**The Effect of
Parental Involvement
on
ESL Students' Achievement and Classroom Behaviour.**

تأثـــير شـــراكــة الآبـــاء علي تحصيل الطلاب
للغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانيه وعلي سلوكهم الصفي.

By

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ABSTRACT

Involving parents in education is one of the most critical issues that directly impact the educational process in the UAE, which has recently witnessed a major education revolution in all trends. Teaching English as a second language (ESL) has always been the main focus of interest for all Emirati education policy-makers. The current research, therefore, casts light on the influence of parental involvement (PI) on students' ESL learning achievement and classroom behaviour. Obstacles that hinder the effective involvement of parents in the Emirati school society are also explored with a view to paving the way for further research studies in the future. Implications for future classroom practice are explained in the light of the research findings.

Observation, questionnaires and achievement tests are the research qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. The study includes 78 male participants who are randomly selected among seventh graders on a mixed-ability group basis. Report cards are weekly sent to parents to involve them in their children's education. A positive correlation is proved between the research dependent and independent variables. The results obtained are in line with many empirical studies. Finally, the research calls for the joint efforts of the school, family and community to bridge the home- school gap as PI is everybody's responsibility. The research could be of a great help to Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) in its quest for education reform as a pioneering study in the UAE society.

ملخص البحث

ان مشاركة أولياء الأمور في التعليم يعد واحداً من أكثر القضايا أهمية من حيث تأثيرها المباشر علي العمليه التعليميه في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ، والتي شهدت بدورها مؤخرا ثورة ضخمة في كافة المجالات التعليميه. نظراً لأن تدريس اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانيه يمثل بؤرة الاهتمام الرئيسة لكافة صانعي القرار التربوي في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ، لذلك فان البحث الحالي يسلط الضوء علي تأثير مشاركة أولياء الامور في المدرسة علي مستوى تحصيل الطلاب في اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية وعلى سلوكهم الصفي. كذلك يستعرض البحث المعوقات التي تحول دون الاشتراك الفعال لأولياء الأمور في مجتمع الإمارات المدرسي بهدف تمهيد الطريق لمزيد من الدراسات المفيدة في المستقبل. كذلك تستعرض الدراسة المؤثرات المستقبليه لنتائج البحث علي المارسات الصفية.

إن الملاحظة واستطلاعات الرأي والاختبارات التقويمية هي أدوات البحث لجمع البيانات الكية والنوعية. شملت الدراسة 78 مشاركاً من الذكور تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من بين طلاب الصف السابع علي أساس المجموعات المتباينة القدرات. كذلك تم إرسال بطاقات المتابعة لأولياء الامور أسبوعياً لزيادة مشاركتهم في تعليم أبنائهم. وقد تم إثبات وجود علاقة إيجابية بين متغيرات البحث التابعة والمستقلة. وختاماً يطالب البحث بتضافر جهود كلا من المدرسة و الأسرة والمجتمع لصدع الفجوة التي نشأت بين المنزل والمدرسة ، حيث أن مشاركة أولياء الأمور هي مسئولية الجميع. ويمكن للبحث أن يكون ذا فائدة كبيرة لمجلس ابوظبي للتعليم في مساعيه لإصلاح التعليم باعتبار البحث دراسة رائدة في مجتمع الإمارات.

DEDICATION

To my dear loving wife who has inspired me in every single word written during my research journey; without her relentless support, I would have never started this work. I also dedicate this work to the apple of my eye, Abdul Rahman, my cute young child. I do hope that one day, when he grows up and is able to read by himself, he will be proud of his father's work. I can never forget my dear parents who are always behind my success all the way. My deep love for my country, Egypt, has definitely provided me with the inspiration and enthusiasm to implement this research paper on time.

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Chapter ONE

1. Introduction:-

Chapter one provides an overall introduction to the current study. It explains why the current research findings are needed in the light of the recent education transformation. It also sheds the light on the research questions and relates them to the theoretical framework. A road map to the research structure is explained and a briefing for the study population is also highlighted.

1.1 Importance of the study

The establishment of the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) in 2005 caused new visions and concepts in education to emerge. ADEC was established 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. According to Dr Al-Khaili (2011), the Director General of ADEC, the main goal of ADEC was to improve the quality of education in the Abu Dhabi Emirate to the highest international standards and provide all learners with opportunities for lifelong learning to enable them to contribute to the development of the UAE. In a press release, Dr Al-Khaili (2009) announced ADEC's Strategic Plan (2009-2018) which sought excellence in Abu Dhabi Schools based on "world-class standards and expertise". He also declared; "Education is the Government's number one priority" and that all the action plans were designed to face the recent challenges.

One of the thorny education problems in the UAE was that a large number of Emirati undergraduates were not academically qualified to study in the university because of their poor English language level. Therefore, they joined English language foundation classes which cost the Abu Dhabi government a lot of money and delayed students' graduation. Shaikh Al Nahyan (2010), the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, declared that he expected a dramatic decrease of the need for foundation and remedial courses at Emirati universities. He also urged Zayed University and other universities in the

UAE to develop partnerships with schools to attain that goal. The negative effects that this phenomenon had on the labour force and the national income urged the government to make decisions to carry out long-term as well as short-term education policy improvements.

However, English Language instruction was a major goal for the Emirati education policy makers. In the press release Dr Al-Khaili (2009) announced ADEC's 10-year strategic plan to increase the hours of teaching English language, Arabic Language, ICT and maths in addition to intensive summer immersion programs in English beside the after-school learning support programs. English teaching and learning have gradually changed and developed to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century. Professional development workshops were conducted by ADEC Education Advisors to all teachers in government schools. Discovery learning and student-centered methods have replaced teacher-oriented instruction. Problem-solving, creative thinking techniques and project-based learning have replaced lecturing and memorizing. The annual External Measurement of Student Achievement (EMSA 2012) program conducted by ADEC for 2012 highlighted overall progress and higher academic achievement in English language literacy and writing among public school students in comparison to previous years. EMSA report proved that ADEC was on the right track to a national reform of education.

According to ADEC (2005), parents are the first teachers and educators of children. ADEC believes that parental involvement (PI) is a key factor in enhancing students' academic achievement and motivation to learn, and that PI positively impacts students' learning more than the income, educational and cultural backgrounds of parents. In his meeting with Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain School principals, Al-Dhaheri (2013), Executive Director of School Operations at ADEC, stressed the dire need for integrating parents into the Emirati school community. He also encouraged schools to establish all possible channels of communication with families to guarantee an on-going and effective partnership with parents who were regarded as the "key players" in the educational process. He finally

urged school principals to issue questionnaires that would explore parents' viewpoints and feedback. A research study showed that public schools' educational systems and standards also benefitted from involving parents in education (Machen , Wilson & Notar 2005). Now is the perfect time for parental involvement to be utilized efficiently due to the rapid change in concepts, education standards and assessment criteria. However, some parents complain about being confused and left-behind, which they declare during parent-teacher conferences. They embrace the old traditional techniques of instruction; they believe in a course book that needs to be studied from cover to cover. Most parents have doubts about how to help their children because of the non-fixed content of ADEC curriculum.

Believing in ADEC's previous vision and out of a personal interest, the effects of P.I. on students' English language acquisition are investigated. The research is a pioneering study in the UAE that attempts to explore a thorny issue that has concerned local educators for a long time (ADEC 2005).The researcher, therefore, has used an observation and communication tool (students' report cards) which he has developed over the last five years to suit the Emirati family with a view to bridging the gap between home and school. It also helps depict the classroom environment and facilitate parent-teacher communication. This paper explores the effect of parental involvement in a public basic school in Abu Dhabi on Emirati learners' achievement of English as a second language (ESL) and its effect on students' conduct in the classroom. The problems that might hinder PI in schools will also be investigated with a view to suggesting some ideas that might pave the way to further research studies.

1.2 Background of the study

Parental involvement in a school has attracted researchers' interest over the last two decades. According to a recent study (Fishel & Ramirez's 2005) parental involvement generally referred to all efforts parents did to take part in their children's education in order to enhance their academic and social well-being. Plowden was among the first prominent scholars who addressed this topic. Epstein's study in 1995 explained six types of parental

involvement, while Fan's research in 2001 empirically recognized seven components. Communication was prominent among the thirteen components. This research paper will shed light on school-home communication through sending weekly report cards as an effective informative parental involvement component to enhance ESL learning and improve students' behavioural classroom conduct.

1.3 Scope of the Study:

The research participants are seventh graders who joined AL Ruwad Model School in the academic year 2011-2012. The experimental group members are distributed in two sections: 7/1& 7/2, whereas class 7/3 represents the control group. There are 26 participants in each class and that makes the total research population 78 participants. According to school regulations, all students are randomly distributed between classes by the school administration on a mixed-ability group basis.

Participants were specifically chosen from grade seven because these students rarely drop out of the study at this early stage. Therefore, the mortality threats to the research validity are minimized. This assumption is based on three facts: 1) Al Ruwad Model School is the only cycle 2 model school in the region of Bani Yas; model schools are always admired and preferred by parents and students due to their good reputation and high quality of education. 2) Seventh graders are not yet targeted by educational institutions (e.g. Petroleum Institutions) at this early stage. Grade nine students usually get attractive offers to leave school and be recruited for study to get future promising careers. Finally, the effect of PI proved to be greater on younger than older learners (Hawes & Plourde 2005). These reasons make the research population an ideal choice.

1.4 Research Structure:

This research paper is divided into six related sections. The first part explains the niche of the study, gives background information and relates it to the research questions. In the following section, the related empirical studies offer different ideas and theories which may prove or disprove the current research findings. Chapter three details the methodologies used to implement the study and its tools, participants and research design. All procedures and ethical issues are briefly explained, in addition to the ways of ensuring the validity and reliability of the research. The observation, survey and achievement test results are analyzed and findings are discovered using the SPSS program in the methodology section. In chapter five, the collected data is discussed in the light of the research questions and the related theories in the literature review. The study is concluded with the main findings, recommendations and future classroom implications.

1.5 Research Questions

This study is a road map towards establishing a parental involvement attitude that can be relevant to the Emirati community. It seems that there are very few studies on the techniques and the value of parental involvement for learning in Emirati society. The recent study will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between involving parents in education through sending them weekly report cards and students' academic achievement in English as a second language?
2. What is the effect of P.I. in education on students' classroom behaviour?
3. What are the barriers to parental involvement in schools in the UAE?

The answers to the research questions will be landmarks in the process of improving the education system in the UAE; almost no similar published studies can be traced (except for Midraj 2011) inside the UAE, which makes this work a pioneering study. Chapter one provides an overall picture of the entire research study. The next chapter will explore the main theories and research findings that may relate to the current study and help answer its questions.

Chapter TWO

2. Literature Review:-

Chapter two provides a validated theoretical framework for involving parents in education. It also points out the positive versus the negative implications of parental involvement and explains different viewpoints of the related involved parties. Relevant empirical theories are linked to the research problem and the scholars' main ideas are briefly classified in tables at the end of each section.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Education and community are inseparable and the relationship between them needs further exploration and researching. The current study uses the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci 1975) to enhance participants' intrinsic motivation to learn ESL when they receive verbal feedback from both teachers and parents. Social approval can enhance male learners' intrinsic motivation when they receive positive verbal feedback (Deci 1972). In other words, if a two-way communication system is established between home and school in which learners' performance is monitored and a mutual feedback is regularly sent (using report cards), participants' intrinsic motivation to learn increases. However, insisting on the 'positive' side negatively affects the validity and reliability of the feedback.

The Theory of Cognitive Evaluation indicates that there are two forms of parental involvement: informational and controlling. The informative part stimulates learners' intrinsic motivation, while the controlling aspect reduces their intrinsic motivation (Amabile, DeJong & Lepper 1976). Therefore, students' intrinsic motivation to learn increases when their parents receive a weekly report to inform them about students' academic performance and the ways to help them learn at home (Ames, de Stefano, Watkins & Sheldon, 1995; Ames et al., 1993). On the contrary, students are not

intrinsically motivated when their parents control and dominate the ways students do their homework (Ginburg & Bronstein 1993).

Taking the Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein 2001) into consideration, the following literature sheds light on four main areas that relate to PI and the research questions:

1- Socio-economic factors (Community) that enhance or hinder PI.
2- Parents' role (Family) in motivating children to learn.
3- Schools' role in encouraging both PI and students' ESL academic achievement.
4- The positive versus negative impact of PI on children's learning.

2.2 Socio-Economic Factors

Scholars have contrasting views about the roles that students' social and economic backgrounds play regarding their parents' involvement in education. It is debated that only rich and well-educated parents can ensure a good quality education and a motivating educational environment and that poverty can be a greater hindrance to PI than having a learning disabled child (Thurston & Navarrete 2003). Domestic issues like health problems and poverty have a devastating effect on children's academic achievement and PI style is shaped by the family educational background (Abadiano & Turner 2003).However, a high social class does not necessarily guarantee a perfect PI. On the contrary, education is not a luxury for poor parents; education is their priority and an important way of making a living. It is believed that PI can be improved among poor, single-parent and minority families (Epstein 2001). However, both supporters and opponents agree on the need to prepare parents for involvement in activities and literacy programs.

Children at a primary stage are more affected by PI in school than students at higher grade levels (Hawes & Plourde 2005). Middle school students have unique needs and should be

treated more carefully when their parents get involved in their education. However, the study does not specify the nature of PI they investigate: informative or controlling. Adult students reject the controlling interference in their education, whereas reporting students' achievements builds up their self-esteem and intrinsic motivation (Amabile, DeJong & Lepper 1976). In addition, PI is regarded as "a multidimensional construct" (Sui-Chu & Willms 1996) in which it is complicated to compare research findings since PI could function differently depending on the socio-economic conditions. In other words, forms, reasons for and ways of parental involvement in a rich gulf country like the UAE would be different from that in a poor African country or an advanced European community. Therefore, care should be taken when transferring research findings into the current study.

The following table summarises the socio-economic factors that could enhance or hinder parental involvement (PI) in education.

Scholars	Factors that enhance P.I	Factors that hinder P.I.
Epstein 2001	PI can be improved even with poor, single-parent and minority families.	
Abadiano & Turner 2003		The families' social, economic and educational backgrounds; in addition to health problems and parental abuse.
Thurston & Navarrete 2003		Poverty hinders PI more than learning disabilities.
Hawes & Plourde 2005	The younger children are, the more responsive they are to PI.	

