



Investigating the Perceptions of Social Studies Teachers' Practices in Qatari Preschools

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Abstract

This paper investigates the perceptions of social studies teachers' practices in Qatari preschools and their relationship to child development in the four domains of development: social-emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. In addition, it provides information about the extent to which the perceptions of public preschool social studies teachers' practices compare to those of their counterparts from international schools in Qatar. A questionnaire consisting of thirty-seven items spread over the four domains of child development was administered to participants who indicated their responses on a 5-degree scale ranging from "always" to "never." The first domain (social-emotional development) consisted of twelve items; the second domain (physical development) comprised nine items; the third domain (spiritual development) consisted of five items; and the fourth domain (intellectual development) included eleven items. Findings revealed that teachers' practices in the four domains of the study promote child development. The results also reveal significant differences between the practices of public preschool teachers and international preschool teachers in favor of the second in three domains of the study (social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development). No significant differences were found between the practices of public preschool teachers and the international preschool teachers in the spiritual domain of the study. This study aimed at affording social studies preschool teachers in Qatar the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching practices, which is likely to help them adopt innovative, pedagogical tools that will lead to the improvement of students' achievement.

Keywords: School, Preschools, Social Studies Teachers, Social Studies Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Since 2001, the Supreme Education Council (SEC) in Qatar has implemented educational reforms aimed at building "a modern, world class public education and school system that provides all children with the best education possible" (Supreme Education Council, 2003). Independent schools have been built since 2004 under the supervision of the SEC and are given more freedom and autonomy. Education experts from western countries such as the US, Australia, and New Zealand have been hired to train teachers and administrators. Curriculum standards that align with the international standards have been developed, and child-oriented approaches of teaching have been adopted. Preschool education in Qatar has witnessed a shift since the Early Years Education Good Practice Guide was published in 2008 by the Supreme Education Council. Aligned with the new preschool





curriculum standards that are comparable with those of the United Kingdom, early childhood education has shifted from traditional, teacher-oriented approaches to child-oriented and integrated teaching approaches that focus on play activities instead of academic skills. The new social studies curriculum standards in Qatar preschools were initiated in 2011.

Social Studies Curriculum in Qatar

In 2011, the Supreme Education Council initiated the social studies curriculum standards in Qatar (SEC 2011). The curriculum is a comprehensive, completely integrated curriculum for grade levels KG-12. Preschool curriculum subject areas include:

A. **History:** This aims at developing children's knowledge and understanding of the local environment by applying simple historical enquiry and skills.

Teachers have to develop three key standards:

- 1- **Chronology:** The skill of sequencing events and the vocabulary associated with the passing of time are to be developed.
- 2- **Knowledge of events and historical characters:** Children learn about the distinctive features of events, periods, and cultures. They also develop an understanding of the diversity of these cultures and periods.
- 3- **Historical enquiry and skills:** Children are encouraged to develop by asking questions and interpreting historical events focusing on Qatar and the local environment.

B. **Geography:** This focuses on four themes:

- 1- **Geographical enquiry and skills (including mapping):** Children are to develop communication skills; map drawing; and their geographical knowledge, understanding, and skills using different sources including ICT and outdoor enquiry. They are also encouraged to formulate geographical research questions and answers in addition to communicating their opinion.
- 2- **Geographical locality: sense of place:** Children are to identify localities and explain similarities and differences between them. They should know and understand the political and economic role of the Qatar within the region and in the global context
- 3- **Natural environment and environmental change:** Children are to develop knowledge and understanding of the climate, ecosystem, natural environment, and resources. They have the ability to relate these to the significance of using resources wisely for the development of Qatar and the region.
- 4- **Humans and resources:** Children develop knowledge and understanding of population geography and human impact on the environment. They describe and explain how humans can adapt to their environment and use local resources for their benefit.





