

Using Distance Learning in Children Aged Between Three and Six Years Old

Ebtisam Abu Hamad

Guided by: Prof. dr. Maria Roth

Abstract

In the years during which children attend kindergarten, they acquire many of the important cognitive and social skills needed for healthy interactions with their teachers, peers, and parents. In the kindergarten environment, the kindergarten teachers, and staff also play an important role in helping the children learn and grow. The outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 forced many of the kindergarten schools to close their doors to protect the health of the children, the kindergarten teachers, and the community. To create an educational framework for the children and to sustain a communication channel between the kindergarten staff and the children in their homes, many kindergarten teachers in Israel reverted to the use of distance learning with the children. Little is known about the influence that distance learning had on kindergarten children kept in their homes by the pandemic. In this study, focus group sessions were held with two groups of kindergarten teachers and two groups of parents to understand the perspectives and concerns of kindergarten teachers and parents about the use of distance learning for the kindergarten children. Despite limited training and a variety of difficulties in engaging the kindergarten children and their parents in distance learning, the kindergarten teachers discovered methods and techniques that were useful for distance learning.

Key Words: kindergarten teacher, distance learning, Zoom, training.

Introduction

Childhood is a major stage in intellectual development, and the best age for learning and acquiring skills, both scientific and cognitive. Therefore, many educational institutions that plan for that stage of life, whether the child is at home or in school, focus on acquiring skills through educational media. The interest in early childhood is one of the milestones that indicate the crystallization of community awareness and the advancement of its culture. The concern for childhood development is a part of the concern for both the present and the future because children form the most important segment of society and because they are destined to become the future generation, making adequate childhood development an important social demand (Al-Youssef, 2008).

Kindergartens are educational and social institutions that seek to properly qualify the child for enrollment in the primary stage of education. This is so that the child does not feel the sudden transition from home to school and enables him complete freedom to practice his activities and discover his abilities, inclinations, and capabilities within the kindergarten environment, assisting him to acquire new skills and to undergo new experiences. The ages of children in the kindergarten stage range from the age of three to six years old. At this stage, the children need constant encouragement from their kindergarten teachers to develop a love of teamwork, to instill a spirit of cooperation and positive participation, to rely on self and to gain self-confidence, while acquiring many linguistic and social skills. In addition, the kindergarten years drive the children in the right direction towards the educational progress (Abu-Ghazaleh, 2007).

The kindergarten stage is a purposeful educational stage that is no less important than other educational stages, as it is a distinct educational stage, self-standing with its distinct educational philosophy, behavioral goals and its own educational psychology. The goals of kindergarten are based on respecting the children's self and individuality, stimulating their independent creative thinking, and encouraging them to express themselves without fear, while taking care of the children physically. The kindergarten environment accustoms the children to healthy habits, helps them live, work and play with others, savor music, art and the beauty of nature, and makes them accustomed to sacrificing some of their desires for the sake of the community. Although the kindergarten curriculum is not based on academic foundations or specific experiences, but rather is based on providing various encounters and experiences that serve the child and broaden his experiences. The necessity of working to develop the children in the various areas of growth differs from one kindergarten to another and from one region to another. Therefore, a need was created for the responsible official authorities to develop a unified curriculum that is circulated to all kindergartens to provide guidance for the kindergarten staff. The kindergarten teachers also must be taken care of, by improving their professional performance, and conducting training courses for them and improving their salaries, so that consistency is attained across kindergartens. The mission of kindergarten teachers is building the first building blocks in the life of future generations (Rabadi, 2008).

The function of early childhood education is to help the child's natural growth and develop his social instincts and awaken in him the tendency to live socially with his peers in kindergarten, and it depends on the kindergarten teacher to achieve the goals of education in kindergarten. The focus of the kindergarten teacher's work in kindergarten is the child.

The kindergarten teacher, with the personal, practical, and cultural traits that she possesses is considered the main factor in the raising of the child within the kindergarten, and the kindergarten teacher's influence is not only related to her technical skills, but also related to her attitudes, values, feelings, and habits that are reflected in her thoughts and actions, and which may be projected to children in her role model as they imitate her in their behavior. When the kindergarten teacher is caused to revert to distance learning for the kindergarten children, the daily physical contact with the children disappears and the children no longer experience the physical kindergarten environment. Furthermore, the children's interaction with peers is restricted to minimal online interaction.

