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# Standards for Early Childhood Education

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STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education

By

Yasmin Aljounf

Summer 2019

**THESIS of Yasmin Aljouf APPROVED BY**

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### Abstract

I have been researching and focusing on a topic that has been of interest to me from the beginning of my undergraduate studies in the field of kindergarten education. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does not have its own standards for the early childhood stage. It took from the United States. When I started my graduate level studies, I focused on the perception of Saudi Arabian faculty, graduate students, and kindergarten teachers regarding standards for early childhood education. I designed a survey and published it to faculty in Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University, as well as graduate students and kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia. Ninety people responded to the survey. I used SPSS to analyze my data and most of the results agreed with my expectations. Most people believed that Saudi Arabia should have its own standards because it has its own culture and traditions. Respondents also believed in the importance of Islamic religion and that the standards should include Islamic religion.

*Keywords:* kindergarten, standards, early childhood education

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Personal Interest in Early Childhood**

When I was studying at Dammam University, I remembered the words of Professor Amal Ba Aqil (a lecturer at the university) when she said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia derives its standards and curriculum of early childhood education from foreign countries, especially America and Canada. It benefits from the work completed on standards by other countries.

This made me think deeply about the subject. Saudi Arabia is now a country that aspires to development and progress, hoping to be a pioneer in all fields, especially in the field of education. There is a focus on children's education, because today's children are the adults of the future. Therefore, my purpose in this study was to create standards for education in the field of early childhood, which suits the Saudi people with their customs and traditions.

Any teachers who work with children and make curricula for children should examine childhood education in kindergartens. Kindergartens include children between the ages of three and six and provide them with pre-primary education. These programs have to prepare the child socially, academically and educationally before entering elementary school. Pre-primary education is an important educational stage in many countries of the world, so kindergartens are keen to apply their own quality standards and curriculum in order to produce an effective future generation.

### **Background**

Education in Saudi Arabia has foundations in the Muslim religion. There are three types of schools in Saudi Arabia: public, private, and international. No matter the school type, each school must teach Islamic religion (Alghamdi, 2010). This means children in Saudi Arabia

adhere to the covenants and assumptions of Islam. The education system and the state curriculum affect the information which students are provided in lessons

It is impossible to ignore the words of Professor Amal Ba Aqil, when she said Saudi Arabia does not have special standards for early childhood education. Saudi Arabia has always followed North American curriculum, especially in the early childhood education university major, instead of developing its own curriculum. Because of this, my study focuses on finding research on early childhood education conducted in the United States. Early childhood is one of the most important stages of human life in general, as growth is rapid, especially mental development. This stage covers a series of changes that occur in the child, in which the child's awareness of separation and independence grows gradually. At this point, children are able to stand on their feet and move their hands, which makes them rely heavily on exploring and reviewing and absorbing external phenomena, to become familiar with the properties of things and their relationship to each other. Children at this stage are attracted to contact with the surrounding world. They acquire their knowledge of the outside world through their senses (Calvi, 1995).

Early childhood education refers to the branch of education theory that relates to the teaching of children formally and informally from birth up to the age of eight years (Calvi, 1995). According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), it is during this period that the child undergoes the most rapid phase of growth and development (2009). Before the age of eight, the brains of children develop faster than at any other point in their lives, making early childhood education a critical aspect of any country's education system (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Han & Brown, 2013; Heineke, 2013). As such, more emphasis should be placed on developing the most appropriate and effective curriculum for meeting the

developmental needs of early childhood. Early childhood education is responsible for laying the foundation for social skills, self-esteem, and perception of the world, as well as a moral outlook for children (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; LaParo & Van Schago, 2018; Logue, 2016; Lohmann, Hovey, & Gauvreau, 2018; Recchia, 2016).

Therefore, early childhood education has a lifetime impact on the lives of young children. Interestingly, parents are increasingly recognizing the significance of early childhood education on the long-term development of their children. Based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the enrollment in pre-kindergarten level education in the United States has significantly risen from 96,000 to over 1 million in the last thirty years, indicating that parents are currently placing emphasis on the early development of their children (Guralnick & Bruder 2016; Lee, 2016). Early childhood education in the United States encompasses a variety of part-day, full-school-day, and full-workday programs that are administered under educational, social welfare or commercial settings (Navarro-Cruz & Luschei, 2018).

It is critical that early childhood educators realize that they play a very important role in the development of children. Although keeping up with children can be exhausting for anyone, meeting the challenge can be an extremely rewarding experience (Buettner, Hur, Jeon, & Andrews, 2016; Lee, Shin, & Recchi, 2016). It is important to realize that young students are very different from other students, as their needs are unique. Thus, teachers should be better prepared to establish a positive relationship with the young children as they transition from homecare to school care (Buettner et al., 2016).

It is also important to note that the school setting can be one of the first times students interact with children their age. This means that the teacher should play the critical role of a

mediator, particularly when young students encounter problems sharing or learning how to get along harmoniously (Hyson, Tomlinson, & Morris, 2009).

The child uses directed questions and inquiries to learn more about the outside world. Children in the early childhood stage like to ask questions about anything they do not know, or they want more information about it (Calvi 1995). The brain in this period is very sensitive, and this makes it easy to store information, experiences, and symbols of things to use in the acquisition and interpretation of future experiences (Calvi 1995). Some longitudinal studies have shown that a number of personality traits are established and stabilized during this stage, especially when the child reaches his fifth year, and may continue and persist during adolescence and adulthood (Calvi 1995). Childhood, in general, has received considerable attention by psychologists and researchers (Jesse, 2018). Personality theories support popular belief that this stage is the most important in the human life cycle and determines the course of subsequent growth.

Learning is a process that begins with the birth of a human and does not conclude until the end of his life. In addition, the education of the child is a fundamental human right. Schooling prepares children to enter, continue to explore the world around them, learn from the environment through integration with other children, playing with them, writing, painting and learning arts. This affects the growth of their mental abilities and the rapid development of the skills that build their personality.

**Early childhood education in the United States vs. Saudi Arabia.** Education acts as a tool that is commonly used in driving the economy of any country. This thesis focused on analyzing the situation in the education sector to understand how the education standards in different countries impact the education sector in general. For the purposes of the thesis, the

standards of education in the two countries of United States of America and Saudi Arabia are regarded to be crucial to the education system, along with the content they offer to local and international learners (JESSE, 2018). To address this, the thesis addressed articles that have been written based on the education standards in the countries and aimed at painting a picture of how progressive or regressive the education programs have been for these countries and how effective they are in delivering whatever is contained in the syllabus and the developed curriculum (Levatino, 2017).

Education can be said to be a key pillar in every country's economic, political and social wellbeing. Understanding the system put in place concerning education helps in determining how the country is inclined to realize its set goals with respect to the contribution the education system makes. The research and innovation skills that learners gain in each country's schools usually contribute immensely in making the business sectors more effective and easier to conduct globally (Neem, 2017).

Enrolment to the kindergarten and the preschool is the most critical stages since these levels of education form the basis of knowledge for the child at the tender age. The structure of education in many countries is designed in a way that it creates a sense of developing national pride for the learners while at the same time developing the basic language, physical education, skills and math skills. It is important to focus on educating the workforce and equipping them with the necessary skills for the country to realize its vision and goals must be set to realize these objectives through the education system. The K-12 curriculum is one of the areas that can be adapted in order to equip the learners with the skills that can be conducted in a constructive direction (Marcus-Quinn, & Hourigan, 2017). By doing so, it becomes easier to develop the social capacity of the learners as they go through the system.

**Early childhood education system in the United States.** It is clear that the education system in the United States offers various choices to students locally and internationally. This is attributed to the effective implementation of the program in the country and the quality of education that is offered. Students come from all corners of the world to study in institutions in the United States, which are ranked as some of the best in the world. The system is set such that the students usually spend a total of twelve years prior to higher education, as they attend primary and secondary school. The system requires that learners should join school at the primary level at the age of six years (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2009).

As one progresses to higher education, there are various levels of study that the United States' system offers. The first level is for undergraduates. During the first two years the learner is required to cover a wide variety of classes from various subjects, which ensure they receive general knowledge and understanding of various subjects before focusing on a specific field of study. After two years, the learner specializes in his field of choice which he pursues towards attaining the bachelor' degree. After completing the first level, the learner may proceed to the postgraduate level where he studies to earn a master's degree. The third level involves pursuing a doctorate, considered to be the highest level of education that a learner can gain (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2009).

The United States is estimated to have the largest percentage of students who are internationally mobile. On the other hand, there are far fewer United States citizens who go abroad for their education. This is due to the country's effective education system which attracts students from other countries. The total number of international students has increased significantly in the United States as a result of increased mobility for citizens from other parts of

the world. The number of international students since 1980 has increased more than 600 percent during the three and a half decades up to 2016. The biggest percentage of the students is reported to enroll for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) which are short-term programs that focus on improving English communication skills. One of the challenges that the learners face is discrimination in some parts of the country, which may make them fear working in the United States once they graduate (Neem, 2017).

There has been debate on how to improve the education system as a result of the increasing number of international learners in the United States. There have been complaints that the students are not taught basic skills in school and as a result the curriculum has been adjusted to remedy the lagging performance. There have been combined efforts to meet the requirements from different government entities which is a great initiative that is likely to realize positive results. The education system in America in recent years takes into account the diversity of cultures because of the diversity of society. The curriculum in schools' suits both the American student and the immigrant student (Copley, 2004). Because of this diversity, education in America is separated from religion.

### **Origination of Early Childhood Specialization**

The concept of early childhood education began in the 19th century (Lipoff, 2011). Lipoff reported early childhood centers began in Europe with mothers as the instructors, but the schooling took place outside of the home. During the industrial revolution, many infant homes were established to provide daycare services while the mothers worked (Dougherty, 2017). The kindergarten model was introduced in Wisconsin by an 1848 constitutional amendment to provide education for the children in the age group of four to twenty years (Dougherty, 2017). This amendment led to the development of the first kindergarten program for four-year-olds.

The concept of nursery, preschool, and daycare spread to other states. Piaget performed a groundbreaking study in the 1920s on child development, which identified useful techniques for early childhood learning (Lipoff, 2011). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was established in 1926, and the organization focused on better education for children between the ages of four and eight (Lipoff, 2011). After the Second World War, more emphasis was placed on early childhood education as a method of preparing children for school (National Research Council, 2001).

Many theories have been put forth since the inception of the concept of early childhood education (Bobrova, Leong, 2010). The first one was given by Maria Montessori, an Italian scholar who believed that children should be allowed to explore their environment through play (Bobrova, Leong, 2010). The Montessori theory was advanced on the basis of this perspective and involves following the children's lead in their interests. Montessori's technique encouraged individual learning instead of class teaching (Lipoff, 2011). The Reggio Emilia approach is based on symbolic education and project-oriented curriculum that considers the environment as a crucial component in child development (Kokoros, 2018). Play-based learning, a contemporary technique, encourages the use of play to open a child's mind to knowledge. Kokoros described this theory as promoting child discovery through practical problem-solving with minimal educator intervention (2018). Direct instruction was advanced by Engelmann and Becker in 1960 (Kokoros, 2018). This method involves educator-led practices that aim to reinforce knowledge acquisition through correction and drilling techniques. All of these theories are used to build a foundation of learning standards specific to early childhood.

Contemporary early childhood education is chiefly based on the child's interests. There are several guidelines on the preschool curriculum that provide cohesion and develop standards.

According to Kokoros (2018), the guidelines serve to orient the learning of skills within the play-centered theories that drive the curriculum. There has been an effort to differentiate play from the curriculum. Bodrova (2010) describes that playing is a spontaneous child-initiated activity while curriculum refers to teaching by the deliberate inclusion of instructional techniques in the child's activity.

The components of curriculum vary according to the standards used and teaching methods adopted. However, to facilitate learning, the curriculum is designed to cover aspects such as imagination and innovation, language and literacy, creativity and art, physical and motor development, cognitive development, as well as social and emotional development (Dougherty, 2017). Each of these domains must be covered to ensure overall child development. As indicated by the European curriculum, the learning objectives are divided into social, psychological, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Modern theories emphasize the need for a supportive environment involving responsible teachers and parents (Kazu & Is, 2018).