C. Citizenship

Children focus on developing core skills within four themes:

1. **Individuals and groups:** Children develop the skills of enquiry, morality, communication, respect, self-dependency, self-confidence, reflection, adaptation, and belonging to groups in addition to the groups' rights and responsibilities.
2. **Citizenship:** Children learn to differentiate between fairness and unfairness. They know right from wrong, understand differences, and recognize diversity.
3. **Health and Society:** Children develop the skill of keeping healthy and safe, understand factors that affect health and safety, and implement strategies to improve health.
4. **Culture and celebrations:** Children learn about celebrations, customs, and traditions of Qatar and traditions of other cultures within the Qatari context.

The Supreme Education Council published the Early Years Education Good Practice Guide in 2008. It provides a vigorous, broad educational plan that comprehensively deals with all areas of learning for KG children. The Good Practice Guide promotes the application of integrated curriculum and instruction. As with other subjects, the social science curriculum is integrated with other subjects and is not taught in isolated periods or classes. According to Piaget, children benefit most when the curriculum is integrated and children are provided with a mix of hands-on activities and experiences through guided play and adult-led learning (Piaget, 1952). In the same vein, Dewey (1966) asserted that learning revolves around first-hand experience and draws upon many instructional resources beyond the textbook. He emphasized that those learning and teaching activities start with the familiar experiences of a child's everyday life. Thus, since children grow holistically, early years' learning environments should be organized to reveal and develop the different areas of development including social-emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development.

Concept and Significance of Social Studies

There are various definitions of social Studies or social studies. As it is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of study, there is no consensus on a definition among scholars. A social science curriculum was defined as the study of relationships among people and between people and the environment (Ross, 2012). The social Studies enable students to understand others and become good citizens (Alberta Education, 2005). The National Council for Social Studies defined social studies as the integrated study of the social Studies and humanities to promote civic competence (NCSS, 1993). According to the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), the major purpose of a social science curriculum is to help children develop





their abilities to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (NCSS, 1994). From the aforementioned definitions, it seems as though the emphasis of the social Studies subject centers on the interaction between people and their environment and the responsibilities of an individual toward society. Research supports the idea that the role of teacher is critical in early years education and has a significant effect on the child's whole life (Wylie and Thomson, 2003).

The National Education Association (NEA) considers social studies as "the subject matter related directly to the organization and development of human society, and to individuals as members of social groups" (NEA 1916: 5). "The 'subject matter' for this new school subject was to be drawn from the most influential social Studies of the time—history, geography, and civics—and blended together as one school subject" (Maxim 2006: 13). Teachers' practices in early education are considered essential indicators of children's learning. Children are exposed to various experiences and activities organized by teachers including math, science, ICT, literacy, art, and music. These experiences promote the child's development. Social Studies is one of the fundamental content areas in early childhood education that integrates all these activities. Thus, investigating social Studies teachers' practices is vital for better understanding of the application of the curriculum. "The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS 1993: 3).

There have been limited studies about the application of the social science curriculum in early childhood education (e.g., Caldarella et al., 2009; Kramer et al., 2010; Whitcomb and Merrell, 2011). In the region, there was only one study in the United Arab Emirates that investigated the views of Kindergarten teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Al-Momani, Ihmeideh, and Momani, 2008). The authors revealed that the curriculum was deemed inappropriate as it emphasized more "academics" than children's development in social, physical, emotional, and intellectual realms. The Supreme Education Council and independent schools in Qatar adopt an integrated approach for early childhood classrooms to develop children's different developmental areas such as physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive domains. However, to the knowledge of this author, no previous studies have been conducted in Qatar to investigate the extant practices related to the social Studies curriculum in the context of early childhood education.

This study investigates the practices of social Studies teachers in Qatari preschools and their role in child development in the four domains of development: social-emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Social Studies teachers in Qatari schools teach history, geography, and citizenship. This study also provides information about how the practices of Qatari public preschool social Studies teachers compare to those of their counterparts in international schools in Qatar. It is hoped that this study will enable social Studies preschool teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices, which is likely to help them adopt innovative, pedagogical





tools that will lead to the improvement of students' achievement. Moreover, it is expected that this study will be useful for educators and researchers in the Qatari context due to the scarcity of previous studies in the field.