The Definition of Quality

The interest in the issue of quality in educational institutions has increased and become a concern because it has a significant role in continuous improvement. Quality in education is defined as "a basic business strategy that contributes to providing products and services to satisfy the internal and external customer and achieve his implicit and declared expectations". Quality as a term derived from the Latin word (Qualifier), which means "the nature of a thing and its degree of suitability and it does not mean always better or top, but rather it is a relative concept that differs according to the different recipient" (Ali, 2009).

Al-Badi (2010) defined quality as the integration of the features and characteristics of a product or service in a way that enables it to achieve limited or implicit needs, or it is a set of characteristics and features of an entity that express its ability to achieve the limited requirements or expected by the recipient. Asheiba (2000) views quality in education as a set of standards and characteristics that should be available in all elements of the educational process, whether they are related to inputs, processes or outputs that meet the needs and requirements of society and the desires and needs of learners and achieve those standards through the effective use of all elements, both material and human. From the point of view of Al-Khamisi (2007), quality in education is the process of the educational system fulfilling the agreed standards and levels of the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system in its various components (inputs, processes, outputs, environment) in order to achieve the highest level of value, efficiency and effectiveness for each of the system objectives and the expectations of educational service seekers (Students, Society) (Fahmy, 2004).

The Quality of Relationships and Their Effect on the Various Stages in the Child's Development

The first years of a child's life are of utmost importance and a great influence on refining his personality later, as it effectively contributes to his development and to satisfy his needs in early childhood and is a threshold for entering the general education system because it is an integral part of it. Therefore, it is important for the kindergarten stage to be enjoyable for the child and his family, to leave beautiful memories in their hearts, and to give the child a sense of security that will accompany him in the future throughout his educational pathway in the various future stages, as the child gets acquainted with his group of peers (children of his generation) and develops with them communication and social interaction of all kinds. The child acquires social customs and traditions, and develops emotional awareness and sympathy for others and a sense of social justice. The different experiences and practices that kindergarten provides for children provides them knowledge of the world in which they live through their different practices and according to the opportunities that are available to them, and with their innate curiosity they search, discover and solve problems and develop their abilities in various fields (Isa, 2000).

The quality of the relationship between children and teachers in kindergarten plays a major role in the educational success of children and their social development and helps the children feel more comfortable and safe in the educational environment, since the positive and intimate relationships between children and the teacher represent a cornerstone in the process of children's social maturity and allows them to define themselves and how to adapt to their environment and to develop their emotional and social intelligence. The growth of children in kindergarten is characterized by change and remarkable development in various fields: physical, emotional, social, linguistic, and mental, and this is due to natural (biological) maturity. In addition to learning from the experiences that the environment provides to children, the fields of development are related to each other, and are affected by each other at the same time (Al-Mady, 2018).

From the emotional and social aspects, children become more aware of their feelings and emotions and the point of view of others, and they develop their ability to control their feelings and act appropriately, delay their needs, accept failure and face challenges, and develop their self-confidence and a sense of their abilities. Their social

world is expanding, they acquire life skills and behavioral patterns and settle their differences in ways that allow the establishment of social relationships and friendships.

As for the linguistic field, the children's ability to understand the spoken language increases as their expressive abilities grow, and children expand their verbal communication and conduct a conversation depending on their linguistic dictionary that is rich in terms and expressions. They build sound sentences and phrases, and they interact with books and written materials and develop their reading consciousness in preparation for reading and writing in the future.

In the sensory motor field, children grow and develop their physical skills as well as their independence and knowledge of the environment in which they live, and they show consciousness of their bodies and their ability to use them effectively and enjoyably. They develop control over the environment and their ability to use various tools and devices and expand the range of their effectiveness and activities.

In the intellectual field, children expand their ability to think in kindergarten and they use complex processes to learn and understand the world around them. They also have more curiosity and the desire to search, discover, solve problems, and find an explanation for the phenomena they face, while showing greater understanding of symbols and signs through abstract thinking (Isa, 2005).

