

# The Impact of Inclusion Setting on Social Interaction and Psychological Adjustment of Students with Disabilities

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## ABSTRACT

The study aims to identify the impact of inclusion setting on social interaction and psychological adjustment of students with disabilities. Researcher used descriptive statistic methods. Group of study formed from special education teacher in Abu Areech Province in Saudi Arabia about 86 distributed in 15 schools. The researchers selected the sample randomly from study group, 40 special education teacher filled out the questionnaire. To collect the data researchers designed questionnaire to measure the impact of inclusion setting on social interaction and psychological adjustment. The data was analyzed by using SPSS program. The most important results are the roles of inclusive in social interaction are: increases social interaction between students with and without disabilities, empowers students with disabilities to feel efficient and capable, decreases the individual differences among students with and without disabilities. The roles of inclusive in psychological process are: Including students with disabilities into the general education classrooms help meet their academic and social needs; including students with disabilities into general education classrooms enables them to gain new skills.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, Social Interaction, Psychological Adjustment, Disabilities.

## I. INTRODUCTION

With inclusion, special education students stay in general education classrooms and have the support services brought to them, rather than the students being taken to the support services. Inclusion entails educating the child to the maximum extent possible. By bringing the services to the students, they are able to stay in the general education classroom, and keep up with class work. Those for inclusion generally favour newer forms of education service delivery (NASSET LD Report #7 2004).

Over time, inclusion has become a main part of the reform effort to better the service delivery to students with disabilities by putting focus on the placement of these students in the general education setting. In an inclusive school, general education does not renounce accountability for students with special needs, but instead, works collaboratively with special education to provide an excellent program to all students. This arrangement has caused difficulties for many education professionals.

Social competence is the degree to which students are able to create and sustain good interpersonal relationships, gain peer approval, make and keep friendships, and end negative relationships, while strengthening interpersonal relationships. Effective social problem solving includes being able to read one's feelings and being able to accurately express oneself. Good social skills can enable youth with disabilities to create positive peer relationships, success in school, and begin to successfully explore adult roles such as employee, co-worker/colleague, and community member. Social skills also support the development of healthy adult relationships with family members and peers. Such skills are aspects of social and emotional learning (Christine, 2004).

Gresham, Sugai, and Horner (2001) note that insufficiencies in social skills are key components in defining many high-incidence disabilities that hold back students' academic progress, such as specific learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), mental retardation, and emotional disturbance (p. 332). Assisting students with learning social skills is a good approach to lessening the impact of these types

of disabilities on school success. When social skills are not present, educators cannot fully keep students engaged in a variety of learning experiences, especially those that are cooperative. As secondary teachers increasingly use cooperative learning strategies across the curriculum, the need for students to have strong social skills is clear. To participate fully in cooperative learning, some students with disabilities need training in particular skills such as giving/getting feedback, listening, etc.

Young children gain many skills through social interactions with their peers. Skills such as comprehending social roles, sharing, communicating, and responding appropriately to situations are learned this way. In an inclusive educational program, children with disabilities are placed in a setting with typically developing peers who can serve as same-aged models with whom they can interact and learn through a natural behavior modeling format (Grubbs and Niemeyer 1999). However, simply giving children with disabilities the chance to interact with typically developing peers often is not enough for meaningful interactions to occur (Hundert and Houghton 1992).

One part of successful inclusion is the degree to which the student with a disability feels included in the general education classroom. The sense of belonging positively affects a student's self-image, self-esteem, desire to accomplish, speed of adjustment to the larger classroom and new demands, general behavior, and general level of achievement. The impact of the new student on the general classroom is a large concern for inclusion planners. Maintaining positive social relationships between students with disabilities and their peers requires the training of nondisabled peers in the classroom so that they understand the needs of their new classmates. Teachers may use many strategies to help the student achieve a sense of belonging in the class and school (NASSET LD Report #7 2004).