The study attempted to answer the following questions: 1-How do the social Studies teachers' practices in the Qatari public preschools compare with those of their counterparts in international schools in Qatar on children's social-emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development? 2-Are there any statistically significant differences between the practices of social Studies teachers in public and international preschools in Qatar in promoting children's social-emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development?

METHOD

The qualitative research methodology was used by the researcher. Berg (2004) stated that qualitative research enables the researcher to explore, examine, and analyze his or her environment to get answers related to the study. The study used a questionnaire as a means of data collection to investigate teachers' practices on a scale designed for this purpose. The study sample consisted of ninety female preschool teachers of social studies who were randomly chosen from twenty preschools in Qatar. In order to find out the practices of social studies teachers, the researcher prepared a questionnaire as a tool to measure these practices and uncover their consistency with the four domains of child development. While preparing the questionnaire, the researcher made use of the tools in previous studies and literature related to teachers' teaching practices in an early childhood context (i.e., Al-Momani, Ihmeideh, and Momani, 2008; Zarrillo, 2004; Bredekamp and Copple, 1997).

The questionnaire consisted of thirty-seven items spread over the four domains of child development; it was presented to twelve experienced arbitrators in the field of curricula and teaching methods at Qatar University. They were asked to define the suitability of the items, their inclusiveness to measure teachers' practices, the association of items to the four domains of child development, and the clarity of items and their language accuracy. They were also asked to suggest any amendments, deletions, or additions. After the questionnaire was returned, the proposed amendments were made following the arbitrators' recommendations, and some items were reworded. The final questionnaire consisted of thirty-seven items tapping the four domains on which participants indicated their responses on a 5-degree scale ranging from "always" to "never." The first domain (social-emotional development) consisted of twelve items; the second domain (physical development) comprised nine items; the third domain (spiritual development) consisted of five items; and the fourth domain (intellectual development) included eleven items. The reliability of the four domains of the questionnaire was achieved through Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency. Table 1 shows the values of internal consistency for the entire questionnaire and its four domains:





Table 1:

Reliability of internal consistency of the four domains

Domain	Value
Social-Emotional	0.84
Physical	0.85
Intellectual	0.80
Spiritual	0.83
Entire Questionnaire	0.83

The internal consistency of the entire questionnaire was 0.83, which is appropriate for the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question: How do the social Studies teachers' practices in the Qatari public preschools compare with those of their counterparts in international schools at Qatar on children's social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development? To answer this question, means and standard deviations were utilized for each item within the four domains of each of the respondents. Table 2 shows the way in which the T-test value has been utilized to discover significant differences in the responses of the study sample to the questionnaire.

The results in Table 2 indicate that the practices of social Studies teachers seem to promote the child's development in the social-emotional domain. The T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the responses of the study on the social-emotional domain was 29.74, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and in favor of the mean of responses on the first domain (social-emotional). In reference to the items of this domain in Table 2, the items that seem to promote the child's development from highest to lowest are as follows: 24, 12, 22, 26, 14, 21, 32, 27, 37, 23, 15, and 17; the T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the teachers' responses ranged between 6.64 and 22.24. This indicates that all items are statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in favor of the mean of the response to the item. The lowest items promoted were items 17 and 15, with T-test value of 6.64 and 12.91, respectively. These items are concerned with introducing children to a range of cultures and religions and using group times to share events in children's lives. One can argue that teaching practices in Qatar cannot be isolated from the influence of culture, especially religious beliefs and values.



Table 2:

Means, standard deviations and T-test values, and alpha value for each item and total items in the social-emotional domain

