

Swinging between Policy and Preparation: Kindergarten Teachers Relocating for Teaching Primary School Students in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Background: The evaluation of teachers' performance educating children according to international or local standards is one of the important issues in achieving the quality of the educational process. Preparing teachers to teach through providing them with opportunities to enroll in training programs is one of the serious steps in education policies, which are combined with field experiences for these teachers. **Methods:** The performance of female teachers in the primary stage was observed, both those who had previous experience in teaching the primary stage, and those who were assigned from teaching kindergarten to teaching the primary stage without prior qualification. The performance of all parameters ($n = 100$) in public schools in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia was observed through a performance diagnostic card, which included eight basic criteria. **Results:** Generally, the results of the analysis revealed that the primary female teachers who had sufficient and previous experience in teaching the primary classes had an average score in the performance evaluation higher than the performance level of the female teachers who had no experience and were not previously qualified to teach the primary stage. **Conclusion:** Based on the valuable results of this study, which clarified the influence of the ministerial decision in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding the assigning stage, which did not include the pre-qualification of kindergarten teachers in teaching the primary stage on professional performance.

Key words: preparation, kindergarten, policy, primary, performance, assessment

Introduction

Up to recently, the teaching of male primary students in Saudi Arabia was assigned to male teachers based on the gender segregated system of education. In the line with the Kingdom's 2030 vision and to achieve its strategic goals, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) raised the percentage of female teachers to teach boys in early childhood to 45% to include all regions and governorates of the Kingdom (MoE, 2022). In this context, a large body of literature has indicated that it is important to provide teachers with a training platform to link theoretical learning with pedagogical practical application (Gourgiotou, 2017). The new vision, in addition, targeted to contribute to quality, equitable and inclusive education, and to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for all. Accordingly, the MoE has sought to develop innovative curricula and teaching methods, and to build an integrated assessment system for the child, in addition to developing systems and requirements in the kindergarten stage. The new vision of the kingdom reflected that there is an urgent need for education reform in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the area of teacher development, in order to prevent sustain the traditional learning method (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2019).

In the school environment, quality processes in the educational process are like monitoring plan, act, think, review and share with peers prior to service as teachers begin to think critically and take action (Aras, 2020). Undoubtedly, teacher support from mentors and decision makers is a must to improve performance and maintain the quality of learning outcomes. Without a doubt, the teacher plays a decisive and important role in achieving the goals of improving the quality of the educational process. In this regard, teachers must possess sufficient skills and acquired knowledge in their field (Mantra, 2018). Hence, a process of continuous assessment to raise the level of potential and required competence of teachers is essential to be conducted on a regular basis (Maba, Perdata, Astawa, & Mantra, 2018). It is noteworthy, the more prepared the mentor is in the role of imparting expertise to educators, the more effective the support for the next generation of educators will be. Not surprisingly, teachers view themselves as learners who themselves need professional development to be able to perform well (Ryan & Graue, 2015). The main purpose of this research is to document the transitional stage in evaluating the practice of female teachers in teaching primary grades and verifying the mechanism of preparing them professionally for the *Assigning stage* at the end of 2021 and the beginning of this year 2022, as the implementation of this stage has already begun in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Theoretical Framework

The current study adopts the social constructivist theory that supports the concepts of assessment, and that the learning process is a social and cultural process, where the student is the main responsible for his education, and the teacher plays the role of facilitator during the educational process (Lee, 2017). This theoretical framework confirms on the insight that in classroom practice, students should be positioned as individuals who engage in an activity aimed at achieving their own learning goals, monitor their progress and plan for immediate future steps (Huang, 2016; Rasyidah, Triana & Saukah, 2020). Teachers must consider that students need to develop their ability to think and assess their own learning as well as peer learning. It may be noted here that few teacher education programs have succeeded in addressing the challenging task of preparing teachers to meet the learning needs of diverse students (Wachira & Mburu, 2017). The study showed that constructivist theory has implications for teaching strategies based on a constructivist view of learning, and for general principles derived from constructivist theory that were particularly appropriate for students' teaching curricula, consistent with culturally appropriate pedagogical concepts (Wachira & Mburu, 2017).

The new trend in Education in SA

The transitional stage in education emerged due to the low quality of learning outcomes, which no longer meet the requirements of the labor market and the aspirations of employers in the educational and economic sector. Therefore, traditional education programs that included excessive teacher training theory, and teachers' acquisition of knowledge were considered irrelevant to the practical side, which had little impact on student learning. These programs that aim to educate teachers in traditional ways have faced increasing criticism. It should be noted that the trend in education policy towards more investments in early childhood means that educating early childhood teachers through enrichment training programs that give them 21st century skills is now more in demand than ever before (Ryan & Graue, 2015). Out of the Ministry's interest in developing early childhood education, special facilities for primary grades were established in these schools, as these buildings were called (*Childhood Schools*), which is a transformation in the history of education in the kingdom, where classrooms suitable for children were equipped in the buildings. In addition to preparing buildings for boys, organizational restructuring in terms of facilities, and creating an educational environment for female teachers to prepare them to teach in these buildings.

The *Assigning stage*, as named by the ministry, included early childhood schools, which included the primary grades (including the first, second and third grades), where the focus was on raising the qualifications of teachers, and following the educational curricula that focus on basic skills, as a step for an institution for the *Assigning stage*. In 2020, the Assigning project was implemented partly by female teachers teaching boys, in separate classes from girls, in 1,460 public primary schools across all regions of Saudi Arabia (Alotaibi, 2021). The Ministry made great efforts to complete the initiative in a short period of time not exceeding five months, as 3,483 primary classrooms in early childhood schools were equipped to accommodate 80,675 male and female students early last year. According to the statistics in the field of education in 2020, the percentage of female teachers in primary classes (boys) in public schools rose to 11% (Alotaibi, 2021). During the *Assigning stage*, the number of students in the new primary classrooms for (grades 1, 2 & 3) reached to (233784) students with the capacity of (9122) classes (MoE, 2022). According to MoE, the ratio of boys' schools to girls' schools in primary grades (first, second and third) for the year 2022 was about 37.4%.

Preparation of Kindergarten teachers in primary context

There are many factors that can affect the success of education which include; qualifications of teachers, number of students, facilities and infrastructure, curricula and the learning environment (Murtedjo & Suharningsih, 2016). Certainly, the teacher occupies a very important position in teaching and learning in schools. Some studies have found that teachers have an important role in the success of the educational process, despite the limited facilities and infrastructure in schools (Murtedjo & Suharningsih, 2016; Soini, Watt, Sääkslahti, 2021). It is worth noting that the preparation and training of the childhood teacher is a continuous process based on changes in educational policies and innovations in the field of childhood. However, there is no one right way to improve teacher preparation, there are many promising practices in professional development (Jensen, Roberts-Hull, Magee & Ginnivan, 2016).

Undoubtedly, the true value of early childhood teacher training (ECETT) programs is not widely understood by educators and decision makers (Soini, Watt, Sääkslahti, 2021). Recently, as the educational policy in the Kingdom has proven, in addition to recent studies, there is a growth in global support in early childhood programs on the issue of providing professional support for teachers, as there is a need for knowledge and the ability to keep pace with innovative global curricula. Educators should assess carefully the learning outcomes that taught across the coursework, and the pre-service experiences that teachers gain as most of them talk away from the teacher's education approach and the ways in which these experiences are in terms of preparing new teachers for the complexities of work (Ryan & Graue, 2015).

For instance, when teaching children math concepts, some might argue that there is agreement on teaching these concepts by early childhood educators when teaching young children. The important question here is; *Are childhood teachers capable to teach advanced mathematical concepts to children in the primary stage without prior preparation?* Based on Parks and Peyton findings, which shown that a number of articles have examined the ability of teachers to teach children advanced mathematical concepts in the primary grades. As a result, primary teachers while teaching children, they were not well prepared to teach a group of mathematics concepts that respond to the ways in which young children learn.

Interestingly, contemporary study investigated pre-service teachers' perceptions of Physical activity (PA) competency, support and quality in Physical Education (PE) education, by observing and evaluating the child in motor skills (Soini et al., 2021). In general, pre-service teachers' perceptions of perceived competence in PE were an indicator of a positive level of proficiency. In addition, the perceived efficiency to support children PA was rated the highest, and PE teaching skills were ranked second the highest and lowest scores were for observing and evaluating the child's motor skills and PA level. Therefore, ECETT programs play a central role in professional development, and early childhood teacher training in general AP aspects. Notably, at ECETT, pre-service teachers are provided with continuous training focused on theoretical knowledge, such as the various benefits of PA and Practical possibilities of its applications in ECEC centers (Soini et al., 2021).