Table 1: Socio-economic factors

2.3 Parents' Role

A parent is a child's first teacher and reliable role model (ADEC 2005). The motivating and supporting home environment that parents create enhances students' learning achievement more than the parents' financial, cultural or educational background. Different forms of PI at home is more effective on students' learning experience than involving parents in school activities (Christenson & Sheridan 2001; Hickman, Greenwood & Miller 1995 ; Izzo, et al 1999 ; Trusty1999). Moreover, parents tend to adapt their techniques and amount of homework assistance in response to students' behavior and performance in school (Cooper 2000; Grolnick & Slowiaczek 1994). This mutual effect between PI and students' academic achievement disproves the theory that there is no relationship between the family's cultural background and the kind of support a student get at home (Dumont, et al 2011). An illiterate or uneducated parent can hardly adapt his follow-up techniques.

When fourth-grade Emirati students' learning resources are created and designed by parents, Arabic language reading comprehension and fluency level improve significantly (Midraj & Midraj 2011). Besides, children who learn independently at home get higher reading achievement grades than children who have private tutors. In addition, parents' educational level directly impacts on their children's second language acquisition (Burstall 1975 & Gardner 1985) , the parents' involvement in school (Baeck 2010) and the children's level of academic success (Murphy, Mufti & Kassem 2009). However, teachers, being professionally qualified educators, are not equal to parents (Warnock 1985). Parents desperately need to be instructed in the useful ways of helping their children at home (Panover 2010). The zone of responsibility for both a teacher and a parent overlaps, completes each other, but cannot replace one another. All in all, Communication channels should be initially established between home and school before problems arise as a precautionary step (Arguea & Conroy 2001).

The following table gives a brief summary of the previous findings:

Scholars	Parents' Role/ Status	Effect on learners
Midraj 2011	• Create and design learning resources. • Parents' educational level increase	• Arabic reading comprehension and fluency improve. • Arabic reading competence, comprehension, fluency and accuracy improve.
Baeck 2010	Parents' educational level increase	Stimulate parents' interest in school-home cooperation.
Murphy, Mufti & Kassem 2009	• Parents' career & qualification level • Increased level of involvement	• Signal children's academic success. • Guarantee higher levels of children's success and achievement.
Arguea & Conroy 2001	Early & continuous communication.	Students' academic achievement increases.
Panover 2010	• Create a motivating and a relaxing environment at home. • Expose students to many writing & reading tasks.	• Bridge the gap between home and school. • Enrich students' learning experience.
Dumont , et al 2011	Students appreciate and welcome parents' home assistance.	Intrinsic motivation and self-image are supported.
Cooper 2000	Adapt techniques of home assistance depending on students' performance and behaviour at school.	Mutual effect between parents' involvement and students' academic achievement.

Table 2: Parents' Role.

2.4 School Role:

A school can either support or hinder PI according to its administrative and teaching staff policies and strategies. The "theory of overlapping spheres of influence" (Epstein 2001) explains the power of the four related forces in communities. Parental involvement is shaped during the on-going interaction among the family, school and community. The fourth element is the time during which students learn new experiences. There would be more overlapping and more effect on children's education if these four elements came closer and coordinated their efforts.
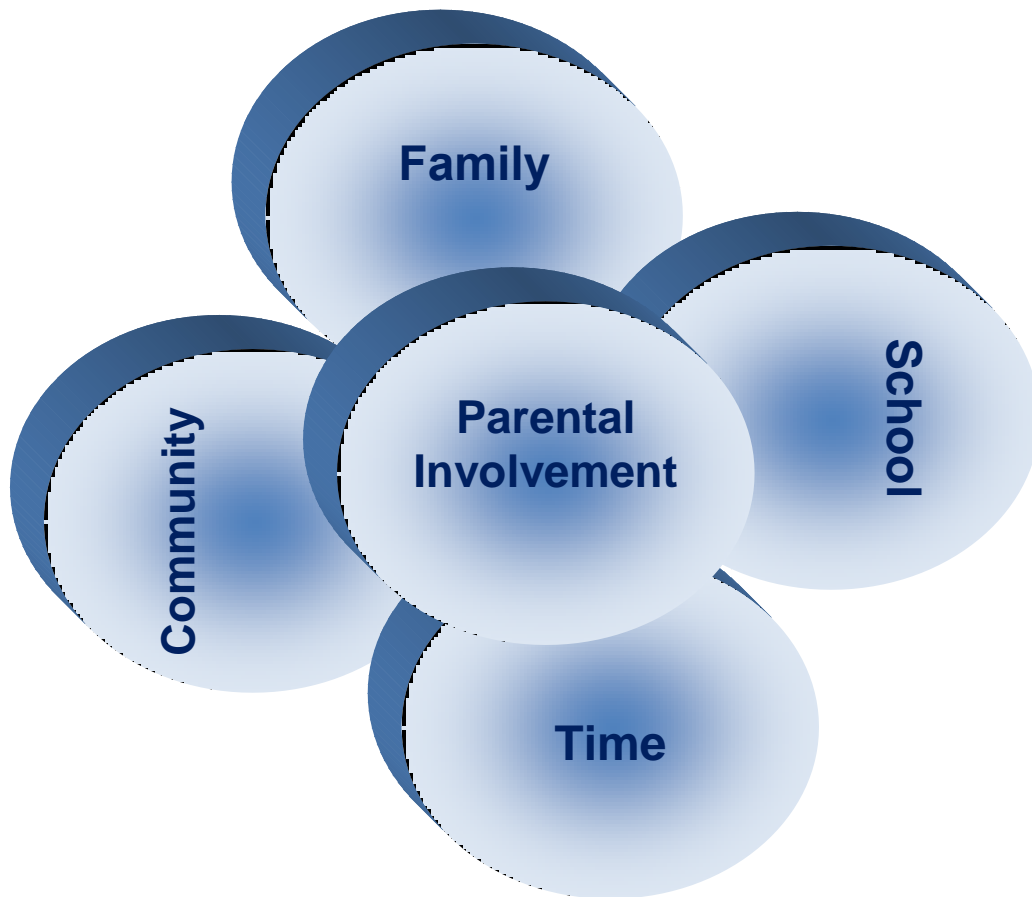
Figure 1: Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein 2001).

On the other hand, Epstein's four spheres will be less effective on children's development causing less overlapping when the four circles are pulled apart. Therefore, harmony and

collaboration between schools, families and the community, on one side, and philosophies and strategies practiced to achieve certain goals, on the other side, should be carefully planned by not only curriculum designers but also education policy-makers. A school, as one of four effective forces, can play a vital role in enhancing PI (Epstein 2001). Schools can make parents either feel that they are welcome and their participation is needed, or that they are rejected as unqualified persons who should not interfere in the school work. P I is a continuous process in which the chances of enhancing students' achievements are maximized (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling 2011). That means communication channels should always run between school and home whether or not there are behavioural or learning problems (Arguea & Conroy 2001). The study suggests that teachers are the only persons entitled to decide the form and timing of the communication. However, the study does not clearly suggest how the overburdened teachers can initiate communication with parents without increasing their workload.

School improvement plans (SIP) should be designed by school administrations to get all parents involved in the 21st century education (Lunenburg & Irby 2002). Moreover, Teachers' duty is to instruct parents in the best techniques of assisting students with homework irrespective of parents' educational or cultural level (Dumont, et al 2011). However, establishing a one-way communication system by getting parents informed about their children's school performance in newsletters, websites or phone messages is only needed to send reports and information (Smith & Baron 2010). Although this technique is easy and fast to implement, an effective partnership and engagement need a two-way communication system. It is believed that parent-teacher mutual feedback reporting is essential to discover points of weaknesses and distinction and to design suitable remedial plans.

When a school-to-home relationship is studied, the social worker's role cannot be overlooked. The Section Manager of Special Education at ADEC recently declares that

ADEC, in line with the New School Model Strategies, makes plans to develop the social worker's " .. pivotal role in bridging the gap between the community and a school," (Hughes 2013). The social worker's duty is to encourage and support students' achievement and success by getting both parents and stakeholders involved in the school-based work as responsible partners. He further declares that social workers should communicate with parents to improve students' attendance, classroom behaviour and enhance student- parent relationships. If a teacher and a social worker cooperate as teamwork to get parents involved in education, the positive implication of PI should be clearly observed.

Table (3) explains the different strategies a school can implement to carry out certain desired objectives.

SCHOLAR	SCHOOL STRATEGY	AIMS
Luneburg & Irby 2002	• Schools design improvement plans. • Administration encourages PI	• Get parents involved in education. • Stimulate students' academic, social and emotional well-being.
Smith & Baron 2010	• Establish two-way communication system between home and school. • Sending parents invitations.	• To build effective parental partnership. • To increase the number of parents in parent-teacher conferences as the feel they are welcome.
Dumont & Trautwein 2011	Teachers instruct parents in P I techniques.	To enable parents help students with homework regardless of their educational level.
LaRocque & Kleiman 2011	• School administrations reduce teachers' workload. • PI is a non-stop process.	• To let teachers decide the form and timing of parent-teacher communication. • To maximize chances of improving students' achievement. • To be ready to deal with students'

SCHOLAR	SCHOOL STRATEGY	AIMS
		problem before they arise.
Hughes 2013	• Develop social workers role. • Holding communication between social workers and parents.	• To bridge the gap between school and community. • To enhance students' social and academic success.

Table 3: School's and Teachers' Roles

2.5 The Positive Impact of PI:

Most empirical study findings stress the positive impact of parental involvement on learners' education in different age groups. However, some researchers still refer to PI drawbacks and stress the need for further research before jumping into conclusions. This section displays the positive versus negative consequences of involving parents in education.

Driessen, Smit and Sleegers (2005) believe that the interactional relationship between school and parents has two distinct forms: school-initiated parental involvement and parent-initiated involvement. The latter, however needs more research and study. The scholars uncover numerous past studies about the positive impact of increased parent-initiated involvement on students' cognitive and social development. In addition, parents develop positive attitudes towards schools that manage to create an inviting learning environment to link with the surrounding community. The study suggests that teachers should receive intensive training to communicate with parents effectively taking into account their various socio-cultural backgrounds.

Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems and Holbein's study (2005 cited in Fan & Williams 2010) stresses the positive effects of parental involvement on students' educational outcomes. However, they believe that the impact of the different aspects of parental involvement on achievement motivation needs more research and extensive study. An earlier study (Simon 2001) also confirms the positive link between parental involvement and students' attendance and class preparation. Shirvani (2007) also proves a positive relationship between parents' involvement and students' achievement in maths (conduct, engagement, attitudes). Members of the experimental group get higher scores in mathematics and have fewer discipline problems than those in the control group. The study indicates the positive impression parents have about their children's academic achievement and behaviour in math class. Such a positive attitude reflects on students' self-esteem and classroom engagement. However, the techniques used to get parents involved is not clearly stated, neither the problems that hinder effective PI.

Machen, Wilson & Notar (2005) argue that parent involvement is crucial to children's self-esteem and self-confidence. Children have the feeling that their parents care about their well-being and success. In addition, the study suggests pre-service training for teachers to explore new ways to get the family involved in education. The theory explains the importance of this study to ADEC's improvement plans and how parental involvement can make a difference at this critical time of the recent educational revolution. LaRocque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011) confirm that parents have the right to be informed about their children's academic achievement and that The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) in the USA makes parental involvement a top priority which renders schools responsible for facilitating parental involvement in the school system. The study concludes that there is no single best way of getting parents involved in education because students have a diverse range of needs and different cultural backgrounds.

2.6 The Negative Consequences of PI:

Domina's study in 2005 (cited in Fan & Williams 2010) proves that parental involvement positively affects students' behaviour and leads to fewer conduct problems. She also discovers that parents can improve students' academic level when they volunteer, attend meetings at school and check their children's homework. However, students' academic achievement is negatively affected by these factors over time. Similarly, a recent study (Fan 2001) proves the negative impact of home-school communication on learners' academic achievement. A later study (Fan & Williams 2010) concludes that parents' excessive participation in extracurricular activities negatively impacts adolescent students' intrinsic motivation to learn English. This is because such an act is viewed as controlling and dominating on the part of parents, which causes intrinsic motivation decline (Deci 1975).

Fan and Williams (2010) prove that negative feedback sent from school to parents about students' low achievement or behavioural problems has a strong discouraging impact on students' motivation. They claim that most parents punish or criticize their children, the thing that causes poor self-confidence and decreases their learning engagement. This finding is consistent with the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci 1972) discussed earlier. However, the discouraging impact of home-to-school communication on learning cannot be generalized without first examining the style of parent-teacher communication and its fitness for students' psychology. When a school reports a problem to the parents, the school does its duty and becomes a part of the solution. Instead of deceiving parents, the school sends a true picture to diagnose the problem and find professional solutions. It is true that adolescents are sensitive to criticism because they tend to be independent and refuse authority. Therefore, parents should be careful when they guide their children and interfere in their education.

The following table summarises the main positive and negative points of PI.

Scholar	PI Positive Impact on:	Suggestions / Negative Impact
Driessen 2005	• Students' cognitive and social development. • Parents who develop positive attitudes towards school.	• Teachers receive intensive training courses to interact with parents effectively.
Gonzalez 2005	Students' educational outcomes.	Different forms of PI on achievement motivation need further research.
Simon 2001	Students' attendance and class participation.	
Machen 2005	• Students' self-esteem, self-confidence and well-being. • Education system which benefits when sharing experience with parents.	Pre-service teacher training is required to develop PI strategies.
LaRocque 2011	• Parents are entitled to know about their children academic achievement.	There is no single best way of PI.
Shirvani 2007	• Students' achievement in math (conduct- engagement & attitude).	
Domina 2005	Students' behaviour which improves and conduct problems which decline.	Students' academic achievement is negatively affected over time.
Fan 2001		Students' academic achievement is negatively affected by home-school communication.
Fan 2010		Negative feedback discourages students' motivation and learning engagement.

Scholar	PI Positive Impact on:	Suggestions / Negative Impact
Sui-Chue & Willms 1996		PI research findings are not comparable due to different socio-economic conditions (A multidimensional construct).

Table 4: Positive versus Negative PI Impact.

Chapter two has indicated that most of the research findings support the positive impact of PI on students' academic achievement and classroom engagement. However, a few researchers still have doubts about PI's correlation with learners' intrinsic motivation and self-image. They believe that this topic needs further research to prove how far it can impact students' learning. The next chapter entails the research method and design and the reasons for their choice. It also depicts the participants and data collection tools, in addition to the procedural and ethical issues considered during the experiment. Chapter three ends with explaining how the researcher has managed to ensure that the study is valid and reliable. The research instruments are presented according to their chronological order in the study.

