

Developing the Educational Program in Kindergartens in the Syrian Arab Republic in Light of the European Model (An Empirical Study on Female Kindergarten Directors and Teachers in the Damascus Education Directorate)

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Abstract: The study aimed to develop the education program in kindergartens in Syria in light of the European model. The sample of the study consisted of female kindergarten directors and teachers who were selected randomly from kindergartens in the city of Damascus. Also, the study used the descriptive analytical method in the study, in addition to building a tool to measure the development of educational programs in kindergartens in Syria. Where the questionnaire consisted of 19 items distributed on one axis: the first axis includes "the development of kindergarten in the light of the relationship of female teachers with children and their families." The study revealed that the development of education programs in kindergartens in the city of Damascus from the point of view of kindergarten female kindergarten directors and female teachers was generally large. The study also found that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) between female kindergarten directors and female teachers' evaluation of their awareness of the areas of developing educational programs in kindergartens according to the work variable.

Keywords: Kindergarten; Development; Education programs.

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1. Introduction

The development of educational programs in kindergartens aims primarily to improve the quality of daycare for early childhood and to ensure that these programs have a high quality of care and education, to choose the best ways of daycare for children and improve the quality of its work as required.

This study focused on developing educational programs in kindergartens in Syria in light of the European model because the founder of kindergartens is the German scientist Friedrich Fröbel, and his educational ideas and trends are still being studied in all countries of the world in the field of child education. The kindergarten program also works on a healthy environment for the child in his daily life, with the program interacting with the elements of the environment, economy and social responsibility for sustainable development (Beschluss der Jugendminister Konferenz, 2004).

1.1. Problem of the Study

The idea of a project to develop educational programs in kindergartens in the Syrian Arab Republic emerged in light of the results of a training course that covered some private and public kindergartens in the city of Damascus. In most developed countries, we see an important role for kindergartens in the educational process, where kindergartens are officially a part of the educational process of schools. That is, the early education stage is an official stage, but it is not mandatory. Thus, kindergartens, whether affiliated to the school building or independent kindergartens in terms of construction, all provide all conditions for safety, entertainment and education for young children in a high degree. When compared with Germany, the pioneer of kindergartens, the comparison is shameful in terms of the form of construction, supplies and educational and recreational programs for children. Therefore, the study attempts to present a step forward in the field of developing kindergarten programs in Syria in the light of the European model. Despite the noticeable efforts of Syria to expand the establishment of kindergartens, it is not mandatory and suffers from many problems that affect the quality of education and care for the preschool child. Where many non-specialized female teachers are working in kindergarten institutions, and this was confirmed by Al-Hamid, as he pointed out that there is a shortage of specialists in child rearing, which leads

to the employment of non-educators or non-specialists in dealing with children (Al-Hamid, 2007). Also, Al-Khathela (1999) indicated that there is a lack of educational programs for workers in kindergartens, with the lack of educational aids used in kindergarten classrooms. Also, there is still a necessary need to expand the spread of kindergartens, whether in cities or villages, where not all children of kindergarten age are accommodated, which delays the acceptance of children at this critical stage of a child's life, given the great demand from parents to enroll their children in kindergartens (Al-Khathila, 1999). Al-Biz (2008) pointed out the need to update the objectives of kindergartens in the Syrian Arab Republic to be compatible with developments, with some officials unaware of the importance of kindergartens (Al-Biz, 2008). In light of the above, the development of educational programs in kindergartens has become a societal necessity and not a luxury for the kindergarten child to provide integrated educational experiences and improve the quality in education and care.

1.2. Questions of the Study

The study shows the main question: What is the extent of the development of educational programs in kindergarten in Syria in the light of the European model, from which the following questions arise:

What is the extent of the development of kindergarten programs in light of the relationship of female teacher with children and their families?

1.3. Hypotheses of the Study

There is a statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the evaluation of kindergarten female kindergarten directors and female teachers in the areas of kindergarten development according to the work variable.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

- Learning about the development of educational programs in kindergartens in light of the relationship of female teachers with children and their families.
- Identifying the development of educational programs in kindergartens according to the work variable.

