

Managing the kindergarten organizing in the Arab sector in Israel

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Today, the leading concept in the Ministry of Education is that early childhood education is an important and unique educational stage that should be perceived as a separate from school. According to this perception the kindergarten teachers will take responsibility for managing their kindergartens which gives them an icon institution and a status of kindergarten managers, which is also expressed in their salaries (Eyal, K., 2012, p 55).

This article **aims** to highlight light on managing the kindergarten as assessed by kindergarten managers in the Arab sector. In my research I chose the qualitative **research method**, I held five interviews with kindergarten managers belonging to the Northern District, I chose "a focused semi-structured interview" that some of its questions were set in advance while the other questions were based on the answers of the interviewees. (Shakidi, 2003, 2011). After reading all the data I sort them into categories. I got important **findings** from the interviews that I held with kindergarten managers. I shared into three basic categories

First category: The kindergarten managers' perception of their role.

Second category: The kindergarten teachers' perception of the organizational culture as a dimension affecting parental involvement and the difficulties related to parental involvement.

Third category: What kindergarten teachers need to improve in order to succeed in managing parental involvement and feel positive organizational commitment.

Conclusions kindergarten managers, perceiving their role as "kindergarten teachers" increases their satisfaction with their job, and it positively affects their functioning and control over the didactic and pedagogical aspects, this is also expressed in a comfortable atmosphere with the children and **parents**. Kindergarten managers' perception of the organizational culture as a dimension affecting parental involvement and the difficulties related to parental involvement. Most of the kindergarten managers indicated that the kindergarten managers are responsible for the improvement of their situation in terms of their role and their work in terms of management, didactic and pedagogic implementation.

Key word: Management; kindergarten; managing kindergarten; Leadership in young age,

Management

The term "management", as used when the aim is to fulfill the goals of the education ministry while preserving the current situation, was perceived as operating, maintaining, planning and organizing the available resources in school (Oplatka, 2007, 2009). Management is the achievement of the organization goals effectively; through planning; organization; coordination; leadership and control over human resources. The goal of management and leadership is to solve current problems and to plan the coping strategies with future plans. (Levi ;2008. p. 19).

Kindergarten- Pre-School Education

A kindergarten is a small organizational framework. Thus, kindergarten teachers, who also act as the managers of the kindergarten, are involved both in managing this institution as well as in the educational process which occurs in it. Books dealing with management claim that a manager is responsible for designing the policy of the organization led by him or her and for coordinating the actions of the organization in order to apply this policy.

Managing the kindergarten

Today, the kindergarten teachers will take responsibility for managing their kindergartens which gives them an icon institution and a status of kindergarten managers, which is also expressed in their salaries (Eyal, K., 2012, p 55). The "Kindergarten Managers' Association" worked on monitoring kindergartens and creating an ethical code for kindergarten managers. Among other things, the ethical code stated that in addition to the educational work of the kindergarten manager, she is committed to the proper maintenance of her kindergarten, to the budget management, to the health of children to professional training and to making continual contacts with the parents of the children in her kindergarten (Stone, 2002. In: Tal, K. Bar. T 2010). In a thesis written by Bigger (1996), "The kindergarten teacher as a director of a learning environment", she claims that a kindergarten teacher acts simultaneously as school teacher and as a director. She is engaged in planning the pedagogic and managerial program, in organizing the role of the educator, in monitoring the children, in activating the team, in representing the team

in contacts with external factors, in coordinating, tracing and supervising the different professionals that serve the kindergarten and the relation with the community in which the kindergarten functions. All the above are clear managerial roles that have not yet gotten their proper position in the qualification and work within the system. (In: Ministry of Education, 2005).

Leadership in young age

Jillian Rodd (Rodd, 1998), who dealt with the topic of leadership in young age, presents five features of managing young age education: The kindergarten teacher/director work directly and simultaneously with the parents, the educational team and the children. This requires management and communication skills and the ability to work with a team. The kindergarten teacher/director is responsible for each child during the whole school day and in different development and knowledge aspects. In order to fulfill her job she needs managerial and organizational skills and a high degree of expertise in different fields. Children are vulnerable and the kindergarten teacher/director must have a high level of self-discipline and professional ethics. The work of the kindergarten teacher/director is done in professional solitude. She needs a high ability to make decisions and solve problems. Many decisions include ethical problems. The age range and the variety of development phases and audiences are very wide and require updated professional knowledge. Reaching a management and leadership position might take place in an early phase of the professional development' the phase of survival¹.

"Intra-kindergarten" evaluation domains: organizing an educational environment, evaluating curricula and instruction-learning materials, providing values, quality and interaction (children-kindergarten teacher; children-children; parents-kindergarten teacher), work methods in the kindergarten, agenda and time planning, coping with problems and unexpected situations, teaching habits, maintenance, organization and cleaning².

