

The Role of the Kindergarten Teacher in Shaping the Next Generation: The Case of Arab Students in Higher Education Institutions in Israel.

Otra Husein, Girne American University (GAU)

Co-Writer: Dr. Tahereh Arefipour, Girne American University (GAU)

Abstract

Kindergarten education is important in the development of children and could determine future success and failure. However, education in the Arab sector in Israel suffers from many challenges that could have devastating effects on the quality of education and academic achievement among kindergarten children. The study focused on kindergarten management in the Arab sector by assessing how empowering of the Arab kindergarten managers influence the academic success of the next generation in the Arab sector in Israel. This research utilized mixed methods that involved qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The study involved a total of 400 Arab students from in higher education institutions. Those who took part in the quantitative study were 400 while 50 were interviewed. The study showed that kindergarten management in the Arab sector should take into consideration the family-related factors, and sociocultural factors to ensure effective management of kindergartens. It was also noted that kindergartens in the Arab sector face the challenge of irrelevant official educational curriculum, poorly equipped teachers, inadequate infrastructure and government support.

Keywords: kindergarten teacher, Arab students, next generation, mixed method, the Arab sector

Introduction:

Kindergarten education is important in the development of children and has been associated with long-term academic and social benefits (Bruja, 2019; Burgess & Ernst, 2020). Evidence suggests that quality kindergarten education could reduce dropout rates (Sverdlov & Aram, 2016; Burgess & Ernst, 2020). However, education in the Arab sector in Israel suffers from many challenges that could have devastating effects on the quality of education and academic achievement among kindergarten children (Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). Poor quality of education at the kindergarten stage threatens the development of the required critical mass of educated young people required to drive forward the development and secure the future of the Arab sector (Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). To ensure the provision of quality education in kindergartens, there is a need to address concerns such as family-related factors, and sociocultural factors that affect the kindergarten

children learning and develop. There is also a need to address issues associated with kindergarten teacher's training and teaching and the management approaches. The study focused on kindergarten management in the Arab sector in Israel by assessing how empowering of the Arab kindergarten managers influence the academic success of the next generation in the Arab sector in Israel.

The problem of the Study

The problem that this study sought to address relates to the challenges in the management of kindergarten education for academic success of the next generation in the Arab sector in Israel (Mizel, 2016, Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). This study considered addressing kindergarten education in the Arab sector because kindergartens form the foundation upon which the child's love for learning and independence is nurtured (Schaap, 2018). The provision of sound foundational skills and knowledge to the kindergarten children in the Arab sector could play a critical role in ensuring successful transition to formal education and building critical mass of well-educated and resourceful members of the community who would help to address issues of marginalization in the region (Dvir, et al., 2018; Eisenberg & Selivansky, 2019). The focus on this problem is also informed by the evidence indicating education to be an important tool for empowerment (Pachaiyappen, 2014).

An important milestone in the life of a child is the entry into kindergarten and the successful transition to formal education (Schaap, 2018; Fatima & Alwi, 2021). Early childhood is an important period in the development of children, socially, health and cognitively (Fatima & Alwi, 2021). During kindergarten, foundational skills and knowledge required for academic success are imparted (Schaap, 2018). For children to develop into successful adults and positively influence society, they need an appropriate environment to develop the required skills, and competencies (Badriyah, 2020). Individuals concerned with the upbringing of children need to take advantage of the fact that the children's cognitive abilities radically increase in the early years of life (Badriyah, 2020).

Evidence indicates a connection between the quality of kindergarten education and the development of children (Fatima & Alwi, 2021). Well-managed kindergartens with a high quality of education positively impact the child's mental, social and psychological structure (McCartney et al., 2007). Karoly et al. (2008) also argued that effective kindergarten learning prepares children for success in future life. Ensuring quality education is vital for national development and empowering marginalized individuals to realize their full potential and power in various spheres of life (Pachaiyappen, 2014). The failure to address the need for quality education right from the kindergarten stage severely impacts the ability of marginalized individuals, such as in the Arab sector, to make effective decision-making, adapt to emerging changes, and challenge the status quo (Van Prooijen, 2018). The lack of preparation for the youth through education limits their participation in community building and civil duties (Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). The importance of kindergarten education can be deduced from the attention given by public schools. In the United States, 73 % of public schools rely on kindergarten readiness to identify special needs and determine classroom placement (Shields et al., 2016). School administrators use kindergarten readiness screening to determine and develop individualized instructions for students (Shield et al., 2016; Schaap, 2018).

One of the determinants of the quality of kindergarten education and achievement is the management approach and the quality of teachers (Mizel 2016). Evidence suggests that the children's performance in kindergarten is influenced the teacher quality and especially the ability of teachers to form a strong relationship with the parents (Xu & Gulosino 2006). However, in the Arab sector, there are concerns about whether teachers prioritize forming strong parent-teacher partnerships.

In this study, focusing on kindergarten managers is important because education in Israel advocates for self-management. Schools across different sectors have the autonomy in developing and implementing the curriculum (Rina, 2016; Dvir et al., 2018; Eisenberg & Selivansky, 2019; Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020; Hayosh & Binyamin, 2021). Based on the self-management policy, kindergarten managers are expected to develop a curriculum that addresses the needs of society and is responsive to cultural and religious

beliefs (Haj-Yehia & Lev Tov, 2018; Hayosh & Binyamin, 2021). However, in the Arab sector concerns have been raised regarding the possible managerial challenges in the kindergartens due to the lack of qualified teachers and education experts (Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). Without the required expertise, the quality of kindergarten education in the Arab sector could be threatened. Effective kindergarten management is required to address other potential challenges in the Arab sector such as the lack of sufficient resources, and underdevelopment (Mizel, 2011).