### **Origin of Early Learning Standards in the United States**

Kindergarten education standards were first developed to promote social and academic success among children. Many children who come to kindergarten have insufficient social skills required to successfully participate in academic activities (Logue, 2007). The standards of kindergarten education helped create foundational learning for later school success. According to Neuman and Roskos (2005) and Logue (2007), kindergarten learning standards initially focused on improving the social skills of children. Teachers, for instance, would allow kindergarteners to play most of the time as it developed their social skills. After a short period of time, the children could now comprehend different aspects in their surrounding plus improve their academic success.

Different states in the United States (US) developed early learning standards for a variety of purposes. The main purpose of the standards was to improve early childhood teaching practices (Hatch, 2002). States wanted to ensure that teachers had an easier time teaching. Another reason why the standards were developed was to enhance the professional development of teachers while educating parents about the progress of their children. Other miscellaneous reasons for developing the standards included educating policymakers, becoming part of the state's quality rating system, and bettering consistency across education programs (Fenech, Robertson, Sumsion, & Goodfellow, 2007). Hence, early childhood teaching practices, easier time teaching, educating parents about the progress of their children, and educating policymakers were the main drivers of establishing learning standards.

### **Learning Standards of Early Childhood**

The K12 curriculum is one of the changes proposed to equip the learners with the skills that are conducted in a constructive direction for building the community. By doing so, it becomes easier to develop the capacity of the learners as they go through the system (Mosaad, 2016).

**Influence of religious learning standards.** In Saudi Arabia Islamic religion is foundational in the education system because Saudi Arabia applies Islamic religion in all aspects of government (Alzamil, 2013). Also, the Saudi government thinks Islam is important for each citizen, so it leads to people to take good things and protect them from bad and evil influences. As for the religious aspect for education in Saudi Arabia, religion is integrated into the philosophy of education (Alzamil, 2013). Many topics and lessons in the curriculum are supported by Quranic verses and Hadiths, and the Arabic language and science are linked to religion. For example, materials teach students the principles of religion and the Arabic language

allows them to read the Quran correctly. In terms of science, students consider animals and plants as the creatures of God and thus strengthen their religious beliefs (National Research Council, 2001).

These standards are set by a group who have higher education certificates or interest in religion, so that the religious process may be linked to the classroom. After that, the higher government must approve these curricula for the students (Alzamil, 2013). The curriculum is not changed but is improved every five years to match the current technologies, with developments to the materials of science and mathematics. As for the materials of religion and the Arabic language, the standards are fixed and do not change, thanks to the stability of the religion (Mosaad, 2016).

**Curriculum for students identified with disabilities.** In Saudi Arabia, education includes all people, whether with disabilities or without. This removes any discrimination from the Saudi system (Mosaad, 2016). The special education system in Saudi Arabia is very sophisticated. There are special schools and education options suitable for people with special needs. Universities also have specializations for graduate teachers. Saudi universities also have a scholarship system allowing disabled people to study for free (Mosaad, 2016). Saudi Arabia is currently seeking to integrate those with special needs with regular children so that there is greater equality in education.

### **Education System in Saudi Arabia**

In some countries such as Saudi Arabia, due to restrictions in religion, some aspects of the learning process have lagged behind, which affects the performance of the learners. The education system in Saudi Arabia is a unified system suitable only for Arabic speakers. If a non-Arab student joins the education system, he/she is placed in special international schools under

an education model derived from the system in America or Britain. Education in Saudi Arabia is linked to the Islamic religion. From entry into kindergarten, the student is given the basic teachings of the Islamic religion, and thus the standards of education in Saudi Arabia place the religion as one of the foundations upon which the curriculum should be built (AlGhamdi, 2010).

In my view, since I am a Saudi educator and early childhood specialist, I believed that teaching religion to children is important and has many benefits for the child. It also instills the meaning of faith in God and its blessings, peace upon children, charity for all people, hatred of evil and evildoers, and love of goodness and good people. Religious instruction helps children avoid making mistakes and falsehoods. Religion works to strengthen social relations and increase bonds of love and affection among people. In Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, through the religious training for members of the Islamic community, students are raised on the meanings of respect and charity to others, with priority for the relationship of blood relatives. Also when Saudi teachers convey the Islamic religion to children, the country achieves security and social peace through the generations that know the *halal* (divine precept) or *haram* (divine restriction). For this reason, we instill religion from childhood (AlGhamdi, 2010).

### **Specific Goals for early childhood education in Saudi Arabia**

**Education system.** The administration of the education system is done by three different bodies and is offered at no cost. The primary level usually lasts for six years while middle and secondary last for three years each. Enrolment in kindergarten and preschool are mandatory since the decision whether to take the child to school is made by the parent. By the age of 6 years, it becomes mandatory for children to attend school. The country has adopted the strategy of separating the students, whereby boys and girls are taught separately (AlGhamdi, 2010). This is done to equip them with the traditional Islamic teachings. The structure of education in the

country is designed in a way that it creates a sense of pride in the Islamic nation where the religion and country are the same, while at the same time developing basic language, physical education, and math skills (Alzamil, 2013). The management of the education system in the country is carried out by a technical and vocational training corporation. The skills offered to the learner have a curriculum that is well established by the governing body which makes adjustments as and when the need arises. This vocational training has been given special attention by the country due to its huge contribution to economic growth and development. The country proposes that to realize sustainable development and economic diversification, it is necessary to reform the education system. It is important to focus on educating the workforce and teachers and equipping them with the skills necessary for the country to realize its 2030 target goals.

### **Specific goals for early childhood education in the United States**

**Teaching social justice.** Early childhood education seeks to equip students with contemporary democratic values of the 21st century. Young children are expected to be respectful towards human rights, creative, sensitive towards the environment in which they live, and able to make right decisions. Teachers should educate children about their rights, as well as societal values that define relationships (Sounoglou & Michalopoulou, 2017).

It is important to realize that human rights education is an important process for creating a human rights culture among young learners. The values that young students learn in childhood influence their relationships and personalities even in adulthood. Essentially, the early childhood education process is based on the active participation of young children through which they get an opportunity to learn about human beings, as well understand the issues of human rights. Teachers have the responsibility of ensuring that young learners acquire the skills and abilities

necessary for them not only to defend human rights, but also to develop attitudes of respect and dignity in society. Therefore, early childhood education plays a significant role in establishing a culture of human rights in society (Hollingsworth et al., 2016).

**Eliminating Discrimination.** Early childhood education has facilitated inclusion in the United States. The early childhood education system in the United States seeks to eliminate discrimination based on identity, ability, or background. For instance, early childhood education policies have always focused on inclusion of children with a range of disabilities in regular education settings (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016).

Early childhood education in the United States has also focused on the importance of children having universal access to inclusive programs (Study in the USA, n.d). Efforts have been made to ensure that every local educational program provides placements for all preschool aged children without discrimination. Extensive progress has been made in expanding education access to young children from all backgrounds in the United States. Thus, early childhood education promotes the quality of social relationships among a highly diverse group of children (Study in the USA, n.d).

### **Statement of the problem//study's purpose**

I still remember Professor Ba Aqil 's words when she said Saudi Arabia does not have country specific early childhood standards for early childhood. Saudi Arabia draws on and benefits from the standards of foreign countries for the early stages of education. As a teacher from Saudi Arabia, I saw how we face in our country many aspects of education that do not have criteria, especially in the stage of early childhood. All of us are aware that every society and its countries have a culture and habits that govern them and have a strong influence on the standards of education.

When we take the standards of education in the stage of early childhood from other developed countries, we have the problem that some important aspects of Saudi children's education do not receive enough attention. This include the religious aspect, social aspect, and the differences between men and women. Because of this, the purpose of my project is first to survey teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and then to outline how early childhood standards could be implemented for Saudi Arabia. This is a starting point, so we can transfer and benefit from the standards of foreign education (America and Canada), but design standards to form a distinctive system of our own.

### **Research Question**

The question I hoped to investigate in this study was:

- What was the perception of Saudi Arabian faculty, graduate students, and kindergarten teachers regarding standards for early childhood education?

### **Limitations**

I was obliged to limit my research to American standards for childhood education because Saudi Arabia does not specifically have its own learning standards. Also, I limited myself to comparison between this country's criteria and create a specific criterion for my country, Saudi Arabia. As I researched, I had to be mindful about looking for the opinion of Saudi educators and scholars on early childhood in my country and perception of early childhood faculty, graduate students, and kindergarten teachers regarding the preparation of early childhood teachers. A limitation is that professors have more knowledge regarding standards and are able to share specific ideas that can be used to improve the nation's standards. Additionally, I presumed that university students are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the Saudi standards for early childhood education.

This study was also limited by the findings of other studies and research that others have done. I wanted to limit my research to the kindergartens in the US and Saudi Arabia. I wanted to talk about why my country should create special curricula for this level in education.

While conducting the study, several other issues arose. Firstly, the respondents were not contacted in advance to inform them of the survey. As a result, some of the potential respondents did not participate in the survey. This outcome also resulted in some of the questionnaires not being returned or not being fully filled as was required. To ensure clarity of data, only those questionnaires that were fully completed were included in the analysis.

It was also a challenge to have teachers respond truthfully, as opposed to how they think they should respond. There may be more positive, stronger perceptions due to this feeling of how they should answer a question. gain perspective on how kindergarten students felt about the standards of education in Saudi Arabia. Even with the surveys being anonymous and confidential, participants may have thought they could be identified.

In this study, I also had to translate the questions into Arabic. The translation from English to Arabic may have meant the questions needed clarification from the researcher. As a result, a good number of the questionnaires were not filled correctly as some questions were not well understood.

## **Conclusion**

The next four chapters of this paper included the literature review, project design, findings analysis, and conclusions and reflections. The literature review in Chapter 2 went into more depth about the major research done on early childhood curricula in the US and Saudi Arabia. Chapter 3 included a section on the methods and purpose of this survey and interview, after which I discussed the benefits and strategies of early childhood education in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 4 included findings, categories, and quotes from the survey of Saudi educators. Chapter 5 included discussion and implications of my research, as connected and linked to the literature review.

### **Definition of terms**

**Culture:** the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group (Alghamdi, 2010, p. 51).

**Early childhood:** the early stage of growth or development in a human from infancy until eight years old (Calvi, 1995, p. 33).

**Early childhood education (ECE;** also, nursery education) is a branch of education theory which relates to the teaching of little children (formally and informally) up through the age of eight (birth through Grade 3) (Alzamil, 2013, p. 48). Early childhood education is a broad term used to describe any type of educational program that serves children in their preschool years, before they are old enough to enter kindergarten. Early childhood education may consist of any number of activities and experiences designed to aid in the cognitive and social development of preschoolers before they enter elementary school (Calvi, 1995, p. 35).

**Educational standards:** are the learning goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level (Calvi, 1995, p.77).

**Learning standards:** written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. Learning standards describe educational objectives—i.e., what students should have learned by the end of a course, grade level, or grade span—but they do not describe any particular teaching practice, curriculum, or assessment method (NAEYC, 2009, para. 2-3).

**The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):** is a large nonprofit association in the United States representing early childhood education teachers, para-educators, center directors, trainers, college educators, families of young children, policy makers, and advocates (NAEYC, 2009, para. 1,4).

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Methods

In conducting this research, my main search terms were *standards in the US for early childhood* and *standards in Saudi Arabia for early childhood*. I found several articles about my topic which I discussed in Chapter 2. I conducted a survey to determine how educators in Saudi Arabia agree or disagree with American standards and aspects of standards important to Saudi Arabia. A thorough overview of the methods used to conduct this research is presented in the methods section of Chapter 3. In this pursuit further search terms were used such as *standards of learning, standards or policy of teacher in the classroom, and early childhood teachers in the United States*.