Including social interaction and social skills curricula is a critical component of the curriculum in an inclusive environment. Incorporating a social skills program or social interaction strategies into an inclusive program is crucial to the success of the inclusive program. Adding or incorporating a social skills program or social interaction strategies into an inclusive program is critical

to the success of the inclusive program. Children learn many different concepts from their classroom teachers, but they also learn important academic, social, and behavior concepts from one another in the classroom, in the cafeteria and on the playground, etc. A child with special needs may be missing the components learned through peer interactions if they are unable or unwilling to interact at the same level as the other children (Judith E. et al 2008).

The effect of inclusion on the social interactions and psychological adjustment of students with disabilities has been studied by numerous researchers. A study conducted by Madhabi B, & Ronald A (1995) examined the academic and affective outcomes of fifth-grade students who were normally achieving (NA) or showed specific learning disabilities (SLD). Findings suggested that students with SLD made some academic gains at a rate comparable to that of NA students; parent and teacher surveys showed improved self-esteem in students with SLD, and, in some cases, better motivation. Anecdotal data suggested reduced stigma for students with SLD. In a study conducted by Stephanny F, Marvin C. (2002) about academic and social achievements of children with mental retardation in general education and special education settings, the results showed that children in general education classes do not attain social acceptance ratings at as high a level as their typically developing peers. When comparing children with mental retardation in general education and special education classrooms, integrated students perform better than their comparable segregated students on measures of academic achievement and social ability. Other variables are discussed that might affect child outcomes, and related recommendations are given for research in the future. A study carried out by Hauser-Cram et al. (1993) maintained that children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms, that contained a high proportion of typical children, took part in more interactions than children with disabilities in settings with fewer typical peers. Sharon V., Batya E., & Alison B. (2011) conducted a study that presented a selected review of research on the social functioning of students with learning disabilities (LD) and draws implications for the inclusion of students with LD in regular education classrooms. Four areas of social functioning are covered: social skills, self-concept, friendships, and social networks. Research in these areas shows that some, though not all, students

with LD demonstrate problems in the social domain that may have costs for their inclusion in regular classrooms. In light of the trend toward inclusion of students with LD, we debate that the social dimensions of placement decisions for these students should be thought of. The study conducted by Doris M. Carey (1995) examined the stoichiometric status of children with disabilities in a full-inclusion school that did not use eligibility labels for special education services. The study used a positive and negative peer nomination method to interview the students. The subject population included students with a range of disabilities; the majority were students with learning disabilities. Findings showed great differences between how students who were currently eligible for special education services and students who were likely eligible for services were seen by their peers when compared to a control group. Full-inclusion strategies did not eradicate negative social perceptions of students with disabilities. In a study conducted by Guralnick & et al (1995) it was shown that social development and interactions of typical children seems to be unaffected by including children with disabilities in educational settings. However, Hanline (1993) found that typical children choose other typical children for communication and play activities, and to sit near during classroom activities more often than they choose children with disabilities. Therefore, simple contact does not result in more positive attitudes or more social acceptance of children with disabilities. Studies have also have been conducted to look at the social and self-concept for students with disabilities educated in inclusive settings. Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, Berryman, and Hollowood (1992) used classroom observations, sociometric analysis, and social competence ratings to study the peer interactions and social acceptance of eight students with severe disabilities and eight randomly selected students without disabilities being taught together in elementary classrooms. The result showed that interactions between the two groups of students were more often initiated by students without disabilities, and that although these interactions included some components of play, talking, and physical affection, they tended to be assistive in nature. The observation results also showed that, although the number of social interactions between students with and without disabilities decreased as the school year went on, the interactions that did occur seemed to be more natural. Sociometric data revealed