Chapter THREE

3 Methodology:-

3.1 <u>Introduction</u>:

The objective of this research study is to explain the relationship between parental involvement in school, on the one hand, and students' academic achievement in English as a second language and students' classroom behaviour on the other hand. A cause and effect relationship is investigated by observing students in the classroom and surveying the parents as well as the students. The researcher also explores the problems that hinder an effective parental involvement in schools in Emirati society

The research in hand is an empirical study that uses a mixed-design approach. The study is 'empirical' because it clearly and explicitly describes what happened when conducting the experiment (Silverman2010). The methodology chapter should, therefore, include an interesting structured narrative of collected data, which will help readers feel that they belong to the text, and not become 'outsiders' to the text (Silverman 2010). In order to conduct the research study in a manner that avoids all forms of ambiguities, the researcher tries to avoid using the passive voice , especially when someone other than the researcher is involved.

A considerable part of literature confirms that a mixed methods design is getting popular among educational researchers. It is the latest approach that mixes both qualitative and quantitative data in conducting a research that is both reliable and valid (Cresswell 2012). The current study adopts this approach and integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to reach to a better analysis of the research issue than either method in isolation (Cresswell 2012).The researcher also thinks that data collection and analysis is

very time consuming, especially if a single research approach is used. When both qualitative and quantitative data are available and the researcher wants to take advantage of the strengths of both types to achieve a better concept of the research problem, the mixed methods design is selected and preferred (Cresswell 2012). A researcher also uses a mixed methods design when a single research design is not sufficient to conduct the research efficiently and answer its questions (Cresswell 2012). Although mixed researchers can clearly sense the positive side of human behaviour, both qualitative and quantitative research designs have limited and insufficient value for many research issues (Johnson & Christensen 2012). Therefore, there is a need for combing or mixing both research designs to better understand the world. According to this study, the philosophy of a mixed research is based on the theory of pragmatism which means that only practical and useful data can be considered as the true answers to the research questions regardless of whether or not the study may conflict with norms or traditions.

The current study follows the Exploratory Sequential Design. According to this design, the qualitative data collection appears in phase one and precedes the quantitative analysis in order to recognize the phenomena and design the research tools (Cresswell2012). In the second phase, quantitative data helps explain the relationships, prove or disprove theories and provide evidence of and refine the initial qualitative observations. The researcher stresses the qualitative data by using open-ended research questions and analyzing the qualitative data in more detail. This design is flexible and allows a researcher to design his tools depending on the data collected in the qualitative phase instead of conducting research with a fixed set of instruments (Cresswell 2012).This design is useful when the research population do not have access to the variables and instruments of the study (Cresswell 2012). This fact applies to the current study in which participants are too young to understand the research variables and tools. Finally, this design combines the best features of both qualitative and quantitative research designs. However, that design is time-consuming and requires experience on the part of the researcher. Besides, the researcher needs to examine the research instruments, collect extensive data and determine the most suitable qualitative data to use (Cresswell 2012).

3.2 Research Design:

The study is a mixed methods design (Johnson & Christensen 2012) in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected to best investigate and explain the research questions. The research paper follows a dominant status sequential design in which qualitative components outweigh the quantitative part. The first two questions of the current study require qualitative data (i.e. correlation between parental involvement and ESL achievement and students' classroom behaviour) and dominate most of the study. They are also open-ended to allow qualitative data be analysed in more depth and detail. However, the final question (i.e. obstacles to parental involvement) requires quantitative data which is not highlighted much because the issue needs further research depending on the current research findings.

The research also follows a Dominant Status *Approach* because most data collection tools require extensive qualitative data in order to identify the phenomena (Cresswell 2012). The quantitative data follows in a smaller amount to refine and prove the initial qualitative findings. The research paper is an Exploratory Sequential *Design* that is hypothetically divided into two related sections. Qualitative data collection comes before quantitative data analysis in the first section in order to identify the phenomena and design the research tools (Cresswell 2012). In the second section, quantitative data helps explain the relationships and provide evidence for or against the initial qualitative observation (Cresswell 2012).Therefore, descriptive data obtained through observation precedes conducting surveys, tests and discussing the scores and values.

3.3 Participants:

The study includes 78 male seventh graders in a model school in Abu Dhabi, in addition to 52 parents who volunteer to participate in parents' surveys. Only parents whose children are

in the experimental group are invited. The control group participants are 26 students in class 7/3, whereas the experimental group represents 52 participants in classes 7/1 and 7/2. [1]All students are randomly distributed by the school administration on mixed-ability group basis. All participants are Emirati students who have their first experience with their English teacher; the researcher. Despite the individual differences, the majority of students come from model schools which are known for providing a high standard education level. Model schools are established by Abu Dhabi Education Zone (ADEZ) in 1994-1995 as a pilot programme under the academic patronage of Zayed University and the Institute of Applied Technology (Abudhabi 2013).

The following table provides a detailed summary about the research participants:

Item	Experiment Group	Control Group	Parents' Group
Number	52 participants	26 participants	52 participants
Nature	7th graders, government school students from classes 7/1 & 7/2.	7th graders, government school students from class 7/3	Parents of participants in the experimental group.
Role	➢ Took pre-test and post test. ➢ Were observed in class. ➢ Answered online survey.	➢ Took pre-test and post test.	➢ Received weekly observation report cards about their children. ➢ Answered online survey.

Table5: Research Participants.

The homogeneity of all the research participants (78 students) in both groups is first insured before conducting the experiment. Using SPSS program and participants' scores in reading and writing in the English language pre-test, the Mean values and Standard

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[1] (Refer to Item 1.4 for more details about the reasons for choosing seventh graders).

Deviation of the average scores of the control and experimental groups are compared using T-Test treatment. 'Independent Samples T-Test' is conducted and table 6 details the results.

Statistical significance[2]	T	DF	Control			Experimental			Group Variable
			Standard Deviation	Mean	n	Standard Deviation	Mean	n	
Non significance	1.10	76	2.556	3.1538	26	2.833	3.8846	52	**Reading**
Non significance	2.17	76	2.627	3.2308	26	2.5003	4.5577	52	**Writing**

Table 6: The Homogeneity between two independent groups

Table 6 proves that there are no statistically significant differences between the average scores of the pre-test of the two groups in reading and writing skills. At 0.05 level of significance and (76) degrees of freedom, the calculated value of T in both reading and writing is (1.10) and (2.17) which proves to be less than the tabular value of T (2.54). This result indicates that both research groups are homogenous in both reading and writing and the possible changes in performance in the post test results should be attributed to the research treatment (PI).

3.4 Instruments:

The current research paper uses three different instruments for collecting data: tests, observation and questionnaires. The study follows a clear timeline so that it can be replicated easily. All research participants first take a pre-test in September 2011. Then, participants in the experimental group are observed for ten weeks during their engagement in learning English inside the classroom to obtain qualitative data. Meanwhile, report cards are weekly sent to participants' parents in the experimental group. Observation cannot

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[2] N.B. The tabular value of T at 0.05 level of significance equals 2.54 when degrees of freedom are 76.

successively be conducted for that period due to national and religious breaks. In May 2012, participants in the experimental group and their parents are surveyed online to get the quantitative data needed to explain the descriptive data obtained earlier. All participants take a post test and the results are compared and analysed in June 2012.

3.4.1   Tests:

Testing is believed to be closely related to the educational process as a reliable and valid means of performance measurement (Johnson & Christensen 2012). Standardized achievement tests are preferred to teacher-constructed tests because the data obtained from the first type, being developed by experts in testing, is more valid and reliable (Johnson & Christensen 2012). Therefore, an ADEC standardized English language test is used to measure students' level of achievement in English language as a second language (ESL) before and after applying the treatment (Appendix G). The same test is used as a pre-test and post-test in Trimester 1 (September, 2011) and Trimester 3 (April, 2012). The test covers both reading and writing skills and the marking process is done against ADEC standards using the ADEC marking rubric (Appendix H & I). ADEC English language curriculum is based on three interrelated strands: taking / listening, reading and writing. The three strands are assessed during the academic year in integrated strand tasks (IST), whereas ADEC's standardized achievement tests include reading and writing only, which the study uses to assess students' ESL achievement.

3.4.2   Observation:

Observation is used as an intentional activity to collect descriptive data about students' English language learning engagement. The type of data collected through observation is "attractive" because the situation is "live" and the responses are spontaneous (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). Observational data is also more reliable than other tools; e.g. questionnaires or tests, because a researcher can observe what participants might want to

hide or fake. A "systematic observation schedule" has been designed using pre-planned observation check-lists or coding systems. Using coding systems instead of on-the-spot description is easier to handle and analyse using numerical values (McDonough & McDonough 2004). It also enables researchers to generalize and compare results with previous studies.

3.4.2.1 Teacher's Observation

Observation is the main tool for collecting information about students' classroom performance and level of engagement. Five classroom behaviours are targeted to measure students' level of engagement and learning English. The five areas that are observed for three months are: doing homework, class participation, bringing necessary supplies, class discipline and punctuality. Participation and bringing supplies closely relate to learners' intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning which can be used as an indication of their ESL achievement to answer the first research question. Discipline and punctuality refer to learners' class behaviour mentioned in the second research question. However, removing the data collected about bringing own supplies and punctuality makes data analysis in chapter 4 easier to handle , especially when such data does not add much to the research problem. Therefore, only three areas are observed and analyzed.

The observation helps achieve two goals: first, students' academic achievement level and behavioural conduct are tracked and a comparison can be made later between the experimental and control groups. Second, a weekly report card can be sent to parents to inform them of their children's daily behaviour and get them involved in school (Appendix E). A report card is used to send a clear picture of the classroom environment, facilitate parental involvement and establish constant and professional communication channels between the school and home. Parents are updated about their children's daily classroom behaviour, teacher's comments and future plans. A teacher collects the report cards the following day to check parents' feedback and reply to their inquiries to diagnose areas of weaknesses and agree on a remedial plan.

In order to achieve the best level of reliability and validity, the report card system is piloted with Emirati families. A similar, but more detailed report card was used with grade five pupils in the same school in 2005. To date, the report card content and layout have been developed and modified to make it more practical. A colleague who has used the same form with his students has suggested that an area for teachers' notes should be added. In September 2011, the research participants receive report cards twice before conducting the study. The feedback from parents as well as students helps modify the recent report card and make it simpler. For example, a blank area is used to show that the targeted behaviour is not observed that day. It is not logical that a teacher can observe five areas daily for each and every student. Sometimes a teacher is too busy to check homework or there could be no homework to check at all. A lot of confusion and concern on the part of parents can therefore be avoided.

A four-point scale is used to describe students' behaviours (Wright 2003). Instead of using numerical rating, symbols are used instead for easy interpretation. Parents eventually accepted the following symbols that represent the 4 to 1 scale. The report cards, therefore, include four levels for evaluating students' conduct. The behaviour that is ticked ($\sqrt{}$) refers to an excellent performance, whereas (?) means 'acceptable and fair' but may not be complete. Problematic areas are highlighted with an (X) to attract parents' attention to serious learning problems such as a lack of motivation, special needs, carelessness or misbehaving. Blank fields mean that the behaviour is not observed and that no judgement can be made about it.

3.4.2.2   Classroom visits:

An ADEC English Education Advisor is informed of the purpose of the study and she willingly volunteers to support the researcher. She makes two classroom visits to observe both the experimental and control groups in action. She provided the researcher with a standardized ADEC observation form which he modified later to suit his research questions Appendix (K). The advisor observes the students using a semi-structured observation form

with a check-list and a comment field in order to measure students' level of engagement when they learn English as a second language. Involving a professional observer from ADEC who is completely neutral to the experiment is an addition to the validity and reliability of the observation. On the other hand, the researcher (observer and teacher at the same time) is an active participant observer. Combing both techniques gives the collected data new and informative dimensions. The advisor visits class 7/1 in period 2 and class 7/3 in period 5. The two classes learn the same material taught by the same teacher. Each period lasts for forty-five minutes. The teacher uses the same teaching techniques and strategies with both groups. The participants are observed by the end of March, 2012 in order to measure the effect of the research treatment on their ESL learning level and classroom behaviour by the end of the school year.

3.4.3   **Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are often used as data collection tools to assess language teaching programmes (McDonough & McDonough 2004). They are used to collect much quantitative data in a short span of time (Denscombe 2003) which can be statistically analyzed. Denscombe (2003, p.27) says: "Its breadth of coverage" makes survey results more generalized even if the results are obtained from a representative sample. Surveys enable the researcher to elicit original information directly from its source. Besides, surveys spotlight the topic more than the theories which make the research structure more organized and focused. The current study uses two different questionnaires to examine the type of relationship between PI on one side, and students' learning English (ESL) and classroom behaviour on the other side from both students' and their parents' perspectives. Questionnaires also seek to explore the main obstacles to achieve PI in the school work (Appendix L & N). Two questionnaires are designed for both parents and participants in the experimental group (Walters & Hill 2000). They are also piloted with the ADEC English Advisor, an American licensed teacher and the English language coordinator at AL Ruwad Model School.