I searched the databases of google scholar and EWU Library. The majority of my research articles were found in the databases from EWU Library. Information was first included about the ideal components of early childhood standards. This was necessary to provide a foundation for aspects of standards that may need to be included in rewriting Saudi Arabian standards.

This chapter carried out a review of literature relating to the perceptions of teachers regarding early childhood standards in the United States. Upon investigation, research studies conducted with teacher's perceptions as the focus were found to be limited. The literature review was focused on ideal components of early childhood education and looked into developing early learning education standards. Next, it was broadened to include teachers' perceptions and experiences. Then, it considered teacher preparedness for early childhood education in the United States. Finally, it examined the connection between teachers use of standards and resulting classroom quality. This information would also include curricular activities supported

through standards that may improve both teacher quality and classroom quality in the United States (Powell & Diamond, 2012; Trundle, Sackes, 2012). Early childhood education forms the basic foundation for the long-term development of children, and the government should support the development and implementation of policies that enhanced ECE's quality and effectiveness (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017; Guralinick & Bruder, 2016; La Paro, La Paro, Van Schagen, King & Lippard, 2018).

In Saudi Arabia, kindergarten education standards that the United States had developed are used to guide teachers. Saudi Arabia does not have its own developed standards of education; instead, it has adopted those of the United States with slight modifications. Rabaah, Doaa, and Asma (2016) produced a report on the development of early childhood education in Saudi Arabia. The report highlights that Saudi Arabia had its first kindergarten in 1974. After the introduction of this level of education, the country struggled with adopting a system of standards that would result in a quality education for children. In 2000, the Saudi government opted to replicate the US standards of kindergarten education and make a few adjustments to fit the culture of the country. The standards, as a result, have remained part of Saudi Arabia's education system.

### **Ideal Components of Early Childhood Education**

There are various important components of early childhood education according to research in the United States. Early childhood education is essential for the social development of young learners (Calvi, 1995). The early childhood education setting provides young students with the opportunity to develop critical social skills, as well as plays an important role in the development of language among young students while they learn to communicate (Logue, 2016).

Without language development, young children will not be able to voice their ideas effectively and appropriately (Powell & Diamond, 2012).

Early childhood education also provides students with an opportunity to develop important scientific thinking skills, as well as the basic understanding of natural phenomena (Brown, 2013; Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Heineke, et al., 2013). Early childhood teachers can help young learners to develop fundamental science understanding that will support them through to adulthood (Brown, 2013). It is also important to note that early science learning opportunities provided in early childhood education impart basic inquiry skills to young learners. Another important component of early childhood education is that it helps in the cognitive development of young children (Brown, 2013; Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Heineke, Kennedy & Lees, 2013). Young children not only grow physically, but also mentally. During early childhood, children continue to advance their skills in observing and interacting with the environment around them (Lake, Winterbottom, Ethridge, & Kelly, 2015; Sounoglou & Michalopoulou, 2017). Most importantly, children at this stage make tremendous advances in terms of how they process, store, and use information (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017; Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Han & Brown, 2013).

**Social Development.** High quality early childhood teachers can play a critical role in promoting the social development of children (Logue, 2016). As children grow, they begin to mature in their ability to interact with others socially. Unlike infants whose only social need and developmental task is to bond and connect with primary caregivers, children in early childhood are beginning to branch out to create other complex social relationships (Hatcher, Nuner & Paulsel, 2012). As the children continue to develop socially, they normally enter a stage of rough and tumble play with peers, such as racing, running, or competitive games. These games

require such social skills as turn taking and following simple group rules and norms. Early childhood education provides the necessary support for the development of social skills necessary for coexisting with others harmoniously in the early childhood educational setting (Logue, 2016).

Studies have shown that effective teachers for young children provide critical foundation for their social development (La Paro et al., 2018). High quality teachers can help in meeting the social needs of young children during early childhood. Essentially, teachers should be effective communicators, capable of maintaining positive learning relationships. Children need to be provided with necessary support in terms of learning the values, skills, and knowledge that can enable them to relate to others effectively. They should also be taught the importance of contributing positively to family, school, and the community at large (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Heineke, Kennedy & Lees, 2013; Logue, 2016).

Teachers are responsible for passing important knowledge to young children that will help them in the process of fully integrating into their community (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Logue, 2016; Lohmann, et al., 2018). The relationships of children with others, as well as their awareness of values and expectations enable them to build a strong sense of who they are, along with what roles are available for them. It is important to note that children respond to the influences around them, which play an active part in shaping their relationships as they develop socially during childhood (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Logue, 2016; Lohmann et al., 2018).

ECE teachers influence the social development of children in a significant way. They are mostly likely to be the first individuals with whom the young children interact, apart from their own family. Thus, the teacher must be able and committed to help the young children through such a critical transition, as separation from parents at first can be a difficult experience.

Additionally, a student can be attached to the teacher as a substitute for the parents or shun the teacher completely based on the quality of the initial interaction (Han & Brown, 2013).

In addition, teachers act as mediators in children's interactions with peers in the school setting. As such, the teachers have a unique opportunity of shaping the social development of the young children. This means that teachers need to be creative and adaptive. The children's relationships and connections with those around them play a critical role in building their sense of who they are, as well as where they fit in the social world (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Hatcher, et al., 2012; Logue, 2016). Therefore, early childhood teachers help young children understand themselves and others. Coming to such understanding is perhaps one of the central goals of children's social development (Heineke, et al., 2013; Lohmann, Hovey & Gauvreau, 2018; Tobin, 2005).

Generally, the ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that children have regarding their identities, their capabilities, as well as their place in society significantly shape their understanding of self. It is important to realize that children often base their self-concepts on the feedbacks they receive from others, as well as their own individual judgments. Early childhood education shapes the way children develop their self-concept. It is also normally in the school setting where young children develop a strong cultural identity, which promotes a sense of connectedness and belonging. Teachers nurture the cultural identities of young students by teaching them about their own cultural traditions (Logue, 2016). Additionally, the cultural identity of young children is also nurtured when they observe others show respect for their cultural values. Teachers in childhood education instruct the children in respect and appreciation for variations and differences between cultures, as this is an important aspect of the children's overall social development.

Generally, young children are naturally self-focused, thinking that everyone sees things the way they do. Early childhood education provides an opportunity for them to learn that others may actually see things differently. The teachers can help the children not only to understand others' points of view, but also to appreciate multiple ways of looking at the same situation. Thus, it is evident that children's earliest and most extensive learning about social relationships occurs during early childhood. Early childhood education plays a critical role in the social development of children (Buettner, et al., 2016; Guralnick, Bruder, 2016; Logue, 2016).

**Language Development.** Early childhood education helps to promote early literacy and language development in young children. According to Powell and Diamond (2012), instructional practices and curricula designed to improve the literacy and language skills of young children play a significant role in language development. Code-related skills in early childhood curricula help young children crack the alphanumeric code and read the combinations of letters. It is important to realize that these decoding skills serve to address the auditory and written aspects of language, including phonological awareness, letter name and letter sound knowledge, as well as writing.

Phonological awareness enables the young children to attend to, remember, and manipulate the elements of spoken language, ranging from words in sentences to phonemes in words. The development of phonetic awareness among young children in early childhood education begins gradually and builds through preschool and the early elementary period. It is worth realizing that phonetic skills are critical predictors of literacy performance in subsequent years. Many researchers are of the opinion that phonological awareness in early childhood is more important to literacy compared to other variables such as intelligence or social status (Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012; Powell & Diamond, 2012).

Early childhood teachers can help in developing the phonological awareness of young children through different types of word play. For instance, reading books to children that focus on sounds, rhyming, and alliteration can help in promoting awareness of sounds from different letters. Essentially, phonological awareness among young children in early childhood education serves to improve the ability of the children to understand the structures of their native language (Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012; Powell & Diamond, 2012).

Young children are also taught vocabulary skills in early childhood education. Early childhood vocabulary is considered one of the greatest building blocks of a solid reading foundation. Engaging young children in conversation is one of the most effective methods of supporting the development of vocabulary. Talking with children about what they see and experience in their environment can help significantly in introducing new vocabulary. Their vocabulary can also be improved by reading aloud. This can give opportunities to explain new words, as well associate words with illustration (Hatcher, Nuner, & Paulsel, 2012; Powell & Diamond, 2012).

**Science Knowledge Development.** Trundle and Sackes (2012) pointed out that young children begin to develop important scientific thinking skills and basic understanding of natural phenomena. Early childhood education can help young children develop fundamental scientific understanding. By allowing students to understand fundamental science concepts, early childhood education plays a critical role in laying a solid foundation for the subsequent understanding of more complex ideas (Trundle & Sackes, 2012).

In a world filled with the products of scientific inquiry, it is becoming increasingly important to teach young children scientific skills. Everyone in society needs to use scientific knowledge to make choices that arise daily. Children need to be empowered to engage

intelligently in public discourse about important issues that involve science and technology. Children with a broad base of experience in scientific concepts tend to move more rapidly in acquiring more complex skills (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Hyson et al., 2009; Logue, 2016).

**Cognitive Development.** Early childhood teachers play a critical role in supporting the cognitive development of children (National Research Council, 2015). The teachers carefully prepare materials and create an engaging learning environment. The goal is to thoughtfully plan learning experiences, provide scaffolding as needed, and take advantage of teachable moments to help children develop skills to understand the world around them. The hope is that students will eagerly approach these learning opportunities.

Cognitive growth refers to changes in one's knowledge, understanding, ability to think about surrounding things, and processes that increase human knowledge. These cognitive processes include attention, perception, memory, and thought. From a cognitive point of view, the knowledge of the learner's cognitive stock is updated by the accuracy and maturation of these processes. As well as the elapsed time spent by the individual learner in the work of previous knowledge processes on the raw material that takes place. And the more time spent on these operations, the inventory was deep and orderly and easy to retrieve in similar situations. This indicates the importance of cognitive structures and their role in the growth of thinking and thinking as a mental process is different From other mental processes such as perception, memory and imagination (Board on Children, Youth, and Families The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015).

According to Brown (2013), early childhood education helps young children to develop critical thinking skills. The ability to think critically is essential not only for classroom success, but also for a lifetime. Early childhood teachers can impart effective critical thinking skills to

young children, enhancing their potential to be successful in life. Early childhood education experts agree that critical thinking is essential for language and literacy success (Brown, 2013). Early childhood education curricula are increasing their focus on critical thinking skills. In order to understand the meanings of various academic concepts learned in class, young children must be armed with effective critical thinking skills (Powell & Diamond, 2012; Trundle & Sackes, 2012).

### **Developing Early Learning Education Standards**

The process of developing kindergarten education standards in the past was described as being arbitrary (Scherman, Zimmerman, Howie & Bosker, 2014). According to Scherman et al. (2014), the process of setting education standards relies on the “assumption that it depended on imprecision and subjectivity of human judgment” (p. 94). The United States development of the standards process in early childhood was unpredictable, as each state decided which standards to include in their final product (Scherman et al.). The level of control those who were in charge of developing the standards was unrestrained. As a result, the standards did not highlight the best practices in every kindergarten, but a mix of what the developers thought would be beneficial.

In the past, individual states developed the standards of kindergarten education and mainly focused on the scope and quality of education children received. According to Ackerman and Sansanelli (2010), only ten states had documents that outlined the expectations for child learning and development before kindergarten entry in 1999. In mid-2002, twenty-seven states had established early learning standards for kindergarten children. The standards mainly covered what children were capable of learning and efforts needed from teachers to improve the quality of education they provided (Chandler et al., 2012). The standards also helped increase accountability among teachers. In some of the states, teachers were responsible for the

performance of the children in academic and social activities. In such a way, the standards formed a baseline for other states to emulate and develop their own.

States have made tremendous efforts in supporting the implementation of early learning standards. Today, all the states in the US have early education standards that provide teachers with guidance, technical support, and training (National Center on Early Childhood, 2017). The states have training programs that target early education teachers with the aim of helping develop the standards. The process of developing early learning education standards is ongoing and the states try to provide teachers with an environment conducive to educating children.