In a recent study, teachers were found to be concerned about late training in the school year (Allen, Hansford, Hayes, Longdon, Allwood, Price, Byford, Norwich, & Ford, 2022). This is because they expressed their desire to work consistently and effectively with their students from the beginning of the year. This confirms the importance of qualifying teachers, training them on modern programs and strategies, and obtaining feedback before the beginning of the school year (Allen et al., 2022). As a result, to improve the teacher's teaching experience and to encourage innovation and creativity in teaching strategies, teachers should be motivated to join training courses this contributes to evaluation process (Jensen et al., 2016). Accordingly, changes in policy and standards generate a range of effects, including demographic trends, and continuous review of the practice of performing professionals (Mueller & File, 2015).

It is worth noting here that the lack of adequate training is a major obstacle to providing adequate support to teachers, which may be linked to insufficient funding or the limited time available for training due to priorities (Maclean & Law, 2021). Within the scope of the initial training of teachers, modern programs must be implemented to determine whether teachers' knowledge, skills, understanding, and data are relevant and appropriate to contemporary variables in the discipline (Maclean & Law, 2021). It would say, that new educational policies in the initial or in-service teacher education should focus not only on professional learning, but also on the content that is taught to ensure a professional future for teachers so that their evaluation is not affected by the new policies in education. This highlights the importance of identifying the knowledge and skill required from early childhood teachers, and thus identifying their needs for appropriate teachers' preparation programs.

Primary teachers' performance

The term performance is defined as the qualitative and quantitative result of the work performed that the individual achieves from the duties and responsibilities entrusted to him (Murtedjo & Suharningsih, 2016). Teacher competency is a concept that defines the levels of competency of teachers in various fields, which has attracted attention since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Ayranci & Başkan, 2021). The competence of the teacher is divided into a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are manifested in the ability and full responsibility to carry out the educational task as an important factor for learning and change (Maba et al., 2018). There is no doubt that teachers are one of the components of the educational process, as they play an essential role in the learning process and economic development (Rahmatullah, 2016). Teacher competencies such as having a positive attitude towards the profession, being able to see things positively and enjoying work, have positive effects on teacher motivation, improving their performance over time (Jang, 2017). In addition to personal factors as communication, remuneration/recognition, salary and personal rights, administrative factors, pre-service and in-service training can be considered as a motivating factor from the external environment (Yardibi, 2018).

Without a doubt, a child's successful start to learning depends on the teacher. Therefore, teacher competencies play an important role in communication and interaction with children and others, which are essential components of a teacher's qualifications (Kruszewska, 2018). In this sense, teachers are expected to possess additional competencies apart from the evaluation of classroom instructional activities. Teacher competencies in Saudi Arabia are based on a set of characteristics, including knowledge, skills, and values that all teachers are expected to possess.

In addition, Kruszewska(2018)clarified thatteacher competencies include technical competencies based on technical knowledge, which include hypothetical competencies with methodological and cognitive competencies, as well as ethical practical competencies which includes communicative competencies with others.

Professional competence contains the subject matter according to the content standard based on the study plan of the teaching unit, and includes concepts and methods in a relevant scientific or technical discipline, which are conceptually compatible with the teaching units in the program or subjects chosen to teach (Maba et al., 2018). Certainly, to achieve a high level of professional quality, teachers in higher education institutions must be trained to possess extensive pedagogical knowledge of the subject, and adequately raise awareness of the social and cultural dimensions of education(Ayranci & Başkan, 2021).Social competence is the ability of teachers to represent a part of society in terms of communicating and aligning effectively with learners, peer teachers, education personnel, parents, parents of learners and the community (Maba et al., 2018). In addition, this competence is the ability to communicate well orally, in writing and in conversation, the ability to use information technology and to communicate effectively with others (Maba et al., 2018).

As educators, achieving competence requires an effective learning process, which contributes to achievingthe quality of education in schools through the management of the educational process, which requires the ability and competence of teachers to achieve high quality(Rahmatullah, 2016).A recent study revealed that general professional competencies were important effective teaching from the teachers' point of view, in addition to the competencies of the teaching profession, such as good communication skills, positive personal characteristics and positive attitude towards profession is crucial to educating students well (Altunova & Mahmut Kalman, 2020).In a similar vein, the result indicated that some teachers consider themselves to be professionally weak in terms of knowledge, skills and personal characteristics (Altunova & Mahmut Kalman, 2020). These teachers confirmed their need for educational reforms in terms of, implementation of practices that may be enhance motivation, pay attention to teacher training, give importance to performance evaluation and development.

In the evaluation process, it is difficult to undermine the importance of knowledge of teacher evaluation in perform a variety of assessments simultaneously. Practically, teachers' belief in the necessity of designing ideal teaching models for the practices required to achieve certain performance indicators, is considered an important step in the optimal change in teaching practices. Therefore, it is necessary to design, plan, implement and constantly monitor the educational process. Indeed, teachers' ability to choose an appropriate method of assessment and evaluation to measure learning outcomes is vital to the evaluation level (Ayranci & Başkan, 2021).Moreover, due to rapid changes in assessment perspectives offered to teacher development, there is an expectation that this is in line with teachers' knowledge and practices with the modern trend in education policy (Rasyidah et al.,2020).

More importantly, a shift in classroom assessment should involve students as agents of assessment, rather than just passive recipients, resulting in quality assessment (Rasyidah et al.,2020).In parallel with this, school leaders have an important role in evaluating performance to get more effective results in estimating the future success of the school organization (Tabancalı, 2017). The study confirmed that school principals are more successful in distinguishing between effective and ineffective teachers when evaluating teachers. Likewise, involving parents in evaluating the performance of teachers based on the results of their children's academic achievement is an important pillar in the children's academic progress. Teacher evaluation should be intensively targeted to students, who have some dilemmas in learning in order to take it considered in minimizing discrepancies between projected goals and current progress. In doing so, the primary goal of teachers is to enable all students to maintain their competencies for support the future growth of learning.

Additionally, the quality of assessment of teachers' competencies and performance influence by the number of students, size of classes and school. In previous findings, school principals and teachers were agreedthat there is a positive relationship between teacher motivation and the size of small schools, in which they were satisfied with the motivation system and their performance in those school (Pasathang, Tesaputa & Sataphonwong, 2016). According to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2018), the staff-to-child ratios for school-age (from kindergarten till third grade) must be 1:15 with maximum class size of 30. In addition, government-supported educational entities should contribute to improving the quality of education by providing adequate budgets, for teacher training and professional certification, as well as long-term investments through the establishment and continuous improvement of education infrastructure (Maba et al., 2018).

In the light of the reviewed literature, the results of the previous study confirm that the quality of practical training for teachers depends on the cooperation of those whose competence is rooted in a more consistent scientific understanding of teaching and learning and for those with years of practical experience in teaching, decision making, and problem solving in a specific educational context (Matengu, Ylitapio-Mäntylä & Puroila, 2020).

This requires a rethink in designing teacher education, which reinforces the importance of the new vision of a community of practical training between the two main educational organizations includes universities and early childhood education settings, which are not without contemporary challenges in specialization, which they do not attempt to solve (Matengu et al., 2020).

Methodology

Research Design

Instrumentation

This research adopted the descriptive analytical method, which is appropriate to the nature of the current study. The researchers used the (performance standards assessment card) according to the four-point Likert scale. The performance indicators in the card are divided into eight main standards, from which sub-indicators are divided. These include the following indicators: the responsibility; connection and professional cooperation; professional development; planning and preparing for classes; implementing learning strategies; learning assessment; learning environment; and academic achievement. The first standard was (responsibility) that assess teacher in implementing workplace regulations and ethics of teaching profession. The connection and cooperation standard evaluate teachers' positive cooperation in the working environment and commit to good verbal and written conversational manners. Teachers in addition, assessed in professional development standards in relation to commit to the lesson plans and objectives, exchange teaching feedbacks and experiences with colleagues and present knowledgeable production.

Regarding plan and prepare for class standard, teachers' performance was measured in term of designing a termly plan for the curriculum, and planning the lesson according to a clear scientific methodology. The implement learning strategies standard assessment encompassed; the proper preparation that supports the learning goals; implement a lesson that meets the learning goals; employ learning aids and technology that supports the learning goals; use online platforms and learning apps that relates to the learners' tendencies and needs ; present scientific materials that is linked to the learning goals and the learners' experiences; implement different learning strategies that achieve the learning goals and suit different learners' tendencies; present lessons that integrate well with other subjects; and link the lesson to reality and life.