Item Num	Items of the social-emotional domain	Mean	SD	T-test value	Alpha value
12	I encourage children to ask questions about events in each other's lives in discussions and explore these experiences in role play	3.38	0.712	18.35 *	0
14	I am ready to listen to children wanting to talk about significant events and give them time to formulate thoughts and words to express feelings	3.27	0.687	17.44 *	0
15	I use group times to share events in children's lives	2.99	0.727	12.91*	0
17	I introduce children to a range of cultures and religions for example by telling stories, listening to music, dancing, eating food from different cultures, and using resources in role play that reflect a variety of cultures, such as clothes cooking implements, food, symbols, candles, and toys	2.63	0.905	6.64 *	0
21	I acknowledge children's feelings and work with them to resolve conflicts.	3.27	0.632	19.00 *	0
22	I observe children to ensure interventions are appropriate and timely.	3.31	0.729	17.06 *	0
23	I give children practice in resolving social conflict.	3.13	0.837	12.84 *	0
24	I provide activities that involve turn-taking and sharing.	3.46	0.621	22.24 *	0
26	I help children to understand that name calling is hurtful and unacceptable.	3.31	0.664	18.72 *	0
27	I collaborate with children in creating explicit rules for the care of the environment.	3.24	0.676	17.48 *	0
32	I prepare children for changes that may occur in the class	3.27	0.65	18.49 *	0
37	I ensure that children have opportunities to identify and discuss boundaries so they understand why they are in school and what they are intended to achieve.	3.17	0.864	12.80 *	0
Total values		3.2	0.383	29.74 *	0

(*) Statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Several studies have shown that early childhood education is embedded in social and cultural contexts (e.g., Lane, 2007). Although western theories and models have influenced the Qatari childhood education, the Arabic and Middle Eastern culture still appears to influence teachers' practices in preschools. Preschool education still and will continue to reflect traditional, educational values, such as the authority of the teacher, the teacher's authoritative classroom management style, and the emphasis on whole-group activities. Regarding classroom organization, the

teachers seem to use teacher-centered activities more often than child-centered ones. The role of the teacher is not too different from the traditional role as a direct instructor rather than a facilitator. This apparently contradicts with the Early Childhood Education Good Practices Guide of the Qatari Supreme Education Council (SEC, 2008). The preschool teacher spends a greater proportion of her instructional time in whole-class instruction. This can be interpreted by reference to the Arab culture that emphasizes teachers' authority, teachers' leadership, and children's obedience.

Table 3:

Means, standard deviations and T-test values, and alpha value for each item and total items in the physical domain

Item Number	Items of the physical domain	Mean	SD	T-test value	Alpha value
4	The children and I visit and use photographs of the local area to identify features, for example a library, mosque, or postbox	2.89	0.929	9.07 *	0
5	I provide opportunities for children to examine objects to understand texture, shape, and material.	3.03	0.942	10.41 *	0
8	I provide and encourage children to play with, compare, and talk about collections of objects that have similar and different properties, for example natural or manmade, size, color, shape, texture, function.	2.86	0.881	9.21 *	0
13	I provide stimuli and resources for children to create simple maps and plans, paintings, drawings, and models of observations of the area and imaginary landscape	3	0.874	10.85 *	0
16	I support children in finding appropriate ways of preserving memories of special events, for example making a book, collecting photographs, tape recording, drawing, and writing	2.81	0.911	8.45 *	0
19	I teach children to use and care for materials and then trust them to do so independently.	3.2	0.737	15.44 *	0
25	I help children manage their own behavior.	3.24	0.547	21.59 *	0
29	I encourage children to attempt skills and activities and to gain proficiency, for example putting on shoes	3.13	0.782	13.75 *	0
33	I help them to recognize and understand the social rules such as waiting for a turn, etc.	3.17	0.691	16.02 *	0
	Total values	3.04	0.443	22.21 *	0

(*) Statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Results in Table 3 indicate that the practices of social Studies teachers seem to promote the child's development in the physical domain. The T-test value for the

single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the responses of the study on the physical domain was 22.21, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and in favor of the mean of responses on the second domain (physical). Referring to the items of this domain in Table 3, the items that seem to promote the child's development from highest to lowest are as follows: 25 · 19 · 33 · 29 · 5 · 13 · 4 · 8 · 16; the T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the teachers' responses ranged between 8.45 and 21.59. This indicates that all items are statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in favor of the mean of the response to the item. The lowest item promoted was item 16, with a T-test value of 8.45. This item is concerned with supporting children in finding appropriate ways of preserving memories of special events. This might suggest that teachers should consider creative ways to foster children's metacognitive abilities surrounding special events. In a recent study, Chernokova (2009) has shown that the preconditions of the metacognitive functions are formed in the preschool years and suggest that highly organized training could help promote children's metacognitive development. The researcher postulated the possibilities of metacognitive function development in preschool children through learning the dialectical tools and formulation of mental activities.