Standards of kindergarten education were developed based on different sources. In the United States, the standards were developed from the existing K-12 education programs. Initially, kindergarten children were subjected to a standard of education similar to those for students in higher levels of learning (Casey & DiCarlo, 2018). However, children in kindergartens are new to the education system and need to have their own dedicated set of standards (Casey & DiCarlo, 2018). Thus, states modified the standards of education that existed to match the type of education kindergarteners ought to receive (Casey & DiCarlo, 2018).

Each country addresses standards in different ways. In South Africa, different methods were used to develop the kindergarten education standards (Casey & DiCarlo, 2018). Researchers have begun to look for different approaches to standards to develop kindergarten education by considering everything from foundational skills (Scott-Little, Lesko, Martella, & Milburn, 2007). The process of developing the standards, however designed, helps provide teachers with a snapshot of what they need to do to educate children.

According to Kagan, Castillo, Gomez, & Gowani, (2013). Throughout the world, there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of the early years, with the number of countries setting

the standards for early education and development. Differences in country context and service delivery affect the content and use of standards documents. In general, countries in their documents prefer either to identify precise indicators of what children should know and be able to do, or to include many elements that guide early education on a larger scale. Although standards documents vary, countries generally use their documentation for curriculum development, professional development, parent involvement, and national monitoring and evaluation. Criteria have made many positive contributions to early childhood, but while the evaluation of accurate results is lacking, it is too early to distinguish the impact of standards on children's performance and learning. It is recommended that countries pay more attention to the development of their early childhood infrastructure so that standards documents can be understood, used and evaluated more effectively.

Each age group has a different set of standards. Early learning standards were developed to help teachers improve the quality of education that children received. For a long time, kindergarten education was operated without any specific standards, and it was only in the late 1990s that some of the states in the United States opted to have standards (Helm & Gronlund, 2000). Graue, Ryan, Wilinski, Northey, and Nogera (2018) identified the role played by standards in pre-K programs in Wisconsin and New Jersey and how they were a foundation for teachers and administrators. In New Jersey, full-day programs for 3- and 4-year-olds were targeted while in Wisconsin, half-day programs for 4-year-olds were included in the study. Both of these programs had fully implemented the pre-K program education. The findings of the study demonstrated that standards that had been developed for pre-K programs were not good predictors of enacted practices. As a result, the standards applied in the two states were not

representative of the ways teachers performed their roles. Standards that were developed for states played a little role in defining the roles of teachers.

### **Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences**

**Perceptions.** Kindergarten teachers have mixed reactions to early learning standards (Gibbons, Tesar, Steiner, & Chan, 2018). In addition, teachers are often not well informed about the standards of kindergarten education they ought to know and practice. For example, in a study conducted by Abankina (2018), 888 directors and teachers of preschools in Russia were interviewed concerning the implementation of education standards. The majority of teachers from public schools in Russia were not aware of the standards of preschool education. Only those from private institutions were well educated on the standards of education they were supposed to abide by. Children attending public kindergartens were subjected to lower standards of education, different from what the Russian federal government proposed. According to Abankina (2018), public kindergarten teachers did not know what standards to follow, and as a result, they focused on what they knew based on available public information.

Furthermore, children at this age developed at different rates. This means that it is normal for children to reach milestones at different time points (Helm & Gronlund, 2000). Children may have difficulty with the specific cognitive processes associated with kindergarten standard-setting activities. Teachers who face this reality rely on alternative strategies they have such as their experience in working with kindergarten children and their content knowledge (Helm & Gronlund, 2000). Research conducted by Scherman et al. (2014) has also found that teachers who participate in the standard-setting process disagree with some of the items because of the impracticability involved. Teachers find it difficult trying to encourage children toward success

while abiding by the set standards. Since the standards are mandatory for all the teachers, determining how children benefit from them is challenging for the teachers.

Teachers have different interpretations of the standards of kindergarten education. Education sectors across the world develop the standards with the hope that all the participants, especially teachers, will have the same understanding. Upon development, teachers acquire their own understanding and interpretation of the standards (Helm & Gronlund, 2000). In certain scenarios, they end up distorting the main purpose of the education standards due to misinterpretation.

In some countries, inadequate standards of kindergarten education guide teachers on what they should do. Kindergarten children are sometimes forced to receive an education based on what teachers think is right or acceptable. In a study conducted by Peng (2017), attitudes of teachers on early linguistic education standards in China were investigated. Participants in the study responded that the Chinese government had adopted standards to help teachers educate kindergarten children learning English. It had proposed a play-based learning curriculum and play-literacy relationship. Parents in China were opposed to this system and preferred that teachers focused on teaching rather than playing with children. The results of the study demonstrated that teachers were in a dilemma: should they abide by the standards set by the government or should they satisfy parents' requests. The majority of the respondents were in support of the government's teaching standards. Teachers showed that they would support standards that focused on the development of a child while learning.

**Experiences.** Teachers, through their views of education and their experiences working with young children, felt there was a lack of inclusivity for students identified with special needs in kindergarten (Scherman et al., 2014). The standards are only meant to work for children who

are normal both physically and mentally (Gibbons, Tesar, Steiner, & Chan, 2018). The standards do not serve the children who have characteristics that differ from the others. Teachers who work with children with disabilities, for instance, have a difficult time educating them based on the standards provided. By contrast, children who do not have disabilities may be forced to slow down their learning to allow those with disabilities to catch up (Scherman et al., 2014). The standards of kindergarten education are, therefore, not inclusive of all the children they aim to help.

Lack of integration of the standards among administrators to cater to the needs of all children and teachers is a major issue of concern among the teachers. School administrators have done little to help teachers incorporate the standards correctly. The administrators, who include school principals, do not understand their role in the process of integration. According to Copley (2004), if principals understood their role in helping teachers abide by standards of education, all the students would benefit. The lack of integration makes teachers and staff unable to take key considerations when teaching children since no serious follow-up is conducted for the standards provided. Schools should ensure that integration of the standards with learning activities is done to keep teachers on the right track.

The effectiveness of kindergarten education standards depends on reasonable changes being implemented by schools. According to Clasquin -Johnson (2016), teachers are sometimes forced to work under unbearable circumstances, such as overcrowded classrooms and too many subjects to handle. For instance, the standards might define the ultimate size of a classroom to be controlled by a teacher, but a larger number of children might be enrolled. In such a case, a teacher cannot abide by the standards by ignoring the number of students under his or her control. Schools that do not have enough resources struggle to maintain the required standards of

education. According to Henderson (2019), reasonable changes include having a strict policy on the maximum number of enrolled children and helping maintain a specific class size. These changes will help teachers remain focused on education standards.

The experiences teachers have working with the kindergarten education standards depend on the efforts made by school administrations. In an Australian study, Kilderry, Nolan, and Scott (2017) investigated the level of confidence that educators had when working with kindergarten education standards. Five kindergarten teachers participated in the study. They were exposed to different standards of early learning education and were supposed to rate their experience and confidence in working under them. Two of the respondents stated that their experiences while practicing the standards were unclear as they were ever changing. Three of the respondents stated that the standards were flexible and improved teachers' experiences. The respondents claimed that the school administration played a supportive role in implementing the standards of kindergarten education. School administrations helped teachers understand their mission in implementing kindergarten education standards. Hence, teachers relied on school administrations to give them direction whenever standards changed or were not clear.

Kindergarten teachers supported the inclusion of education standards that cater to children with disabilities. In a study conducted by Al-Qaryouti, Ihmeideh, Bustami, and Homidi (2016), 747 kindergarten teachers from four Arabian Gulf countries, i.e. Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, were used to investigate the attitudes teachers had on the inclusion of standards that supported education for children with disabilities. The study focused on three domains: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions. The results of the study demonstrated that the attitudes of kindergarten teachers towards the inclusion of standards that supported the education of children with disabilities were moderate across the three domains.

Respondent teachers also showed support for standards that required teachers to have training in dealing with children with disabilities. Teachers who had less background in special education were interested in increasing their experience through training and interaction. This study facilitated the positive and supportive attitudes that teachers have towards their kindergarten students, especially those with disabilities. As a result, having standards that are supportive of children with disabilities guarantees support from teachers.

Kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia are supportive of developing the standards to match the culture of the country. When the standards of education were developed based on those used in the United States, children in special needs classes attending kindergarten did not receive a chance to fully interact with the culture of Saudi Arabia. Garni and Abdullah (2012) explored teachers' perceptions of standards for inclusive preschool. The purpose of this study was to explore whether these attitudes were held by future special education teachers in Saudi Arabia, and how the standard gifted education course, delivered as part of their program, impacted their attitudes toward gifted students., teachers would welcome standards that promote the cultural beliefs of the people of Saudi Arabia.

Garni and Abdullah (2012) employed a mixed method design to collect quantitative and qualitative data from 90 students enrolled in a teacher education program, majoring in special education, at a Saudi Arabian university. The quantitative component of the study involved an investigation of a cohort of future special education teachers taking a semester-long course in gifted education. The data were primarily received from a standard questionnaire instrument and supplemented with questions that probed the future teachers' attitudes toward gifted children. The findings, based on both the quantitative and qualitative data, indicated that the majority of future special education teachers held, overall, slightly positive attitudes toward gifted students

and their education. The findings also indicated that the attitudes of most of the participants were significantly improved, as a result of the course, toward ability grouping such as special classes and schools.

From the findings, lectured-based courses can serve as a starting point from which to focus future teachers' attention on the varied needs of the gifted, and as a conduit for learning about special services for the gifted (Kaur, 2011). The standards of kindergarten education applied in the US, for instance, combine the education of both boys and girls with no differences being defined. In Saudi Arabia, teachers prefer standards that clearly define the difference between genders during learning.

### **Teacher Preparedness for Early Childhood Education in the United States**

Preparing early childhood teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms is one of the most effective strategies for improving the quality of early childhood education. The US population is becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse. There are efforts to develop curricula that meet the needs of bilingual children and English Language Learners in early childhood settings (Lohmann, Hovey & Gauvreau, 2018). Early teacher preparedness assists in improving the quality of education for young children.

There is need for investment in sufficient numbers of full time, early-childhood-trained university faculty (Buettner et al., 2016; Hyson et al., 2009). Competent faculty in a university program can create competent early childhood educators. There should be enough manpower to train early childhood teachers pursuing degree programs. Having sufficient well-educated early childhood teachers can help deliver quality education to students. Deep, rich, and positive teacher education can provide a critical foundation that may constructively influence the learning experiences of children.

Essentially, early childhood teachers need to be creative and adaptive in order to identify the various motivations of young children in class. This means that the teacher should play the critical role of a mediator, particularly when the young students encounter problems sharing or learning how to get along harmoniously (Buettner et al., 2016; Hyson et al., 2009). Teachers in early education should also learn to be not only creative, but also adaptive. Teachers in early education should endeavor to think outside their own adult perspective and place themselves in the shoes of young children. They should be able to identify the factors that may motivate their students. Lessons in early education must be essentially hand-on, involving arts and crafts, exercise, storytelling, educational games, among many others (National Research Council, 2015).

Additionally, NAEYC has made significant contributions in the field of early childhood education by providing credible guidance. It has proved to be a trusted source of information and resources necessary for effectively preparing early childhood education teachers for classroom teaching (Guralnick & Bruder, 2016; Hyson et al., 2009).

### **Type of Design and Underlying Assumptions**

The research employed a survey research design and a questionnaire. Survey research provides quantifiable results from the participants, based on their characters, opinions, and behavior (Mertler & Reinhart, 2016). Moreover, the survey can be distributed in various ways such as e-mails, allowing speedy communication to the participants and back to the researcher. Additionally, surveys work best when the research is done in universities as the researcher can gather useful information, can follow-up even after participants have graduated, and can aid in detecting the values and attitudes of the participants or population under investigation. The use

of a survey also helps streamline data to accommodate the age and native language of the participants.

Furthermore, the survey had open-ended personal questions for the respondents, and the Likert scale questions allowed the female university students, faculty of the university, and the teachers in kindergartens to have a variety of options to choose from when answering the questions created by the researcher to allow quantitative analysis. The participants had to choose from options that ranged from 1-5 and could complete a section for explanation if they had more information or reasons for their choosing.