Learning implementations standard assess the teachers' performance in asking proper learning questions; considering individual differences in the activities; and involving learners in lesson activities and ensure equal opportunities for all. The standard of Learning evaluation aimed to assess three main indicators which include build an integrated plan to discover learners' strengths and weaknesses; create a plan that encourages the learners according to their tendencies and consider their strengths and weaknesses; and employ class work and homework in evaluating the learners according to their levels. Assessing learning environment standards encompasses; establish a proper learning environment that build, encourage, and enhance learning; effectively coordinate the learners' vocal and written queries and participation; and efficiently manage the learning time and invest in it. The last standard was academic achievement evaluate teachers' performance in the level of learners' interaction during class and the level of learners' educational achievement.

Research questions

There are two main research questions this study intended to answer and these are:

- 1- How does kindergarten teacher initial preparation impact on their performance when teaching primary classes?
- 2-How does teacher' performance in relation to their different background training impact on students learning outcomes?

Participants

The study sample consisted of 100 primary teachers in different disciplines, including (science, Teaching English as Second language (TESL), Art, mathematics). All teachers who agreed to participate in this study were employees of public schools. The sampling divided into (n=42 kindergarten teachers) and (n= 58 primary teachers) with different qualifications. These qualifications included early childhood bachelor degree and Bachelor of Science, bachelor of art, bachelor of mathematics, and bachelor of TESL degrees. They agreed to participate voluntarily and they were selected randomly from different primary schools in the city of Mecca. Prior to conducting the observations, the researchers obtained initial approval from the Department of Early Childhood Education in Mecca. Teachers' performance was observed during an entire three months of observations. Each teacher was observed twice with a total of 200 observations for all participants.

Data Analysis

Validity

Validity and reliability are used to assess the quality of a research instrument, as they refer to how well a test measures something. Reliability, in particular, refers to the consistency of a measure, while validity relates to the accuracy of a measure, and also means the extent to which the questionnaire is able to measure what it was designed to measure by using the internal consistency between the total score for each axis and the total score for the questionnaire. It was calculated using internal consistency by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the total score for each axis and the total score for the questionnaire (shown in the table below).

Table 1.

The values of the correlation coefficients between the total degree for each axis and the total degree for the questionnaire

	Correlations	Sig
Responsibility	0.855	0.01
Connection and cooperation	0.741	0.01
Professional development	0.953	0.01
Plan and prepare for class	0.728	0.01
Implement learning strategies	0.901	0.01
Learning implementations	0.776	0.01
Learning evaluation	0.813	0.01
Learning environment	0.939	0.01
Academic achievement	0.830	0.01

In the above table, it is clear that all correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01), because they are close to the entire coefficient, which confirms the validity and homogeneity of the questionnaire items.

Reliability

Reliability test refers to the extent to which a test measures without error. The concept of reliability is closely related to test validity, in addition, test reliability can be considered as accuracy. It means that the test does not contradict itself, and the extent of its consistency in providing us with information about the behavior of the examiner, which is the ratio between the score difference when analyzing the results of the questionnaire, which indicates the actual performance of the examiner. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using the two tests (Alpha Cronbach coefficient and Split-half methods).

Table 2.

The values of the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire axes

	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-half
Responsibility	0.915	0.876 – 0.952
Connection and cooperation	0.808	0.765 – 0.840
Professional development	0.881	0.849 – 0.923
Plan and prepare for class	0.746	0.701 – 0.785
Implement learning strategies	0.903	0.861 – 0.948
Learning implementations	0.834	0.791 – 0.876
Learning evaluation	0.777	0.735 – 0.812
Learning environment	0.921	0.880 – 0.963
Academic achievement	0.795	0.750 – 0.831
Reliability of the questionnaire as a whole	0.861	0.824 – 0.909

As shown in the previous table, the significance of all the values of the reliability coefficients, include the Alpha coefficient and the Split-half coefficient at the 0.01 level, which confirms the validity of the questionnaire.

Demographic information

Teaching experience

Female teachers were asked the following question: Did you previously work as a kindergarten or primary teacher? This question aims to reveal the experience of teachers, whether she was a kindergarten teacher previously and currently primary classroom teacher, or her main occupation is a primary teacher as shown in Table (3).

Table 3.

Teaching experience

Were you working before as	Number	Percentage
Primary teacher	58	58%
Kindergarten teacher	42	42%
Sum	100	100%

The results of the statistical analysis showed that nearly half of the research sample ($n = 58, 58\%$) had previously worked and are currently working as a primary teacher. About ($n=42, 42\%$) of the research sample members previously worked as kindergarten teachers, and they are now working as primary teachers for the first time in their teaching life. The next question for these teachers was: How long have you been teaching primary classes? (see table 4 & figure2).

Table 4.

Experience of teaching primary classes

For how long have you been teaching primary classes?	Number	Percentage
Less than one year	39	39%
from one year to three years	3	3%
from three years and above	58	58%
Sum	100	100%

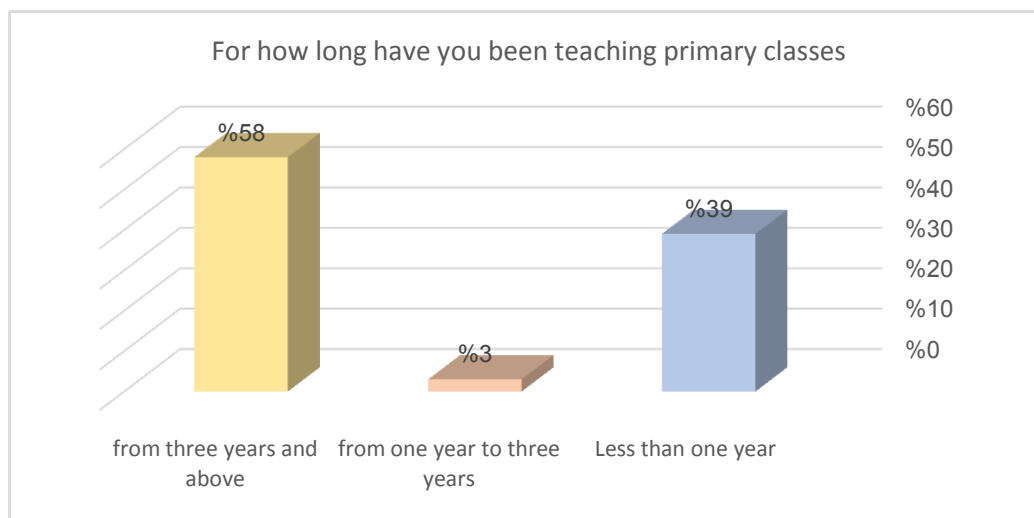


Figure 2. Experience of teaching primary classes

The result of data analysis showed that more than half of the primary school teachers ($n = 58, 58\%$) had teaching experience of three years or more. Nearly a quarter of these teachers ($n = 39, 39\%$) reported having less than one year of teaching experience in the primary grades. Less than a quarter ($n = 3, 3\%$) indicated that they had one to three years of teaching experience as primary grade teachers.

Preparation program

Teachers were asked, have you ever received any kind of preparation for teaching in the primary classes? The question was directed to female teachers who mainly have previous experience teaching the primary stage, and the new teachers who were transferred from the kindergarten stage recently this year 2022 to teach the primary stage in order to achieve the Kingdom's vision 2030 regarding *Assigning stage* that was mentioned earlier in this research (see Table 5& Figure (3) below).

Table 5. Preparation program for primary teachers

Have you received any kind of preparation for primary classes teaching	Number	Percentage
No	64	64%
Yes	36	36%
Sum	100	100%

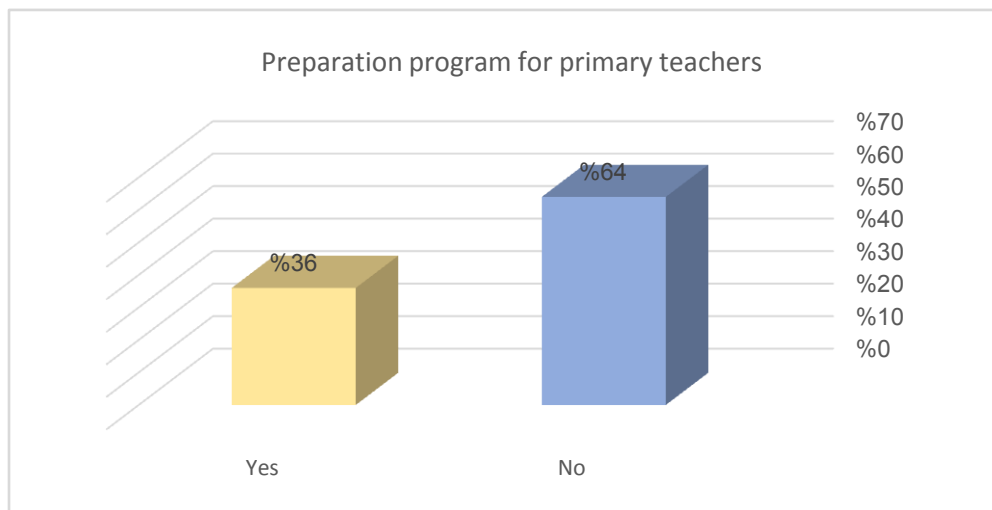


Figure4. Preparation program for primary teachers

Almost half of the female teachers ($n = 64, 64%$) answered (no), that is, they did not attend any preparatory program before they were assigned to teach the primary grade. While almost a quarter of female teachers ($n=36, 36%$) liked (yes), meaning that they had previously joined the "Primary Teaching Preparation Program". In the same context, the female teachers were questioned about the nature of the training: Was the training sufficient? The results of the analysis, as presented in table (6) and figure (5), the female teachers' opinion on the extent to which the preparation program meets their training needs. As shown in Table (6) and Figure (5), it is clear that ($n = 51, 79.7%$) of the primary school teachers said (no), while ($n = 13, 20.3%$) of the other teachers said (yes).