It should however be noted that the management of kindergartens and quality of teachers cannot be considered isolated without taking into consideration the parent-related factors. Evidence suggests that parents related factors such as parenting style, warmth, control and discipline, family learning environment and cognitive stimulation could have a significant influence on the achievement and academic growth of kindergarten children (Reynolds et al., 2019; Cabrera et al., 2020; Ogg & Anthony, 2020). It is important to determine the influence of the family learning environment in the Arab sector on the cognitive development of children and language outcomes. Evidence indicates that the family learning environment where parents are willing and able to partner with children in reading books and engaging in non-literary related activities promote literacy development among kindergarten children (Feng et al., 2014; Niklas et al., 2016; Niklas & Schneider, 2017). Focusing on parental cognitive stimulation is also important given its potential to substantially contribute to children's cognitive outcomes and language development, especially for children in rural areas (Xiong et al., 2020).

The Arab sector consists of traditional conservatist societies in which cultural and religious beliefs have a significant influence on education management and learning activities (Abu Asbah & Da'as, 2018; Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). Although the government appointees act as the principals/teachers in kindergartens located in the Arab sector, the Sheikh is viewed as the director and the appointees require the official approval of the Sheikh (Abu Asbah & Da'as, 2018). Such influence from the cultural leaders could have significant impact on the delivery of quality kindergarten education. The other socio-cultural factor that could influence the kindergarten education and the achievement of the children is the socio-economic status. Evidence suggests that the socioeconomic status

influence the literacy development among kindergarten children (Thompson et al., 2019; Fung & Chung, 2020). However, it is not known to what extent the socio-economic status in the Arab sector influence the achievement of the kindergarten children.

Significance of the Study

This study has important implications for research and practice relating to kindergarten education in the Arab sector in Israel. One of the important contributions to practice relates to the understanding of the role that kindergartens in the Arab sector play in supporting the learning and development of kindergarteners. The findings of this study provide insights that will help policymakers and other stakeholders involved in kindergarten education to understand the importance of kindergarten education with respect to the role in promoting cognitive development, social and emotional development and the physical development of kindergarteners. This study also provides an in-depth understanding of the influence that family-related factors have on the learning and development of kindergarteners in the Arab sector. With this information, the kindergarten managers and other relevant stakeholders are expected to promote the family-related factors that boost the development and learning of kindergarteners. The information regarding the family-related factors is also expected to help parents to understand how they can contribute to the improved development and learning of their children. Kindergarten managers could also use the information on family-related factors to develop strategies to help kindergarteners who are at a greater risk of experiencing poor learning and development outcomes. The findings of this study also highlight socio-cultural factors that could influence the learning and development of kindergarteners in the Arab sector.

This study also provides an in-depth understanding of the running of kindergartens in the Arab sector from the managerial perspective and teaching perspective. The study describes the support that kindergartens in the Arab sector get from the Israeli government. The outcome of this study is expected to inform the actions taken by policymakers and other stakeholders involved in lobbying the government for additional support to kindergarten education within the Arab sector. The study also

provides information regarding whether the kindergarten teachers have the required competencies to effectively address the challenges and the educational needs of kindergarteners in the Arab sector. It is expected that this information will be used by individuals involved in the provision of professional development opportunities for the kindergarten teachers and those who are involved in the hiring of kindergarten teachers in the Arab sector. The findings of the study also highlight the relevance of the curriculum used in kindergarten education in the Arab sector and provide insights into the areas for improvement.

2. Materials and Methods

This research was completed using the mixed methods research methodology involving qualitative and quantitative research components. The rationale for adopting the mixed methods research approach was the need to take advantage of the benefits of the two research components while addressing the shortcomings associated with the use of either qualitative or quantitative research approach alone (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). In order to adopt the use of mixed methods approach, the researcher was guided by a pragmatism philosophical thinking, which acknowledges that one can utilize different techniques in interpreting the worldviews since there is no single point of view that can provide a detailed understanding of the existing multiple realities regarding a given research phenomenon. Therefore, using the highlighted philosophical thinking, the researcher studied the research questions and identified pragmatic ways of assessing each (Morgan, 2014).

3. Results:

According to the responses provided by the participants who took part in the interviews, it emerged that the kindergartens in the Arab sector are effective in supporting various aspects of children's learning and development. The participants noted that kindergarteners experience physical development, language development, cognitive development, social and emotional development.

Cognitive development

The majority of the participants (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4, Participant 7, Participant 9, Participant 11, Participant 16, Participant 17, Participant 19, Participant 20, Participant 21, Participant 25, Participant 27, Participant 28, and Participant 30) agreed that kindergartens in the Arab sector promote cognitive development of the children. The participants noted that the main goal of kindergarten is to help the children develop cognitively. Enhanced cognitive development among kindergarteners was associated with the fact that those leaving the kindergarten had the ability to recognize and name colors and basic shapes (Participant 2, Participant 7 and Participant 1). Enhanced cognitive development was also indicated by the ability to recite their names the names of their parents (Participant 2, and Participant 1). Cognitive development was also shown by the basic mathematics knowledge (Participant 1) among the kindergarteners.