**Researcher assumptions.** I made a few assumptions when developing my questions. My first assumption was that most of the respondents were familiar with the standards of the American National Association for the Education of the Young Children (NAEYC) because most are teachers of kindergartens or students of ECE. My second assumption was that almost all the respondents would strongly disagree with Q5, “NAEYC standards should be prepared only for normal children.”

### **Connection between Teacher Quality and Classroom Quality**

The quality of teachers is directly related to classroom quality. The quality of training offered to educators influences the quality of services offered by teachers in the classroom. Increasing the critical thinking skills of early childhood teachers ensures that the teachers develop the knowledge and skills to teach in diverse classroom settings (Brown, 2013). Critical thinking has been described as skillful thinking that facilitates good judgment. There are six core intellectual standards that should be applied to thinking in order to ensure quality in service delivery. These standards include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, and breadth (National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, 2017).

Clarity is used to describe how teachers need to be easy to understand and free from confusion and ambiguity (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017; Hyson et al., 2009; Sounglou & Michalopoulou, 2017). This standard will ensure that young children can effectively understand what they are being taught. Accuracy refers to being free from errors, distortions, and mistakes, which can have adverse effects on the learning process. Teachers should ensure that they are accurate in the way they deliver content to young students.

Precision refers to being definite and exact in the classroom since young children strive to emulate their teachers. A precise teacher can ensure that students also learn to be precise in their approach to learning. Relevance refers to how teachers need to relate to the matter at hand while teaching young children. Young children are more likely to understand concepts that they can relate to. Depth refers to how teachers should be equipped to deal with the complexities of classroom challenges. They need to be detailed in the way they teach while putting themselves in the shoes of young children (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017; Hyson et al., 2009; Sounglou & Michalopoulou, 2017). This can enable them to adopt effective strategies to enhance comprehension in class. Finally, breadth refers to the way teachers need to recognize insights into more than one side of the question. The teacher should explore a given issue from all perspectives in order to enhance learning in the classroom. Such standards can improve the capacity of early childhood teachers to effectively meet the needs of young children.

**Inclusive Classrooms.** There is need to train early childhood teachers on new learning standards and accountability practices (Anderson & Linderman, 2017). This will enhance increased accountability among early childhood teachers, particularly those teaching in inclusive classrooms. Current early childhood teachers are required to integrate new learning standards and accountability reforms with developmentally appropriate materials for children with and

without disability. Therefore, it is important to enhance the quality of teachers in order to improve the quality of classroom experience for young children in inclusive early childhood educational settings in the United States (Anderson & Linderman, 2017).

Generally, best practices in early childhood education point to the potential benefits of inclusion for young children (Sounglou & Michalopoulou, 2017). Early childhood education programs can have a positive effect on school participation and outcomes for children with disabilities. Research has shown that all children can benefit significantly from an inclusive prekindergarten setting. Inclusive classrooms provide children with disabilities opportunities to learn critical skills from their non-disabled peers. Additionally, inclusive classrooms offer students without disabilities the opportunity to develop a greater acceptance of children with different abilities. The children without disabilities can learn more about living with disability and thus become more compassionate. As such, inclusive prekindergarten settings provide a win-win situation for all children (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017; Sounglou & Michalopoulou, 2017).

Inclusive classroom also provides young children opportunities to learn from children from other cultures and communities. The settings provide an effective platform from which the children can learn the importance of diversity. Children who interact with classmates drawn from different backgrounds can learn to be tolerant. This can help enhance the ability of the children to coexist harmoniously with people from different social and cultural backgrounds (Anderson & Lindeman, 2017; Hollingsworth, Knight-McKenna, & Bryan, 2016; Sounglou & Michalopoulou, 2017).

**Supportive Learning Environment.** There has been an increasing need for provision of supportive learning environment for preschool children (Buettner et al., 2016; Lohmann et al., 2018). NAEYC recommends that teachers use developmentally appropriate curricula in order to

effectively meet the developmental, emotional, and cultural needs of the children in classroom while developing instructions. The teachers also need to increase motivation and engagement in class in order to encourage student exploration and self-expression. It is important to realize that student motivation for learning is increased significantly by allowing students to take responsibility for self-monitoring their own behaviors, as well as keeping track of their understanding of key learning concepts.

Young children also enjoy being given an opportunity to have some control over their own learning. This will make them feel they play a role in their own learning process. By providing choices, the teachers will be able to effectively increase the motivation of children for participating in classroom activities and complying with the guidelines provided. Providing choices also helps in supporting children with more significant disabilities (Lohmann, et al., 2018).

### **Curriculum Research**

Early childhood education has recently gained significant attention among researchers because of its impact on human development and growth. There are both long- and short-term benefits to quality early childhood education, and their identification has aided in improving the curriculum. While many aspects of this subject have been researched, quality enforcement has emerged as the most important. This quality should be enforced in educational preparation for school and other goals like physical, emotional and social development (Schola Europaea, 2011).

The focus should be on implementing the best standards to achieve quality in early childhood education, rather than choosing the most superior curriculum. Kagan and Kauerz (2006) highlighted the challenge in finding the best option as the absence of reliable comparative techniques. Their paper analyzes recent research findings to find a solution to this problem,

and their conclusion is that the curriculum should be regarded as different from learning standards, skills, beliefs, and pedagogy. Instead, they propose that no curriculum is superior and that all should be analyzed for suitability, while allowing for flexible application to suit individual children's' needs. Research by MacEwan (2013) on the significance of early childhood education similarly analyzes findings from previous studies and concludes that the benefits of early childhood education depend on the quality of care that accompanies the education.

Successful programs require developing a supportive environment, with a close one-on-one, teacher-child relationship. A case study comparison by De Botton (2010), which involves qualitative analysis of different curriculums in use, found similarities in the effective methods. In these studies, a focus on academic outcome was identified as an essential tool, and teacher-led activities were found to be more useful in advancing literacy, numeracy and language. However, another study by Schweinhart and Weikart (1998) finds that there are emotional benefits to child-initiated learning. The study, which followed individuals up to the age of twenty-three, concludes that children who had early childhood education focusing on development, rather than academic outcomes, were more emotionally stable and less susceptible to drug use and criminal activities. These two contradictory conclusions provide perspective on the importance of a balance between instructional learning and child development. Therefore, while preparing children for school through academic guidelines is important, there should also be a focus on their social and emotional development.

There is a need to integrate play into early childhood education, according to research conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (n.d.). A comparison between education-based curriculums and those based on comprehensive

development showed the need for integration by highlighting the negatives of both approaches. Although the comprehension approach results in a lower numeracy and literacy score, it builds the core characteristics of creativity and independence (Schola Europaea, 2011). A hybrid of the two seems to be the most successful approach, but they warn that if this combined approach is not applied correctly, it may result in a lower benefit than either option on its own. Bodrova and Leong (2010) explored the same concept by studying the importance of incorporating play in education. When education-based curriculum includes play, it achieves both instructional and child-initiated learning. The study concludes that playing is essential for childhood growth and development, and that child-initiated play should be differentiated from adult-initiated play. Therefore, both studies agree on the need for developing a hybrid curriculum without compromising the benefits of either play or academic skills.

The studies above provide perspective on the necessity for a curriculum that combines academic advancement with child development. However, the challenge is how to combine the two without the risk of affecting the intended quality.

### **Literature Review Analysis**

The research on the origin and the development of kindergarten education standards plus the attitudes, experiences, and reaction of teachers outlines key concepts. The reviewed literature demonstrates the reasons why education systems across the world saw the need to have kindergarten education standards that were separate from the rest of those applied for students in higher stages of learning. The literature review also highlights the reactions of teachers towards kindergarten education standards.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that the standards of early learning around the world were initially meant to promote academic and social success among kindergarteners. The

studies conducted by Logue (2007) and Ackerman and Sansanelli (2010) are instrumental in understanding why standards for kindergarten education were developed. The studies demonstrate that the country such as the United States saw a gap in terms of the quality of education kindergarteners were receiving. Neuman and Rokos (2005) had initially identified that kindergarteners lacked key social and academic skills. The three studies clearly demonstrate that the education system that established throughout the United States did not cater for the needs of kindergarten children. The three studies provide great insight as to why standards have been developed throughout the world. Additionally, the two studies help connect the reasons kindergarten education standards were introduced in Saudi Arabia. In such a case, majority of countries focus on imparting social and academic success in kindergarteners' education.

The study's main focus is the origin, development, and reactions of kindergarten education teachers on early learning standards in Saudi Arabia. The study conducted by Rabaah, Doaa, and Asma (2016) investigated the origin of Saudi Arabia's early learning education standards. The research demonstrates that despite Saudi Arabia having its own education system, the country still saw the need to have a system dedicated to kindergarteners. Saudi Arabia is a country that is rooted deep in its own culture and the majority of people prefer educating their children through the culture they understand. Adopting the new kindergarten education in Saudi Arabia was difficult as people deeply rooted in culture found it difficult to adjust to it.

The problems experienced by Saudi Arabia in incorporating the kindergarten education standards demonstrated a need for development. The origin of kindergarten education standards first focused on imprecision and subjectivity of human judgment (Scherman, Howie, Zimmerman, & Bosker, 2014). The main problem with this initial standard setting baseline was that it was unpredictable in terms of targets set. The system in place allowed people to establish

their own rules regarding what the standards were supposed to be. The standards that were supposed to help children, in reality, had little focus on them. This problem frustrated teachers in Saudi Arabia and other countries that had kindergarten education standards. In 2002, the standards of kindergarten education, according to Chandler et al. (2012), were developed to include what children were capable of learning and the efforts teachers were to make in improving the quality of education they provided. In such a case, the standards were first developed to meet the needs of kindergarteners and give teachers the freedom of effectively educating them.

Development of standards of kindergarten education has continued over the years with countries and states making progress on their own. As Scott-Little, Lesko, Martella, and Milburn (2007) noted, all the states in the US have developed kindergarten education standards that focus on helping children as opposed to before. Teachers are subjected to training programs aimed at enriching their knowledge of kindergarten standards and how to ensure children benefit.

The standards of kindergarten education have drawn different reactions from teachers across the world. Teachers have differing attitudes, views, and experiences towards some of the standards. Gibbons, Tesar, Steiner, and Chan (2018) noted that teachers in the United States had diverse reactions to how the standards were not inclusive of children with disabilities. Children who have characteristics that differentiate them from the majority of the population are disadvantaged by the standards (Al-Qaryouti et al., 2016; Peng, 2017; Gibbons et al., 2018; and Henderson, 2019). Abankina's (2018) study showed that teachers were sometimes not aware of the standards they needed to follow. In terms of experiences of teachers, Helm and Gronlund (2000) had outlined that it was difficult to determine what kindergarteners were supposed to accomplish based on the standards available. Lack of integration of the standards among

administrators and the needs of teachers was also noted as the main challenge (Copley, 2004). School administrations have done little in integrating the needs of teachers into the kindergarten education standards. Teachers easily ignore key considerations since the system is not working in their favor. These experiences, views, and attitudes demonstrate an understanding of what education standards are to kindergarten teachers.

### **Summary**

Kindergarten education standards were first developed to distinguish kindergarteners from the rest of the school going children. The standards were formed around the idea of improving children's social and academic skills. Development of the standards has occurred depending on the need and their effectiveness. The reactions of teachers to the standards of kindergarten education vary from region to region. The most notable reactions identified are the negative attitudes of teachers towards culture and children with disability inclusivity in the standards of kindergarten education. The reviewed literature provides a tremendous background of how kindergarten education standards in Saudi Arabia are together with the reactions of teachers.