Table 6. Teachers' reflection on the preparation program

If the answer is yes, were the training enough?	Number	Percentage
No	51	79.7%
Yes	13	20.3%
Sum	64	100%

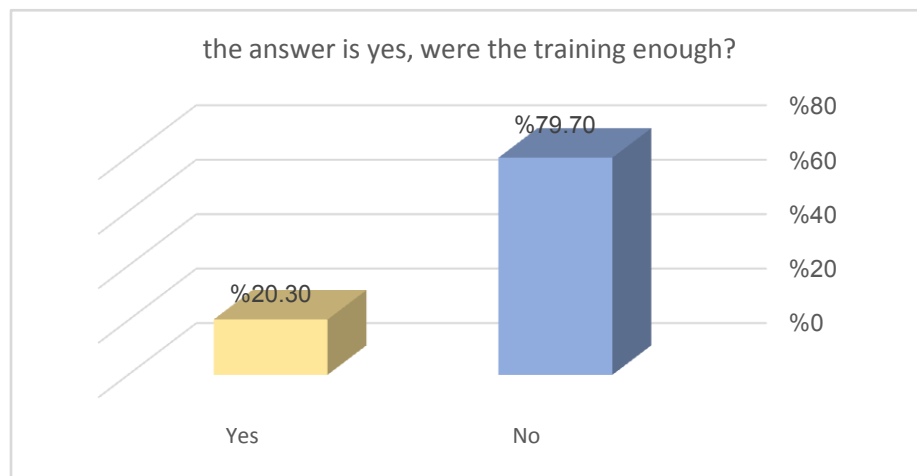


Figure 5. Teachers' reflection on the preparation program

Results

Evaluating teachers' performance standards

Responsibility

The first hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of (primary and kindergarten teachers) in the standard of responsibility. To verify this hypothesis, the (T-Test)was applying the to calculate the average scores between the two categories: primary and kindergarten teachers, as shown in the following table below.

Table 7.The differences ofthe mean value of teachers in the standard of Responsibility

Responsibility	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Implementing workplace regulations and ethics of teaching profession						
Primary teacher	3.951	1.035	58	98	2.532	0.05
Kindergarten teacher	1.014	0.987	42			

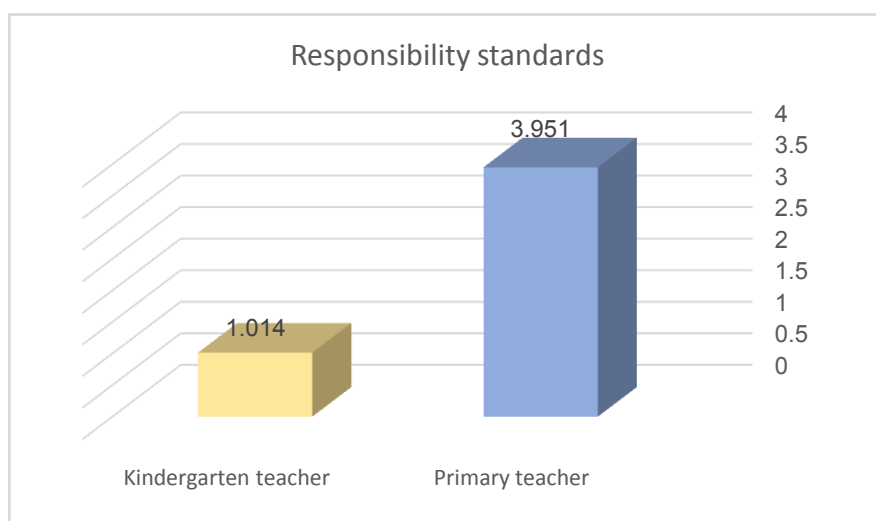


Figure 6. The differences ofthe mean value of teachersin the standard of Responsibility

As shown in (7) and Figure (6) in terms of the criterion of responsibility of primary school teachers, the calculation of the value of (t) was($t=2.532$),which has a statistically significant value at the level (0.05). Female kindergarten teachers who were assigned to teach primary classes without prior training had a lower level of responsibility ($M = 1.014$, $SD = 0.987$), compared to female primary teachers ($M = 3.951$, $SD = 1.035$), who had very long experiences teaching primary classes. This analyze confirmed that primary classes teachers had higher level of implementing workplace regulations and ethics of teaching profession than kindergarten teachers, which justified by there was no preparation program was designed to prepare kindergarten teachers for the implantation of assigning stage.

Connection and cooperation standard

With regard to the criterion of connection and cooperation for female teachers, the study hypothesized that there are clear statistically significant differences between the average grades of primary school teachers and kindergarten teachers who study at the primary level and have not previously trained. To test the validity of this hypothesis, a hypothesis-validation T-test was applied to calculate the mean scores for all female parameters (see table 8 and figure 7).

Table 8.The differences ofthe mean value of teachers in connection and cooperation standard

Connection and cooperation	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	df	t	Sig
Positive cooperation in the working environment						
Primary teacher	6.395	1.968	58	98	5.637	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	2.784	0.870	42			
Commit to good verbal and written conversational manners						
Primary teacher	7.821	2.410	58	98	6.001	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.664	0.925	42			

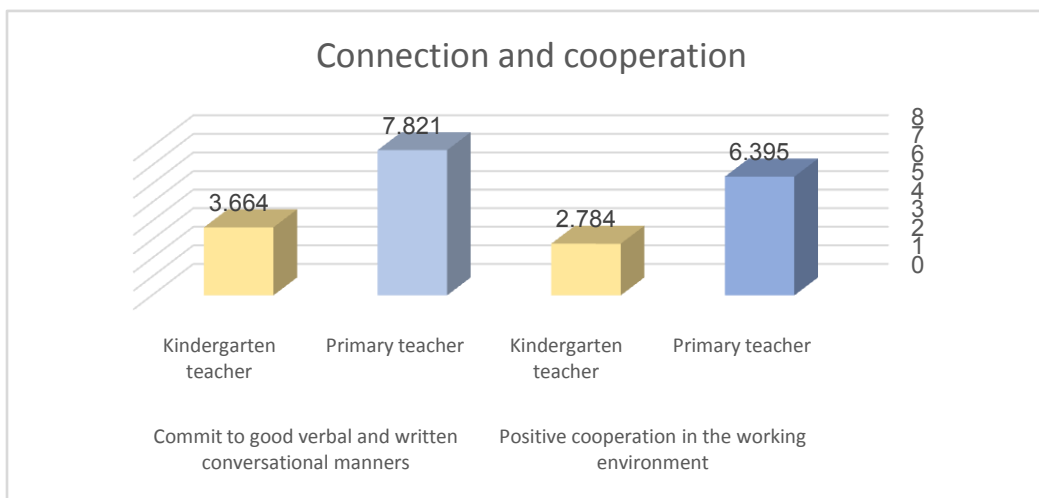


Figure7. The differences of the mean value of teachers in connection and cooperation standard

The results of the analysis showed that primary school teachers who have teaching experience obtained a high degree in the criterion of positive correlation and cooperation in the work environment, where the value of (t) reached ($t=5.637$). The value of the statistical significance of this criterion was at the level of significance (0.01) with regard to the high performance of the teachers of the primary classes in cooperation and association with their colleagues in the work environment. The results of the analysis show that the primary teachers got a higher mean value score ($M=6.395$, $SD=1.968$) in the creating positive cooperation in the working environment, compared to the mean value average score of the kindergarten teacher ($M=2.784$, $SD=0.870$). Primary teachers had higher level of the commitment to good verbal and written conversational manners ($M=7.821$, $SD=2.410$) compared to kindergarten teachers ($M=3.664$, $SD=0.925$). These analyses revealed that primary teachers who have quite long teaching experience in teaching primary showed higher level of positive cooperation in the working environment and commit to good verbal and written conversational manners than kindergarten teachers who have less experience in teaching primary grads.