1.5. Importance of the Study

The study of developing education programs in kindergartens by benefiting from foreign experiences, especially from developed countries, has become a prerequisite in a rapidly changing era, especially in early childhood education and education. Therefore, the importance of this study is due to:

- In this stage is which the child's personality crystallizes to discover his environment and develop in an integrated manner if he is given the appropriate opportunities for proper growth.
- Responsible authorities can benefit from it by updating the kindergarten programs and their suitability for the kindergarten child.
- This study can benefit officials in the Ministry of Education, the kindergarten departments in universities, the Education Department and community institutions to develop kindergartens in line with contemporary trends and educational developments for raising children in the European Union.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

The study tool was applied to a sample of kindergartens in the city of Damascus in Syria during the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022.

2. Review of the Literature

Previous literature has emphasized the importance of kindergartens in developing positive attitudes toward the child through educational experiences, including diverse educational activities. The researchers confirm that the development of educational programs in kindergartens has become a mainstay for advancing the upbringing, education and care of the kindergarten child, as there are few Arab studies in this field.

De Moll, Frederick; Betz, Tanja (2014) conducted a study to identify the quality of early childhood education and care in the Republic of Germany for immigrant families through the role of the state in expanding education and care programs and expanding the provision of activities and care outside kindergartens. As well as identifying the situation of immigrants and the extent of care for their children. The study was applied to a sample of 2,400 parents whose children were between 3-5 years old. The study found that fathers from the middle and upper classes do more activities with

their children than fathers of the lower classes when it comes to the impact of placing immigrants in informal care (De Moll, Frederick; Betz, Tanja, 2014).

According to Abdulaziz (2011), the Kindergartens in Germany give more attention to the field of activity development and the autonomy of the child and provide for the special needs of activities while in Syria educational activities are supported by the Department of education, and there is a similarity to some extent in the evaluation of the importance of educational quality standards in both countries. The study aimed to identify educational quality standards in daycare facilities by specialists and parents in Germany and Syria. The study used questionnaires for conducting the study and was applied in the city of Aleppo, Syria, and the province of NRW-Westphalia, North Rhine-Westphalia. The study was applied to 273 children's families, 125 female teachers in Syria, 299 families, and 63 female teachers in Germany (Abdulaziz, 2011). Also, Ullrich et al, (2016) conducted a study to enhance the role of preschoolers by improving skills of the speech skills and language skills of language-impaired children, as they are of great importance for later participation in economic and social life. The sample of the study was in Saxony, Germany, and playing was used to treat cases with the use of long-term observation. The study showed that about 75% of children with language impairment who used therapy with them continued their education in schools or completed vocational training. The study also showed a significant improvement due to treatment and the use of educational measures and an improvement in the development of language skills through play, and these groups were allowed to join their peers in the same age group (Ullrich, Dieter; Marten, Magret, 2016).

In the same context, partnership and communication with parents and kindergartens have multiple dimensions and aspects of positive cooperation on current issues such as the integration of children in kindergartens and the daily pressures faced by the family. With recommended to support the process of participation and cooperation between the family and kindergarten in providing many ideas and tools for a successful educational partnership (Wehinger, 2016). For Strohmer, Janina; Mischo, Christoph (2015) university students have higher degrees of language knowledge than graduates of vocational schools, given that their qualification years are

more, and therefore they have more opportunities to acquire language knowledge (Strohmer, Janina; Mischo, Christoph, 2015). Many parents need special support to implement cooperative work in family centers and move their children to primary school. The importance of family education networks and the importance of parents' participation in early childhood support became clear (2015, Albers, Eva Ritter).

The current study agrees with previous studies on the importance of developing education programs in kindergartens by paying attention to the opinions of female kindergarten directors and teachers. While the current study differs from those studies in its application to the kindergarten stage (in Syria) by benefiting from the experiences of developed countries such as the European model

developing educational programs in kindergartens to serve early childhood. In addition to the nature of the sample and the time difference between them and how to activate the role of the kindergarten in providing educational activities that develop the child's experiences from various aspects.