In conclusion, it is clear that early childhood education plays a critical role in the social, physical, mental, and emotional development of young children. As such, more emphasis should be placed on developing the most appropriate and effective curriculum for meeting the developmental needs of early childhood. Early childhood education is responsible for laying the foundation for social skills, self-esteem, and perception of the world, as well as the moral outlook of the children. Therefore, early childhood education has a lifetime impact on the lives of young children. This implies that early childhood education is essential for the healthy development and nurture of all the important foundations in children. It is also important to

realize that the various goals for early childhood education the United States include teaching social justice, and eliminating discrimination based on identity, ability, or background. As such, early childhood education settings need to be inclusive in order to meet the needs of students from all backgrounds.

### Chapter Three: Methods

This chapter discusses the methods for data collection and analysis used by the researcher to obtain the appropriate information for the study. The study was aimed at addressing the structural standards of the process of education in kindergartens to make it compatible and consistent with Saudi Arabia's education and standards. All levels of education in Saudi Arabia have their own standards created by Saudi educators; only kindergartens took their standards from US and Canada. From the previous chapters and the present literature one main research question was raised to guide this research:

- What is the perception of Saudi Arabian faculty, graduate students, and kindergarten teachers regarding standards for early childhood education?

The research employed both qualitative and quantitative data by use of written response surveys. The data was collected through a survey, providing qualitative and quantitative questions aimed at gathering the relevant information. The number of questions in this questionnaire were fifteen, and the questions fell into two categories; fourteen Likert scale questions, some of which had an open-ended element, and one open-ended personal questions. This questionnaire was sent to female graduate students in the university, faculty of the university, and teachers in kindergartens in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2019.

The questions included in the survey covered three concepts. The first concept focused on awareness of learning as per the structural standards. The second concept addressed the compatibility of development standards with the culture and values of Saudi Arabian society. The third concept investigated the use or need for standards to meet cultural and community values.

### **Researcher Worldview**

Before conducting this research, I had spent three years teaching Saudi female students at the university. I am from Saudi Arabia, and I graduated with a Bachelor of Education and Arts in Education from King Faisal University. This research is conducted in partial fulfillment of a master's degree in ECE at Eastern Washington University. Since after I finish my master's degree I will return to teach female students in King Faisal University, I believe this study will be a driving force towards decisions regarding standards of ECE in Saudi Arabia's education system.

I would like my study to be used as a guide in Saudi Arabia to help students understand learning standards. I also hope educators will try to create their own standards for Saudi Arabia's kindergarten education system. I believe this is important information to reach all families in my country.

### **Participants**

I sent my survey to Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University in March 2019. In regard to the educational level of the respondents, the study uncovered that 13% held a doctorate, 36% held a master's degree, and 51% held an undergraduate level degree. There were ninety people that responded including sixteen faculty instructors, eight graduate students and sixty-six kindergarten teachers. The kindergarten teachers were from all over Saudi Arabia. The kindergarten teachers were recruited in two ways: (a) the university had a database of names that was used to send out an email invite to take the survey; (b) the researcher sent a Twitter hashtag throughout Saudi Arabia with the survey link. The average professional experience was between five and six years ( $M = 5.71$ ,  $SD = 5.85$ ), the highest being a professor with thirty-eight years of experience, and the lowest a teacher in their first year of experience.

### **Sites Criteria**

Participants were chosen to answer the questionnaire due to their experience as kindergarten teachers, students specializing in kindergartens, and university faculty. Moreover, in selecting the sample kindergartens and the university, the research limited its scope to eight sites across one school district and university in Saudi Arabia, referred to in this study as learning institutions. The researcher ran the demographics of the institutions with the help of descriptive statistics. The participating sites had to meet the following criteria for inclusion:

1. The learning institution must be based in Saudi Arabia.
2. The learning institution must serve early childhood education.
3. The learning institution must teach children both with disabilities and without disabilities.

### **Data Collection**

As stated before, the questionnaires were sent to female students in the university, faculty of the university, and teachers in kindergartens in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in spring 2019. The surveys were created using a Google Document and were e-mailed to the eight sites selected for the study. Participants had to be fully aware of the kindergarten specialization and be from Saudi society. They were required to respond to the fourteen Likert scale questions and one open-ended personal question.

The demographic questions were comprised of name, age, level of education, and year(s) of working experience, while the Likert scale questions were comprised of options labeled as (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree, plus an option for further explanation labelled (explain). To keep the anonymity of the respondent, the survey did not require their name, included no identifying markers, and the

response was call through the spreadsheet created by in Google Documents. To meet the deadline, follow-up reminders were sent to the participant emails.

### **Data Analysis**

The proposed study made use of statistical packages for social scientists (SPSS) for descriptive statistics. SPSS was used in the analysis of the closed-ended survey responses, thereby coming up with a summary of the enriching content and other relevant components of the early education learning standards in Saudi Arabia.

For the purposes of coming up with a relevant description of the response patterns emerging from the close-ended survey, the researcher computed the means and standard deviations for each group. These were followed by a summary of the information, specific to each location so as to enrich the content for accessing childhood learning standards. In addition, the approach saw the researcher assessing the similarities likely to emerge across the three areas of focus. This came alongside a summary of the areas of content that the selected district schools had covered within the early childhood education standards in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the year 2019.

The outcomes of the detailed examination of special education, as well as the strategies adopted within early childhood education standards in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the year 2019, has been summarized through counts of the selected district schools. The outcome of the analysis was displayed using Microsoft Excel and relevant SPSS tools, attending to the indicators of concern for the study. This extended to the strategies used by teachers. In the last question the participants gave extensive information to develop and improve the central goal of this thesis. The researcher examined the open-ended responses to look for subjective responses to support the quantitative survey results.

The researcher took additional steps by a detailed analysis of the qualitative data for a few open-ended survey questions. Just as explained above, the researcher had undertaken thematic analysis, thus coming up with a number of final themes expected to emerge across the various survey responses. The researcher summed up and quantified the final themes likely to emerge from the different survey responses. In particular, those survey responses that had supporting text reflecting a given theme had to be counted. The last step entailed tracking the frequency of the responses, with a summary of the prevalence of final themes in the entire survey for the respective questions raised.

### **Conclusion**

As per the survey research design established in the detailed literature review, the survey for the current study had to respond specifically to three questions regarding the Saudi vision of early childhood education; Saudi society, values and culture; and preparation of Saudi students with standard of education. A questionnaire aided the data collection which was comprised of Likert scale questions and open-ended personal questions. Data was analyzed using SPSS together with Microsoft Excel. Descriptive analysis along with the use of the comparative method ensured qualitative analysis of data. Due to anticipated sufficient participation, the researcher is quite optimistic that the responses assisted in answering the research question, addressing the formulated objectives and goals. These results are presented in Chapter 4, Findings, and discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Conclusion and Reflection.

### **Chapter Four: Findings**

This chapter reports the findings from the survey responses from the university professors, and graduate students who are kindergarten teachers. The main purpose of the research was to investigate the following question:

- What is the perception of Saudi Arabian principals and teachers regarding standards for early childhood education?

Through the use of survey data, I explored the relationship between education standards in the United States and Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the survey's goal was to uncover ideas stemming from thoughts and visions of Saudi standards as perceived by educators, professors, and graduate students. Additionally, it should be noted that the survey's goal was to understand the perceptions of participants regarding early childhood standards among Saudi Arabian educators. The important task pertained to the understanding of these groups' visions for making national standards appropriate to the culture and values of Saudi Arabia.

#### **Data and Data Explanation**

The results of this survey had presented into sections for groupings of quantitative survey data that aligned with a topic or concept. The data had displayed within those sections together with the accompanying explanations. For example, eight questions surveyed participant's perceptions on standards. With the help of the descriptive data, the findings compared the positions of teachers from various levels of education.

#### **Descriptive Findings**

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the data obtained using the survey instrument and presents it in the tables as indicated. The entirety of data was descriptively analyzed in relation to the means and central tendency in the form of standard deviations. This

latter aspect guides the survey and impacts the direction of the research due to the responses received. The main concepts examined within the survey are perceptions of standards, family and community, and early childhood curriculum.

### **Perceptions of National Standards**

Educational standards impact and influence curriculum. Thus, the perceptions of the standards made up the majority of the survey inquiries into the subject of early childhood education. The survey queried teachers about the perception of their knowledge but also their opinion of how they felt about other teachers' knowledge of standards. In regard to their own knowledge, kindergarten teacher's responses indicated a slightly stronger familiarity with the NAEYC standards ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ), as compared with the faculty ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ). Graduate students who were former kindergarten teachers responded they had the least familiarity with the standards ( $M = 2.80$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ).

The survey also queried teachers about whether the "NAEYC standards of early developmental education were prepared for use only with normal children". In regard to their own knowledge, faculty responses indicated a slightly negative agreement that NAEYC standards were prepared only for normal children ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ), as compared with the graduate students who thought the standards slightly tended toward being appropriate for children with special needs ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ). Kindergarten teachers felt the strongest agreement that NAEYC standards were prepared only for use with normal children ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ).

Thus, the perceptions of the national standards continued with the question, "NAEYC standards must be changed every five years to fit with change and development in the world of the child." In regard to their own knowledge, graduate students' responses indicated the strongest

feelings that standards should be changed every five years ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), comparable to the faculty ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ). Kindergarten teachers had the least positive opinion about this change ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ).

Participants also reported their perceptions regarding whether the implementation of NAEYC standards included all areas of growth for the Saudi child. The faculty responded most positively that they believed NAEYC standards included all areas of growth for the Saudi child ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), followed closely by the kindergarten teachers ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). The graduate students reported a neutral opinion about this statement ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ).

### **General perceptions about standards**

Eight of the questions queried participants on knowledge of national education standards. In response to the survey question, "the kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia have a comprehensive understanding of these standards?" there was some disagreement regarding current standards, with kindergarten teachers feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ). Graduate students also had positive feelings about Saudi kindergarten teachers' understanding of these standards ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ), but the faculty had fewer positive feelings ( $M = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ).

In comparison, when participants reported their perceptions about whether "Specific standards should be added to the standards including growth criteria in order to help the Saudi child to improve," the faculty responded most strongly that they agreed ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), followed closely by the kindergarten teachers ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ). Graduate students also reported strong feelings about adding growth criteria to help Saudi children improve ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ).

In comparison, participants reported their perceptions of other kindergarten teacher's knowledge of the standards. The kindergarten teachers responded most affirmatively that these educators were familiar with the standards ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), followed closely by the faculty ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). The graduate students reported the least agreement that kindergarten teachers know the standards ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ).

In comparison, participants reported their perceptions regarding the question, "It is important to build national standards for kindergarten students." The faculty responded most strongly that they believed it's important to build national standards ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ), followed closely by the graduate students ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ). The kindergarten teachers reported the least strong agreement with the need to build national standards for kindergarten students ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ).

### **Family/Community and Culture**

Perceptions regarding the family and community were also included in the survey inquiries into the subject of early childhood standards using such questions as, "I believe the importance of teaching children the concepts of religion, and culture in early childhood culture." The faculty saw the importance of learning religion in the early childhood stage ( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ), and graduate students were close to faculty in supporting the importance of including religion in education for early childhood ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ). The kindergarten teachers also had positive feelings to include religion and culture in early childhood ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ).

When asked whether "community should participate in the dissemination of these early childhood structures of the standards," the faculty responded most affirmatively that community does have a role in providing information to the parents about the standards of early childhood ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ). Kindergarten teachers and graduate students also had similar strong

feelings that it was the community's job to share information on the standards (kindergarten teachers:  $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ; graduate student's  $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ).

The teachers' perceptions on the family's and community's need to be aware of the standards were also surveyed. On the question, "Parents should know the growth standards of a child in early childhood," faculty had the strongest feeling that parents should be familiar. Therefore, their response was highest ( $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ), but kindergarten teachers ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), and graduate students ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) also saw the importance of parents being familiar with these standards.

Building on this, participants reported their perceptions regarding the following question: "Teaching preparing: Early Developmental Education Standards Document: A comprehensive tool is a valuable and useful source for parents and teachers that includes values, information, and guidelines for use with children." Faculty saw the importance of having a clear national document for standards of development early childhood education that was easy for both teachers and parents to use ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ); graduate students also preferred to have a clear national document ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ) while teachers' responses were lower ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), but still had strong feelings that there should be resources for parents..