Participant 2 stated, "The cognitive development of kindergarteners is what we are focused on. By the time the child is leaving kindergarten they normally have the ability to recognize and name colors and basic shapes. They also have the ability to recite their names the names of their parents and their address. So I think kindergartens support the cognitive development of the children but of course, there are other factors that come into play."

Language development

Qualitative interviews result also showed that kindergartens in the Arab sector promote learning and development among children through language development. Seven (Participant 18, Participant 7, Participant 10, Participant 14, Participant 3,

Participant 16, and Participant 5) participants noted that children by the end of their kindergarten education show well-developed literacy abilities. According to the participants, language development is characterized by the ability of the children to follow simple instructions and engage in a conversation or reason out using common words (Participant 3, Participant 16, and Participant 18). The qualitative findings also indicated that language development is shown by the ability of children to use tenses and time correctly (Participant 18). kindergarteners with good language development also have the ability to tell stories and understand commonly used words (Participant 16).

Participant 18 stated, “We focus on language development. We ensure that children are able to follow simple instructions and they are able to engage in a conversation or reason out using common words. We also strive toward ensuring that children are able to use tenses and time correctly.”

Social and emotional development

The other aspect of learning and development that was highlighted in qualitative study findings was social and emotional development. Seven (Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 8, Participant 13, Participant 15, and Participant 20) participants noted that kindergarteners, by the time they leave kindergarten, show signs of social and emotional development. The participants noted that kindergarten education help children to be able to coexist with others and make friends (Participant 5 and Participant 20). Social and emotional development was also indicated by the ability of children to care for one another and overcome challenges that could impede social interactions such as fear of disappointment (Participant 5). The qualitative interview findings also indicated that kindergartens had children learn to listen to others and take and give criticism (Participant 29). Kindergarten also plays a vital role in identifying children with challenges interacting with others, which therefore facilitates early intervention (Participant 15).

Participant 5 stated, “Our roles is to ensure children are able to coexist with others. we help them understand how to make friends and how to care for each other. We also help children to overcome challenges such as

low self-esteem, fear of disappointment and to be confident about themselves.”

Physical development

Six (Participant 2, Participant 6, Participant 14, Participant 17, Participant 22, and Participant 23) participants observed that kindergartens help children develop physically. According to the views shared by the participants, kindergarten help children to learn how to hold writing material, use the bathroom (Participant 17) and develop their fine motor skills (Participant 14). However, it was noted that the lack of recreational tools and other infrastructure such as a swimming pool limits the ability of the kindergartens to effectively promote physical development (Participant 6).

Participant 6 stated, “I cannot completely say that kindergartens in the Arab sector are effective in helping children to develop physically. We lack recreational tools. I don’t see how we can help children to start moving in coordinated ways if we do not have the infrastructure for swimming pool and simple games. However, we are at least try we provide them with ropes and help them to jump ropes.”

Four items were used to test the effectiveness of the kindergartens in the Arab sector in supporting the children’s learning and development. The items focused on cognitive development, language development, social and emotional development, and physical development.

According to the findings presented in Figure 1, regarding cognitive development, the highest response percentage (51.3 %) was for those who agreed that kindergartens were effective in promoting cognitive development. The highest number of participants either agreed (27.3 %) or strongly agreed (35.3 %) that kindergartens in the Arab sector are effective in promoting language development among children. Figure 1 also indicates that the highest response percentage regarding the effectiveness of kindergartens in promoting social and emotional development was for those who agreed (34.7 %). The findings also indicate that the highest response percentage regarding the effectiveness of kindergartens in promoting physical development was for those who agreed (32.7 %).

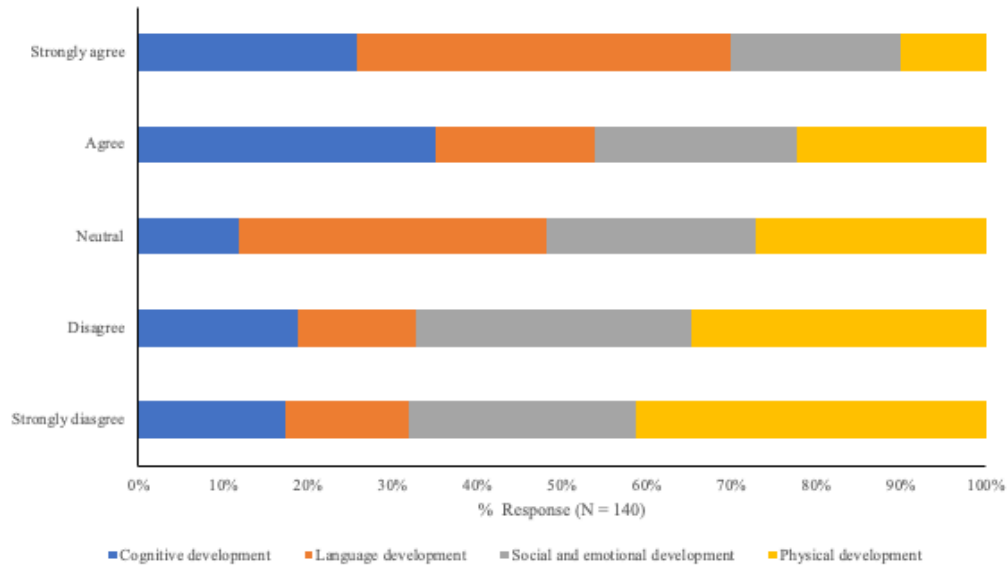


Figure 1: Percentage frequency of responses showing the effectiveness of the kindergartens in the Arab sector in supporting the children's learning and development