3. Methods and Procedure

3.1. The Sample of Study

The study population consisted of female kindergarten directors and teachers. The sample amounted to (60) female kindergarten directors and teachers.

Table (1): The study population and sample

The total number of government kindergartens	A random sample drawn from the total number of kindergartens	The proportion of the sample
50 kindergartens	10 kindergartens	20%

From table (1) the proportion of the sample, compared to the original population, was high,

reaching 20.00%, which indicates the selection of a representative sample of the original community.

Table (2): The description of the study sample

Variables	Description	Number	Percentage
Nature of work	Kindergarten manager	10	16%
	Kindergarten teacher	50	84%
Total		60	100%

It is evident from the above table that the number of kindergarten female kindergarten directors constitutes approximately 16% of the total number of the study sample.

3.2. The Approach of the Study

The study followed the descriptive analytical approach to identify the kindergarten development systems in Europe, intending to benefit from their experience in developing kindergartens in the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with the identity and culture of the Syrian society.

3.3. Tool of the Study

The study used a questionnaire as a tool to obtain the necessary data from kindergarten female kindergarten directors and teachers.

3.4. The reliability of the questionnaire

Table (3) shows the implications of the reliability of the questionnaire of kindergarten female kindergarten directors and teachers regarding the development of kindergartens in Syria in light of the European model using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which depends on internal consistency, and gives an idea of the consistency of the questions with each other, and with all questions in general.

Table (3): The implications of the reliability of the questionnaire of kindergarten female kindergarten directors and teachers

Questionnaire parts	Number of paragraphs for each axis	Number of people in the sample	Reliability coefficient
The development of kindergartens in Syria in light of the European model in the light of the following themes: The relationship of female teacher with children and their families.	19	60	.912

From table (3), the values of Alpha Cronbach indicate that there is a high degree of internal consistency, and this is an appropriate indication that the measurement tool has high stability indications.

3.5. The validity of the questionnaire

- content validity: To check the content of the questionnaire, we find the basic dimensions related to the subject of the study in particular do exist.
- Sincerity of the arbitrators: The questionnaire items were presented to a group of specialized arbitrators from the professors of the faculties of education and child education and those interested in the role of kindergartens in the development of the child's personality and in the areas of development.

4. Results discussion

4.1. First: Regarding the results related to the answer to the first question represented in: What is the extent of the development of kindergartens in the light of the teacher's relationship with

children and their families from the point of view of female kindergarten directors and teachers?

After reviewing the educational literature and in order to interpret the results, the following scientifically approved arithmetic averages for the responses to the paragraphs were adopted as follows:

- 80% and above Kindergarten development scored (very high)
- From 70% to less than 80% Kindergarten development scored (high)
- From 60% to less than 70% Kindergarten development scored (average)
- From 50% to less than 60% Kindergarten development scored (low)
- Less than 50% KG development scored (very low)

The following are the results of the development of kindergartens in the light of the relationship of female teachers with children and their families from the point of view of female kindergarten directors and teachers.

Table (4): The arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and the degree of development in kindergartens for the responses of the female kindergarten directors and teachers towards their evaluation of the development of kindergartens in the light of the relationship of female kindergarten directors and teachers with children and their families