## **Conclusion**

This questionnaire is a tool to uncover the perceptions of the Saudi society about its understanding of the educational standards for Saudi child development. The questionnaire also revealed the awareness of Saudi society about the importance of establishing educational standards for the Saudi child, the extent to which Saudi society is satisfied with current standards, and Saudi society's assessment of the performance of kindergarten teachers, as well as the extent to which they conform to developmental standards and curricula at the university

level. This information aids in the development of early childhood educational standards by giving voice to teacher's perceptions.

## **Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

The education system adopted by Saudi Arabia is similar to that used by the United States. The kindergarten system of Saudi Arabia, in particular, is a replica of that used in the United States. Students enter formal education at age five. Early childhood in Saudi Arabia is considered from birth through age 8. Its similarity has resulted in some of the standards of education between the two countries being similar to one another. Saudi Arabia has not made significant efforts in developing its own system of kindergarten education. The country has adopted most of the United States' standards and added only a few of their own. This elaboration is mainly in religious education, where the Saudi government has opted to replace Christianity with Islam (Al-Qaryouti, Ihmeideh, Al Bustami, & Homidi, 2016; Tarhini, Hone, & Liu, 2015). The kindergarten stage of education has been regarded as the most important in a person's life of learning (Hamdan, 2014). It is through kindergarten education that children can learn basic skills such as writing, reading, and comprehending simple terms within their surroundings.

Saudi Arabia and the United States have two different cultures. As already identified, cultural differences are mainly derived from different religions. The United States has designed and developed its system of education around legislative policies (Gottfried, Stecher, Hoover, & Cross, 2011). When Saudi Arabia adopted this system, it paved the way for its unique culture to be overlooked in education (Rajab & Wright, 2018). Even though it has replaced legislative law

with Islam in its curriculum, the system is still predominantly foreign to the people of Saudi Arabia (Miller, n.d.).

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher's perceptions of how the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia could benefit from the criteria of foreign education (the United States). This establishes a foundation for designing special standards in an attempt to establish distinctive standards used within Saudi Arabia. This elaboration is essential in setting education standards that will help Saudi Arabia maintain its culture and not rely on foreign intervention (Cheema, 2014). As a result, different elements of the study were designed to fit this objective and ensure that relevant information was collected.

The study mainly focused on kindergarten education in Saudi Arabia. The kindergarten system of education in Saudi is similar to that practiced in the United States. A survey in the form of a questionnaire was conducted on educators who had knowledge and experience of the Saudi's kindergarten education system. A total of 90 participants participated in the study, including 66 kindergarten teachers, 16 faculty members, and 8 graduate students. Participants were chosen based on their experience as teachers or students specializing in kindergarten education. The focus of the study was on participants based in Saudi Arabia, those serving in childhood education, and teachers from learning institutions that taught children with and without disabilities.

The data collected comprised quantitative data. The questionnaire contained Likert scale questions, closed-ended that were organized around the topic of the study. In general, descriptive statistics were applied in the analysis of the collected data, while the results were presented in tables and charts.

The objective of this study was to answer the question: “What are the perceptions of Saudi Arabian faculty, teachers, and graduate students regarding standards for early childhood education?” The researcher identified three concepts in an attempt to answer the question. They are the perception of national standards, general standards for early childhood., and the need for family and community input and knowledge about standards.

### **Perceptions of National Standards**

In response to the survey question, “I am familiar with the standards of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC),” there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with graduate students feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Kindergarten teachers also had more positive feelings about the standards, but the faculty had less positive feeling. These graduate students are becoming certified teachers and do not have experience with standards, but they have learned them through theoretical studies, they do not have expectation or a sense of importance. On the other hand, the kindergarten teachers and faculty must know the standards of knowledge and their application.

In response to the survey question, “The teachers in Saudi kindergartens have a comprehensive understanding of these standards,” there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with faculty feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Kindergarten teachers felt more strongly that teachers in Saudi Arabia needed to know the standards. Faculty and kindergarten teachers have noticed that teachers in kindergartens are generally well aware of these standards, perhaps because they see the standards being used every day in the classroom. On the other hand, graduate students felt that

kindergarten teachers needed more training and knowledge to understand these standards and to see them applied to children.

In response to the survey question, “The implementation of NAEYC standards included all areas of growth for the Saudi child,” there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with graduate students feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Kindergarten teachers also had more positive feelings about the standards, but the faculty had less positive feelings. Because the faculty create the curriculum for the child, they may believe that the standards should focus on all aspects of growth for the Saudi child. Kindergarten teachers deal and work with the Saudi children and want them to have special standards that contribute to the development of all aspects of their growth. For graduate students, they were less responsive to this because they did not have direct connection with the children.

In response to the survey question, “NAEYC standards of early developmental education were prepared for use only with normal children,” there continued to be some disagreement. Kindergarten teachers and graduate students felt most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. However, the faculty had less positive feelings. The teachers saw that the standards of education are used and valid only with normal children, because when they use these standards in the classroom, they found that these standards are not suitable for children with special needs. Students identified with disabilities receive their education in a setting outside general education classes, typically in a different building.

### **General Perceptions of Early Childhood Standards**

In response to the survey question, “Education standards should focus on all areas of a child development,” there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with faculty

feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Graduate students also had more positive feelings about the standards, but the kindergarten teachers had less positive feeling. Because standards are comprehensive in all aspects of early childhood growth, faculty, graduate students, and kindergarten teachers were close to each other's perspective. They all felt that national standards should focus on all areas of growth, whether mental, physical or psychological, and work on developing them.

In response to the survey question, "Specific standers should be added to this standard and the growth criteria in order to help the Saudi child to improve," there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with faculty feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Graduate students also had more positive feelings about the standards, but the kindergarten teachers had less positive feelings. Graduate students and faculty saw the importance of having special standards for Saudi children to help them develop. Saudi Arabia is a country with its own customs and traditions. Standards must include these customs and traditions. In this way, children maintain their identity when standards included the behavior of their country.

In response to the survey question, "NAEYC standards must be changed every five years to fit with change and development in the world of the child," there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with graduate students feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Faculty also had more positive feelings about the standards, but the kindergarten teachers had less positive feelings. Graduate students as well as members of education have seen that standards must change every five years because life is constantly changing. As life changes, these standards can be modified to be appropriate for the time and change that occurs in society.

In response to the survey question, “It is important to build national standards for kindergarten students,” all the respondents to the survey from kindergarten teachers, graduate students and faculty, saw the importance of Saudi Arabia having its own national standards to suit its values and traditions and to strengthen the religious aspect of the children.

### **Family and Community Input and Knowledge about Standards**

In response to the survey question, “I believe the importance of teaching children the concepts of religion, and culture in early childhood,” there was some disagreement regarding the current standards with faculty feeling most strongly that the current standards for early childhood are acceptable. Graduate students also had more positive feelings about the standards, but the kindergarten teachers had less positive feelings. All respondents to the survey see the importance of educating children in religion and consider this to be a basic standard that should be included in the early childhood education standards. The child must learn the basic principles of religion so that the religious aspect can be strengthened. The kindergarten teachers have to use the curriculum provided by the government, however teachers can choose which aspects they would like to address. Possibly, the teachers lack understanding of how to teach religious curriculum. The use of professional development on how to instruct teachers may strengthen the importance for kindergarten teachers.

In response to the survey question, “the community should participate in the dissemination of these early childhood structures,” all the participants felt strongly that the community has a role in sharing information about early childhood standards. The faculty felt most strongly that the community should be involved in early childhood sharing of standards. Kindergarten teachers and graduate students also felt this was important, but not as the same level as the faculty. This information could be in response to faculty teaching best practice, knowing that

community and family involvement are critical to growth and development (Wood & Bauman, 2017).

In response to the survey question, “Parents should know the growth and development (including education) standards of a child in early childhood,” there was again stronger feelings by all participants that parents should have this knowledge about children’s development. Similar to support for community dissemination, faculty again had the strongest feelings about parents knowing about how their children develop. The faculty saw that parents must be familiar with the child's growth and educational standards because these standards are not only focused on the mental or educational aspect of the child but on all aspects of the child's physical and psychological growth. Parents should be “educational partners,” and this would mean that they cannot be just told information by the teacher but must have their own understanding of how children develop (Sindelar, n.d., para. 1).

In response to the survey question, “Early Developmental Education Standards Document: A comprehensive tool is a valuable and useful source for parents and teachers that includes values, information, and guidelines for use with children,” again all participants felt this document was an important tool or resource for parents. Faculty and graduate student’s responses of a higher mean response (4.60). indicate this as a highly important aspect of parent communication about the standards. Kindergarten teachers while still positive feelings about the tool, were slightly less positive. Perhaps, those involved in the education of teachers best practice means sharing all information regarding tools to support parents (Great Schools, 2015). Kindergarten teachers may have a parent that is not as involved and feels this does not affect the child’s growth and development.

### **Implications**

The results of this survey has many implications that may lead to the development of standards by providing perceptions of some of the major contributors to creating standards for early childhood. While the groups of participants demonstrated strong, positive feelings regarding standards, each group was not exactly alike (see Table 1). Being able to review and compare the differences in their answers can lead to more information when it may become possible to create standards specific to Saudi Arabia.

Table 1

*Comparison of Responses by Group*

	National Standards	General Standards	Family/ Community
Faculty	Do you have familiarity with NAEYC Standards?	Current curriculum covers standards for ECE	Religious/cultural content
Kindergarten teachers	Do Saudi teachers understand NAEYC standards?	Standards should focus on all areas of development	Parents informed of educational standards
Graduate students	Comfortable using the NAEYC standard document	Five-year review needed to update standards	Society plays role in educational standards
	NAEYC standards are suited for Saudi children	Specific Saudi standards needed	Standards are valuable for parents & teachers
	Regular/normal growth and developments for NAEYC standards		

*Note:* Each group is highlighted with a different color. If their response received the highest score on a question, the question was highlighted in the group color. For example, faculty participants demonstrated the highest score in the “Current curriculum covers the stands for ECE.” The faculty group is highlighted green, so subsequently the question is highlighted green.

One implication in this research may mean there is a greater need to involve teachers in development of national standards. This group reported the strongest personal familiarity, so implementing any new standards would need support and buy-in from this group. This results also have implications for faculty in standards development. The curricula in the bachelor's stage and include a comprehensive and expanded explanation of the developmental criteria in the early childhood stage.

Perceptions of teachers and national standards focused on the perceptions on the use of educational standards within early childhood education. Overall, these participants support the use of standards as a tool for addressing growth and development. The areas that received the lowest average scores were in the areas of teacher's knowledge about these standards and a disagreement with the question that the standards were developed with normal growth some development children. There was a general perception that teachers did not understand the early childhood standards. This could be because the curriculum from the standards come from the government. There may be a feeling that and teachers have limited voice developing and

The responses to the survey implied that the changes could be prompted by the fact that the world is constantly changing both from educational and technological standpoints. Howe and Van Wig (2016) suggested that the significant factor in considering the changes to a student-centered pedagogical approach is the dexterity of the new generation when dealing with technology. As technology continuously changes, so does the culture and the environment of the society (Tarhini et al., 2015). With this understanding, it is easier to deduce that a change in the standards of education after five years is needed.

The standards of kindergarten education that were applicable in Saudi Arabia were known to the respondents as being foreign and a direct replica of the US education systems. To ensure that children were incorporated into Saudi Arabian culture at a young age, the standards ought to be developed afresh. Respondents agree that kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia needed different standards of education from what they are accustomed to.

Furthermore, the study aimed at addressing the general standards of the kindergarten education system in Saudi Arabia in terms of family and community. The importance of religion to children has been emphasized. With the kindergarten education system mainly derived from that of the US, it is prudent to ensure that it is in line with the culture of Saudi Arabia. This change will help ensure a smooth transition from kindergarten to grade school education. The majority of faculty members strongly believed that family and community were important aspects of religion in Saudi Arabia. As a result, it should be incorporated within the kindergarten education system to enable children to learn and practice their religion at an early stage.