In order to plan for a professional questionnaire, a decision has to be made about the central purpose of the research, and then the related sub-topics have to be recognized and defined. After that, certain information requirements have to be gathered about these topics (Cohen, Marion & Morrison 2003) See Figure (2).
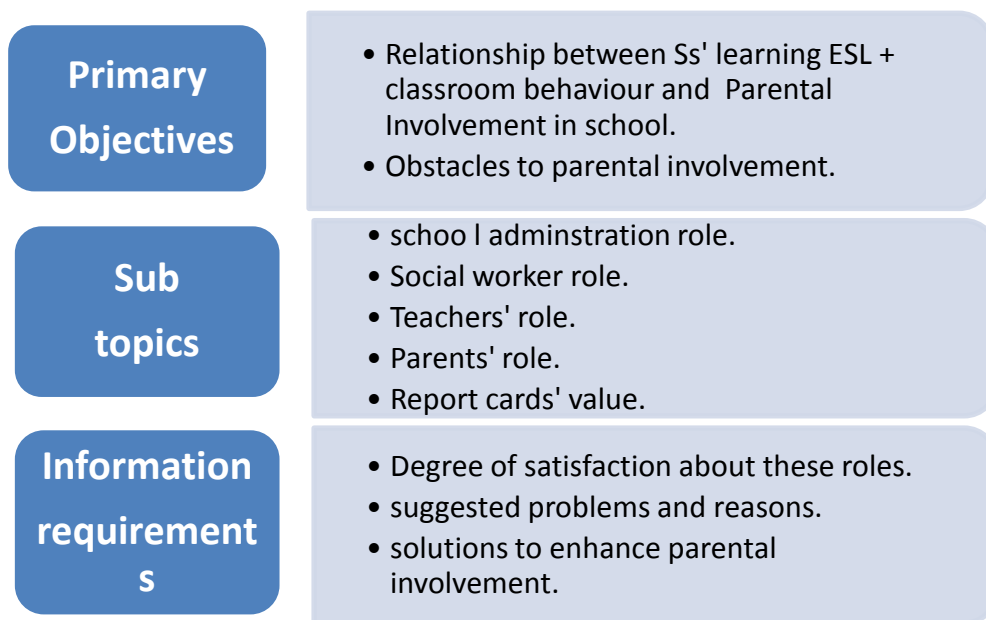
Figure 2: Survey Plan

By integrating closed and open questions into parents' as well as students' surveys, the chances of designing effective and reliable questionnaires increase dramatically (Coles & McGrath 2010). Likert-scale questions in addition to open-ended questions are used in both the parents' as well as the students' surveys. Likert-scale responses provide statistical data while open questions prove or disprove the validity of such numerical data. The study uses a free website to design the two semi-structured questionnaires and analyze their results.[3] A semi-structured questionnaire is preferred to other types because it sets the general framework without forcing participants to give specific answers (Cohene , Manion & Morrison 2000). Likert-Scale questions have the advantage of combining flexible answers

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[3] http://www.kwiksurveys.com/

with measuring frequencies for quantitative analysis. Therefore, both parent and student questionnaires mainly rely on Likert-Scale questions with only one or two open-ended questions. This technique serves as a tool to increase the authenticity, depth of answers and validity of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000).

3.5   Procedure / Ethical Issues:

An informed consent letter is emailed to the Al Ruwad Model School principal to permit the conduction of the research study with a sample of the school's students (Appendix M). Parents are sent a detailed letter explaining the importance of the study and are encouraged to participate anonymously in the survey (Appendix C). Permission from parents to observe the students is not needed because the researcher already has the approval from the school principal to conduct the study. Besides, the researcher actually observes his own students which is one of his duties as a teacher.

3.6   Validity and Reliability

The researcher uses multiple data collection techniques in order to take advantage of their strengths and minimize the bias. Best and Khan (2006, p.269) say: "A researcher can cover the weakness of one method with the strengths of another". This technique is also known as "triangulation" which allows qualitative data to be validated. Therefore, qualitative data obtained through observation and parts of the surveys is validated and explained later through the analysis of the quantitative data of tests and surveys.

Parent and student surveys are both designed and accessed online in order to increase the validity of their results. Despite the high return rate, the researcher does not intend to take advantage of his profession as a teacher to force his participants to stay in school to fill in

the survey as "a captive audience" (Coles & McGrath 2010). Instead, all participants are invited to participate voluntarily and submit their true answers anonymously online. Parents and students who have technical problems in accessing the questionnaire online are offered paper-based questionnaires. Report cards and questionnaires are both written in English and Arabic in accordance with ADEC's policy of bilingual learning. The objective is to ensure the participation of as many participants as possible regardless of their social or cultural backgrounds; all the research participants are included willingly into the study. Besides, consent letters are sent to Al Ruwad Model School Princicpal and all students' parents who participate in the study in order to inform them of the nature and purpose of the study and get their approval (Appendix D).

The two questionnaires are piloted with a sample of the intended participants, colleagues and ADEC Advisor to spot and remove areas of ambiguity and to check that the questionnaires are not too long or boring (Coles & McGrath 2010). Likert-scale and open-ended questions are both used to increase the content validity when both qualitative and quantitative data are compared and analysed. Threatening questions are avoided; initial simple questions are intentionally used to build up the participants' motivation and confidence (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). Before conducting the experiment, the homogeneity between the control and experimental groups has to be ensured in both reading and writing skills using the pre-test scores (3.2 section). The SPSS program is used during data analysis process to find the following statistical treatments: T-Test, Mean Values and Standard Deviation.

Chapter FOUR

4 Findings and Analysis of Outcomes:

The current study aims at examining the effect of PI on students' ESL learning level and classroom behavior. The obstacles that hinder involving parents in the Emirati school society are also explored. Observation, achievement tests and questionnaires are used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. An informative school-to-home communication system is established using report cards that are sent weekly to parents to get them involved.

4.1 Observation

4.1.1Teacher's Observation

Teacher's daily classroom observations and field notes are the main tool of collecting data about participants' engagement in learning English for ten weeks. The teacher uses a check-list to observe five categories of students' classroom behavior: doing homework (HW), participation (Par), discipline (Dis), bringing own supplies and punctuality (See Appendix F).The researcher focuses his analysis on three main fields of observation: homework, participation and discipline. Bringing own supplies and punctuality are already included within the previous three fields. Weekly-report cards are sent to parents to inform them of their children's learning outcomes and get them involved in the learning process (See Appendix E). Only parents who have children in the experimental group receive the weekly follow-up. However, all participants are observed during the same period of time using the same check-list to compare both the experimental and control groups' performance.

Group 1 (Class 7/1):

The first experimental group (grade 7/1) shows a consistent improvement in the three areas over the ten weeks (See Chart 1). An overall similarity between group 1 and group 2 is noticed in almost all areas (Homework, participation and discipline).[4] It is also noticeable that the percentage of doing homework and class participation in groups 1, 2 and 3 declines significantly in weeks 2 and 3 due to weather conditions. The heavy foggy weather causes many students arrive at school late and miss classes. Most students want to have fun and are not seriously desirous of learning which negatively affects their overall learning performance.
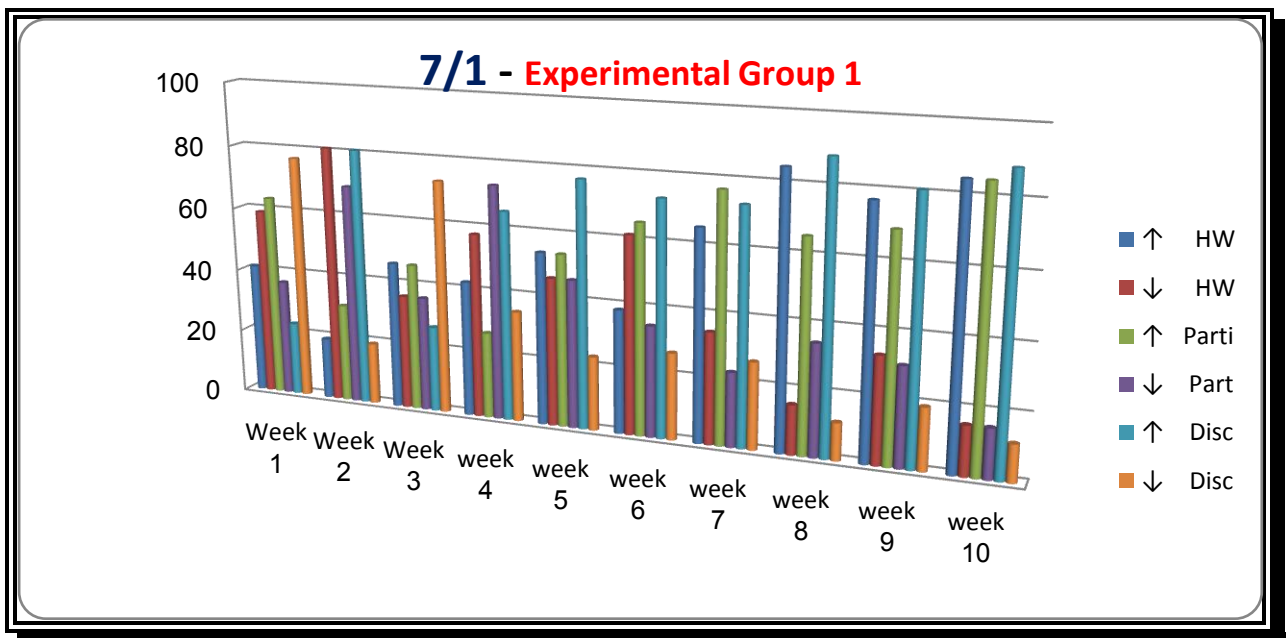
Chart 1: 7/1 Classroom Overall Observation Analysis.

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[4] **N.B.**(The rising arrow'↑' indicates a positive behavior, while the falling one '↓' indicates a negative attitude).

Doing homework, participation and discipline rates reach their peak during the last three weeks of observation. However, homework rates decline in week six in all groups due to the Feast Day Vacation and students' absence few days before.

Conduct 7/1	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
HW ↑	41	19.2	46.1	42.4	53.8	38.5	65.4	84.6	77	84.6
HW ↓	59	80.8	35.9	57.6	46.2	61.5	34.6	15.4	33	15.4
Part ↑	63.5	30.8	46.1	26.9	53.8	65.4	76.9	65.4	69.3	84.6
Part ↓	36.5	69.2	35.9	73.1	46.2	34.6	23.1	34.6	30.7	15.4
Disc ↑	23.1	80.7	26.9	65.4	76.9	73	73	88.4	80.7	88.4
Disc ↓	76.9	19.3	73.1	34.6	23.1	27	27	11.6	19.3	11.6

Table 7: Observation Percentage (1).

The percentage of doing homework doubles from week 1 (41%) to (84.6%) in week 10 (See Table: 7). Participation levels improve consistently and reach a high rate (48.6%) in week 10 which indicate students' learning achievement improvement. Disruptive behavior declines significantly from week 1 (76.9%) to only (11.6%) in week 10.
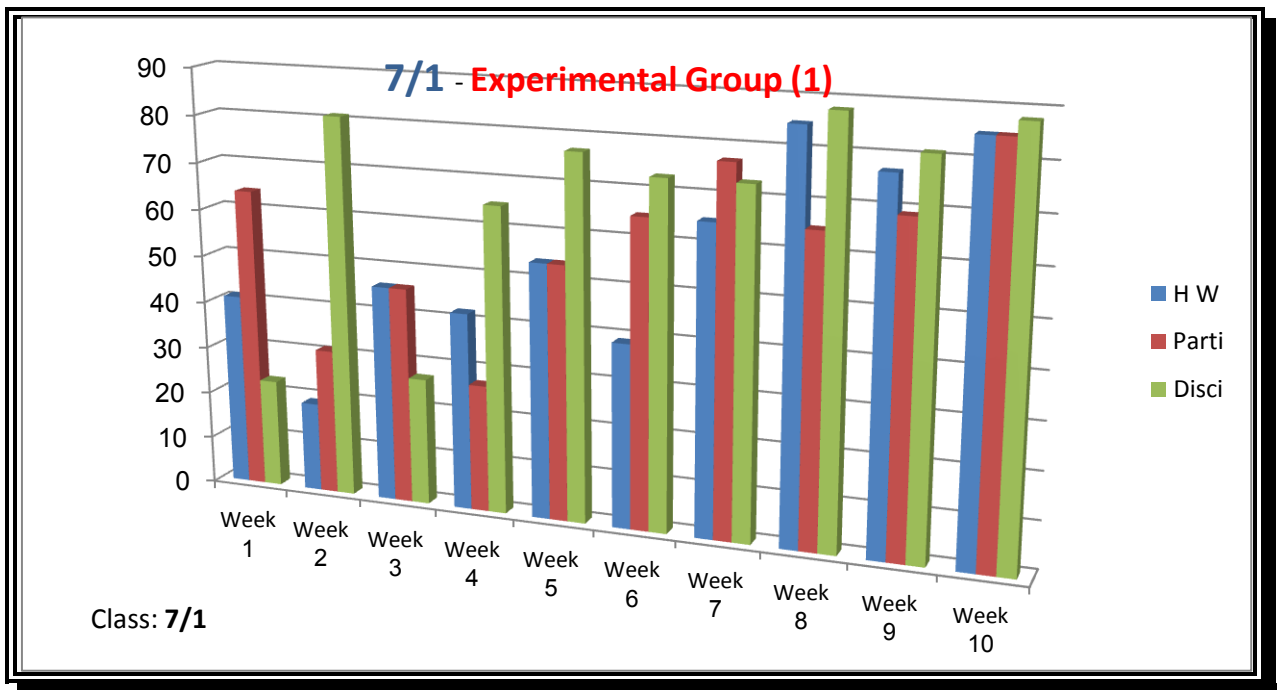
Chart2: 7/1 Classroom Observation Analysis.

It is apparent in Chart 2 that the three fields rise significantly over the ten weeks of observation. A noticeable improvement can be traced in the three target behaviors if compared to the first four weeks of the experiment.