Professional development standard

The results of the analysis indicate that there are statistically significant differences between the average grades of a primary and kindergarten teacher in the professional development criterion. To test the validity of the hypothesis, the T-Test was applied to the average scores of female teachers in the professional development skill as detailed in the following table 9 and figure 8.

Table 9.

The differences of the mean value of teachers in Professional development standard

Professional development	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Commit to the professional development plan						
Primary teacher	11.506	2.819	58	98	8.210	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	5.418	1.031	42			
Exchange professional and special experiences with colleagues and activate professional learning communities						
Primary teacher	10.333	2.443	58	98	6.329	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	4.001	1.025	42			
Present knowledgeable production						
Primary teacher	9.456	2.739	58	98	5.185	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.291	0.742	42			

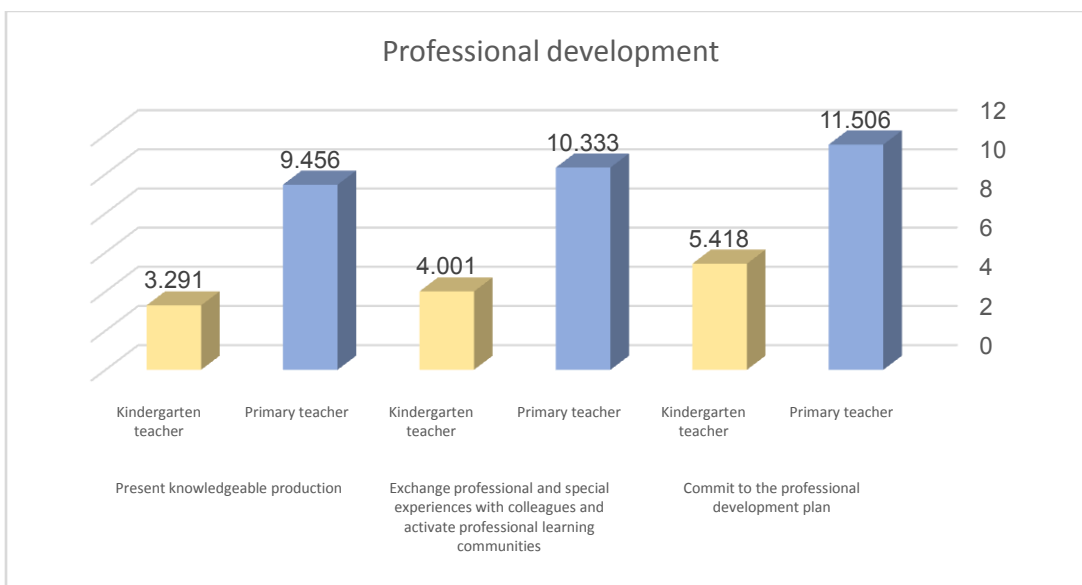


Figure 8. The differences of the mean value of teachers in Professional development standard

The value of (*t*) was ($t=8.210$) with regard to commitment to the professional development plan for primary school teachers, as it was a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). Primary teachers ($M=11.506$, $SD=2.819$) got an average score twice higher than the average score, while the average kindergarten teacher scored ($M=5.418$, $SD=1.031$). With regard to the exchange of professional and special experiences with colleagues and activate professional learning communities, the value of (*t*) reached ($t=6.329$), a value of statistical significance at the level of significance (0.01) in favor of a primary teacher. The average grade of a primary school teacher ($M=10.333$, $SD=2.443$) was twice higher than the average grade of a kindergarten teacher ($M=4.001$, $SD=1.031$). Further result regarding teachers' present knowledgeable production, the value of (*t*) was ($t=5.185$), which had statistically significant value at the level of (0.01). The mean value of degree score of primary teachers ($M=9.456$, $SD=2.739$) was three times higher than the mean value of the degree score of kindergarten teacher ($M=3.291$, $SD=0.742$).

Classroom management standard

The fourth hypothesis in the current study states that there are possible statistically significant differences between the average grades of a primary teacher and a kindergarten teacher in the criterion of plan and readiness for class. To test the validity of this hypothesis, the T-Test was chosen to calculate the average scores of the parameters in the two categories with regard to the planning and preparation criterion for the class (see table 10 & figure 9).

Table 10. The differences of the mean value of teachers in classroom management standard

Plan and prepare for class	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Design a termly plan for the curriculum						
Primary teacher	7.775	1.238	58	98	8.135	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.608	0.729	42			
Plan the lesson according to a clear scientific methodology						
Primary teacher	6.913	1.655	58	98	5.190	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	2.705	0.694	42			

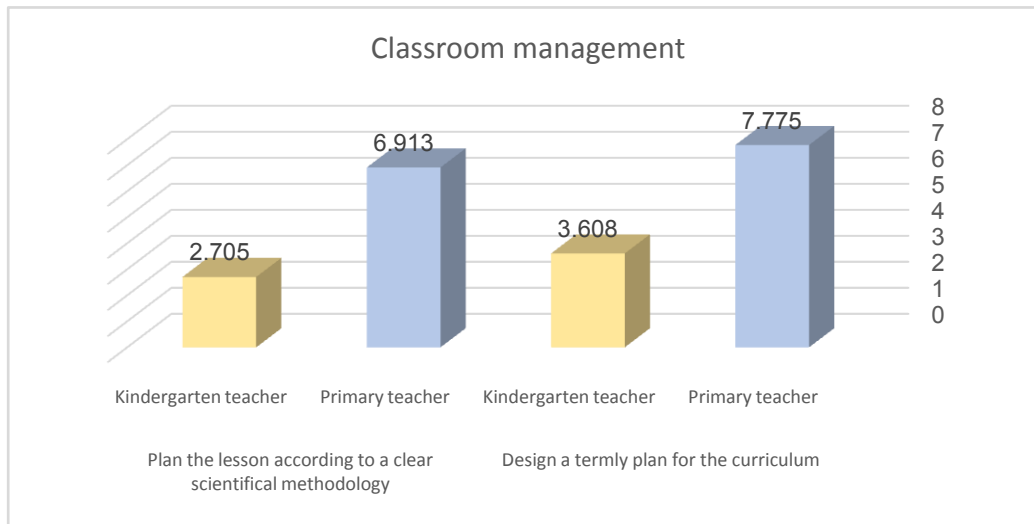


Figure 9. The differences of the mean value of teachers in classroom management standard

In the class management criterion, the indicator for designing a semester plan of the curriculum was evaluated for primary teachers, and the value of (t) was ($t=8.135$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). The results found that the average grade of the primary school teacher ($M=7.775$, $SD=1.238$) almost twice as high compared to the mean level of the kindergarten teacher ($M=3.608$, $SD=0.729$). In addition, with regard to the lesson planning indicator according to a clear scientific methodology, the primary teacher obtained a higher degree, where the value of (t) reached ($t=5.190$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). There were significant statistical differences in the mean level of the primary school teacher ($M=6.913$, $SD=1.655$), which was higher than the average grade of the kindergarten teacher, which amounted to ($M=2.705$, $SD=0.694$).

The standard of implementing learning strategies

In the context of the application of different learning strategies and practices, there are clear statistically significant differences between the average performance scores of the primary and kindergarten teacher. To test the validity of this hypothesis, a (T-Test) was conducted on the average scores of female teachers in the two categories regarding their initiation to the application of learning strategies, which included eight sub-practices as shown in the table 11 and figure 10 below.