The analysis of whether kindergartens in the Arab sector were effective in supporting the children's learning and development involved obtaining cumulative scores from the four items. The maximum expected score was 20 while the lowest was four. To facilitate better interpretation of the findings the cumulated scores were categorized into two groups those with scores less than 10 were grouped as the ineffective group while those with a cumulative score of 10 and above were grouped as the effective group. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was used to test the assumption that the distribution of the respondents in the two groups did not differ significantly. Of the 140 respondents who took part in the study, 98 were in the effective group and 42 were in the ineffective group. The minimum expected frequency was 70. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicated that the number of effective group participants and the ineffective group participants recruited to the study were statistically significantly different ($\chi^2(1) = 17.050, p = .021$), with more than half of the respondents indicating that the kindergartens in the Arab sector are effective in supporting the children's learning and development.

4. Discussion

The outcome of this research offers in-depth insights into the issue of empowerment of kindergarten managers in the Arab sector and the influence on the academic success of the next generation in the Arab sector in Israel. In this section, the obtained findings with the aim of showing how they fit within the existing literature. The findings relating to each of research hypothesis are discussed separately. First, the hypothesis is identified and a summary of the related findings provided. It is then established whether the hypothesis was confirmed or rejected after which the findings are discussed based on related literature.

H10: The kindergartens in the Arab sector are not significantly effective in supporting the children's learning and development.

Based on the findings of this study, this hypothesis was rejected. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicated that the number of effective group participants and the ineffective group participants recruited to the study were statistically significantly different ($\chi^2(1) = 17.050, p = .021$), with more than half of the respondents indicating that the kindergartens in the Arab sector are effective in supporting the children's learning and development. The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis. Therefore, as noted from the findings of this study, the kindergartens in the Arab sector are effective in supporting the children's learning and development by promoting cognitive development, language development, social and emotional development, and physical development.

The findings of this study regarding the contribution of the kindergartens to development of children in the Arab sector corroborates previous studies (Aram & Ziv, 2018; Bruja, 2019; Burgess & Ernst, 2020). The reported positive influence of kindergartens in the Arab sector in promoting cognitive development support the observations made by Aram and Ziv (2018). The reported positive influence of kindergartens in the Arab sector in promoting social and emotional development could be associated with the development of the children's self-perception and social relationships skills reported by Bruja (2019). Therefore, the findings of this study support the existing literature in highlight the importance of kindergarten education in helping children

develop skills behaviors, and dispositions foundational to school readiness and future success (Burgess & Ernst, 2020; Bruja, 2019).

H2o: Family-related factors do not significantly influence children's learning and development in kindergartens in the Arab sector.

The study rejected this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that the influence of family-related factors on children's learning and development in kindergartens in the Arab sector was statistically significant. As noted from the study, that the number of "no-influence" group and the "influence" group participants were statistically significantly different with 75 % of the respondents indicating that family-related factors influenced children's learning and development in kindergartens in the Arab sector. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that the different family-related factors considered in this study influence children's learning and development. The findings of this study showing the significant influence of the family-related factors on kindergarten education support previous literature (Feng et al., 2014; Niklas et al., 2016; Niklas & Schneider, 2017).

The findings of this research showing that parenting styles contribute towards enhanced learning and development among kindergarteners corroborates the work by Yuill and Martin (2016), Reynolds et al. (2019), and Ogg and Anthony (2020). As noted in this study, parenting style characterized by the treating of children lovingly and with care was associated with enhanced learning. Similarly, Ogg and Anthony (2020) reported that children who enjoyed love and care from their parents showed enhanced cognitive development. Yuill and Martin (2016) also demonstrated that caring for their children help them develop emotional responsiveness. Contrary to care and love, this study noted that treating of children harshly is associated with poor performance, which support previous research (Kurniasih & Hastuti, 2017; Reynolds et al., 2019). Previous researchers suggest that cognitive stimulation is associated with children's cognitive, academic, and language abilities (Cabrera et al., 2020; Ogg & Anthony, 2020; Xiong et al., 2020; Lurie et al., 2021). This study also reported that cognitive stimulation has positive impact on their cognitive development. The outcome of this study indicated that cognitive stimulation helps children to develop faster. Although not examined in this

study, previous research indicates that cognitive stimulation significantly influences cognitive development in two-parent families at kindergarten entry and play a significant role in children's reading skills before and during kindergarten (Cabrera et al., 2020; Muñoz et al., 2021).

Existing literature also indicate that other aspect of family related factors that influence the children's learning and development in kindergartens is the family learning environment (Feng et al., 2014; Niklas et al., 2016; Niklas & Schneider, 2017).