Table 4:

Means, standard deviations and T-test values, and alpha value for each item and total items in the spiritual domain

Item Number	Mean items of the spiritual domain	Mean	T-test value	Alpha value
1	I provide attractive resources and learning environments to stimulate children's curiosity.	3.46	25.39 *	0
30	I model how to label and manage your own feelings, e.g., I am feeling a bit angry and I need to calm down, so I am going to---	3.06	14.13 *	0
31	I ask children for their ideas on what might make people feel better when they are sad or upset	3.2	15.13 *	0
34	I repeatedly talk about feelings such as sadness happiness or feeling upset	3.07	13.04 *	0
36	I talk about fair and unfair situations and children feelings about fairness and how we can make things fair	2.6	5.13 *	0
Total values		3.08	21.00 *	0

(*) Statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Results in Table 4 indicate that the practices of social Studies teachers tend to promote the child's development in the spiritual domain. The T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of



the responses of the study on the spiritual domain was 21.00, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and in favor of the mean of responses on the third domain (spiritual). Reflecting on the items of this domain in Table 4, it is realized that the items that seem to promote the child's development from highest to lowest are as follows: 1, 30, 31, 34, and 36; the T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the teachers' responses ranged between 5.13 and 25.39. This indicates that all items are statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in favor of the mean of the response to the item. The lowest item promoted was item 36, with a T-test value of 5.13. This item is concerned with talking about fair and unfair situations and children's feelings about fairness as well as how they can make things fair. The effect of culture is also obvious here. In Qatari culture, children are dictated what is fair and unfair, and obedience to the elders and teacher is a must. This may also be related to the direct-instruction approaches and teacher-centered paradigm that the teachers themselves might have experienced as children. For instance, Elkind (1986) found that a number of teachers who, as children, were taught according to a traditional, teacher-centered curriculum tended to adhere to a similar practice in their own classrooms as teachers.

Results in Table 5 indicate that the practices of social Studies teachers promote the child's development in the intellectual domain. The T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the responses of the study on the spiritual domain was 27.85, which is statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and in favor of the mean of responses on the third domain (intellectual). In reference to the items of this domain in Table 5, the items that promote the child's development from highest to lowest are as follows: (2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 18, 20, 28, 35); the T-test value for the single sample between the hypothetical mean (second grade) and the actual mean of the teachers' responses ranged between 8.82 and 22.41. This indicates that all items are statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in favor of the mean of the response to the item.

The lowest item promoted was item 35, with T-test value of 8.82. This item is concerned with encouraging children to tell stories about places and journeys. This implies that teachers in Qatari preschools still need to focus more on child-centered activities rather than teacher-centered ones. Six years ago, in their study of teachers' views of curriculum, instructional, and assessment practices in the United Arab Emirates Kindergartens, Al-Momani, Ihmeideh, and Momani (2008) found that direct instruction and teacher-centered approaches were prevalent, which they postulate may be related to the centralization of the decision-making process at the administration level.



Table 5:

Means, standard deviations and T-test values, and alpha value for each item and total items in the intellectual domain