Group 2 (Class7/2):

The second experimental group (Grade 7/2) shows a significant rise of the three positive conducts, except week six, throughout the observation period (See Chart 3). The data shows how classroom misbehavior minimizes in the last two weeks (15.4%) which paves the way to more participation and students' engagement. The last five weeks witness a gradual and consistent rise in students' classroom participation. The overall data proves that students become more motivated to learn English and that their academic achievement level is on the increase.
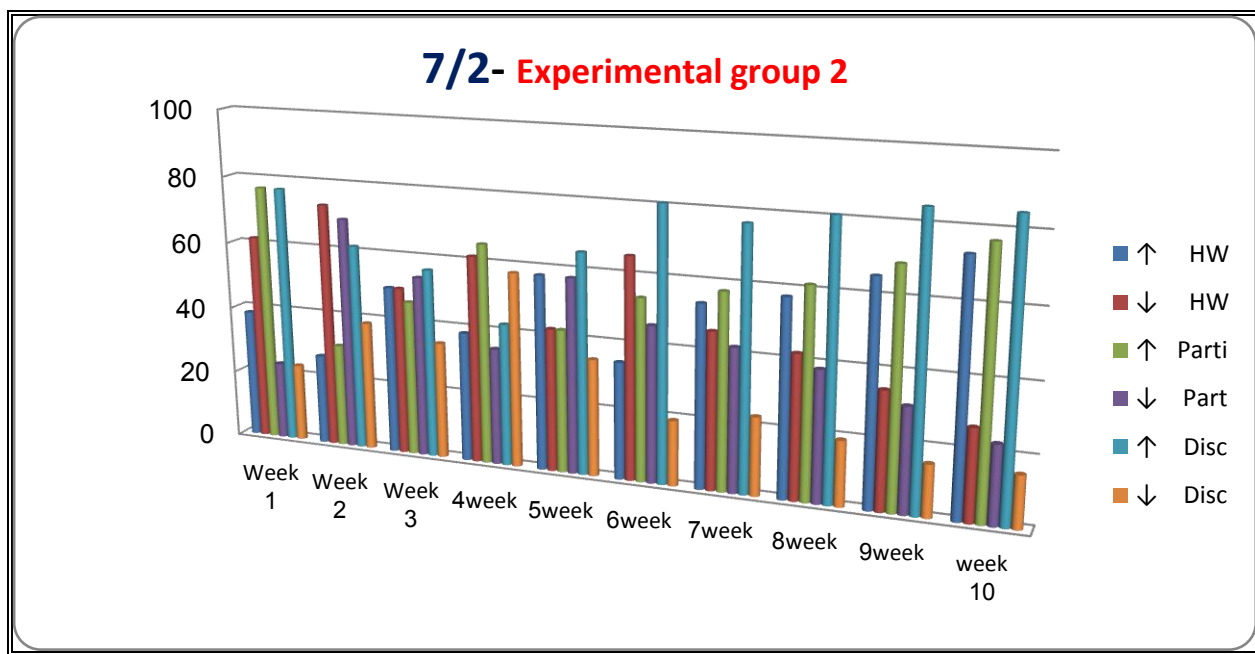
Chart 3: 7/2 Classroom Overall Observation Analysis

Conduct 7/2	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	week 4	week 5	Week 6	Week 7	week 8	Week 9	Week 10
HW ↑	38.4	26.9	50	38.5	57.7	34.6	53.8	57.7	65.4	73.1
HW ↓	61.6	73.1	50	61.5	42.3	65.4	46.2	42.3	34.6	26.9
Part ↑	76.9	30.7	46.2	65.3	42.3	53.8	57.7	61.5	69.2	76.9
Part ↓	23.1	69.3	53.8	34.7	57.7	46.2	42.3	38.5	30.8	23.1
Disc ↑	76.9	61.5	56.3	42.3	65.3	80.7	76.9	80.8	84.6	84.6
Disc ↓	23.1	38.5	34.7	57.7	34.6	19.3	23.1	19.2	15.4	15.4

Table 8: Observation Percentage (2).

Table 8 shows how students' classroom participation rate increases dramatically starting from week six (53.8%) and reaches its peak in week ten (76.9%). However, the participation level is not stable and the fluctuation in performance is evident from week one (76.9%) to week five (42.3%). The percentage of students who do their homework is also fluctuating throughout the whole experiment. However, there is a rapid increase from week one (38.4%) to week ten (73.1%) in the percentage of doing homework.
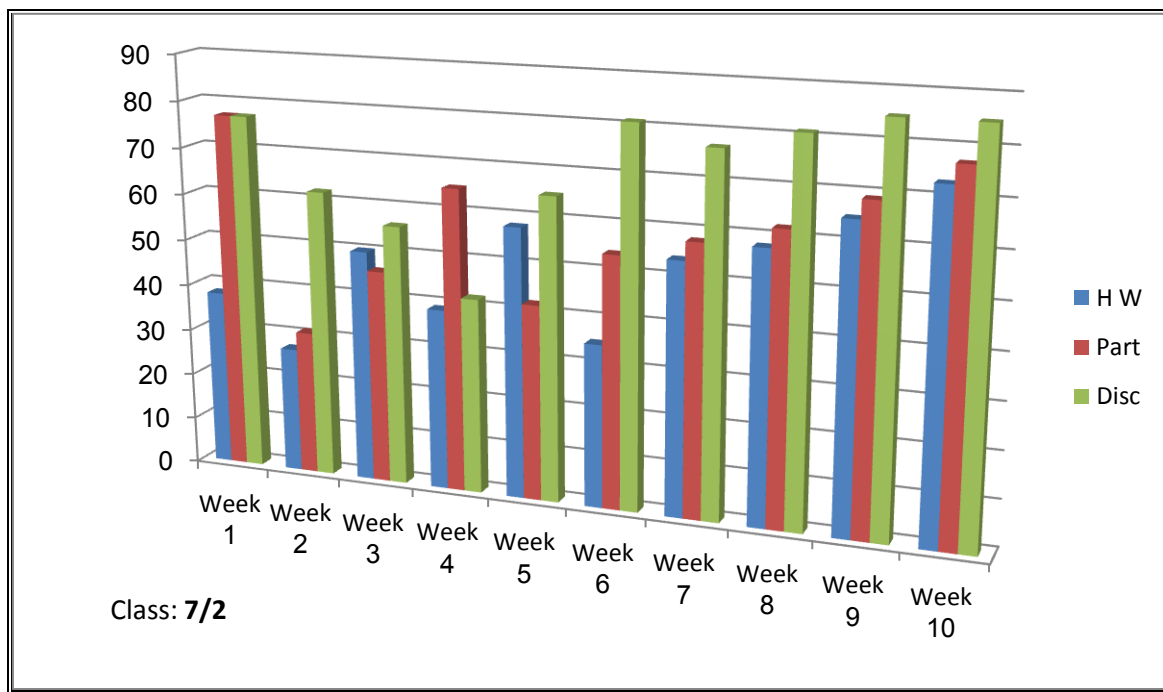
Chart 4: Experimental Group 7/2

Chart 4 shows the overall considerable improvement of class 7/2 participants in the three targeted fields during the last five weeks of the experiment, while the first five weeks show inconsistent and unstable overall performance. Class management seems to be the most successful attribute in this group, as students' discipline rates reach its peak in week 9 and week 10 (84.6%). However, the significant increase of homework and participation rates prove that this group is on the right track and that their ESL achievement level is on the increase.

Group 3 (Class 7/3):
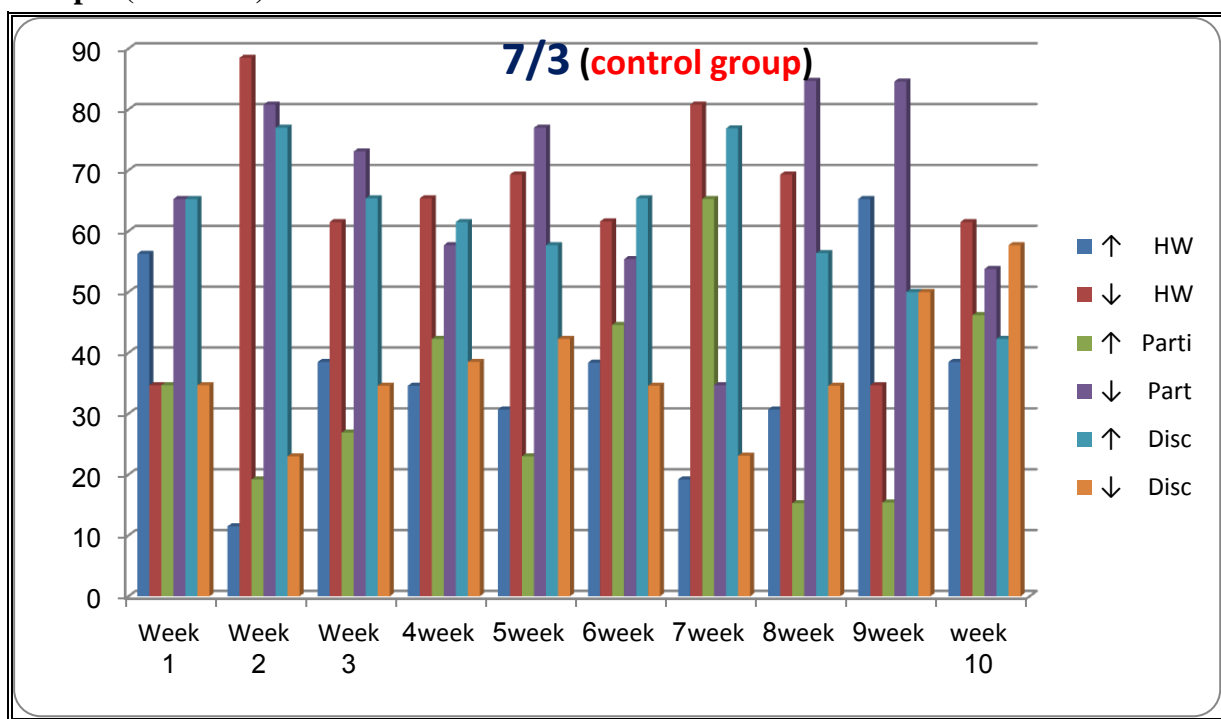
Chart 5: Classroom Overall Observation Analysis

Unlike groups 1 and 2 (experimental group) whose classroom discipline problems decline towards the end of the experiment, group 3 (control group) witnesses a critical challenge in classroom management especially in the last two weeks (%50-%57.7). Chart 5 shows how far discipline problems negatively affect students' learning engagement and participation, especially in weeks 2, 5, 8 and 9.

Conduct 7/3	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	week 4	week 5	week 6	week 7	Week 8	week 9	week 10
HW ↑	56.3	11.5	38.5	34.6	30.7	38.4	19.2	30.7	65.3	38.5
HW ↓	34.7	88.5	61.5	65.4	69.3	61.6	80.8	69.3	34.7	61.5
Parti ↑	34.7	19.2	26.9	42.3	23	44.6	65.3	15.3	15.4	46.2
Parti ↓	65.3	80.8	73.1	57.7	77	55.4	34.7	84.7	84.6	53.8
Disci ↑	65.3	77	65.4	61.5	57.7	65.4	76.9	56.4	50	42.3
Disci ↓	34.7	23	34.6	38.5	42.3	34.6	23.1	34.6	50	57.7

Table 9: Observation Percentage (3).

The information in table (9) shows how seriously the percentage of doing homework declines and reaches critical levels, especially in weeks 2 and 7 (11.5% & 19.2%). The overall picture indicates a dramatic decline in students' learning and behavioral conduct.
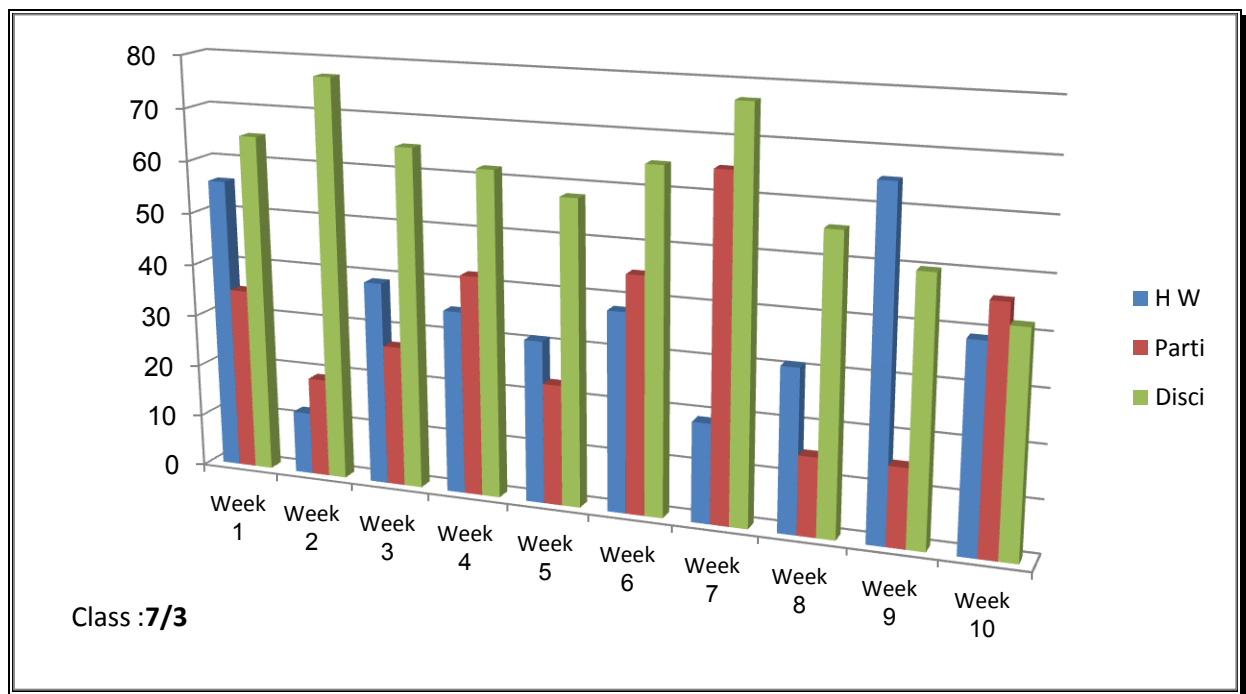
Chart 6: Controlled Group Classroom Observation Analysis

Chart 6 shows the sharp fluctuation of students' performance. Unlike groups 1 and 2, the gap between discipline on one side and homework and participation on the other gets wider. Participation and homework mostly occupy the lower part of the chart showing

increased fluctuation and instability. The big number of discipline problems in weeks 9 and 10 (50% & 57.7%) has a negative effect on students' participation and overall learning engagement.