According to this study, a family learning environment characterized by availability of reading materials and the readiness of parents to actively be involved in helping children to read and write promotes the academic development of kindergarteners. The reported findings support the observations made by Niklas and Schneider (2017) indicating that home learning environment improves the child's cognitive abilities and influences letter academic achievements. Concerning the importance of warmth, Xing et al. (2019) reported that it promotes the child's self-regulation and promote cognitive development. This research also indicated that parental interactions characterized by warmth where the children enjoy a close and affectionate relationship with their parents promote learning development among kindergarteners. However, according to this study control and discipline of children where harsh disciplining approaches is used is counterproductive could be detrimental to their academic development.

H3₀: Sociocultural factors do not significantly influence children's learning and development in kindergartens in the Arab sector.

The study rejected this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that the influence of sociocultural factors on children's learning and development in kindergartens in the Arab sector was statistically significant. As noted from the study, less than 50 % of the participants indicated that family-related factors influenced children's learning and development in kindergartens in the Arab sector. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that the different sociocultural factors considered in this study influence children's learning and development. The observations made in this study showing the importance of sociocultural factors on children's learning

and development in kindergartens corroborates the conclusions made by previous researchers (Thompson et al., 2019; Fung & Chung, 2020).

One of the sociocultural factors considered in this research was the religious beliefs of the people in the Arab sector, which according to the study influence what is taught in the kindergartens and how the kindergartens are managed. The findings support the observations made by previous researchers indicating that the Arab sector consist of traditional conservatist beliefs that influence education management and the learning activities (Abu et al., 2018; Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). It is should however be noted that influence of religion on kindergarten education is not only specific to the Arab sector. Munastiwi and Puryono (2021) noted that Israel educational system to address linguistic and religious requirements.

The study also reported that social-economic characteristics of the communities in the Arab sector that influence the learning and development of kindergarteners by affecting self-management and the infrastructural development of the kindergartens. The influence of social-economic factors on learning and development of kindergarteners was also reported by previous researchers who indicated that low socioeconomic status negatively affects language and academic achievements (Ogg & Anthony, 2020; Lurie et al., 2021). Fung and Chung (2020) also reported that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are likely to have reduced word reading and dictation performance.

This research also showed that cultural views influence on kindergarten leadership with the participants indicating that kindergarten leadership is determined and influenced by the community leaders. The observation made in this study regarding the influence of culture was expected given the fact that the Ministry of Education has allowed culturally sensitive learning approaches across the sectors (Dvir et al., 2018; Eisenberg& Selivansky, 2019). Arar and Abu-Romi (2016) in acknowledging the influence of culture noted that schools' curricula in Israel are centered on the contextual cultural views across the different sectors. According to Mizel (2016), the cultural aspects in the Arab sector is responsible for the kindergarten attendance rates. The study outcome indicated that kindergarten managers who do not understand the cultural beliefs and practices finding the management process to be stressful. The reported stress could be

associated with the need for the management to take into consideration the cultural views regarding education (Dvir et al., 2018; Eisenberg & Selivansky, 2019)

H4₀: A statistically significant majority of kindergarten teachers and kindergarten managers in the Arab sector do not view the official educational curriculum as relevant.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that the kindergarten teachers and kindergarten managers in the Arab sector viewed that official educational curriculum was not relevant. As noted from the study, more than half of the respondents indicating that the official educational curriculum is not relevant. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that the official educational curriculum is not relevant to the education needs of the kindergartens in the Arab sector.

There are many reasons that could explain the reported lack of relevance of the official educational curriculum. This research reported that the development of the national curriculum did not embrace inclusivity and important stakeholders were left out of the process. Without taking into consideration the views of the local the curriculum could fail to address the cultural requirements making it less relevant (Dvir et al., 2018; Eisenberg & Selivansky, 2019). According to the finding of this study, the lack of clarity makes it challenging for teachers to tailor the national curriculum to the needs of the local community. The irrelevance of the national curriculum could also be associated with the reported limited focus on the local needs including the religious beliefs. It is important to note that one of the key aims of the Ministry of Education is to develop the curriculum that addresses the needs of the society and is responsive to cultural and religious beliefs (Haj-Yehia & Lev Tov, 2018; Hayosh & Binyamin, 2021).

The study identified the potential reasons why there was limited involvement of the individuals in the Arab sector in the curriculum development process. According to this study, kindergarten teachers in the Arab sector had limited expertise to develop an appropriate curriculum that responds to the specific needs of kindergarteners. With the lack of the required expertise, the teachers cannot exercise the existing autonomy provided by the Ministry of Education to develop their own curriculum (Rina, 2016; Dvir

et al., 2018; Eisenberg & Selivansky, 2019; Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020; Hayosh & Binyamin, 2021). Previous researchers have identified the lack qualified teachers and education officials in the Arab sector required to develop culturally sensitive curriculum (Mizel, 2011; Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). The other challenge that was associated with the issue of curriculum development is the interference from other parties. Abu et al. (2018) alluded to the interference by local leaders in their observations that indicated that cultural leaders have significant influence on the delivery of quality kindergarten education. According this study, curriculum development process is interfered with by people without expertise in education who want their views to be incorporated. Based on the outcome of this study, it is important to train teachers in the Arab sector and equip them with the necessary expertise to carry out curriculum development.