Item Num.	Mean items of the intellectual domain	Mean	T-test value	Alpha value
2	I encourage and respond to children's signs of interest and expand these through questions, discussions, and further investigations	3.29	22.41 *	0
3	I encourage close observation, for example by drawing the surroundings or natural or made objects	3.08	12.62 *	0
6	I encourage children to talk about their findings, ask questions, and speculate on reasons	3.21	15.81 *	0
7	I give opportunities to record findings, for example through drawing ,writing, making a tape or model, and/or photographing.	2.94	10.85 *	0
9	I encourage children to examine change over time, for example growing plants or looking at photographs of children since birth or by observing change that may be reversed, for example melting ice	2.81	9.09 *	0
10	I encourage children to raise questions and suggest solutions and answers	3.02	12.45 *	0
11	I model investigative behavior and raise questions, such as What do you think? Tell me more about? What will happen if? What else could we try? What could it be used for? And how might it work?	3.12	13.71 *	0
18	I value support and encourage independent learning.	3.26	17.52 *	0
20	I provide activities that encourage children to ask questions, seek answers, make decisions, and solve problems	3.22	17.39 *	0
28	I involve children in identifying issues and finding solutions.	3.29	17.70 *	0
35	I tell stories about places and journeys	2.81	8.82 *	0
Total values		3.1	27.85 *	0

(*): Statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

The second question: Are there any statistically significant differences between the practices of social Studies teachers in public and international preschools in Qatar in promoting children's social-emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development? To answer this question, means, standard deviations, and the T-test value were utilized to discover the significant differences between the means of the responses of the Arab preschool teachers and the international preschool teachers on the four domains of the study as shown in Table 6.

Table 6:

Means and standard deviations for the study sample of Arab and International preschools and the values of T-test between them, the values of alpha for the four domains, and the total score of the questionnaire

Domain	International preschools		Arab preschools		T-test value	Alpha value
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Social-emotional	3.11	0.432	3.27	0.327	-2.01 *	0.047
Physical	2.88	0.433	3.16	0.412	-3.21 *	0.002
Spiritual	3.13	0.501	3.03	0.474	0.95	0.345
Intellectual	2.95	0.358	3.21	0.349	-3.40 *	0.001
Total	3.01	0.346	3.2	0.312	-2.65 *	0.009

(*): Statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

(-): The second mean is larger than the first mean (The mean of international schools is greater than the mean of the Arab schools).

The results of Table 6 reveal the presence of statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the means of the study sample of public preschools and the means of the study sample of international preschools. In response to the social-emotional, physical, and intellectual domains, there were statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) and in favor of the means of the study sample of the international preschools. The T-test values for independent samples for the three domains (social-emotional, physical, and intellectual) were 2.01, 3.21, and 3.40, respectively, and the total score of the questionnaire was 2.65. This indicates that the practices of international preschool teachers appear to promote social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development more so than the public preschool teachers' practices with a significant difference ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the three domains. The results of Table 6 also reveal the lack of statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the responses of the public preschool teachers and the international preschool teachers in the spiritual domain. The T-test value of the independent samples was 0.95, which is not statistically significant. Due to fact that the shift to modern child-centered approaches to teaching social Studies in public preschools in Qatar is still new and developing, it is expected that teachers' practices in these preschools still need time to be comparable to the practices of intentional preschool teachers.

The strengths of this investigation need to be evaluated in the context of its limitations. One limitation of the data analyses of this study is related to the nature of hypothesis testing. Since many statistical procedures were run in this investigation, and considering the fact that hypothesis testing revolves around probabilities (Leedy and Ormrod 2001), there is the chance that the researchers could have made a type I or type II error. Another limitation has to do with the questionnaire: It is possible that the thirty-seven items may not adequately or entirely account for the areas of



development, which could have resulted in erroneous inferences about the relationship between the method and construct (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, 2002). Moreover, since the questionnaire is a self-reporting instrument, it is not immune from the response bias, which could have occurred because of faking good, lack of self-knowledge, or ambiguity of questions posed (Hammond, 2000). There is also the likelihood that participants might have interpreted the questions at different levels of understanding, which is one of the inherent shortcomings of self-reporting measures. Finally, the study was restricted to ninety female social studies preschool teachers from twenty public and international preschools from various areas in the State of Qatar. The study was conducted during the first term of the 2013-2014 academic year. A longitudinal study spanning the course of all years of preschool would have yielded generalizable results.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper investigates the extent to which the practices of social Studies preschool teachers in Qatar promote the child's development in the four domains of the study: social-emotional development, physical development, intellectual development, and spiritual development. In the context of Qatar, this is an important issue because no previous research studies have previously been made to investigate the practices of social Studies preschool teachers, especially given that there has been great evidence from research in the last decade that quality preschool education has positive effects on future success of children (e.g., Epstein 2014; Catsambis and Buttaro Jr., 2012; Whitcomb and Merrell, 2011; Jennings and DiPrete, 2010).