Experimental & Control Groups:

This section compares between the three groups during the whole observation process. The following graphs illustrate the percentage of students in all groups who manage to do their homework (HW), participate in the class (Par) and behave themselves (Dis).
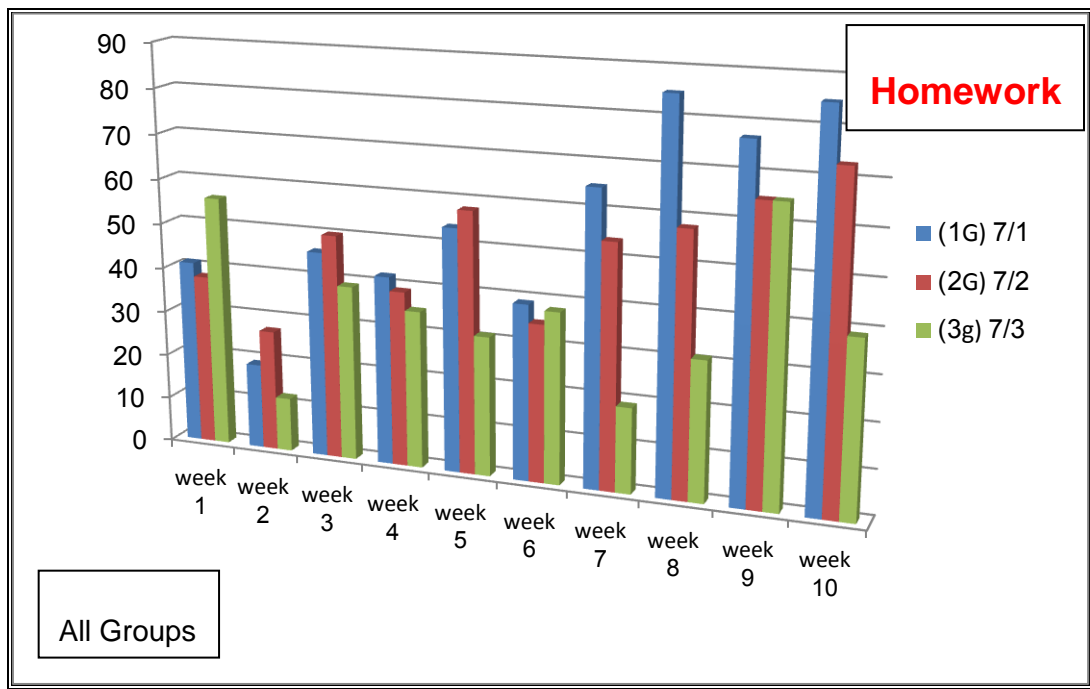
Chart7: Homework levels

The data in chart 7 signifies that group 3 is not consistent with the other two groups regarding students' percentage of homework. Groups 1 and 2 reach higher levels than group 3, especially during the last four weeks.

Chart 8: Participation levels

The experimental groups (G1 & G2) participate actively and consistently, while the participants' performance of the control group (G3) seems confused and their participation levels fluctuate throughout the experiment.
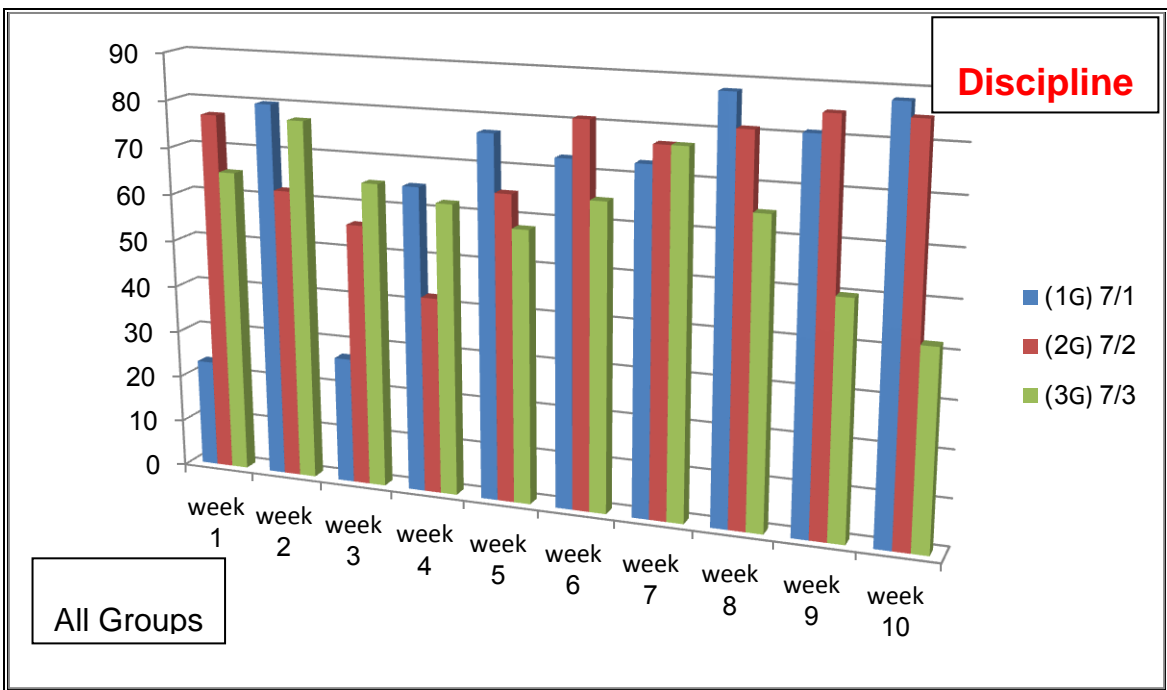
Chart 9: Discipline levels

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Chart 9 shows the harmony among the three groups in discipline levels despite the dramatic drop which groups 1 and 2 suffer in weeks 3 and 4. The experimental group (G3) also suffer a sharp drop during the last four weeks (from week 7 to week 10), which has a negative impact on students' learning achievement.

4.1.2 Classroom visits:

Participants in the experimental and control groups are visited in classroom by an ADEC Education Advisor on the same day. The idea is to observe students while they are engaged in learning English through the eyes of a neutral expert observer. A semi-structured observation check-list formally used by ADEC English Advisors and recently modified by the researcher is used to observe 78 students (Appendix K). Five items are used to observe four categories of students' classroom behavior that relate to the research questions: ESL achievement and classroom behavior using one to nine-point Likert-Scale to measure performance. The two experimental classes (7/1&7/2) are visited separately but the observation feedback is grouped together and the mean value of scores is calculated and compared to the control group feedback (7/3).

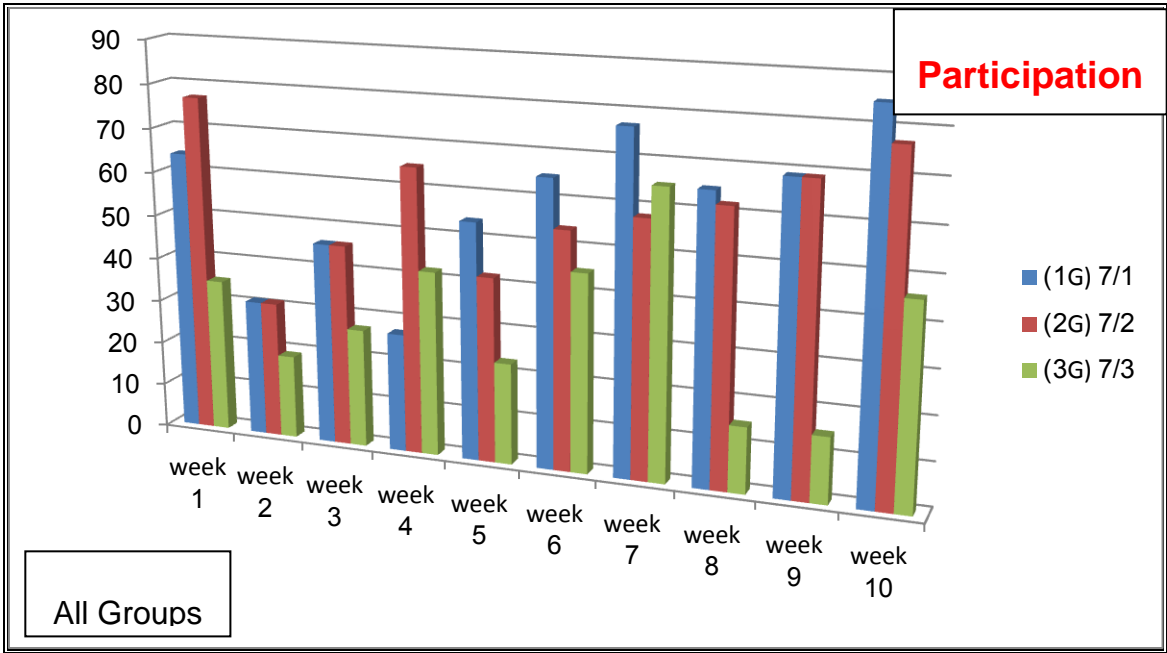| No	Conduct	Control Group (7/3)	Experimental group (7/1&7/2)
1	Motivation	5	8
2	Cooperation	7	8
3	Learning Outcome	5	8
4	Discipline	4	9
	Total Score /36	**21/36**	**33/36**

Table 10: Classroom Visit

The ADEC Education Advisor is impressed by students' performance in 7/1 and 7/2, while 7/3 proves to be a real challenge to their teacher. The ADEC Advisor reports:"Students are fully engaged in learning English and participate actively especially when they see their teacher observing them and ticking off their names on the weekly report form." She also

comments that the spirit of competition prevails among students who shares information and cooperates within their groups. The class is almost run by students themselves and the teacher's role is to guide and observe.

Scores of the control group (7/3) indicate that students suffer serious problems in all areas, especially at the discipline level. "The noise level seems frustrating and annoying despite the teacher's repeated efforts to control it", reports ADEC Advisor. Students' motivation is low and they constantly need the teacher to pressure them. "Surprisingly..", ADEC Advisor says in a later discussion," the same observation form the teacher used with 7/1 &7/2 is not effective with 7/3. Ticking troublemakers' names off does not stop misbehaving nor motivate slow-learners" (Chart 10).
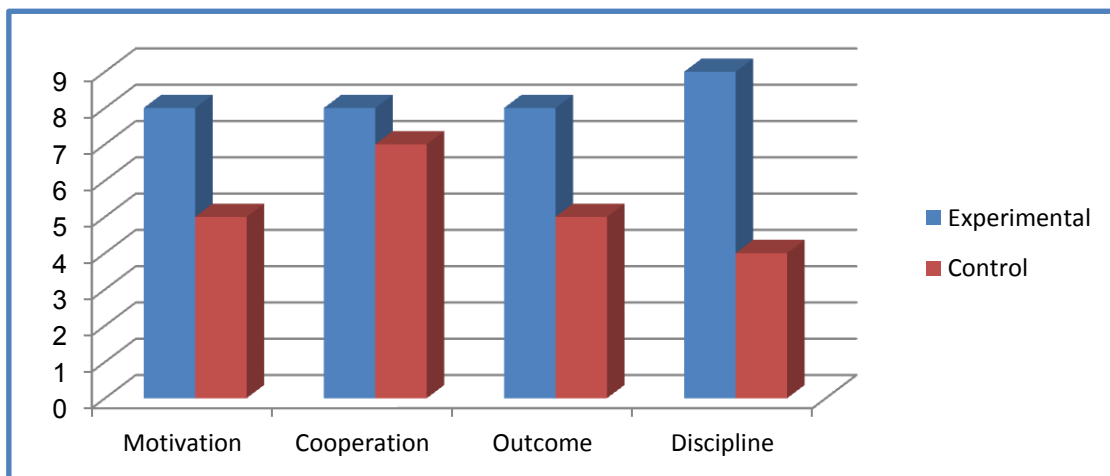
Chart 10: Advisor's Class Visit Analysis

4.2 Surveys

Two different questionnaires are conducted separately online to control group participants and their parents to assess their views on the roles of four elements that directly affect PI and the research questions. Students and their parents are surveyed about the roles of school, teachers, parents and sending report cards in school-to-home communication and their effect on involving parents in school.

4.2.1 Parents' Survey

 A total number of 52 parents of students in the experimental group are given a semi-structured survey to investigate the relationship between PI and students' engagement in learning English as a foreign language (ESL) from parents' perspective. The researcher also intends to explore the possible obstacles that might hinder involving parents in the school work. The survey includes 10 Likert-scale questions and 2 open-ended questions to increase the authenticity and depth of answers (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Table (1) summarizes the overall responses of parents that represent the raw data to be analyzed (Appendix A).

The suggestions parents make in item (4) to enhance PI are summarized as follows:

- Parent-teacher conferences should be held once weekly.

- Extra-curricular activities should be designed for both students and their parents.

- Direct and open communication channels with the school should be established through using mobile messages, emails and regular teacher-parent conferences, in addition to sending regular reports.

- Arabic language should be the language of communication with parents, especially those who cannot speak English.

According to the responses in item (12), parents suggest that their work time, long shift duties, family problems and domestic troubles are the main obstacles to their involvement in schools. They also confirm that their children are loaded with much school work. The scale in table 11 is used to analyze parents' responses by multiplying such raw data in the values shown in footnote[5].The percentage of each item is obtained by multiplying the Mean value by (x20). Survey questions are grouped together under four categories: school, teacher, parents and report cards. Items 1, 2 and 3 represent the school role; items 5 and 6 refer to the teacher's role; item 7 refers to the parent role while items 7, 8,9,10 and 11 represent the report cards role.

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[5] *Strongly Disagree= (x1), Disagree=(x2), Neutral=(x3), Agree=(x4), Strongly Agree=(x5).*

Item	Role of …..	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Percentage
1	School	0	0	24	76	125	225		
2		1	4	33	80	90	208	4.25	85%
3		1	0	15	64	150	230		
5	Teacher	1	2	30	92	85	210	4.07	81.4%
6		1	6	24	72	110	213		
7	Parent	4	12	57	48	55	176	3.38	67.6%
8	Report Cards	0	12	21	40	145	218		
9		2	6	27	64	110	209	4.17	83.4%
10		0	10	21	56	130	217		
11		0	4	21	72	125	222		

Table 11: Parents' Response Analysis.

Parents' overall responses indicate that the school has the main role in initiating and establishing parent involvement activities (85%), while parents are least responsible (67.6%) for that. The report cards that are sent to parents come in the second place (83.4%) just before the role which teachers play (81.4%) in that communication system. Therefore, parents' responses show their belief in the value of report cards as a means of communication between home and school and the way it depicts the classroom environment. The responses also show the positive effect of sending report cards on students' achievement of English and classroom behavior. The low percentage of responses to item seven (67.6%) signifies a serious problem most families suffer from: parents are too busy to communicate with the teacher or even help their children with their education at home.

4.2.2 Student Surveys

An on-line survey is given to 52 participants in the experimental group. The survey includes 10 multiple-choice (Likert-scale) questions and one open-ended question. The survey investigates the relationship between PI and students' academic achievement in English (ESL) and classroom behavior. It also reveals the common obstacles of PI from students' perspective. Students' responses explain the roles of school, teacher, parents and report cards and their effect on PI. Student responses to item (11) show much consistency and agreement with their parents' suggestions in item (4). In order to enhance PI, students suggest the following:-

- Schools should invite parents and students to participate in extra-curricular activities inside and outside school.
- Establish direct and continuous contact with parents through phone calls, messages and sending report cards regularly.
- Parents need training to enable them help their children with studying at home and increase their motivation to learn.

Students' Questionnaire responses (Appendix B) represent the raw data obtained from students' overall responses.