The development of kindergarten in the light of the relationship of female teacher with children and their families	Responses				
	Average	Standard Deviation	Rank	Response Rate	Degree Development
The female teacher work to meet the individual needs of the children.	3.09	.874	19	63.2	Average
The female teacher treats all children equally, without prejudice to males and females.	3.54	.954	10	70.00	High
The female teacher uses the active learning method with children based on guidance	3.70	.968	5	75.00	High
Female teachers take into account the feelings and feelings of all children	3.80	.929	3	76.4	High
female teacher work to support and encourage the children and enhance their self-confidence	4.05	.914	1	80.6	Very High
The female teacher interacts with the children to stimulate their critical thinking skills.	3.50	1.08	14	72.00	High
The female teacher creates for the children a pleasant atmosphere of happiness and joy	3.95	.942	2	78.2	High
The female teacher communicates with the children's families about aspects of care	3.60	1.07	8	73.2	High
There is an active exchange of information between female teacher and parents.	3.53	.904	11	71.00	High
Kindergarten adopts educational methods with the family to control children's behavior	3.66	.935	6	73.8	High
The kindergarten adopts a counseling program for children and families	3.55	.904	9	71.00	High
Kindergarten parents participate in making decisions about their child's education	3.52	1.06	12	70.8	High
There is a daily or weekly program between female teacher, female kindergarten manager and children's families	3.77	.930	4	75.4	High
There is daily follow-up between the female teacher and the families of the children through groups via the WhatsApp program	3.22	.848	17	7.00	Average
There are extracurricular activities in kindergarten that help children break out of the daily routine	3.44	.901	1	70.00	High
There are correspondences and entertainment competitions between kindergartens within the governorate	3.49	.909	15	70.1	High
There are monthly meetings in the Directorate of Education in order to follow up on the local developments of kindergartens	3.51	.911	13	70.2	High
The response of parents to the invitation of female kindergarten manager and female teacher regarding meetings is weak	3.5	.933	7	73.7	High
Parents respond to school feedback regarding children	3.20	.858	18	7.00	Average
The general average paragraphs of the field	3.5	.929	-	72.00	high

From the previous table, it is seen that the weighted arithmetic averages of the respondent's responses to the items in this field ranged between (4.05 - 3.09), which is an arithmetic average of a

large to a medium degree. Also, it indicates the great role played by kindergarten institutions in consolidating the appropriate relationship between female kindergarten directors, female teachers, children and mothers of children, as it contributes

to making decisions that take everyone into account to a high degree. As it became clear that the remarkable role of kindergartens is in activating development, which helps to strengthen the relationship between female teachers and children and their families. From the point of view of kindergarten female teachers and this shows that these institutions adopt appropriate strategies that encourage and ensure the upgrading of the educational system in kindergartens by activating family participation and respecting the wishes of children and their families.

It is clear from the phrase “the female teacher work to support and encourage children and enhance their self-confidence” that took the first place with a very large response, followed in the ranking by the phrase that states “the female teacher creates for children a pleasant atmosphere of happiness and fun,” with a great response. Then the rest of the paragraphs came to get a high and low arithmetic average, which shows that the evaluation of the study sample was positive for the paragraphs of this axis. The results of this study agree with the study (Azim, 2013) of attention to childhood care through play centers and activating family participation and state support for children's families at this critical stage by providing institutions that take into account the child's development at this stage.

Europe is one of the developed countries that has taken care of providing distinguished daycare for children in kindergartens, based on the use of educational play programs, including educational and recreational activities, as providing a place for the child in nurseries and kindergartens is one of the basic conditions for women's participation in the labor market. There are many forms of daycare,

whether governmental or private institutions, but they are subject to the supervision of the state, where children are accepted in daycare institutions from the age of two and a half years, and they open their doors from eight-thirty in the morning until three thirty in the afternoon, with the provision of hot meals for children in the kindergarten (2004, Muller). Also in Europe, education systems help immigrant families to Europe, where the kindergarten provides advice to immigrant families and helps them raise their children. These tips contribute to how to educate, raise and care for children, as well as how to integrate them into European society. The kindergarten teacher has a great role in standing by the families coming to the European community, as well as the European community feeling the problems that face the immigrant families in how they integrate into the community. That is why the teacher gives full confidence to the parents so that there is an open door between them. This study agrees with the study (Abdulaziz, 2011) on parents' satisfaction in the European Union with educational work, dealing with children, and information and advice provided to families in kindergarten.