Mechanisms and Methods That Can Help the Teacher in Developing Relationships with Children

Kindergarten prepares children to exit kindergarten with skills that enable them to solve daily problems, take appropriate decisions about them, and achieve a balance in building their personalities, as they are subjected to those educational experiences that they pass through at this stage. The child's ability to learn during the school stage depends on the competence that he develops in the mental, social, and emotional aspects during his years in kindergarten and there are special methods of raising children, which the kindergarten teacher should take into account during the implementation of the learning and teaching process. These methods include different types of play, which affect the children, and fulfill a basic need for their continuous physical, mental, and emotional / social development, and their means of understanding the world around them (Madkour, 2005).

The activities are chosen according to the children's abilities. To help them choose and to provide them with safety and self-confidence in playing, open-ended questions are used to help children speak, express themselves and enrich their language. The teachers may work on the participation of the children in more than one activity, and to encourage them to work in groups by moving between them easily for guidance and direction and by not issuing orders, but rather providing the children with activities which help them to predict and meet their expectations and not the expectations of the teacher as an adult. During work, they use the plural form such as "Let's work" or "This is for all of us", because this helps children to feel a belonging to the kindergarten. Furthermore, preserving ownership, and increasing their social interaction within the group, the teachers work to find various activities to strengthen the children's fine and large muscles and work on their development, as well as taking into account both easy and difficult levels of activities. The teacher may use a holistic method of learning, including sensory training, observation, and experimentation in training the child mentally, physically, and socially. To achieve the goals of moral education, the kindergarten teacher should train the children to practice good habits in their daily lives, to form good attitudes towards order and cleanliness, and to develop positive social emotions among children such as: cooperation, bearing responsibility, and a love of goodness (Al-Nashif, 2005).

Challenges Facing Teachers in Developing Quality Relationships with Children During Distance Learning

Distance learning is considered as one of the most recent innovations that educational technology has produced in educational practices in recent decades, as it departed from the traditional approach of education and the educational systems. Distance learning created an educational learning situation in which the learner is physically and geographically separated from the teacher, while the learning takes place in an interactive way by transferring information from the teaching source to the learner. As a result, distance learning required the establishment of institutions that differ from those of traditional educational institutions (Al-Hassan, 2014).

An observer of the conditions of educational systems across different eras in a different part of the world, recognizes that education was not immune to the societal conditions surrounding it, always being affected by what is happening in society in terms of social, health, economic and political changes and crises. In view of the current situation and the spread of COVID-19 worldwide, it was decided to suspend schools, and to maintain the continuity of the education process, using distance learning systems. The goal was to maintain the permanence and continuity of learning, through appropriate learning during this period, as students learn remotely using online technologies. One of the greatest difficulties in maintaining the quality of the relationship with children is that many children do not always go to kindergarten, thus constant absenteeism leads to difficulties in building relationships with the children.

The exposure of children to punishment by the teacher leads to bad experiences for the children and creates difficulties in trusting the teacher. The teacher's lack of knowledge of all matters relating to children and their circumstances leads to bad relationships between children and their teacher. In addition, some teachers have their own perception of children according to personal biases and deal with them accordingly, which may lead to bad relationships with other children, and the presence of some behavioral or educational disorders that leads to difficulties for the child in understanding the teacher. This situation may be normal within the confines of the kindergartens, but in the case of distance learning, many teachers point out difficulties that lie in communication with children remotely.

Distance Learning During COVID-19

Some studies have been conducted to examine the use of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Distance learning relates to educational activities where the learning is located away from the educator and uses available technologies to access the learning materials and to communicate with the educator (Schlosser, & Simonson, 2002). In a study conducted in kindergarten schools in Athens, Greece, the outcomes of the implementation of distance learning with the closing of the kindergarten schools during the COVID-19 pandemic were examined (Foti, 2020). A survey questionnaire was distributed amongst kindergarten teachers. The responses of the teachers to the survey indicated a lack of support for teachers in distance learning, and a large proportion of the kindergarten teachers indicated a low response rate of the kindergarten children to their efforts at implementing distance learning. In addition, the teachers reported that they had experienced a lack of training in the use of distance learning. Another issue that was addressed in the study was the challenges that prevented meaningful communication between the children and the kindergarten teachers. The lack of communication demonstrated a limited collaborative and communicative environment in the distance learning class. Overall, the teachers specified that distance learning was very useful during the COVID-19 pandemic, where schools were closed for long periods of time and the children were at home. Nevertheless, the teachers' perception was that distance learning could not replace the value of live teaching in passing on knowledge to the children (Foti, 2020).