H5₀: A statistically significant majority of kindergarten teachers are not effectively equipped to serve learners in the Arab sector.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that majority of kindergarten teachers are not effectively equipped to serve learners in the Arab sector. As noted from the study, more than half of the respondents indicated that the kindergarten teachers are not well equipped to serve learners in the Arab sector. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that significant majority of kindergarten teachers are not effectively equipped to serve learners in the Arab sector. Mizel (2011) also reported that noted that the challenge of well-equipped kindergarten teachers in the Arab sector.

The observations made in this study suggesting kindergarten teachers in the Arab sector are not effectively prepared could be linked to the reported lack of adequate professional teacher training. As reported in this study there are limited kindergarten teachers' training facilities within the Arab sector, and the available teacher training institutions do not equip kindergarten teachers with the required information regarding the needs of kindergarten in the Arab sector. The limited kindergarten teachers' training facilities could be seen as failure on the part of the government, which should be responsible for supporting in-service teacher training (Arar & Abu-Romi, 2016; Haj-Yehia & Lev Tov, 2018). According to this study, it is challenging to find teachers who

have relevant knowledge of the challenges and educational needs in the Arab sector. This study further suggests that the problem of kindergarten teachers being not well equipped to serve learners in the Arab sector could be associated with the kindergarten teacher training colleges giving more attention to the needs of Jewish education at the expense of others.

H6₀: A statistically significant majority of kindergarten teachers do not have adequate teaching material to serve learners in the Arab sector effectively.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that majority of kindergarten teachers do not have adequate teaching material to serve learners in the Arab sector effectively. As noted from the study, more than half of the respondents indicated that there was inadequate teaching material to serve kindergarteners in the Arab sector. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that a significant majority of kindergarten teachers do not have adequate teaching material to serve learners in the Arab sector effectively. The reported lack of adequate teaching material could be attributed to the history of underdevelopment in the Arab sector (Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). Although Mizel (2011) argued that the Government is increasing resource allocation to the Arab educational system, Mizel (2016) observed that Arab schools received significantly lower allocations compared to other sectors.

There are various explanations for the reported lack of adequate teaching material in kindergartens in the Arab sector. According to this study, the available books and instructional materials are old. It is important for the relevant stakeholders to address the issue of outdated teaching materials because it could negatively affect the learning and development of kindergarten children in the Arab sector. The study outcome also suggests that the lack of adequate teaching material in kindergartens in the Arab sector could be associated with the challenge of proper storage and maintenance of instructional material. As noted from the study, there is a risk of losing the materials because of a lack of clear strategies on how to store and maintain them. According to Diala Abu-Oksa (2020), poor schools in the Arab sector face the challenge of maintaining the school resources. The education stakeholders in the Arab sector and the Ministry of Education need to ensure the kindergartens in the Arab sector are supported for them to access basic teaching

material that can serve the existing number of children. As noted by Dvir et al. (2018), the political establishment influence the educational resources, and assignment of new teachers, which reiterates the role of Israel government in addressing the challenge of inadequate resources.

H7₀: A statistically significant majority of kindergartens in the Arab sector do not have the needed infrastructure to effectively support children's learning and development.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that majority of kindergarten teachers in the Arab sector do not have the needed infrastructure to effectively support children's learning and development. As noted from the study, more than half of the respondents indicated that there was inadequate teaching material to serve kindergarteners in the Arab sector. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that a significant majority of kindergartens in the Arab sector do not have the needed infrastructure to effectively support children's learning and development. The lack of sufficient infrastructure in the Arab sector could be associated with limited support from the Government (Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020).

The study provided various aspects associated with the limited access to the infrastructure need to effectively support kindergartener's learning and development in the Arab sector. The outcome of this study indicates that the limited infrastructure is characterized by the few classrooms, insufficient recreational tools, and poorly maintained and they lack the necessary equipment. According to this study, the few classrooms lead to overcrowding, which was noted to limit the teacher's ability to attend to the specific needs of individual kindergarteners. The observations made in this study corroborates the conclusions made by Diala Abu-Oksa (2020), which showed that schools in the Arab sector suffer from overcrowding. The study also indicated that the lack of sufficient recreational tools could negatively affect the motivation and the physical development of the children.

H8₀: A statistically significant majority of kindergartens in the Arab sector does not receive adequate support from the Israel Government.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that number of participants who indicated that the government was supportive was not statistically significantly different from the number of those who indicate the government was non-supportive. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that a statistically significant majority of kindergartens in the Arab sector does not receive adequate support from the Israel Government.

Various researchers have pointed out the important role that the Government plays in resource allocation and staffing of the learning institutions in the Arab sector (Mizel 2016; Suwaed & Ali, 2016; Diala Abu-Oksa, 2020). However, the study seems to support the view that learning institutions in the Arab sector continue to be inadequately supported by the Government (Mizel 2016). This study provides further insights that could explain why the Israel Government support is not sufficient. According to this study, government support that include hiring and paying of teachers, continuous professional development, infrastructural support and support for curriculum formulation and implementation does not match the need. The study outcome further showed that the government is not consistent in its support. The study outcome also raised concerns regarding discrimination against the kindergartens in the Arab sector, which could be associated with unfair representation of the Arab sector in the government educational agencies.