Findings

After collecting data from the field following the qualitative research method (semi-structured interview), I chose, as a researcher, to organize the material and data in tables and analyze all the material of the interviews and quantitative research findings

¹ Web.macam98.ac.il/~livne/3olan/man5.htm

² web.macam98.ac.il/~livne/3olan/man5.htm

through reflective thinking. After reading all the data that were carefully collected, I sort them into categories, major categories and sub-categories (Shakidi, 2003, 2011).

The basic categories related to the kindergarten managers:

First category: The kindergarten managers' perception of their role.

Second category: The kindergarten teachers' perception of the organizational culture as a dimension affecting parental involvement and the difficulties related to parental involvement.

Third category: What kindergarten teachers need to improve in order to succeed in managing parental involvement and feel positive organizational commitment.

The way kindergarten managers perceive their role (as kindergarten managers-teachers). According to the kindergarten managers, perceiving their role as "kindergarten teachers" increases their satisfaction with their job and this is expressed in their commitment to the kindergarten and it positively affects their functioning and control over the didactic and pedagogical aspects of the kindergarten; this is also expressed in a comfortable atmosphere with the children, their parents and with different professionals. Kindergarten managers think that the parents are interested in the academic success of their children, and they see a similar perception among people occupying different positions such as the local authority and the supervision. Most of the meetings taking place with the supervisor focus on the academic aspect and on the fact that the child should feel comfortable in the kindergarten, and they focus on the pedagogical aspect which is expressed in hanging materials, pictures and Arabic words on the walls and in educational projects like "nutrition", "educational garden", etc. The dissatisfaction of some of the kindergarten managers was due to the lack of proper budgets, difficulties in holding constructive dialogues, the size of the kindergarten, the building of the kindergarten, the number of the children, the lack of a playground, etc. The dissatisfaction of the kindergarten managers is mainly due to the kindergarten environment, the organizational culture of the kindergarten that they are responsible, and because of the poor opportunities that prevents them from giving the maximum to the children. As for the perception of the job, the kindergarten teachers think that they are treated as kindergarten teachers and not as managers, and this makes them feel dissatisfied. Officially they are "kindergarten managers" as defined by the Ministry of Education and by the CEO, but in reality, the local authority and the supervision do not really treat them as managers and this leads to a feeling of **blur** and dissatisfaction among the kindergarten managers. An important

point that the kindergarten managers mentioned is related to the curriculum, which, according to the feeling and professional evaluation of the kindergarten managers damages the extent of their organizational commitment. Another point which the kindergarten managers referred to was the "composition of the kindergarten group" which includes children aged three, and children aged four plus. The difference between the two groups that come to the same preschool kindergarten is huge. First of all, children who are currently in the age of four and up, have already spent a whole year in the kindergarten, they learned and internalized rules, boundaries and the didactic and educational aspects. However, the group of children who are at the age of three or so are new in the kindergarten, for most of them this their first year, they are not yet accustomed to the time schedule, to sitting on chairs, to the laws, to the boundaries and to be with such a big group of children that including 35 children in the same place for 6 hours. This difference makes it very difficult for the kindergarten managers to implement the program requested from by the Ministry of Education and Culture, they try to adjust the learning and organizational environment for the younger children, they work on the organization inside the kindergarten, they cope with difficulties related to parting from parents among the new children, etc. In addition, the kindergarten manager is committed to build two programs to fit the developmental stage of the two groups, that is children aged three and children aged four. The kindergarten manager feels satisfaction with her job when there are clear regulations, when importance is given to the number of students in the same frame and their age, when there is a given budget, a proper organizational environment and physical conditions, when professionals work in this environment (a doctor, a psychologist, etc.), when involving parents moves in the same direction along with the kindergarten manager, and most importantly when the proposed curriculum for kindergarten children will be experientially, and will not be coded as 1, 2,3, etc.

In the Second category, Kindergarten managers' perception of the organizational culture as a dimension affecting parental involvement and the difficulties related to parental involvement. According to the kindergarten managers, active parental involvement is affected by the dimension of the kindergarten's "organizational culture", its degree of development and the things offered by the kindergarten managers, first academically and pedagogically and secondly in terms of increasing knowledge and strengthening capacities of the staff members, the children and parents through people who specialize in early childhood, such as psychologists, occupational

therapists, speech therapists, etc., because according to the perception of the kindergarten managers, the child is still in infancy, he/she still needs guidance in all areas of development; for example, if a four year old child suffers from a problem in spelling or of speech then it is better to have a doctor visiting the kindergarten to discuss the matter with the supervisor, the psychologist, and various professionals. The child can be sent to undergo examinations, and if it is necessary to undergo treatment. Thus, the young child can narrow the gap with his age group and he/she will feel more self-confidence and progress as other students. Many other areas of development can be implemented and many children can get help from professionals.