Item	Role of ….	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Percentage
1	School	1	8	30	60	110	209		
2		12	6	9	40	110	177	3.71	74.2%
3		3	26	9	40	115	193		
4	Teacher	1	6	12	44	165	228		
5		1	4	15	44	110	229	4.40	88.0%
6		1	6	6	48	170	231		

Item	Role of	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Percentage
7	-	12			184		196	-	-
8	Parents	1	6	12	68	130	217	4.31	86.2%
9		1	6	9	36	180	232		
10	Report cards	1	4	9	36	185	235	4.52	90.4%

Table 12: Students' Response Analysis.[6]

The scale in table 12 is used to analyze students' responses by multiplying such raw data in the values that appear in footnote 3. The percentage of each item is obtained by multiplying the Mean value by (x20). To facilitate data analysis, survey questions are grouped together under four categories: school, teacher, parents and report cards. Items 1, 2 and 3 represent the school role; items 4, 5 and 6 refer to the teacher's role; item 8 and 9 refer to the parents' role while item 10 represents the report cards role.

Survey data analysis confirms the positive impact of sending report cards (90.4%) on students' learning and motivation. It also stresses the outstanding and effective role of teachers (88.0%) in English language instruction, helping students with ESL achievement and classroom management. Parents come in the third place (86.2%) as a main force that enhances English language achievement and increases students' intrinsic motivation through their involvement in their children's education. The school comes in the last place (74.2%) as a successful partner with parents. Students believe that the school administration fails to contact their parents on a regular basis and can only offer a limited social and psychological support.

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[6] *Strongly Disagree= (x1), Disagree =(x2), Neutral=(x3), Agree=(x4), Strongly Agree=(x5).*

4.2.3 Both Surveys
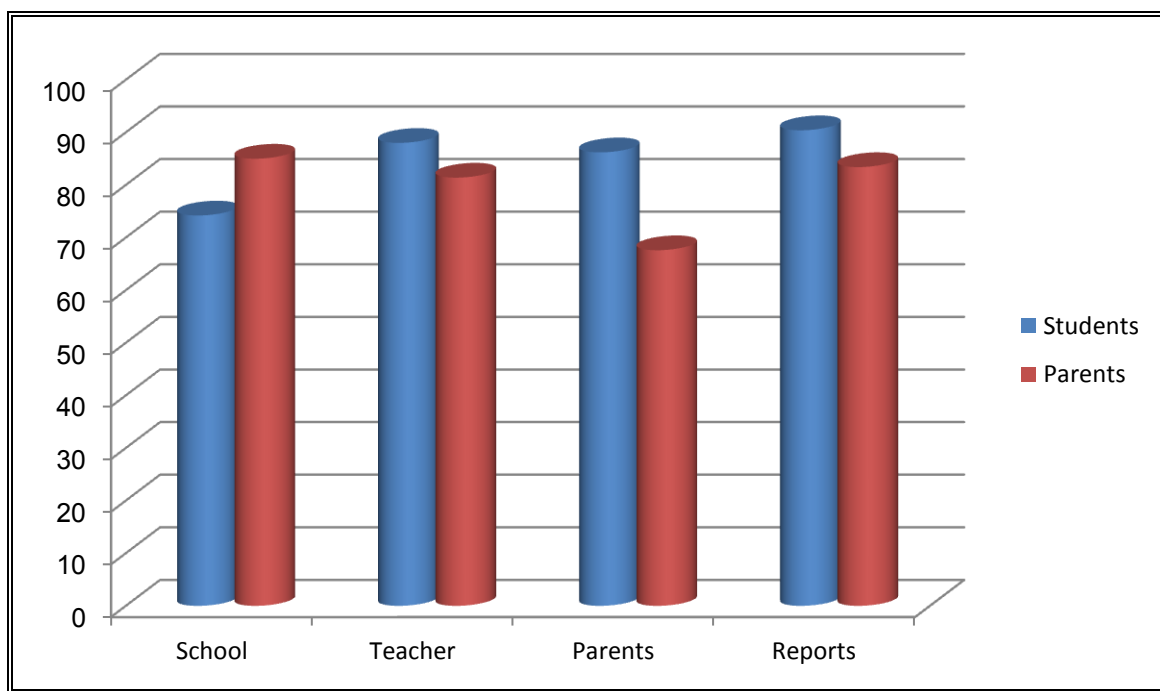
Chart 11: Students' & Parents' Survey Analysis.

Chart 11 shows the percentage of the overall responses of parents and students regarding four elements: school, teacher, parents and report cards. These four elements are believed to affect parental involvement, students' ESL achievement and classroom behaviour. The consistency and agreement are evident between parents' and students' responses concerning the roles of 'teachers' and 'reports' in spite of students' being more positive than *their* parents. While students have a high opinion of their parents' role (86.2%) in their education, parents underestimate their role (67.6%) confessing that they do not give their children the time and the help they need to learn at home. The school is parents' top priority (85%), which indicates that parents want to maximize the school role to compensate for the wide gap between them and their children's education. On the other hand, the school is the students' last option (74.2%) which signifies the administrative staff inability to support PI or create a motivating learning environment for students.

4.3 Achievement Test

A pre-test and post-test are conducted for students in both the control and experimental groups before and after applying the treatment (involving parents in learning English as a second language). The results of the test are necessary to provide quantitative data that can validate and explain the qualitative data obtained from both observation and surveys Appendix (J). The test results will also answer the research questions about the correlation between PI and ESL achievement & classroom behaviour in addition to the main obstacles that hinder PI in the Emirati schools.

4.3.1 Experimental Group Score Analysis

Using SPSS program, the 'One-Sample' T-Test treatment is used to find out the statistically significant differences between the average scores of the Independent Group reading and writing skills in the pre-test and post-test. Table 13 details the results.

Statistical significance[7]	(T)	D F	Experimental Post test			Experimental Pre- test			Group Variable
			Standard Deviation	Mean	n	Standard Deviation	Mean	n	
Significance	9.88	51	2.720	7.1731	52	2.833	3.8846	52	**Reading**
Significance	13.14	51	3.952	8.1538	52	2.500	4.5577	52	**Writing**

Table 13: One-Sample T-Test /Experimental

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[7] The tabular value of T at (0.05) level of significance equals (3.095) when degrees of freedom are (51).

Table 13 indicates the statistically significant difference between the Mean values of the participants' scores in the pre-test and post-test in both reading and writing at (0.05) level of significance and (51) degrees of freedom. The average scores of reading rise significantly from 3.8846 (pre-test) and reach 7.1731 (post-test). Similarly, the average of writing scores rise from 4.5577 to 8.1538. The obvious improvement in reading and writing inside the experimental group may be attributed to the independent variable (involving parents in the school work using weekly report cards).

4.3.2 Control Group Score Analysis

Using SPSS program, the 'One-Sample' T-Test treatment is used to find out the statistically significant differences between the average scores of the Control Group reading and writing skills in the pre-test and post-test. Table 14 details the results.

Statistical significance[8]	(T)	D F	CONTROL Post test			CONTROL Pre- test			Group Variable
			Standard Deviation	Mean	n	Standard Deviation	Mean	n	
Significance	6.29	25	3.265	**4.8846**	26	2.556	**3.1538**	26	**Reading**
Significance	6.26	25	3.921	**4.5385**	26	2.627	**3.2308**	26	**Writing**

Table 14: One-Sample T-Test /Control.

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[8] The tabular value of T at (0.05) level of significance equals (2.121) when degrees of freedom are (25).

Table 14 illustrates the significant difference between the pre-test and post test average scores of reading and writing. There is a slight rise in the average score of both reading and writing in the post test. In reading, the mean value rises from 3.1538 to 4.8846, while the average score of writing changes from 3.2308 to 4.5385 in the post test. Although the control group participants are not exposed to the research treatment (PI), the slight improvement in English language reading and writing can be attributed to the learning experience they have during the 10 weeks of the experiment.

4.3.3 All Participants' Score Analysis

Using SPSS program, the T-Test treatment is used to find out the differences between the average scores of both the experimental and control groups in the post test reading and writing. 'Independent Samples T-Test' is conducted and table 15 details the results.

Statistical significance[9]	T	D f	Control			Experimental			Group Variable
			Standard Deviation	Mean	n	Standard Deviation	Mean	n	
significance	3.273	76	3.265	4.8846	26	2.720	7.1731	52	Reading
significance	3.818	76	3.921	4.5385	26	3.952	8.1538	52	Writing

Table 15: Post Test Score Analysis

Table (15) proves that there are clear statistically significant differences between the average scores of the post test of the two groups in favour of the experimental group in

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[9] N.B. The tabular value of T at 0.05 level of significance equals 2.54 when degrees of freedom are 76.

reading and writing skills. At 0.05 level of significance and (76) degrees of freedom, the calculated value of T in reading is (3.273) which proves to be more than the tabular value of T (2.54).Similarly, the calculated value of T in writing is (3.818) and that is greater than the tabular value of T (2.54).

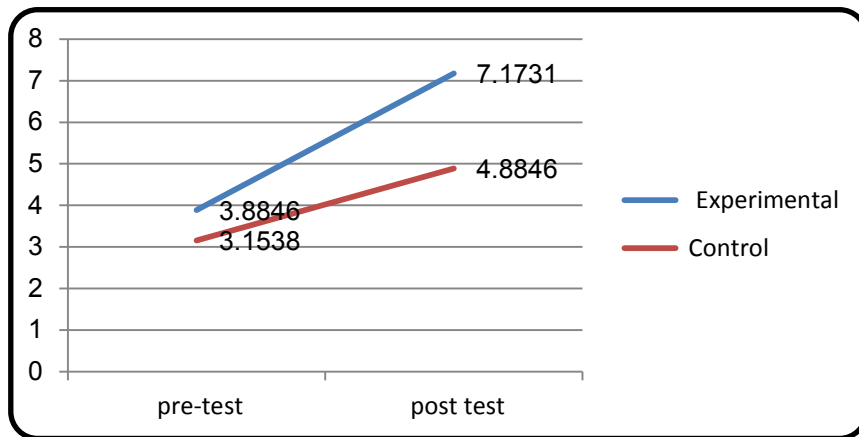**Chart 12:** Pre-test and Post Test (Reading)

Chart 12 illustrates how the Mean values of the Post Test Reading scores rise significantly in favour of the experimental group and reach (7.1731). However, the control group improves slightly (4.8846) due to exposure to the same teaching experience, except for involving their parents in the school work.
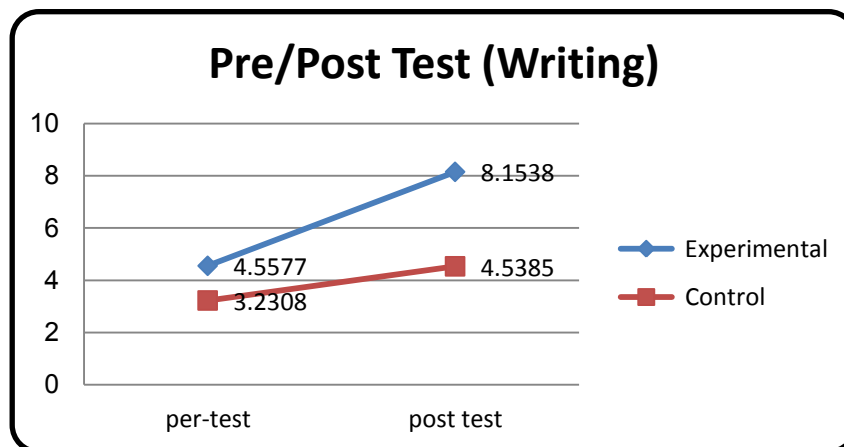
Chart 13: Pre-test and Post Test (Writing)

Chart 13 illustrates how the Mean values of the post test scores rise significantly in favour of the experimental group and reach (8.1538) by the end of the experiment. However, the control group improves slightly from (3.2308) to (4.5385) due to its exposure to the same teaching experience, except for involving their parents in the school work.

In chapter four, the study uses the descriptive as well as the statistical methods to analyse the raw data collected by three different instruments: observation, questionnaires and testing. The following chapter will strive to address the research questions pertaining to the related previous studies discussed in chapter two.

Chapter FIVE

5   Discussion

Introduction:

The data collected earlier will be discussed critically in this section. First, the type of correlation between PI and seventh graders' ESL achievement will be explored. Then, the effect of PI on students' classroom behaviour will be studied from a teacher's as well as the parent's perspectives. Finally, the obstacles to involving parents in schools in Emirati society will be explored with a view to opening doors for researchers to conduct further studies and suggest solutions to bridge the gap between home and school.

5.1 ESL Achievement

Data obtained from the research collection tools confirms the positive link between PI and students' ESL achievement level. Students whose parents communicate regularly with the teacher by receiving weekly report cards manage to achieve higher ESL learning levels than the students in the control group. The percentage of students' classroom participation and doing homework has risen dramatically during the second half of the experiment (Chart 2 & 4) which proves that students' motivation to learn has increased significantly if compared to the control group who witnesses a slight improvement due to its exposure to the same learning experience (Chart 5). In other words, the teacher's observation has shown that participants' motivation to learn English in the experimental group has developed significantly if compared to the control group. That positive correlation between PI and students' motivational outcome and intrinsic motivation is also supported by a recent study (Dumont, et al 2011).

The percentage of doing homework and classroom participation are the observer's evidence that participants are engaged in learning English, hence the improvement of their ESL achievement. The current research finding supports a recent conclusion that PI significantly improves children Arabic language comprehension and fluency (Midraj & Midraj 2011). Such a positive correlation is recently confirmed that students' academic achievements are maximized by PI (LaRocque , Kleiman & Darling 2011). In addition to that, table (13) shows the statistically significant difference between the mean values of the pre-test and post-test English language reading and writing scores in favour of the post test. The improvement of the test scores of the experimental group is attributed to the research treatment: involving parents in school by establishing a communication channel using weekly report cards. The same positive correlation is proved in earlier studies. The mutual effect between PI with homework and students' academic achievement is in line with many empirical studies (Grolnick , Slowiaczek 1994; Cooper 2000 & Holein 2005). The same conclusion is made by Domina (2005) who highlights parents' role in improving students' academic levels and behaviour. Moreover, the report which is written by ADEC Education Advisor about her class visits is also in favour of the experimental group which scores higher than the control group (Table 10). She is impressed by their classroom performance and admires their learning engagement and spirit of cooperation and competition.