Table 11. The differences in the mean of value of teachers in implementing learning strategies

Teaching strategies	Mean(M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	N	df	t	Sig
The proper preparation that supports the learning goals						
Primary teacher	28.769	3.695	58	98	19.333	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	12.634	1.250	42			
Implement a lesson that meets the learning goals						
Primary teacher	25.361	2.779	58	98	17.024	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	10.500	1.296	42			
Employ learning aids and technology that supports the learning goals						
Primary teacher	30.169	3.558	58	98	16.103	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	15.707	1.209	42			
Use online platforms and learning apps that relates to the learners' tendencies & needs						
Primary teacher	24.102	2.339	58	98	15.919	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	8.310	1.034	42			
Present scientific materials that are linked to the learning goals & the learners' experiences						
Primary teacher	27.153	2.708	58	98	20.204	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	11.378	1.665	42			
Implement different learning strategies that achieve the learning goals & suit different learners' tendencies						
Primary teacher	28.009	2.330	58	98	16.222	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	14.533	1.209	42			
Present lessons that integrate well with other subjects						
Primary teacher	25.516	2.401	58	98	14.091	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	12.470	1.259	42			
Link the lesson to reality & life						
Primary teacher	31.178	3.206	58	98	18.337	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	16.399	1.270	42			

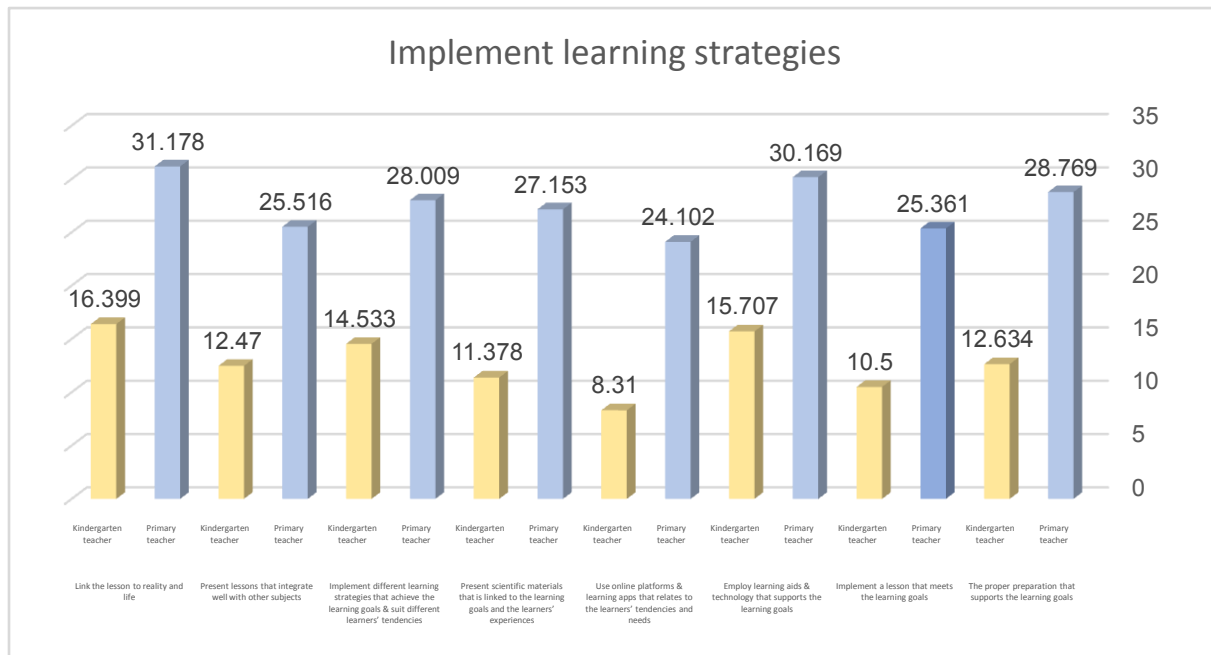


Figure 10. The differences in the mean of value of teachers in implementing learning strategies

In the indicator of proper preparation that supports learning objectives, the value of (t) was ($t=19.333$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) for the performance of a primary teachers. The results of the analysis confirmed that the performance of the primary school teacher was almost twice as high in the mean score ($M=28.769$, $SD=3.695$) than the performance of the kindergarten teacher, whose average score was ($M=12.634$, $SD=1.250$) in this indicator. The performance indicator of the teachers' ability in the two categories was also measured to implement a lesson that achieves the learning objectives. The value of (t) reached ($t=17.024$), and it has a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) in the performance of a primary teacher. There were statistical differences in the average performance score of the primary school teacher in this indicator ($M=25.361$, $SD=2.779$), compared to the average performance score of the kindergarten teacher at a rate of ($M=10.500$, $SD=1.296$), which is considered low compared to the primary teacher.

In the context of employing educational and technical means that support learning objectives, the results were in favor of the primary teacher, where the value of (t) was ($t=16.103$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). The result showed that the average grade of the primary school teacher in this indicator was twice higher ($M=30.169$, $SD=3.558$), compared to the average score of the kindergarten teacher ($M=15.707$, $SD=1.209$). The following analysis in the performance indicator for teachers' use of Internet platforms and learning applications that relate to learners' tendencies and needs, the value of (t) was ($t=15.919$), which has a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01), which was at the performance indicator of primary school teachers. Interestingly, the primary teachers got a score three times higher in the mean score ($M=24.102$, $SD=2.339$), than the average performance score of the kindergarten teacher ($M=8.310$, $SD=1.034$).

Additionally, the performance indicator of teachers in the two categories was measured with regard to their presentation of scientific materials related to learning objectives and learners' experiences, where the value of (t) reached ($t=20.204$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) that was related to the performance of primary school teachers.

In comparison, the average grade of the primary school teacher was twice higher ($M=27.153$, $SD=2.708$) than the average grade of the kindergarten teacher ($M=11.378$, $SD=1.665$) in this indicator. In the performance indicator, implementing different learning strategies that achieve learning goals and are compatible with learners' different tendencies, the value of (t) was ($t=16.222$), which has a statistically significant value at the significance level (0.01) in the performance indicator for primary school teachers. There are clear statistical differences in the average performance score of primary school teachers ($M=28.009$, $SD=2.330$), which was almost twice higher than the average performance score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=14.533$, $SD=1.209$).

The results of the statistical analysis of the performance indicator confirmed that primary teachers provide lessons that are well integrated with other subjects, where the value of (t) was ($t=14.091$), which is of statistical significance at the level of significance (0.01). In response to this result, primary teachers achieved a performance level twice higher in the mean score ($M=25.516$, $SD=2.401$) than the average performance score of the kindergarten teacher ($M=12.470$, $SD=1.259$). The indicator of teachers' linking the lesson to reality and life was measured, as the value of (t) reached ($t=18.337$), which is of statistical significance at the level of significance (0.01) for the performance level of a primary teacher. Primary teachers achieved a significantly higher level of performance in their average score ($M=31.178$, $SD=3.206$), compared to the average score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=16.399$, $SD=1.270$) in this indicator.

The standard of learning implementations

The following hypothesis in learning applications states that there are statistically significant differences between the average grades of primary and kindergarten teachers. To confirm the validity of this hypothesis, a (T-Test) was conducted on the average teacher performance scores as shown in the following table 12 and figure 11.

In the indicator of teachers' ability to ask correct learning questions, the value of (t) was ($t=7.189$), which has a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) in the performance of primary teachers. There are significant differences between the average performance score of primary school teachers ($M=9.807$, $SD=2.186$) and the average score of kindergarten teachers ($M=4.163$, $SD=1.113$).

Table 12.

The differences in the mean value of teachers in learning implementations

Learning implementations	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation(SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Ask proper learning questions						
Primary teacher	9.807	2.186	58	98	7.189	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	4.163	1.113	42			
Consider individual differences in the activities						
Primary teacher	11.255	2.391	58	98	9.649	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	5.816	1.010	42			
Involve learners in lesson activities and ensure equal opportunities for all						
Primary teacher	10.291	2.003	58	98	11.076	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.120	1.305	42			

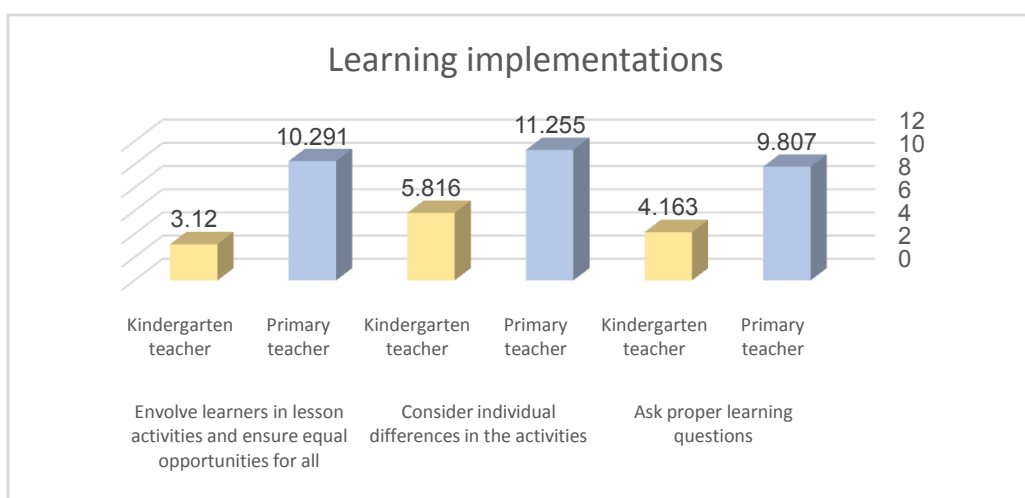


Figure 11. The differences in the mean value of teachers in learning implementations

The teacher performance index was measured in taking into account the individual differences of learners in the activities, and the value of (t) was ($t=9.649$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) in the performance level of primary school teachers. Accordingly, clear statistical differences were found in the average performance score of primary school teachers ($M=11.255$, $SD=2.391$), and the average performance score of kindergarten teachers ($M=5.816$, $SD=1.010$). In a similar context, the indicator of teachers' performance was measured in engaging learners in lesson activities and ensuring equal opportunities for all, with a value of (t) ($t=11.076$). This

value is statistically significant at the significance level (0.01) in the performance level of primary teachers. The results revealed that there is an increase in the average performance score of primary school teachers ($M=10.291, SD=2.003$) in this indicator compared to the average score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=3.120, SD=1.305$).