H9₀: Statistically significant number of kindergarten managers in the Arab sector do not have access to the desired empowerment opportunities.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that majority of kindergarten teachers in the Arab sector do not have access to the desired empowerment opportunities. As noted from the study, more than half of the respondents indicated that the kindergarten managers in the Arab sector did not have access the desired empowerment opportunities. Therefore, the outcome of the study suggests that a significant majority of kindergarten managers in the Arab sector do not have access to the desired empowerment opportunities.

According to the outcome of this study, the reported lack of access to empowerment opportunities is characterized by limited access to professional training opportunities. As

noted from the findings of this study and supported by previous literature the lack of training opportunities poses a challenge in accessing qualified managers and teachers (Arar & Abu-Romi, 2016; Haj-Yehia & Lev Tov, 2018). In addition to the limited training facilities, the available ones are not tailored to meet the needs of kindergarten managers who serve in the Arab sector. The study also noted that the kindergarten managers in the Arab sector face the challenge of adequate remuneration. Based on the outcome of this study lack of access to empowerment opportunities is attributed to the lack of a strong professional association to channel the kindergarten managers concerns and engage in strategies to promote quality in our kindergarten. Study highlighted the support from the parents and community as an important aspect of empowerment for kindergarten managers in the Arab sector. The study also noted that the government can help in the empowerment of the kindergarten managers in the Arab sector by offering opportunities for professional development.

H10: A statistically significant number of kindergarten managers do not perceive that they contribute to shaping the next generation.

The study failed to reject this hypothesis. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test findings of this research showed that majority of the kindergarten managers in the Arab sector have the perception that they contribute to shaping the next generation. As noted from the outcome of the study, majority of the kindergarten managers reported that they offer a good foundation that help to kickstart the children's journey to success. The managers' observation aligns with the reported important role that the kindergartens in preparing the children for success in future life (Karoly et al., 2008). Effective kindergarten management has also been linked to empowerment of the marginalized individuals to realize full potential and power in various spheres of life (Pachaiyappen, 2014). However, the contribution of the kindergarten managers to shaping the next generation could be limited. According to this study, the kindergarten managers cannot influence whether learners are able to build on the foundational knowledge and skills.

5. Conclusion

The examination of the issue of empowerment of kindergarten managers in the Arab sector and the influence on the academic success of the next generation in the Arab

sector in Israel provide important insights that could be guide kindergarten managers to effectively shape the future generations. By focusing on the kindergartens in the Arab sector and take into account the views and opinions of the managers and the teachers working in the sector, the study provided findings that are contextually relevant. The insights from this research suggest that the kindergarten managers in the Arab sector contribute to shaping the next generation. The managers help to build a good foundation that could anchor the children in the Arab sector to success. With good management, the kindergarten managers in the Arab sector help to enhance the children's learning and development by promoting cognitive development, language development, social and emotional development, and physical development.

The study however identified various challenges that need to be addressed to enable kindergarten managers to effectively influence the academic success of the next generation. The managers need to take into consideration the factors that influence the kindergarten management and the children's learning and development such as family-related factors. According to this study, parents can promote children's learning and development by treating them lovingly and with care, and assisting them home with learning tasks. It is also evident from this study that kindergarten managers should manage sociocultural factors such as religious beliefs, and prevailing cultural views. It also emerged from this study that kindergarten managers in the Arab sector need to address the issues of curriculum development to ensure it is relevant, inclusive and addresses the educational needs of the local community.

References:

- Abu Asbah, K., & Da'as, R. A. (2018). Perceptions of educational counselling for teachers on personal and professional matters: The case of Arab teachers in Israel. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 18*(3), 308-318.
- Aram, D., & Ziv, M. (2018). Early childhood education in Israel. *International handbook of early childhood education, 101-116*.
- Arar, K., & Abu-Romi, A. (2016). School-based management: Arab education system in Israel. *Journal of Educational Administration, 54*(2), 191-208.
- Badriyah, N. (2020). The Effect of Quality Kindergarten Services. *Early Childhood Research Journal (ECRJ), 3*(1), 18-22.
- Bruja, C. V. (2019). The importance of kindergarten involvement in the process of socialization of pre-schoolers. In *Preocupări contemporane ale științelor socioumane* (pp. 518-524).