Inconsistence with the above viewpoints, some studies argue the effectiveness of PI on a student's education. They doubt whether PI positively affects ESL learning achievement and believe that PI negatively impacts academic achievement (Fan 2001 & Domina 2005) and that a negative feedback discourages a student's motivation and learning engagement (Fan 2010). On the other hand, The Theory of Cognitive Evaluation confirms that informational PI stimulates students' intrinsic motivation, while controlling PI reduces it (Amabile, DeJong & Lepper 1976; Greene, Sternberg & Lepper 1976 and Plant & Ryan 1985).

5.2 Classroom Behaviour:

Observing students for 10 weeks shows a positive correlation between PI and students' classroom behaviour. The control group (7/3) suffers classroom management problems which negatively affect their ESL achievement (Chart 6), whereas the participants in the experimental group (7/1 & 7/2) show a commitment to the classroom code of conduct and they refrain from all forms of disruptive behaviour (Chart 2 & 4). The current study shows that reporting students' conduct to parents using report cards positively affects their classroom behaviour, whereas PI absence leads to behavioural complications in the classroom. Two studies (Shirvani 2007 & Domina 2005) prove the positive correlation between PI and students' classroom behaviour: participants in the experimental group have fewer discipline problems than the control group members which, in turn reflect their self-esteem and well-being.

The control group suffers serious classroom management problems and low motivational attitudes toward learning English, as the ADEC Education Advisor reports after her forty-five minute visit to class 7/3. The teacher uses an observation check-list to monitor students' classroom conduct in both groups (Appendix F). However, the control group members' misbehaviour is not affected by the teacher's observations because parent-teacher contact channels are not established. The teacher keeps his field notes and comments in students' portfolios and does not report them to parents. Only parents who are interested in attending parent-teacher conferences can view this information. Students who feel safe from the parents' follow-up do not show a commitment to the classroom regulations. Therefore, neither the daily observation of the teacher nor the ADEC Advisor's visit stimulated the motivation of the control group or reformed their disruptive behaviour. Inconsistence with this, the ADEC Advisor reports that the observation check-list can be effectively used to manage the class and monitor disruptive behaviour in the experimental group (Chart 9). In other words, getting parents involved in school (by sending them weekly report cards) improves overall classroom behaviour.

The argument above is supported by Arguea and Conroy (2001) who call for the early establishment of home-school communication channels to raise the standard of instruction and enhance students' achievement. Such a professional attitude is more promising than just negotiation of students' misbehaviour. As a precautionary step, communication should always continue to prevent future disruptive behaviour before it exists (LaRocque & Kleiman 2011). This study highlights the positive correlation between PI and students' behaviour. Such a positive association between parents' assistance in homework and students' motivational outcome is also proved recently (Dumont, et al 2011). When students appreciate the way parents get involved in their school homework, students develop a positive sense of self-esteem and become intrinsically motivated to learn. Further, the positive correlation between students' classroom behaviour and their learning achievement is evident. It is believed that students' accepted classroom behaviour paves the way to creating an inviting and motivating environment to learn at school, and vice versa.

Parents' answers to question (11) on the survey (Appendix A) directly measure the effect of using report cards on students' classroom behaviour. A high percentage (84.31%) of parents agrees that a positive correlation exists. Similarly, 84.61% of students' responses to questions (4 & 5 – Appendix B) indicate that teacher's daily observation (and consequently, reporting that to their parents) has a positive effect on students' classroom behaviour. Despite the big number of studies that favour PI, a recent study (Fan & Williams 2010) concludes that parents' excessive participation in extracurricular activities and tending to control learning negatively impact adolescent learners' intrinsic motivation to learn English, which will certainly lead to students' classroom misbehaviour. The overall results of the research observation stress the positive impact of PI on students' ESL achievement and classroom behaviour. This conclusion is confirmed earlier by different studies, such as Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems and Holein's study (2005), which stress the positive effect of PI on students' educational outcome.

5.3 Obstacles to PI and Suggestions

No correlation could be found between observing students and test scores, on the one hand, and exploring the possible obstacles to PI on the other hand. Test score analysis is mainly used to measure students' ESL achievement, while observation is conducted to monitor ESL achievement and students' classroom behaviour. The two questionnaires are mainly designed to explore the possible obstacles which hinder effective PI and all the related variables (Appendix L& N). Data obtained from students' questionnaires (Table 12) shows that students regard school as the least effective (74.2%) force in involving parents in school: 32.7% of students disagree that the social worker provides them with necessary social and psychological support, and 30.77% believe that the school administration fails to contact their parents regularly. They say that their school is partly an obstacle to PI. Students' responses explain that some administrative staff at their school are not helpful and fail to communicate their parents. They express their concern about the social worker's negative role. Students have a high expectation especially from their social worker whose "pivotal role is to bridge the gap between the community and a school" (Hughes 2013). Students' viewpoints shed the light on real problems that strongly exist in schools and require urgent solutions.

As for the parents, their questionnaires indicate that a parent's role in PI is very limited (67.6%) which might hinder the effectiveness of PI (Table 11). Parents confess that they do not do their duty at home as school partners. They justify their view that they are too busy at work and that teachers should undertake their role. Parents' point of view contradicts the Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein 2001) in which PI is formed during the interaction between the family, school and community (Figure1). Unlike their children, parents could not recognize the school administration's dysfunction because most of them visit the school once a month or a trimester after setting the scene and preparing everything to receive the 'guests' (Chart 11). Considering that parents and schools as obstacles to PI is totally inconsistent with various studies. First, the positive impact parents have on children's ESL acquisition is quite evident in different empirical studies (Burstall 1975,

Gardner 1985 & Murphy et al. 2009). A strong correlation is also proved between parents' assistance with homework and the learners' motivational outcome (Dumont et al. 2011). Second, the school role of involving parents in education is of crucial importance. The number of parents who attend teacher-parent conferences increases significantly when schools send personal invitations to parents (Smith & Baron 2010). Schools are also responsible for designing school improvement plans (SIP) to facilitate PI in accordance with the new visions of the 21st century (Lunenburg & Irby 2002). Finally, some studies agree that parents may hinder PI when families' social, economic and educational backgrounds are at risk (Abadiano & Turner 2003, Hawes & Plourde 2005).

The suggestions which students have made in their questionnaire add a new dimension to the current study and generate new ideas for future research and classroom implications. Report cards got the highest percentage among all other variables in both surveys (90.4%). Students firmly believe in the positive and effective impact of sending home report cards on their English language learning achievement and intrinsic motivation. That clearly shows the positive effect of PI on ESL achievement because report cards are used as a strategy to involve parents in school. As students suggest earlier, sending weekly reports to inform parents about academic performance and remedial plans seems to increase learners' intrinsic motivation to learn (Ames et al., 1995; Ames et al., 1993). Moreover, effective PI should be based on two-way communication system between school and home (Smith & Baron 2010). Students also stress the teacher's role (88.0%) in observing, monitoring and facilitating ESL learning and classroom management. A teacher's outstanding role to train parents in the PI techniques and help students with homework cannot be ignored (Dumont & Trautwein 2011). A teacher has a duty to decide the timing and form of parent-teacher communication (LaRocque & Kleiman 2011). Parents occupy the third place (86.2%) as an effective force that enhance ESL achievement and students' intrinsic motivation to learn English. Parents negate the importance of their role (67.6%) blaming the school and teachers for the poor performance of their children.

An analysis of the parents' survey shows the important role of school (85%) in establishing and initiating parental involvement activities (Table 11). Parents' responses to the value of using report cards as a tool of communication come in the second place forming (83.4%). They believe that it truly depicts the classroom environment and positively affects students' ESL achievement and learning engagement at school (Chart 11). Similarly, teachers are regarded as the main generators who run the whole process (81.4%). Surprisingly, parents are the main obstacle that hinders PI according to their own self-evaluation (67.6%). Parents believe that their tough work conditions and long shift duties in addition to family and domestic problems are the main barriers to PI. Therefore, they blame the school for not taking full responsibility for initiating contacts with home and designing extra-curricular activities for students and parents alike.

Referring to the related studies, there are areas of agreement and disagreement with the parents' viewpoints. The leading role of schools and teachers as genuine partners with parents was emphasized in different related empirical studies (Luneburg & Irby 2002; Smith & Baron 2010; Dumont & Trautwein 2011). Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (1995) considers a school one of the main four overlapping powers that forms and influences PI. The theory supports what parents say earlier about the school role in PI. Smith and Baron (2010) stress the need for a two-way communication system which schools can establish with parents. When parents are invited personally by the school administrations, they feel that their support is needed and become keen on attending meetings. These findings are in line with the high expectations parents have from schools in the current research. However, underestimating a parent's role in education and shifting his responsibility onto the school contradict many research findings. Parents' cultural background signals children's academic success (Murphy, Mufti & Kassem 2009) and their efforts to create a relaxing home environment and provide children with reading and writing opportunities help bridge the gap between home and school and enrich children's learning experience (Panover 2010). When students like their parents' assistance and

intervention in education, students are motivated intrinsically and their self-esteem is stimulated (Dumont, et al 2011).

5.4 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of the current research is that the overall research population is limited (78 participants). Due to the nature of the research, qualitative data is required to describe the type of relationship between three variables: PI and ESL achievement and the quality of the classroom behaviour. That kind of descriptive data can only be collected and analyzed through the daily observation of participants for a long period of time (ten weeks). Only the researcher may willingly observe his students for this long period of time as part of his job requirements. No other observers, other than the ADEC Advisor, were invited into the study in order to preserve its validity and reliability. A second limitation is that the research population is homogenous due to the fact that they are selected from the same school. According to the school regulations, each class is randomly formed on a mixed-ability group basis to ensure fairness among students. However, all participants belong to the same gender (male), age group (7th graders) and nationality (Emiratis) which makes the results hard to generalize. Besides, all research findings regarding PI are incomparable because of the diverse socio-economic conditions (Sui-Chue & Willms 1996). Finally, the website used to design and publish the research questionnaires [10] is attacked by hackers and the link is broken after the survey is conducted and the results are obtained. Unfortunately, the survey cannot be accessed online now. However, the original downloaded hard copy is attached (Appendix L & N).

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[10] http://www.kwiksurveys.com/

Chapter SIX

The current study draws attention to PI as a new technique which can dramatically improve Emirati students' ESL achievement and classroom behaviour. It also reveals the existence of serious problems that hinder an effective PI in government schools, which opens the door to further empirical studies on this topic.

6.1 Findings

The statistical analysis of observations, surveys and test scores has proved the positive correlation between PI and students' academic achievement of ESL. Students' classroom behaviour is found to be improving when parents are intentionally involved by sending them daily report cards on a weekly basis. The positive correlation proved in the current study supports ADEC's visions and policies about the need for integrating parents in education and establishing on-going communications channels (Al-Dhaheri 2013). In addition, parents' role in education is essential for the success of the whole educational process; parents are children's first teachers whose early involvement in education is vital for their academic achievement (ADEC, 2005). Finally, parents' and students' surveys stress that the main obstacles to PI are schools and parents themselves when they fail to function properly and do their duties. In fact, schools are responsible for integrating parents, educating them about their vital role and handling students' problems before they arise (Luneburg & Irby 2002).

6.2 Recommendations

Investigating parents' and students' questionnaires show the suggested ideas to enhance PI. Parents suggest that they need training sessions and workshops in the techniques of helping children and understanding ADEC's new curriculum. They also stress the need for constant communication through phone calls, emails and school reports, in addition to extra-curricular activities. Late parent-teacher conferences are recommended by parents who find

it difficult to leave their work to attend meetings at school. Students also stress the need for extra-curricular activities with their parents at school and declare their desire to be awarded marks when they show academic and behavioural improvement and when they facilitate involving their parents in their ESL acquisition. The research participants blame social workers for their passive role in bridging the gap between home and school. Social workers have a major duty to do to help teachers and parents at the same time reach common ground concerning PI.

6.3 Implications

 The most important implication of the current study is that a teacher can use behavioural report cards to achieve two goals: 1. establishing a two-way informative communication channel with parents, 2. helping a teacher with class management and controlling disruptive behaviour. Besides, the positive correlation between PI on the one side and students' ESL achievement and classroom behaviour on the other side adds to the value of this study because of the mutual effect between students' behaviour and their learning achievement. In other words, improving one aspect through PI will necessarily improve the other. Moreover, parental involvement is an ongoing process in which students' learning experience and motivation are maximized (LaRocque & Kleiman 2011). This implies the need for enhancing PI throughout the school academic year as a precautionary step to any possible future disruptive behaviour. Instead of involving parents to solve behavioural problems, it would be great to enrich student's learning experience and create a motivating home environment. Finally, school, parents and community share the responsibility to enhance PI in a joint effort to develop the education system.

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Appendices

A

N.B.
SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

	Items	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1	Do you feel welcome when you visit your son's school?	0	0	8	19	25
2	Does the social worker at school offer you the social and psychological support needed?	1	2	11	20	18
3	Do you find parent-teacher conferences useful?	1	0	5	16	30
4	What do you suggest to enhance parental involvement in school?					
5	Do you feel your son's teacher really cares about educating him?	1	1	10	23	17
6	Do you feel your son's teacher pays attention to your suggestions?	1	3	8	18	22
7	Do you have enough time to communicate with your son's teacher?	4	6	19	12	11
8	Do the report cards sent by a teacher give you enough information about your son?	0	6	7	10	29
9	Do you think report cards give you a clear picture of the classroom environment?	2	3	9	16	22
10	Do you think the report cards have a positive effect on your son's English language learning?	0	5	7	14	26
11	Do you believe that report cards have a positive effect on your son's behavior at the classroom?	0	2	7	18	25
12	What are the possible barriers to parental involvement in school?					

Parent Survey Overall Result (Raw data).

B

	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Does the school help you contact your parents when you need them?	1	4	10	15	22
2	Does the social worker offer you the social and psychological support needed?	5	12	3	10	22
3	Does the school administration regularly contact your parents?	3	13	3	10	23
4	Do you care about the teacher's observation to your learning English and classroom behavior?	1	3	4	11	33
5	Does the teacher's classroom observation affect your behavior positively?	1	2	5	11	33
6	Do the teacher's classroom observations affect your English language achievement?	1	3	2	12	34
7	Do you care whether the teacher's observations are reported to your parents regularly?	YES			NO	
		46			6	
8	Are your parents interested in helping you learn English?	1	3	4	17	26
9	Does PI in your school motivate you to learn English harder?	1	3	3	9	36
10	Do you want the weekly report cards' system to continue next year?	1	2	3	9	37

Student Survey Overall Result (Raw Data)**.**