4.2. The results of the study hypotheses and their discussion

To answer the hypothesis put forward by the study: There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the assessment of female kindergarten directors and (female teachers) regarding the extent of their awareness of the areas of kindergarten development according to the variable of work, shown in the following table:

Table (5): shows the results of a one-way variance analysis of the differences in the evaluation of kindergarten female kindergarten manager and female teacher towards their awareness of the areas of kindergarten development according to the work variable

Contrast sources	Sum squares	Degree Freedom	Average sum squares	Values (q)	Statistical significance value
Between groups	.378	2	.125	.844	Not statistically significant $\alpha 0.05=$
Within groups	9.488	66	.144		
Total	9.8	68			

Table, it is shown that there is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the arithmetic averages of the responses of

female kindergarten directors and female teachers in kindergartens towards the extent of awareness of aspects of kindergarten development according to the variable of work. This may be explained by the

fact that the female kindergarten directors and female teachers know the aspects of development in kindergartens, each in his job, as the value of (q) is (0844), which is not statistically significant. The sample responses explain that everyone encourages areas of development in kindergarten institutions, and this, in turn, is reflected in positive work in kindergarten. This study is consistent with the findings of the study by Abdulaziz (2011) on the respondents' satisfaction with the aspects of development related to health care, security, safety, direction and supervision.

General clarifications:

- Kindergarten institutions in both the European Union and Syria do not have specific school curricula, as in the rest of the educational stages. The educational and recreational activities and programs provided are a variety of activities aimed at comprehensive development in all aspects of the child's personality growth.
- Europe differs from the Syrian Arab Republic in some admission requirements and procedures for the age of admission and the percentage of admission for children in kindergarten.
- Admission systems to kindergartens differ in Europe and the Syrian Arab Republic. In Europe, all children are accepted starting from the age of three, and the family has a right by law while in Syria, children are arranged for admission according to the oldest.
- Parents' participation in Europe is positive, and this is in the interest of the child to learn about his performance and behavior. However, in Syria, more participation from parents and more awareness of the importance of the kindergarten stage is required.
- The study showed positive trends for the two study samples towards evaluating cooperation between kindergartens and primary schools by following up on the behavior and performance of the child. In light of the results, the study lays out a future vision for the development of kindergartens in the Syrian Arab Republic in the light of the experience of Europe:

Kindergartens in the Syria should take care of the following:

- Deepening effective cooperation between kindergartens and children's families to follow

up on their children and identify their problems in early childhood.

- Kindergarten should be compulsory for all children, starting from the age of 3 until the child's enrollment in primary school because of its impact on the child's personality and skills development.
- Qualifying female teachers who graduate from specializations other than kindergarten in kindergarten departments in Syrian government universities to do an educational diploma in kindergarten for appropriate academic and professional qualifications.
- Interest in involving parents in decision-making in the kindergarten through periodic meetings with mothers, informing them of the goals, programs and needs of the kindergarten child, consulting them in solving children's problems, and accepting their opinions and suggestions in a manner that does not conflict with the general framework of work in the kindergarten. Also providing them with awareness programs about raising the child at this stage, and allocating a place for that in the kindergarten. Parents can also be involved through periodic or quarterly forms that are sent to the father to fill out with what he sees as proposals and to provide the opportunity for parents to visit the kindergarten after the end of the official working hours and for the female employees to go out to learn about the environment in which their children stay for a short period of their day and for their suggestions to be based on direct knowledge of the reality on the ground.
- Allowing children who are not registered in the kindergarten and who will join it for the next year to visit the kindergarten with their mothers and introduce them to the facilities and activities of the kindergarten.
- Opening channels of communication between the kindergarten teacher and the mother at home, and that it is mandatory for both of them.
- Encouraging initiative in the child through appropriate role models.
- Investing in early childhood through educational methods used with children in the morning and during eating and nightly tips before bed.

Recommendations:

To achieve the appropriate development in kindergartens in the Syrian Arab Republic, some recommendations can be made, including:

- Using appropriate educational strategies in early childhood education that depend on observation, use of the senses, and manual training on the use of educational activities, with the development of the child's self-activity skill.
- Raising the efficiency of female teachers by giving training courses (continuous professional development), on how to search for appropriate methods and methods for development in kindergarten.
- Educate children about the importance of the natural environment to attract interest and encourage them to research, experiment and explore.
- Using various educational programs that depend on the freedom of children to self-learn, through the use of the experiences of developed countries in how to develop kindergarten programs and activities and try to benefit from them in a way that suits the conditions and capabilities of the Syrian society.

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