Learning evaluation standard

In the field of learning assessment, the study hypothesized that there are statistically significant differences between the average grades of primary and kindergarten teachers. To verify the hypothesis, the T-Test was used to calculate the average scores of the parameters in terms of performance in this criterion (see table 13 &figure12).

Table 13.

The differences in the mean value of teachers in Learning evaluation standard

Learning evaluation	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Build an integrated plan to discover learners' strengths and weaknesses						
Primary teacher	9.550	1.839	58	98	7.005	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.927	0.715	42			
Create a plan that encourages the learners cording to their tendencies and consider their strengths & weaknesses						
Primary teacher	11.817	2.096	58	98	9.113	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	4.558	1.183	42			
Employ classwork and homework in evaluating the learners according to their levels						
Primary teacher	11.269	2.440	58	98	8.287	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	5.017	0.938	42			

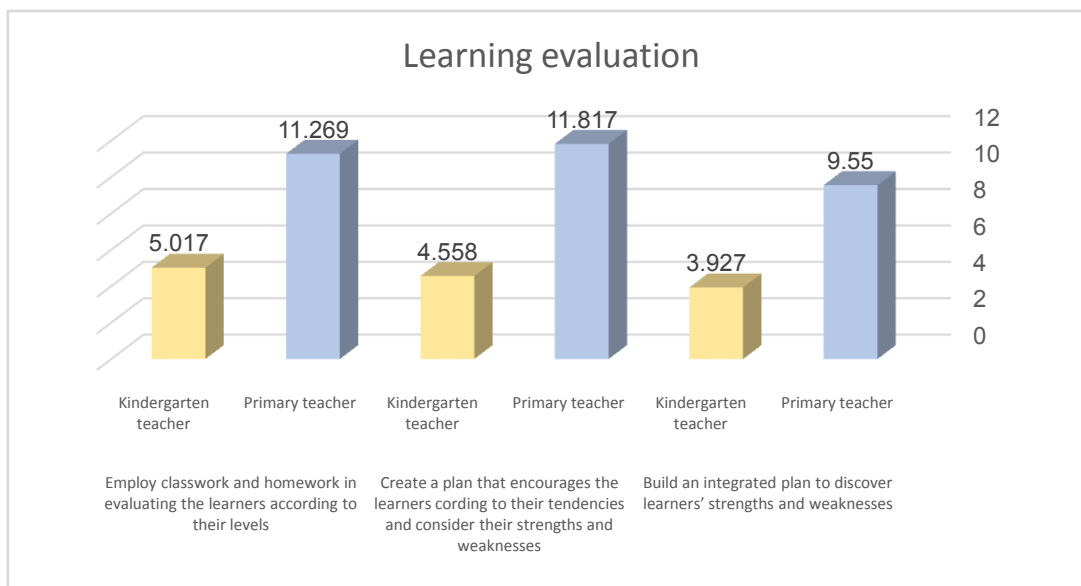


Figure 12. *The differences in the mean value of teachers in Learning evaluation standard*

With regard to measuring teachers' performance in the ability to build an integrated plan to discover learners' strengths and weaknesses, the value of (t) was ($t=7.005$), which is a statistically significant result at the level of significance (0.01) with regard to the performance of primary school teachers.

As a result, these teachers got an average performance score twice higher ($M=9.550, SD=1.839$) than the average performance score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=3.927, SD=0.715$).

Primary school teachers achieved a high level of performance in developing a plan that encourages learners according to their tendencies and taking into account their strengths and weaknesses, where the value of (t) reached ($t=9.113$), which is statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01). There are statistically significant differences in the average performance of primary school teachers ($M=11.817, SD=2.096$), and the average performance score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=4.558, SD=1.183$) in this indicator.

Additional results in the performance indicator related to the ability to use class and homework duties in evaluating learners according to their levels showed that primary teachers outperformed kindergarten, where the value of (t) reached ($t=8.287$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). According to the apparent results, the average performance score for primary school teachers was twice ($M=11.269$, $SD=2.440$), and the average performance score for kindergarten teachers was ($M=5.017$, $SD=0.938$).

Learning environment standard

The results of the analysis were clarified with regard to the educational environment standard, as there were statistically significant differences between the average grades of teachers. As shown in table (14) a (T-Test) was conducted to calculate the average teacher scores to test the validity of this hypothesis.

Table 14. The differences in the mean value of teachers' performance in learning environment

Learning environment	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation(SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Establish a proper learning environment that build, encourage, & enhance learning						
Primary teacher	10.106	2.331	58	98	7.802	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	5.835	1.789	42			
Effectively coordinate the learners' vocal & written queries and participation						
Primary teacher	8.561	2.016	58	98	5.334	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	2.742	0.809	42			
Efficiently manage the learning time & invest in it						
Primary teacher	11.718	2.718	58	98	6.910	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.807	0.663	42			

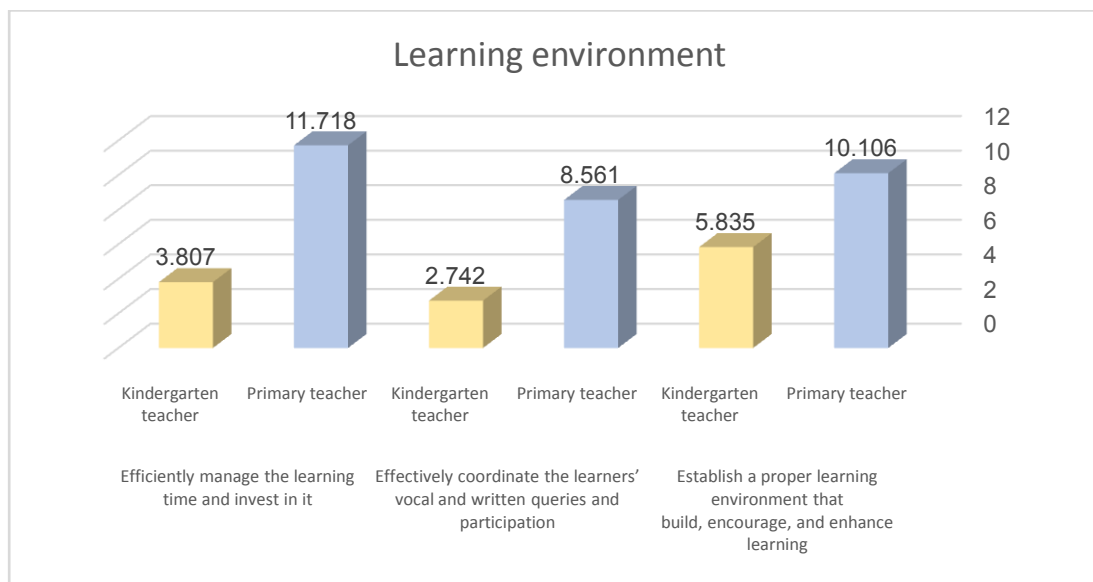


Figure 13. The differences in the mean value of teachers' performance in learning environment

The analysis in the indicator of teachers' ability to create an appropriate educational environment that builds, encourages and enhances learning is linguistic, which resulted in the value of (t) in favor of the performance of primary teachers ($t=7.802$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). The average performance score of primary school teachers was twice higher ($M=10.106$, $SD=2.331$), than the average performance score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=5.835$, $SD=1.789$).

The results of the criterion for effective coordination between the learners' vocal and written inquiries and their participation found that the value of (t) was ($t=5.334$), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) in the performance of primary teachers. There are clear statistical differences that appeared when measuring the average performance score of primary school teachers ($M=8.561$, $SD=2.016$), compared to kindergarten teachers, whose performance index reached ($M=2.742$, $SD=1.789$).