- Burgess, E., & Ernst, J. (2020). Beyond Traditional School Readiness: How Nature Preschools Help Prepare Children for Academic Success. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, 7(2), 17-33.
- Cabrera, N. J., Jeong Moon, U., Fagan, J., West, J., & Aldoney, D. (2020). Cognitive stimulation at home and in child care and children's preacademic skills in two-parent families. *Child Development*, 91(5), 1709-1717.
- Cabrera, N. J., Jeong Moon, U., Fagan, J., West, J., & Aldoney, D. (2020). Cognitive stimulation at home and in child care and children's preacademic skills in two-parent families. *Child Development*, 91(5), 1709-1717.
- Diala Abu-Oksa, E. (2020). The Arab Educational System in Israel: Challenges and Changes. *Studia Edukacyjne*, (56), 435-448.
- Dvir, Y., Yemini, M., Bronshtein, Y., & Natur, N. (2018). International education as a novel entity in a public education system: the establishment of a new public international school in Israel. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 48(6), 935-953.
- Eisenberg, E., & Selivansky, E. O. (2019). Adapting Israel's Education System for the Challenges of the 21st Century. *Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute*.
<https://en.idi.org.il/media/13080/adapting-israels-education-system-final.pdf>
- Fatima, S. A., & Alwi, S. K. K. (2021). Quality assurance policies of Kindergarten Education in Karachi and their implementation. *International Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 29-36.
- Feng, L., Gai, Y., & Chen, X. (2014). Family learning environment and early literacy: A comparison of bilingual and monolingual children. *Economics of Education Review*, 39, 110-130.
- Fung, W. K., & Chung, K. K. H. (2020). The role of socioeconomic status in Chinese word reading and writing among Chinese kindergarten children. *Reading and Writing*, 33(2), 377-397.
- Haj-Yehia, K., & Lev Tov, B. (2018). Preservation of Palestinian Arab heritage as a strategy for the enrichment of civil coexistence in Israel. *Social Identities*, 24(6), 727-744.
- Hayosh, T., & Binyamin, I. P. (2021). A Global Pandemic in a Multicultural Society: Comparison between Jewish and Arab Teachers' Metaphors of Teaching. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, (3), 94-110.
- Karoly, L. A., Ghosh-Dastidar, B., Zellman, G. L., Perlman, M., & Fernyhough, L. (2008). Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California. *Rand Corporation*.<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED501718>
- Kurniasih, N., & Hastuti, D. (2017). Effect of Mother's Discipline Parenting Pattern on Discipline Character of Kindergarten Children. *Journal of Child Development Studies*, 2(1), 23-34.
- Lurie, L. A., Hagen, M. P., McLaughlin, K. A., Sheridan, M. A., Meltzoff, A. N., & Rosen, M. L. (2021). Mechanisms linking socioeconomic status and academic achievement in early childhood: Cognitive stimulation and language. *Cognitive Development*, 58, 101045.
- Mizel, O. (2016). The Illusion of Self-Management in Kindergartens in Unrecognized Arab Bedouin Villages in Israel.<https://www.academia.edu/download/71909729/c25a1e780ea2dc588ee8052cbc9526670a41.pdf>
- Morgan, D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a paradigm for mixed methods research. *Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: SAGE Publications, Inc*, 25-44.
- Munastiwi, E., & Puryono, S. (2021). Unprepared management decreases education performance in kindergartens during Covid-19 pandemic. *Heliyon*, 7(5), e07138.

- Niklas, F., & Schneider, W. (2017). Home learning environment and development of child competencies from kindergarten until the end of elementary school. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 49*, 263-274.
- Niklas, F., Cöhrssen, C., & Tayler, C. (2016). Home learning environment and concept formation: A family intervention study with kindergarten children. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 44*(5), 419-427.
- Ogg, J., & Anthony, C. J. (2020). Process and context: Longitudinal effects of the interactions between parental involvement, parental warmth, and SES on academic achievement. *Journal of school psychology, 78*, 96-114.
- Pachaiyappen, P. (2014). Education: A tool for empowerment of women. *Journal of Education and Practice, 5*(30), 2222-1735.
- Reynolds, E., Vernon-Feagans, L., Bratsch-Hines, M., Baker, C. E., & Family Life Project Key Investigators. (2019). Mothers' and fathers' language input from 6 to 36 months in rural two-parent-families: Relations to children's kindergarten achievement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 47*, 385-395.
- Rina, B. S. (2016). Trends in the development of education system in Israel. *Вестник КГППИ, (4)*, 39-43.
- Schaap, L. (2018). Do Kindergarten Readiness Screenings Predict Academic and Social Success?. https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/med_theses/126/
- Shields, K. A., Cook, K. D., & Greller, S. (2016). How Kindergarten Entry Assessments Are Used in Public Schools and How They Correlate with Spring Assessments. REL 2017-182. *Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands*.
- Schoonenboom, J., & Johnson, R. B. (2017). How to construct a mixed methods research design. *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, 69*(2), 107-131.
- Suwaed, M., & Ali, N. (2016). Education, identity, and ideology: the Islamic movement and Moslem religious education in Israel. *Social Identities, 22*(4), 426-449.
- Sverdlov, A., & Aram, D. (2016). What are the goals of kindergarten? Teachers' beliefs and their perceptions of the beliefs of parents and of agents of the education system. *Early Education and Development, 27*(3), 352-371.
- Thompson, K., Richardson, L. P., Newman, H., & George, K. (2019). Interaction effects of socioeconomic status on emerging literacy and literacy skills among pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children: A comparison study. *Journal of Human Services: Training, Research, and Practice, 4*(1), 5.
- Van Prooijen, J. W. (2018). Empowerment as a tool to reduce belief in conspiracy theories. *Conspiracy theories and the people who believe them, 432-442*.
- Xing, X., Liu, X., & Wang, M. (2019). Parental warmth and harsh discipline as mediators of the relations between family SES and Chinese preschooler's inhibitory control. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 48*, 237-245.
- Xiong, X., Deng, L., & Li, H. (2020). Is winning at the start important: Early childhood family cognitive stimulation and child development. *Children and Youth Services Review, 118*, 105431.
- Xu, Z., & Gulosino, C. A. (2006). How does teacher quality matter? The effect of teacher-parent partnership on early childhood performance in public and private schools. *Education Economics, 14*(3), 345-367.
- Yuill, N., & Martin, A. F. (2016). Curling up with a good e-book: Mother-child shared story reading on screen or paper affects embodied interaction and warmth. *Frontiers in psychology, 7*, 1951.