Overall, the findings reveal that teachers' practices in the four domains of the study promote child development. The results also reveal significant differences between the practices of public preschool teachers and international preschool teachers in favor of the second in three domains of the study (social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development). No significant differences were found between the practices of public preschool teachers and the international preschool teachers in the spiritual domain of the study. It can be concluded that the international preschools have many advantages over the public ones in terms of the domains of the teachers' questionnaire. The most obvious drawbacks of all Qatari public preschools seem to be in the following three domains: social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development. Although it is still early to compare the practices of public preschool teachers and international preschool teachers, this study revealed that more training and professional development is needed to create high-quality early childhood education in the State of Qatar.

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Katar Anaokullarında Görev Yapan Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenlerinin Uygulamalarına İlişkin Algılarının İncelenmesi

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Amaç: Bu çalışma Katar anaokullarında görev yapan sosyal bilgiler öğretmenlerinin uygulamalarına ilişkin algılarını ve bu uygulamaların çocuk gelişiminin 4 gelişim alanı (sosyal-duygusal, fiziksel, zihinsel ve ruhsal) ile ilişkisini incelemektedir. Bu incelenin, öğretmenlerin öğrenci başarısının artması ile sonuçlanacak yenilikçi ve pedagojik eğitim araçları seçmelerine ve hayata geçirmelerine katkı sağlayabileceği umulmaktadır. Bunların yanı sıra, çalışma, Katar’da bulunan devlet anaokullarının öğretmenleri ile uluslararası anaokullarındaki meslektaşlarının uygulamalara ilişkin algılarının kıyaslanmasına ilişkin de bilgi sağlamaktadır.

Yöntem: Katılımcılara çocuk gelişiminin 4 alanına (sosyal-duygusal, fiziksel, zihinsel ve ruhsal) ilişkin sorular içeren 37 soru maddesinden oluşan bir anket uygulanmıştır. Kullanılan anket “Her zaman” ile “Hiçbir zaman” aralığında yer alan 5 dereceli bir ölçme aracıdır. Birinci gelişim alanı (sosyal-duygusal gelişme) 20; ikincisi (fiziksel gelişme) 9; üçüncüsü (ruhsal gelişme) 5 ve dördüncüsü (zihinsel gelişme) ise 11 soru maddesinden oluşmaktadır.

Bulgular: Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, öğretmenlerin 4 gelişim alanına ilişkin faaliyetleri öğrenci gelişimini desteklemektedir. Ayrıca sonuçlar devlet ile uluslararası anaokulu öğretmenlerinin uygulamaları arasında üç gelişim alanı açısından (sosyal-duygusal, fiziksel ve zihinsel) uluslararası anaokulları lehine anlamlı farklılık olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Devlet anaokulu öğretmenlerinin uygulamaları ile uluslararası anaokulu öğretmenlerinin uygulamaları arasında ise ruhsal gelişim alanı açısından anlamlı farklılık yoktur.

Sonuçlar: Öğretmenlere uygulanan anketin sonuçlarına göre, uluslararası anaokulları devlet okullarına kıyasla çocuk gelişim alanları açısından birçok avantaja sahiptir. Katar’daki devlete ait anaokullarının en belirgin dezavantajlarının şu üç gelişim alanında olduğu görünmektedir: sosyal-duygusal, fiziksel ve zihinsel. Devlet anaokulları ile uluslararası anaokullarının öğretmenlerinin uygulamalarını kıyaslamak için hala çok erken olsa da, bu çalışma Katar Devleti’nde yüksek kalitede bir erken dönem çocukluk eğitimi oluşturabilmek için daha fazla eğitim ve profesyonel gelişme gerekliliğini ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Key Words: Okul Anaokulu, Sosyal bilgiler öğretmeni, Sosyal bilgiler programı