that, although several of the students with disabilities were very popular, others were not very popular. Fryxell and Kennedy (1995) used a posttest-only control group design with matched comparisons to contrast the social relationships of nine students with severe disabilities educated in general education classrooms and nine students with severe disabilities who received their educational program in a self-contained special education class. The results showed that the students with severe disabilities educated in general education classrooms had more social contacts and richer friendship networks that included peers without disabilities and provided and received more social support than their peers who were taught in self-contained classrooms. Kennedy, Shukla, and Fryxell (1997) related the impact of educational placement on the social relationships of intermediate school students with severe disabilities educated in inclusion classrooms. The findings revealed that the students who were educated in inclusion classrooms had a larger number of interactions and social contacts with students without disabilities. Bear, Clever, and Proctor (1991) studied the impact of class placement on the self-perceptions of students with learning disabilities. The findings revealed that the students with learning disabilities had quite lower self-perceptions in the domains of global self-worth, scholastic competence, and behavioral conduct than their peers without disabilities who were educated in the same integrated of classes. Some study conducted about attitude teachers and pre-service toward inclusive. Ahmed Elhassan & et al (2015) found that the pupils with disabilities on general education class are positive. Abdulaziz Alasmari & et al (2015) found that the attitude of students toward including disabilities in general education classroom is positive. Ahmed Elhassan & et al (2015) indicated that the attitude of students toward including disabilities in general education classroom is positive.

## II. METHODS AND MATERIAL

### Method:

The researchers used descriptive analytical method based on questionnaire.

### Group study:

Group of study formed from special education teacher in Abu Areech Province in Saudi Arabia about 86 distributed in 15 schools.

**Sample:**

The researchers selected the sample randomly from study group, 40 special education teacher filled out the questionnaire.

**Tool:**

The researchers used questionnaires designed by the researchers to obtain the data. The questionnaire. The questionnaire includes 20 phrases distributed on two parts. The first part contains the phrases that measure the impact of the inclusion in social interaction, it formed from 9 phrases. The second part contains the phrases that measure the impact of the inclusion in psychological process, it formed from 11t phrases. To ensure reliability and validity of the tool the researchers distributed the questionnaire to three experts in Jazan University to give their opinions about the suitability of the questionnaire to measure what it was intended, for reliability the researchers used Cronbach's alpha confidence and the value of reliability is 0.86.

**Practical Procedures:**

The principle of voluntarism was the pre-condition of participating in questionnaire. For the questionnaire answer, an explanation was prepared. The goal of the research and how the study would be carried out were clearly stated in it. Questionnaire took place between one to three weeks from 15 September to 07 October 2016.

**Statistical Methods:**

After gathering data the researcher uses percentages for ordering and giving opinions.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Q1 what is the impact of inclusion on social interactions?**

For answer this question the researcher used the percentage table (1) show the result of question.

Table 1 shows the result of question one.

| Phrases             | Agree |   | Not sure |   | Disagree |   |
|---------------------|-------|---|----------|---|----------|---|
|                     | N     | % | N        | % | N        | % |
| Inclusive education | 34    | 8 | 6        | 1 | 0        | 0 |

|  |    |        |        |        |        |    |
|--|----|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|
| increases social interaction between students with and without disabilities                              |    | 5      |        | 5      |        |    |
| Inclusive education empowers students with disabilities to feel efficient and capable.                   | 28 | 7<br>0 | 1<br>0 | 2<br>5 | 2      | 5  |
| Inclusive education decreases the individual differences among students with and without disabilities    | 26 | 6<br>5 | 1<br>4 | 3<br>5 | 0      | 0  |
| Educating students with disabilities in inclusive schools reduce their social isolation                  | 26 | 6<br>5 | 1<br>0 | 2<br>5 | 4      | 10 |
| Students with disabilities adapt effectively when integrated in general education classrooms.            | 22 | 5<br>5 | 6      | 3<br>0 | 6      | 15 |
| Students with disabilities make social relationships (friendships) with students without disabilities    | 20 | 5<br>0 | 5      | 2<br>5 | 1<br>0 | 25 |
| Including students with disabilities in general education classrooms reduce their social anxiety.        | 20 | 5<br>0 | 1<br>6 | 4<br>0 | 4      | 10 |
| Inclusive education reduces the academic achievement gap between students with and without disabilities. | 16 | 4<br>0 | 1<br>8 | 4<br>5 | 6      | 15 |
| Students with  | 14 | 3      | 1      | 4      | 1      | 25 |

|   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| disabilities feel depressed because they cannot academically perform at the same level as their peers without disabilities. | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|