Difficulties related to parental involvement: According to the perception of kindergarten managers, underdeveloped organizational culture can lead to difficulties in managing parental involvement in their work. The organizational culture includes the kindergarten structure, size of the children's population, equipment, communication and dialogue, rules and boundaries. kindergarten managers expressed fear from parents' accessibility or from reporting to parents on a specific topic related to their children because most of the parents are not willing to hear, and from our experience, which is more than ten years, we see that some parents get angry, complain about the kindergarten manager/teacher and feel that her guidance or reference to the issues such as "speech difficulties" and " difficulty sitting on the chair", and many more important areas in child development, insults them and their children and they do not try to take the positive aspect of the matter to help their children. From these responses and the difficulties I have referred to in the system that includes various professionals responsible for this specific environment, any failure or shortcoming affects the kindergarten managers negatively, as if the kindergarten teacher or manager is the person to solve all the problems without telling the parents, without complaining to the people responsible, etc. Therefore, parental involvement in kindergartens has not yet received a management form management with reference to the various management basics, such as how to lead a group of parents, and how to plan meetings, which are the basic points that should be treated and how and in what manner to refer to things, etc.

The Third category that related to **what's** kindergarten managers need to improve in order to succeed in managing parental involvement. Most of the kindergarten managers indicated that the kindergarten managers are responsible for the improvement of their situation in terms of their role and their work in the

kindergarten, in terms of management, in terms of didactic and pedagogic implementation and in terms of optimal educational environment and in terms of contacts with parents, etc. First of all, according to the data collected during the interviews, the kindergarten managers have a first degree and all of them did not take courses in the area of kindergarten management and everything related to the subject or how can build a dialogue with parents within their studies for the first degree. They said that the seniority in the job was what taught them how to manage the kindergarten, what was good and what was bad. However, and despite so many years of employment they are still unable to make decisions based on what they see fit if they do not get the approval of the supervisor or the local authority. They said that those responsible always want them to be report on a job they did or a decision they made. This topic it is important to build kindergarten teachers' forums, where they can exchange information between them in terms of rules, problems and dilemmas they encounter so that the meetings with the tutors and supervisors get a different form. To sum up: the perception of the kindergarten managers of their managerial role is still seen as a complex and blurred; there are many tasks they must apply throughout the year with various factors such as the local authority, the Ministry of Education, parents, professionals such as a psychologist, a supervisor, coordinators, etc.

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Tabals:

	M (SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.
Organizational culture:														
1.Total score	3.53 (0.47)	.93*	.80*	.80*	.67*	.68*	.40*	.62*	-.53*	-.56*	.04	-.58*	-.45*	-.53*
2.Educational	3.72 (0.49)		.66*	.61*	.64*	.63*	.37*	.65*	-.51*	-.55*	.06	-.58*	-.42*	-.50*
3.Social	3.54 (0.45)			.49*	.57*	.57*	.36*	.52*	-.45*	-.49*	-.05	-.42*	-.29*	-.47*
4.Safety	2.90 (0.84)				.45*	.51*	.29*	.35*	-.41*	-.31*	.04	-.46*	-.45*	-.41*
Parental involvement:														
5.Total score	3.03 (0.55)					.84*	.82*	.90*	-.28*	-.53*	.21	-.33*	-.10	-.38*
6. Kindergarten based	2.91 (0.70)						.48*	.67*	-.46*	-.62*	.11	-.54*	-.24	-.51*
7.Home based	3.07 (0.55)							.61*	.05	-.25	.28*	.05	.14	-.05
8. Kindergarten home conferencing	3.10 (0.70)								-.31*	-.48*	.16	-.36*	-.15	-.40*
Problems with parental involvement:														
9.Total score	2.32 (0.58)									.55*	.67*	.88*	.78*	.90*
10.Management	2.26 (0.67)										.01	.49*	.25	.42*
11.Teaching	1.79 (0.57)											.44*	.45*	.57*
12.Facilities	2.55 (0.95)												.63*	.78*
13.Program	2.81													.64*

	(0.96)													
14.Parents beliefs	2.61 (0.80)													

* $p < .01$

	Total commitment			Affective commitment			Continuance commitment			Normative commitment		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Organizational culture												
Educational	.40	.11	.41***	.31	.15	.25*	.35	.12	.26**	.54	.15	.38***
Social												
Safety												
Parental involvement												
Kindergarten based												
Home based												
Kindergarten home conferencing	.15	.07	.22*	.21	.11	.24*				.23	.11	.24*
Problems with parental involvement												
Management												
Teaching							.38	.11	.33***			
Facilities												
Program												
Parents beliefs												
R^2	.33			.20			.19			.32		
F (2, 97)	23.66***			11.95***			11.20***			22.76***		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$