Knowledge about standards of growth among Saudi children is needed for parents. The study revealed that teachers had little understanding of the knowledge parents had about their children's growth based on the standards adopted in Saudi Arabia. Having an understanding of the standards will help parents and the community in general to know their role in raising a child. This modification also includes having an Early Development Education Standards Document (EDES) when a kindergarten child is in a family. The document helps provide useful information about values and guidelines for use with children.

Respondents highly suggested standardization of the Saudi Arabian kindergarten education system. Kindergarten teachers believed that the standards of education ought to be

more specific to meet the needs of Saudi Arabian children. Faculty members also agreed that standardization of the Saudi Arabian education curriculum was needed.

This study was a beginning point for aspects under investigation. The perceptions of Saudi Arabian faculty and teachers regarding the standards of kindergarten education for early childhood education in the country have been identified. Future research on related topics or areas of interest can rely on this study. More importantly, the findings of this study are useful in helping the government of Saudi Arabia devise its standards of kindergarten education. Based on the findings in this study, the need for a system of standards that corresponds to the Saudi Arabian culture is great. The Saudis can enforce policies that encourage the adoption of a learning system that is consistent with the culture of the people.

### **Future Research**

There are a number of recommendations for future research. Next steps include surveying parents and community members about their perceptions of early childhood standards. While educators have a major role, prior to the development of any national standards, perceptions from other stakeholders would be meaningful. Any successful development and implementation of standards requires parents and community support.

Another recommendation for future research is to create national standards for Saudi Arabia built with faculty, teachers, and parents. This would be a beginning to moving from standards that do not necessarily meet the needs of the Saudi Arabian people. The standards could be implemented as a pilot project with teacher and parent's perceptions of use.

### **Personal Reflection**

As a person who has gone through the Saudi Arabian education system, I am fortunate enough to have results, so I know what people in my area of my county think about early

childhood standards. Family and the community played an important role in my understanding of the culture of Saudi Arabia as a child. I was able to grow up realizing most of the important principles I needed to know. My family is full of religious people. As a result, from a young age, I was required and expected to live according to societal norms that my parents and family members approved. Most of these norms were also taught in grade school. After conducting this study, my understanding of the standards of kindergarten education has increased. I can comprehend some of the aspects of curriculum standards that were not known to me over the years. As I plan to become a teacher, my knowledge of the standards of education in both Saudi Arabia and North America will help me provide quality education to students.

### **Conclusion**

This study presents insights into the opinions of various types of teachers regarding the NAEYC standards of education in the Saudi Arabian early childhood curriculum. While the research captures significant areas pertaining to Saudi culture and traditions, the areas of limitation pertain to the restricted number of participants which leads to the inability to adequately represent the larger Saudi Arabian society. Additionally, the survey did not include the gender identification of the participants which may indicate arbitrary results. Further research is necessary to determine whether the recommendations of this study were adequately applied or proved to be effective. Consequent studies should document the results of the changes in the education system of Saudi Arabia regarding various developmental stages. Nevertheless, the results indicate that there is a distinct connection between the values of Saudi society and the standards. Furthermore, most of the respondents agreed that the ECE standards should be aligned with the general developmental standards for Saudi Arabian children.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Survey

All questions unless otherwise noted had the following Likert scale

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

#### Subject of this questionnaire:

The perceptions of university education students, early childhood teachers, and professors in universities about developmental standards for kindergartens in Saudi Arabia.

Before you start the questionnaire, fill out the following information:

- Please choose one of the following:

Faculty

Kindergarten Teachers

Graduate Teachers – who were kindergarten teachers – not teaching in the classroom currently

Level of education:

PhD

Master

Bachelor

Years of work experience (include this year)

Questions from the survey:

1. I am familiar with the standards of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
2. Education standards should focus on all areas of a child development.

3. NAEYC standards of early developmental education were prepared for use only with normal children.
4. NAEYC standards must be changed every five years to fit with change and development in the world of the child.
5. It is important to build national standards for kindergarten students
6. The implementation of NAEYC standards included all areas of growth for the Saudi child.
7. I believe the importance of teaching children the concepts of religion, and culture in early childhood Culture.
8. Specific standards should be added to the standards including growth criteria in order to help the Saudi child to improve.
9. Parents should know the growth standards of a child in early childhood
10. Society should participate in the dissemination of these early childhood structures.
11. Teaching preparing: Early Developmental Education Standards Document: A comprehensive tool is a valuable and useful source for parents and teachers that includes values, information, and guidelines for use with children.
12. I feel comfortable with NAEYC and Saudi standards of language development and early knowledge of literacy.
13. The curriculum in the kindergarten specialization at the university covers the standards for early childhood education and I graduate from the university with comprehensive coverage of the standards.
14. The kindergartens teachers in Saudi have a comprehensive understanding of these standards.

**Appendix B: IRB**

**Return this form, signed + 2 copies (3 total) to the Office of Grant and Research Development, 210 Showalter (SHW)**

Principal Investigator (PI): Yasmin Aljouf Title: Master's student  Department: Education Address: 1090W Betz RD #1313  Phone number: (509) 559-9787 E-mail: yaljouf@eagles.ewu.edu	<i>If PI is a student, complete this section:</i>  Responsible Project Investigator (RPI) (faculty/staff sponsor): Ann Van Wig Department: education Campus address Williamson Hall: Cheney, education department Phone number: (509) 359-6097 E-mail : <a href="mailto:avanwig@ewu.edu">avanwig@ewu.edu</a>
Project Title: Standards and Curriculum for Early Childhood education.	
For students only: Is this research being done to meet a course, thesis or other academic requirement? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please specify: this is my thesis project to obtain my Master's degree, required to finish my education major. If not, why is it being done?	
Project anticipated starting date:      Anticipated termination date:	
Funding: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-funded <input type="checkbox"/> Internal funding <input type="checkbox"/> External funding Funding agency (if applicable): - Grant or Contract Number: -	
Check the type of exemption applicable to the project using the "Exemption Decision Aid" on the next page: × 1. <input type="checkbox"/> 2. <input type="checkbox"/> 3. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. <input type="checkbox"/> 5. <input type="checkbox"/> 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	
Rationale for exemption. Why should this project be exempt? Participants ages greater years 18 practicing a soon to be practicing teachers who would consider these equation as part of practice.	
Please state the purpose and methodology of the research: I choose this tittle, "Standards and Curriculum for Early Childhood education in Saudi Arabia", because my country took its standards from other countries such as the US and Canada. The purpose for this survey is to collect data about what the educators think about the standards for early childhood in Saudi Arabia This necessitates creating special standards and curriculum for my country. My plan is to collect all my dates from a questionnaire I will send to Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in Saudi Arabia, because I want specialists in education at my university to participate in the questionnaire.	
Describe the procedures: what specifically will subjects do? If data are anonymous, describe the data gathering procedure for insuring anonymity. This study will connect with the participants via email. A link will be included to the survey requesting anonymous participation by university faculty, students and teachers in early childhood. Once the participant clicks on the provided link to the survey, they will see a screen explaining the research project with a statement indicating that by entering	

the survey they are agreeing to participate. Participants will also be informed they can leave or quit the survey at any time. The purpose for this survey is to collect data about what the educators think about the standards for early childhood in Saudi Arabia, as well as what they think are important standards to include in early childhood in Saudi Arabia. Since I will administer the survey through a website which does not need any private details from the user, I will not collect any personal data about participants. Attach all surveys, questionnaires, cover letters, information sheets, etc. (including required IRB contact information (See “Procedures...” on page 3)

I certify that the information provided above is accurate and the project will be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal, State and university regulations:

PI Signature:

Date:

Submit page 1 of this original, signed + 2 copies (3 total) to the Office of Grant and Research Development, 210 Showalter (SHW)

<b>Recommendations and Action:</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approve/Disapprove</b>
RPI Signature: Yasmin ALjouf <i>(Needed only if PI is a student)</i>		A    D
IRB Rep. or Dept. Chair <b>Print &amp; Sign:</b> <i>(Needed if PI is a student OR for faculty PI if required by department)</i>		A    D
IRB Signature: Yasmin AlJouf		A    D
<input type="checkbox"/> Subject to the following conditions:  Approved from / / to / /		

**Appendix C: Consent****Consent Information**

**Title of research study:** Teacher Perceptions of Standards for Early Childhood education in Saudi Arabia

***Investigators:***

- *Principal Student investigator: Yasmin Aljouf*
- *Co-Faculty investigator: Ann Van Wig, Eastern Washington University*

***Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?***

We invite you to take part in this research study because you are:

- An early childhood education faculty.
- An early childhood education student.
- A kindergarten teacher.

***Why is this research being done?***

Currently, Saudi Arabia uses standards closely aligned with standards from the United States and Canada. The purpose of this project is to gather perceptions about early childhood standards used in Saudi Arabia from early childhood education university faculty, in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers living in Saudi Arabia. The findings from this study may be useful to gather perceptions of the early childhood education teachers and students in hopes to find information to help improve Saudi education and educator standards. I am seeking your consent to use the results from the survey in my master's degree thesis.

***What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?***

If you agree to be part of the study, you are agreeing to:

1. Complete a survey.
2. Participation in this study if voluntary. Skip any questions you may wish not answer or discontinue the survey at any time. This survey should take approximately 20 minutes.

The below are sample questions from this survey:

- It is important to build national standards for the age of kindergarten,
- Specific standards should be added to this standard and the growth criteria in order to help the Saudi child to improve early childhood outcomes.
- The curriculum in the kindergarten specialization at the university covers the standards for early childhood education
- I graduate from the university with comprehensive coverage of the standards.

Data will be stored in a password protected computer owned by the student investigator's classroom for 3 years.

***Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?***

*This study poses minimal risk and will not exceed the risk that one encounters in daily life.*

***What happens to the information collected for the research?***

*The data collected contain no identifying information. This is an anonymous study.*

***Who can I talk to?***

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, talk to the research team:

- Yasmin Aljouf, (054 826 7880), [yasminaljouf@gmail.com](mailto:yasminaljouf@gmail.com)
- Ann Van Wig, (509)359-6097, [avanwig@ewu.edu](mailto:avanwig@ewu.edu)

If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protections Administrator at Eastern Washington University (509-359-7971/6567) [rgalm@ewu.edu](mailto:rgalm@ewu.edu).

Thank you,

Yasmin Aljouf – Master’s degree candidate

Ann Van Wig - Faculty Advisor

**Participant's Statement**

- The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this research.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this form.
- I understand there are minimal risks completing the survey.
- I give permission to the researchers to use survey.

By continuing with the survey, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

VITA

Yasmin Mohammed Abdullah Aljouf

Place of Birth: Dammam, Saudi Arabia

Undergraduate Schools Attended: King Faisal University

Degrees Awarded: Under degree- Anticipated August 2019, United State

Bachelor of Education, 2008, Saudi Arabia

Major & Areas of Interest: Arts & Education, Kindergarten—Early Childhood

Honors & Awards: Teaching Internship, 2019, Eastern Washington University

Professional Experience: Teaching Assistantship, 2015, Imam Abdulrahman

Bin Faisal University (previously University of Dammam).

Training & Certifications:

ICDL, 2010, Saudi Arabia.

Organize classroom and interaction in the classroom.

Prepare test questions in a smart way.

Languages: Arabic (native ability in reading, writing, speaking).

English (intermediate ability in reading, writing, speaking).

Research Interests: Reading and researching early childhood psychology and education.

Technology and its application to education.

## CV

<b>Current job:</b>	Teaching Assistant (Demonstrator)	
<b>College:</b>	work in College of Education in Jubail	
<b>Department:</b>	Kindergarten Early childhood Education	
<b>Name</b>	Yasmin Mohammed Abdullah Al Jouf	
<b>Date and place of Birth</b>	09/19/1986 - Dammam	
<b>Status</b>	Married	
<b>Address</b>	1090 W Betz Rd #1313	
<b>The educational qualification:</b>	Under degree- Anticipated. Bachelor of Education	EWU, 08/16/2019 (Early childhood)  King Faisal university 7/03/2008 (Kindergarten)