When we analysed the data we found that 85% of study sample pointed that inclusive education increases social interaction between students with and without disabilities, 70% pointed that Inclusive education empowers students with disabilities to feel efficient and capable, 65% pointed that Inclusive education decreases the individual differences among students with and without disabilities and educating students with disabilities in inclusive schools reduce their social isolation , 55% pointed that Students with disabilities adapt effectively when integrated in general education classrooms. This means that the roles of inclusive in social interaction are:

- 1- Increases social interaction between students with and without disabilities,
- 2- Empowers students with disabilities to feel efficient and capable.
- 3- Decreases the individual differences among students with and without disabilities.
- 4- Educating students with disabilities in inclusive schools reduce their social isolation.
- 5- Students with disabilities adapt effectively when integrated in general education classrooms.

**Q2 what is the impact of the inclusion in psychological process?**

For answer this question the researcher used the percentage table (2) show the result of question.

Table 2 shows the result of question two.

| Phrases  | Agree |    | Not sure |    | Disagree |   |
|--|-------|----|----------|----|----------|---|
|  | N     | %  | N        | %  | N        | % |
| Including students with disabilities into the general education classrooms help meet their academic and social needs | 32    | 80 | 6        | 15 | 2        | 5 |

|  |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| Including students with disabilities into general education classrooms enables them to gain new skills.              | 30 | 75 | 8  | 20 | 2 | 5  |
| Placing students with disabilities in inclusive settings increase their self-esteem.                                 | 28 | 70 | 10 | 25 | 2 | 5  |
| Inclusive education enables students with disabilities to overcome the social and academic obstacles they encounter. | 28 | 70 | 10 | 25 | 2 | 5  |
| Inclusive education increases students with disabilities' self-confidence.   | 26 | 65 | 10 | 25 | 4 | 10 |
| Inclusive education improves life's productivity and efficiency of students with disabilities.                       | 24 | 60 | 4  | 10 | 1 | 30 |
| Inclusive education changes teachers' perceptions of students with disabilities.                                     | 22 | 55 | 12 | 30 | 6 | 15 |
| In inclusive settings, students with disabilities feel embarrassed because of their disability.                      | 14 | 35 | 16 | 40 | 1 | 25 |
| I agree with educating students with disabilities in special schools only for them.                                  | 14 | 35 | 8  | 20 | 1 | 45 |
| Schools for only students with disabilities make them feel safe and stable.  | 8  | 20 | 22 | 55 | 1 | 25 |
| Including students with disabilities into general education settings make them                                       | 8  | 20 | 16 | 40 | 1 | 40 |

|                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| feel self-deficient and weak. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

When we analysed the data we found that 80 % of study sample pointed that including students with disabilities into the general education classrooms help meet their academic and social needs, 75% pointed that including students with disabilities into general education classrooms enables them to gain new skills, 70% of study sample pointed that placing students with disabilities in inclusive settings increase their self-esteem and Inclusive education enables students with disabilities to overcome the social and academic obstacles they encounter, 65% pointed that inclusive education increases students with disabilities' self-confidence, 60% of study sample pointed that Inclusive education improves life's productivity and efficiency of students with disabilities and 55% pointed that inclusive education changes teachers' perceptions of students with disabilities. This means that the roles of inclusive in psychological process are:

- 1- Including students with disabilities into the general education classrooms help meet their academic and social needs.
- 2- Including students with disabilities into general education classrooms enables them to gain new skills.
- 3- Placing students with disabilities in inclusive settings increase their self-esteem.
- 4- Inclusive education enables students with disabilities to overcome the social and academic obstacles they encounter.
- 5- Inclusive education increases students with disabilities' self-confidence.
- 6- Inclusive education improves life's productivity and efficiency of students with disabilities.
- 7- Inclusive education changes teachers' perceptions of students with disabilities.