In the performance indicator with regard to measuring teachers' ability to efficiently manage and invest learning time, the value of (t) was ($t=6.910$) in favor of the performance of primary teachers, which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). The average performance score of a primary school teacher was about three times ($M=11.718$, $SD=2.718$) than the average performance score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=3.807$, $SD=0.663$).

The standard of Academic achievement

In academic achievement, the current study assumed that there were significant differences between the mean scores of teachers. To test the hypothesis, a T-test was used to calculate the average teacher scores in this criterion (see table 15& figure 14).

Table 15.

The differences in the mean value of teachers in academic achievement standard

Academic achievement	Mean(M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	N	df	t	Sig
Level of learners' interaction during class						
Primary teacher	6.495	1.337	58	98	5.192	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	2.400	0.738	42			
Level of learners' educational achievement						
Primary teacher	7.071	1.452	58	98	9.435	0.01
Kindergarten teacher	3.156	0.910	42			

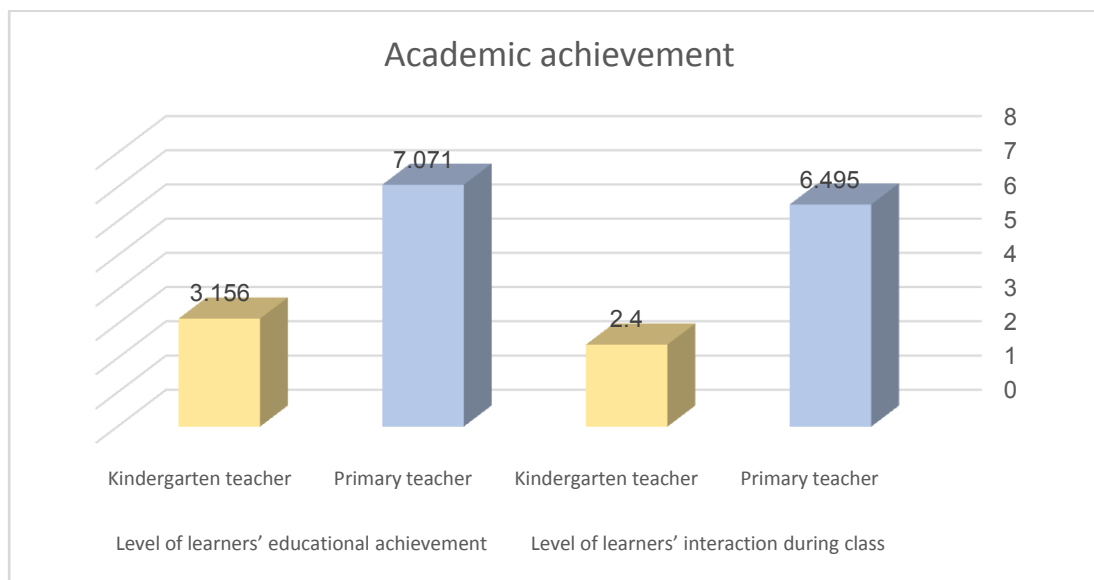


Figure 14. The differences in the mean value of teachers in academic achievement standard

In the context of measuring the level of learners' interaction level with teachers during the class index, primary teachers got a high degree, with a value of (t) ($t=5.192$), which is a statistically significant value at the significance level (0.01). When comparing the level of performance of teachers in this indicator, the average performance score of primary school teachers ($M=6.495$, $SD=1.337$) was three times higher than the average score of a kindergarten teacher ($M=2.400$, $SD=0.738$). The value of (t) reached ($t=9.435$) in evaluating the level of educational attainment of learners, which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01) for the performance of primary school teachers. The average grade of primary school teachers ($M=7.071$, $SD=1.452$) was higher than the average performance score of kindergarten teachers ($M=3.156$, $SD=0.910$).

Discussion

This contemporary study analyzes the outcomes of the educational policy of MoE in Saudi Arabia regarding assigning stage and its impact on female primary teachers' performance, in particular teachers who worked as kindergarten teachers. The observations of these teachers who were not trained to teach primary grades and had no enough knowledge about the proper teaching strategies and insufficient skills to manage the classes with more than 25 students influenced their professional performance. The results of the present study are in line with the previous results, which confirmed that there are many factors that can affect the success of education, which include; teacher qualifications,

number of students, facilities and infrastructure, curriculum and learning environment (Murtedjo&Suharningsih, 2016; Maclean & Law, 2021).

Interestingly, the primary teachers had higher level of implementing workplace regulations and ethics of teaching profession than kindergarten teachers. This finding is justified by the lack of preliminary preparation program was designed to prepare kindergarten teachers for the implantation of assigning stage. The results of the existing research are consistent with the results of previous research on the importance of early professional training for teachers, as studies have proven that a feeling of anxiety accompanies these teachers as a result of training late in the school year, expressing their desire to work continuously and effectively with their students from the beginning of the year (Allen et al., 2022).

Based on the evidence, primary teachers were highly shown abilities to create positive cooperation in the working environment compared to the kindergarten teachers. The result further revealed that kindergarten teachers had lower level than primary teachers in commitment to good verbal and written conversational manners. Primary teachers who have long teaching experience displayed sufficient skills in committing to the professional development plan, exchanging of professional and special experiences with colleagues and activate professional learning communities compared to kindergarten teachers. These current results agree with a recent study on the importance of teachers achieving professional competencies in effective teaching from the teachers' point of view, in addition to good communication skills, positive personal characteristics, and a positive attitude towards the profession (Altunova & Mahmut Kalman, 2020).

Further result of the current study highlights that primary teacher had higher level in the indicators of teachers' present knowledgeable production and their abilities to design a semester plan of the curriculum than kindergarten teachers. Teachers who had long experience in teaching primary stages were succeeded to achieve higher score in the performance in relation to proper preparation that supports learning objectives, as well as presentation of scientific materials related to learning objectives and learners' experiences.

It has been found that qualified primary teachers were implementing different learning strategies that achieve learning goals that compatible with learners' different tendencies provide lessons that are well integrated with other subjects. This then assisted those teachers to show great ability when linking the lesson to reality and life of their students. Improving students' strengths and weaknesses were included in the integrated plan of primary teachers, and they showed higher level of the performance than kindergarten teachers. These abilities occurred through asking correct learning questions and using class and homework duties in evaluating learners according to their levels. More importantly, qualified and well-trained primary teachers were able to create an appropriate educational environment that builds, enhances learning is linguistic, encourage learners' vocal and written inquiries and their participation. In the similar context, primary teachers had higher level of performance compared to kindergarten teachers measuring the level of learners' interaction level with teachers and educational achievement.

Conclusion and recommendations

Depending on the current results of the study, it is worth acknowledging that there is a gap between reality and expectations in early childhood education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specifically the primary grades of primary school. Accordingly, the design of teacher education must be rethought, reinforcing the importance of the new vision of a community of practice between the two major educational organizations that include universities and early childhood education environments, which are not without contemporary challenges in specialization (Matengu et al., 2020).

Consequently, it is important recognizing the necessity of initial training and qualification for female teachers before starting any new occupation, in addition to conduct pre- evaluation of their professional performance and monitoring of their training needs. Indeed, there is an urgent need to provide psychological support and guidance to female teachers, who are teaching boys for the first time, in addition to training them to teach primary grades, which is a crucial requirement.

Certainly, there is an urgent need to provide psychological support and guidance to female teachers, who are teaching primary grades for the first time, as they are not experienced with the learning environment and methods, nor they are trained to educate and guide this age group. Therefore, it is a crucial requirement to train the assigned teachers both psychologically and professionally.

Furthermore, this increases the need to develop the teaching staff in accordance with ministerial directions in terms of modern teaching methods, assessment methods and classroom management, given that the nature of kindergarten teaching is different from the primary stage. Despite the novelty of the subject of the study and the importance of the results, there are some limitations that deserve to be mentioned first. The professional performance of the teachers was

evaluated, whether those who had previous experience teaching the primary stage or the teachers who moved from kindergarten to the primary stage within the assigning stage using a note card and performance analysis. Although important assessments are reliable indicators of teachers' classroom practices, which are the foundation for future studies. Using a supporting research method such as interview can enrich the research results and achieve deeper understanding of teachers' emotional readiness to this big transformation in their career.

Another limitation is that this research was limited to the city of Mecca due to the use of observation as a main tool for measuring teacher performance, which is difficult to apply to a larger sample in the cities of the Kingdom. It is recommended for more research to be done in the future to measure the difficulties that face primary female teachers and the challenges they encountered in the process of teaching boys, if any. Policy makers are recommended the necessity of taking into account the results of the study in qualifying female teachers and developing future training plans to ensure quality in the outcomes of the educational process. Considering the results, it is recommended to conduct further studies that examine a proper training program for new assigned teachers, as this will create a smooth and qualified transition.

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