In Pakistan, over 8 million children attend pre-primary institutes, but when the educational institutions closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the national efforts to develop an alternative framework for the children was limited. A research study was conducted to examine the experience of the parents during the home learning of the children during the pandemic. Nineteen parents participated in the study. The experiences of the parents related to three main themes, which included the effect of COVID-19 on the children's learning, the degree of support provided by the schools and the strategies that were adopted at home to support the children's learning. The concerns of the parents centered around the difficulties in maintaining a routine and the challenges posed by the transition to online learning. Since the transition was abrupt, some of the parents had experienced challenges in providing the necessary technology to the children and mentioned that supporting their children's learning required time and effort on the part of the parents (Bhamani, Makhdoom, Bharuchi, Ali, Kaleem, & Ahmed, 2020).

Methodology

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) pandemic caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in the first quarter of 2020, many countries put in place a mandatory lockdown. In March 2020, Israel's Prime Minister declared a national state of emergency that restricted the movements of residents, and all schools and universities were closed. During the lockdowns, the kindergarten children did not attend the early childhood centers, and they were only able to learn from home. By April 2020, with the closing down of educational institutions globally, 1.5 billion pupils in 194 countries around the world were at home from school (Rivkin, 2020).

About a week after the start of the first lockdown in Israel, the kindergarten teachers started working with the children online in Zoom. Zoom is a software program that enables videoconferencing with large numbers of participants simultaneously. Zoom is considered easy to download and use (Zoom, 2020). The kindergarten children were required to start using mostly Zoom and to learn how to use it correctly for distance learning. The children were helped by their parents, which posed its own set of specific challenges. At the same time, the kindergarten teachers themselves started learning how to teach online. It was challenging, and there were gaps between the different kindergarten teachers, with not all of them relating well to providing opportunities for distance learning.

As a researcher of this study, I was a member of the working group of the Chief Scientist in Israel which discussed all aspects of distance learning in early childhood. In my role, I delved deep into the topic of distance learning in kindergarten children. Focus groups were conducted with two groups of kindergarten teachers and two groups of parents during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Focus group discussions are used as a qualitative method of research and are of value in gaining a deeper understanding of social issues. During focus group discussions, the group of individuals gathered provide their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about a specific topic through moderated interaction (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). The groups of individuals participating in

the focus group were purposely selected rather than selected using a statistically representative sample of the population. They were selected from the kindergarten teachers and the children's parents that had experienced distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings and Discussion

Once the focus group sessions had been conducted, the sessions were examined to discover the main themes that emerged from the sessions. The themes provide a deeper understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of kindergarten teachers and the children's parents to distance learning.

Teachers' Transition to Distance Learning

The teachers displayed difficulties encompassing all the needs of the kindergarten children in the distance learning environment. These challenges were more acutely apparent with children with special needs but were also observed in children without difficulties who nevertheless needed warmth and love or were perhaps more shy or sensitive. They described "the challenges of being there for the children" and being "available to help them during times of adversity". The teachers talked about the lack of support for them as they transitioned from a routine schedule into an emergency with the use of distance learning. This lack of support was particularly noticeable in early childhood education.

The degree of success of the use of distance learning and of maintaining contact with the children and parents partly depends on the kindergarten teacher's outlook, her preparation for the task and the tools at her disposal. Her motivation also has a role to play in successfully using distance learning. Advance preparation is needed for the transition to distance learning, which would prepare the kindergarten teacher for the task that they are to face. Once the teachers are adequately prepared, they can prepare the children, their parents, and the kindergarten staff accordingly.

High-Level Management

There is an expectation from the kindergarten staff involved in distance learning for the higher-level decision makers to become involved at ground level and to understand what the challenges are and the functioning of distance learning. A deeper understanding on the part of the high-level decision makers could be expected to promote the development of learning approaches and teaching tools that would strengthen the connection between kindergarten teachers and children.

