

**The College of Graduate Studies and the College of Education Cordially Invite You to a  
PhD Dissertation Defense**

Entitled

*THE ROLE OF SCHOOL–COMMUNITY COLLABORATION IN THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (IE) PRACTICES  
CONCERNING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SENs) IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
SCHOOLS IN ABU DHABI*

by

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<https://eu.bbcollab.com/guest/095247f5f0bb48b8ac6d0080406707bf>

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the multifaceted role of school–community collaboration in inclusive education (IE) practices for students with special educational needs (SENs) in Abu Dhabi’s public and private schools in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Over the past two decades, the UAE government has intensified its efforts to enhance the realm of special education, aiming to improve SEN students’ social, cognitive, and academic outcomes. National attention for these practices aligns with the broader aspiration to establish an inclusive and equitable society.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the intricacies of school–community collaboration in fostering inclusive education practices. In addition, this study aims to identify the factors that enable or hinder such collaboration. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, this study comprised filling online survey questionnaires based on the SEND Reflection Framework, which were distributed to 161 teachers. Furthermore, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews with 28 school leaders from both sectors were conducted.

The analysis of collected data revealed three pivotal findings: (1) the significance of “systems and processes” in facilitating effective family communication, (2) the critical role of a supportive environment for effective professional collaboration, and (3) the importance of professional development (PD), substantiated by a  $p$ -value of 0.002, in creating an environment conducive to effective learning.

These findings not only contribute to the extant literature on IE and special education but also offer insights into the distinct frameworks of school–community collaboration in Abu Dhabi’s public and private educational systems. The study provides actionable recommendations while highlighting the challenges and opportunities in establishing effective school-community collaboration. This study fills an existing gap by offering an in-depth understanding of teachers and school leaders' practices of the SEND framework and how it affects the inclusion and school-community collaboration concerning SEN students in public and private schools of Abu Dhabi. The complexities of fostering collaborative partnerships, thereby contributing to the growing body of knowledge on effective strategies for inclusive education in the region.

**Keywords:** SEND, inclusive education, collaboration, school–community collaboration, Abu Dhabi, public and private schools, special educational needs (SENs), mixed-methods research, professional development.