**Q3 Are their differences in the opinions of teachers about the` impact of inclusion setting on social interaction and psychological adjustment of students with disabilities according to age of study group.?**

For answer this question the researchers used Analysis of variance ANOVA, table 3 shows the answer of question three.

Table 3 shows the answer of question three.

| Compare        | Sum of Squares | D.F | Mean Square | F    | Sig. | Result          |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| Between Groups | 3.5331         | 3   | 1.178       | .124 | .944 | Not significant |
| Within Groups  | 151.417        | 16  | 9.464       |      |      |                 |
| Total          | 154.950        | 19  |             |      |      |                 |

When we analysis the we found the sig value is 0.944 and this value is over than Level of significance (0.05), so that means there are no differences on the opinions of teachers about impact of inclusion setting on social interaction and psychological adjustment of students with disabilities according to the age of study group.

**Q4 Are their differences on the opinions of teachers about impact of inclusion setting on social interaction and psychological adjustment of students with disabilities according to academic achievement?**

For answer this question the researchers used Analysis of variance ANOVA, table 4 shows the answer of question four.

Table 4 shows the answer of question three.

| Compare        | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F    | Sig. | Result          |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| Between Groups | 101.950        | 17 | 5.997       | .226 | .972 | Not significant |
| Within Groups  | 53.000         | 2  | 26.500      |      |      |                 |
| Total          | 154.950        | 19 |             |      |      |                 |

When we analysis the we found the sig value is 0.972 and this value is over than Level of significance 0.05, so that means there are no differences on the opinions of teachers about impact of inclusion setting on social interaction and psychological adjustment of students with disabilities according to the academic achievement of study group.

## Discussion:

Overall the results showed that special education teachers believe inclusion has a positive impact on social interactions. Eighty-Five percent (n=34) of the study participants believed that inclusion has a positive impact on students with and without disabilities. The results of this question are consistent with previous research by Salend (2001) which stated that effective inclusion improves the educational system for all students across ethnicities, socioeconomic status, religion, linguistic ability, and cultural background. In contrast, only 55% (n=22) of participants believe students with disabilities are able to adapt effectively when appropriately integrated in general education classrooms. These results show significant similarities to those in previous studies on teacher perceptions and perceptions of student adaptability. However, those studies looked at teacher preparedness (Bruce 2010). In these studies, greater perceptions of student adaptability were linked to increased teacher ability and preparedness.

Additionally, the results indicate that educators have an overall positive view of the impact general education classrooms have in aiding students in meeting their academic and social needs (80%). Results indicated that 65% of participants believe that inclusion increases the self-confidence of students with disabilities. This perception is consistent with findings by (Irvine & Lupart, 2006) which indicated that inclusive class settings allow children with disabilities the opportunity to meet a variety of people and form friendships which lend themselves to a sense of belonging thereby increasing self-esteem and self-confidence.

## Limitations

The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution given the limitation in that the population sample was restricted to special educators from a relatively small sample from the Abu Areech Province in Saudi Arabia with 86 surveys distributed and only 40 completed across 15 schools. The experiences of these teachers may not be consistent with those from other provinces and or teaching settings. Teacher supports and preparedness also impact overall perceptions of inclusion, and that data was not collected or provided in this study.

## IV.CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate relatively positive perceptions of the impact inclusion have on students with disabilities across a variety of social development areas. It is possible that teacher training and experiences play a role in the overall perceptions of special education providers. Future research on this topic should focus on teacher interactions in inclusive settings and how teachers work to develop the skills addressed in the study. Additional studies could focus on general education teachers' perceptions and needed supports to increase or sustain positive perceptions regarding inclusion in the general education setting, and how teacher preparedness impacts perceptions.

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