Vocational Training

One of the kindergarten teachers expressed her feeling of being "thrown in the deep end" when having to deal with distance learning, while another kindergarten teacher described the transition to distance learning as "putting the cart before the horse". When the COVID-19 pandemic began and kindergartens were closed, the kindergarten teachers and kindergarten staff were provided with little preparation or training to deal with a transition to distance learning. The kindergarten teachers described a feeling of "not having enough knowledge" to engage in distance learning. Similar findings were reported by the teachers who participated in a study in kindergartens in Greece with the teachers indicating that they encountered a lack of training in the use of distance learning (Foti, 2020).

Nevertheless, when faced with a lack of training for engaging the children in distance learning, the kindergarten teachers developed their own tools and improved their own skills that were needed for better online learning.

The teachers were motivated and aspired to achieve optimal control when it comes to distance learning, but thought that without professional tools, it would not be possible.

Developing Skills Among the Kindergarten Staff

The teachers discussed the need for educational programs developed for distance learning to be adapted "to provide a solution for all children". During the years children attend kindergarten, they learn to cooperate and participate, while relying on the self and developing their self-confidence (Abu-Ghazaleh, 2007). Thus, according to the teachers, distance learning should be designed to empower the child, contributing to the development of his personal abilities, such as self-confidence. During the process of establishing a distance learning program, the teacher must get to know what is good for the children and what the difficulties are that they experience. Based on this knowledge, the teachers can align the curriculum, the schedule, and the physical space to the requirements of the children.

The Physical Space in the Home

In the focus groups conducted with parents of kindergarten children, the parents expressed their concerns over distance learning and detailed their experiences from their children's use of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the concerns aired by some parents was a lack of physical space in the home adapted for distance learning, which should include a quiet corner, a computer and internet technology for communication. In the study conducted in Pakistan, similar concerns were raised by the parents, who mentioned the difficulties of having a computer and internet available at the specific hours that these were needed for the online learning of the

children (Bhamani, Makhdoom, Bharuchi, Ali, Kaleem, & Ahmed, 2020). Furthermore, many of the parents work and are forced to leave their children with their grandparents, and there is no suitable physical space at the grandparents' homes.

Another point brought up amongst the parents in the focus groups was the number of children in the family and accordingly, the preferential priority for giving each child access to the computer, and for allocating time to accompany and support the child in their distance learning. The view of many parents was "to invest in their children that are attending school", since the kindergarten children are young and kindergarten learning and closing gaps can occur at a later stage.

During kindergarten, children undergo important growth and development, physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally through their interactions with the kindergarten teacher and their peers (Al-Mady, 2018). Focusing on the importance of school-going children at the expense of the younger kindergarten children seemingly arose from the limited understanding of the parents of the importance of early childhood education.

The Value of Collaboration

The kindergarten teachers discussed their expectations for collaborations within the kindergarten. They all agreed to the necessity for team collaboration between the kindergarten teachers, the kindergarten assistants, and the kindergarten staff for the well-being of the children. Furthermore, the need for "collaboration with external parties", such as an educational consultant, pedagogical instructor, etc. was also ranked as important for the kindergarten teachers. The kindergarten teachers focused on the value of meetings with relevant parties to harness the professionals to assist and support the kindergarten teacher and to understand together the best possible way to conduct distance learning.

The teachers also mentioned the possibility of creating triangular collaboration between the kindergarten staff, the children, and their parents.

Communication between Kindergarten Staff and Parents

The success of distance learning used with kindergarten children is partly dependent on the parents and the availability of professional tools to create a communication continuum with the parents. When the kindergarten teacher is adequately trained in distance learning, she can explain and provide appropriate responses to the parents. The teachers agreed that it is important to maintain good communication and create trust between the parents and the kindergarten staff. Parents expressed the need to feel comfortable sharing and asking for help from the kindergarten teachers. When there exists a good relationship between the parents and the kindergarten staff, there is expected to be a positive effect on the children. In line with research, the focus groups indicated that kindergarten teachers that have good interactions with the children and their parents were able more easily to mobilize the parents' cooperation for learning online with Zoom. Nevertheless, a few teachers indicated that when they send activities for completion at home, the parents complete the homework instead of the student.

Some kindergarten teachers felt that the kindergarten teachers' role should include raising parents' awareness of the importance of early childhood investment, and the importance of quality parent-child time. During the period of the children's absence from the kindergarten, the teachers agreed that "it is important to have continuous contact with the parents" and to be aware of the work of the parents, some of whom work from home, to be able to enable optimal contact with the children. The parents on their part should pay attention to their children and keep "their finger on the pulse" to detect any difficulties faced by the children, to recognize the problem and to enlist support and guidance for the children.

Both the parents' focus groups and the kindergarten teachers' focus groups strove to find solutions for discourse that arose between the kindergarten teachers and the parents. The parents related to the need of the kindergarten staff "to receive criticism" and discourse from the parents, while expressing the difficulties facing the parents. The kindergarten teachers suggested that "sometimes it is necessary to use someone to bridge or mediate the discourse between kindergarten staff and parents". When there is no parental cooperation, the distance learning process is not possible. A few kindergarten teachers mentioned some of the parents who do not cooperate and do not support their children when it comes to distance learning, and this affects the children's learning.

The parents indicated their interest in the possibility of counselling by a professional and counselling from the kindergarten teacher who spends much of the day with the children.

Relating to Distance Learning

Distance learning poses challenges that require collaboration between the kindergarten staff, as well as between the kindergarten teachers and the children and their parents. Ensuring collaboration demands unique skills for enabling the management of partnerships. The requirements for supporting distance learning need to be examined on a case-by-case basis, since not all children can and have the conditions to learn online.

Many of the kindergartens in Israel have more than 30 children in a class and “it is difficult for kindergarten staff to embrace all 32 children” from the kindergarten class. These difficulties are further compounded by “the need to align their approach to 32 different families” of the children as part of distance learning environment.

Another challenge with distance learning is the difficulties in locating children with developmental gaps when communication is undertaken virtually. Children with a variety of developmental needs and certain disabilities sometimes need different kinds of support and guidance that are difficult to provide online. During the focus groups, some kindergarten teachers described situations in which they were exposed to domestic violence, neglect, lack of hygiene, etc. in the homes of the kindergarten children during their Zoom online sessions and were concerned with the difficulty in dealing with these issues.

The kindergarten teachers also reported that they spend a lot of time preparing a schedule for experiential Zoom sessions, and very few children participated in the sessions. Often only between 5-8 children out of around 30 children in kindergarten participated in the distance learning. These children largely came from strong socio-economic families. These results are like the findings reported in the study conducted in Greek kindergartens, where the teachers indicated that they had experienced a low response rate of the kindergarten children to the efforts made by the teachers to implement distance learning (Foti, 2020)

An additional concern of the kindergarten teachers was that the parents expect the kindergarten teachers to be available at all hours of the day. The teachers were often asked to conduct afternoon/evening distance learning sessions when the parents return from work, so that they could participate and support their children. However, learning in the afternoon hours or in the evenings would disrupt the children's regular daily routine, and often the children were exhausted and unable to concentrate and participate. With the disruption in the routine of the children, the hours spent with computers and mobile phones increased, and the children's individual interaction with the screen affected their social, sensory, and educational development.

Another observation by the kindergarten teachers was the loss of parental authority while the children were at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. These disruptions caused the children to go to bed late, to wake up late, to spend most of their time in front of screens, to eat unhealthy food, and to create a feeling of social detachment.

Conclusions

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was an unexpected event that occurred on a global scale. Advance preparation for the changes that were necessitated in kindergartens by the requirements for social distancing and lockdowns was limited and kindergarten teachers were expected to adapt rapidly to the unfolding changes. The transition to distance learning in the kindergartens in Israel happened overnight and the transition posed many challenges for the kindergarten teachers, the kindergarten children, and their parents.

The kindergarten teachers were inadequately trained in instruction for distance learning. Some training was provided to the teachers after the schools closed, but in the view of the teachers, it was not comprehensive enough to deal with all the challenges of distance learning. Another aspect that affected the success of implementing distance learning for kindergarten children was the physical space in the home and the available technologies. Many households had to allocate the use of technology to more than one child and often a quiet corner was unavailable in the home. The support of the parents was of importance in ensuring a successful learning experience for their children. While some parents were available to assist their children with their distance learning, other parents were busy working, and the teachers faced many requests to reschedule the learning to afternoon or evening hours. Despite the efforts made by the kindergarten teachers to ensure the continuation of the children's education through distance learning, the response from the children and their parents was not always adequate.

In response to the findings from the focus group sessions and from the experience of kindergarten teachers with the use of distance learning for kindergarten children during the COVID-19 pandemic, several recommendations are provided regarding the measures that could be taken to increase the success of the future use of distance learning in kindergarten children. One measure that is recommended is to always maintain healthy relationships between the kindergarten teachers and the kindergarten staff, and to relate positively to the quality of the relationship between the kindergarten teachers and the children, and between the children themselves. Training programs should be planned for the teachers to increase their preparedness for future events which require the use of distance learning. Future activities in distance learning should be planned to draw the children's attention to the kindergarten environment and should be built according to the changing interests and needs of the children, their personal preferences, their abilities and with consideration of the difficulties that the children face with learning from a distance.

References

- Abu Ghazaleh, Haifa. (2007). Kindergarten guide in Jordan, General Union of Charitable Societies, Amman, Jordan.
- Al-Badi, Nawwaf. (2010). Total Quality in Education and ISO Applications, Amman, Jordan, Al-Yazoury Dar for Scientific Publishing and Distribution.
- Al-Hassan, Essam. (2014). The extent of the contribution of educational technology to distance learning programs in Sudanese universities in Darf, educational studies, number (3).
- Al-Khamisi, Salama. (2007). "Effective School Quality Standards in Light of the Systems Approach: A Systematic View, Saudi Society for Educational and Psychological Sciences, Fourteenth Annual Meeting on "Quality in Public Education", Al-Qassim, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Al-Nashif, Hoda Mahmoud (2005), kindergarten teacher, (1st ed.), Amman: Dar Al-Fikr for printing, publishing and distribution.
- Al-Youssef, Rami. (2008). The Effectiveness of a Training Program in the Development of Interpersonal Intelligence among Kindergarten Children, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Jordan.
- Ali, Larkot. (2009). The Possibility of Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions in Algeria - Justifications and Basic Requirements - (Unpublished Master Thesis), Department of Psychological and Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Haji Lakhdar University, Algeria.
- Almadi, Ahlams. (2018). The role of kindergarten directors in spreading the culture of total quality in kindergartens in the west of the city of Riyadh, Journal of Scientific Research in Education, Issue 19, 71-114.
- Asheiba, Fathy Darwish (2000). "Total Quality and its Possibilities for its Application in Egyptian University Education - An Analytical Study" in: Development of Arab Teacher Preparation and Training Systems at the Beginning of the Third Millennium, the Annual Conference of the Faculty of Education, Helwan University, May 26-27.
- Bhamani, S., Makhdoom, A.Z., Bharuchi, V., Ali, N., Kaleem, S., Ahmed, D. (2020). Home Learning in Times of COVID: Experiences of Parents. Journal of Education and Educational Development 7(1), p. 9-26.
- Fahmy, Atef (2004). Kindergarten teacher, Dar Al Masirah for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan.
- Foti, P. (2020). Research in Distance Learning in Greek kindergarten schools during the pandemic of COVID-19: Possibilities, dilemmas, limitations. European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies, 5(1), p. 19-40.
- Issa, Eva. (2005). Kindergarten: Philosophy - Skills - Activities - Programs, University Dar House, Gaza.
- Madkour, Ali (2005). Mentor of the future towards better performance. (I 1), Cairo: The House of Arab Thought.
- Nyumba, T.O., Wilson, K., Derrick, C.J., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. Methods in Ecology and Evolution, 9(1), p. 20-32.
- Rabadi, Maryam. (2008). A study of some variables related to the views of kindergarten teachers on the interactive national curriculum in Jordan, Journal of the Faculty of Education in Port Said, 5, p. 57-79.
- Rivkin, A. (2020). What can be learnt about studies during the Corona pandemic? Machon Davidson, Weitzman Institute of Science. Retrieved from <https://davidson.weizmann.ac.il/>.
- Schlosser, L. A., & Simonson, M. (2002). Distance Education: Definition and Glossary of Terms, AECT.
- Zoom. (2020). Zoom: Video Conferencing, Web Conferencing, Webinars. Retrieved from <https://zoom.us>.