

**OBSTACLES IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT  
FACING JORDANIAN PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS**

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**OBSTACLES IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT FACING  
JORDANIAN PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS**

**By**

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, who always stood beside me and believed in me, and for all her sacrifices.

To my supervisor Professor Dr. Nor Hashimah Binti Hashim and Co-Supervisor  
Professor Dr. Anna Christina Abdullah.

To my martyr's spirit nephew Colonel Fighter Pilot Maen, 16/5/2013

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**Majdi Abdullah Ahmad Adheisat**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ERfKE	Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy
MES	Military Education Schools
JMoE	Jordan Ministry of Education
DE	Directorate of Education
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
OPIK	Obstacles of Parental Involvement in Kindergarten
IOPI	Interview of Obstacles in Parental Involvement
USD	United States Dollar
JD	Jordanian Dinar
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTO	Parent Teacher Organization
ECE	Early Childhood Education
RQ	Research Question
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# **HALANGAN-HALANGAN DALAM PENGLIBATAN IBU BAPA YANG DIHADAPI TADIKA AWAM DI JORDAN**

## **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini mengkaji halangan yang dihadapi oleh ibu bapa dalam penglibatan mereka di tadika awam Jordan. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah campuran yang mengadaptasi soal selidik dan temu bual separa berstruktur. Secara khusus, kajian ini memeriksa dan menjawab soalan kajian melalui perspektif ibu bapa, guru dan pengetua dengan perhatian diberikan kepada kumpulan umur, kelayakan, pendapatan dan jantina. Kajian ini mempunyai tiga kumpulan responden yang terdiri daripada 345 ibu bapa, 262 guru dan 263 pengetua sebagai sampel. Sampel temu bual terdiri daripada tiga orang di kalangan ibu bapa tiga orang guru dan tiga orang pengetua. Soal selidik dan temu bual separa berstruktur digunakan sebagai instrumen untuk pengumpulan data. Statistik deskriptif digunakan dalam mengira min dan sisihan piawai data yang dikumpul. Analisis varians (ANOVA) digunakan untuk mengetahui sama ada terdapat perbezaan statistik yang signifikan antara kumpulan kajian berdasarkan kumpulan umur, kelayakan dan pendapatan ibu bapa. Data daripada temu bual telah ditranskrip secara manual menggunakan analisis data secara kualitatif. Secara keseluruhan, ibu bapa didapati bersetuju, manakala guru tidak bersetuju dan pengetua pula tidak bersetuju bahawa ibu bapa mempunyai halangan dalam penglibatan di tadika awam Jordan. ANOVA menunjukkan perbezaan statistik yang signifikan di antara kumpulan umur, kelayakan dan pendapatan ibu bapa dalam halangan-halangan penglibatan yang dihadapi oleh ibu bapa. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa umur, kelayakan, pendapatan dan jantina ibu bapa

secara individu adalah faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi tahap penglibatan mereka dalam pendidikan kanak-kanak di tadika. Faktor-faktor ini mempengaruhi sama ada ibu bapa mempunyai penglibatan yang kuat mahupun lemah. Oleh itu kajian ini ingin mencadangkan antara lain, bahawa guru-guru perlu memahami tahap penglibatan ibu bapa secara individu dan mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengannya, kerana hal ini dapat membantu meningkatkan penglibatan ibu bapa yang penting kepada kejayaan pendidikan anak-anak mereka. Selain tu, ideologi pengetua dalam memperbaiki hubungan dengan ibu bapa juga perlu diperbaiki, agar dapat membantu ibu bapa membangunkan strategi penglibatan yang positif dalam pendidikan anak-anak mereka.



# **OBSTACLES IN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT FACING JORDANIAN PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the obstacles parents are facing in their involvement in Jordanian public kindergartens. The study was a mixed method which used adapted research questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Specifically, it examined and answered research questions on the obstacles in parental involvement from the perspectives of parents, teachers and principals with attention to age group, qualification, income and gender. The study had three groups of respondents; 345 parents, 262 teachers and 263 principals as sample. The interview sample consisted of three parents, three teachers and three principals. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used as instruments for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used to obtain the means and standard deviations from data collected. Analysis variance (ANOVA) was used to find out if there were any statistically significant difference between the study groups in the obstacles of parental involvement based on parents' age group, qualification and income. Data from the interviews was transcribed using manual qualitative data analysis. Overall, parents agreed, teachers disagreed and principals disagreed that parents have obstacles in parental involvement in Jordanian public kindergartens. The ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference between the parents' age group, qualification and income as obstacles facing parental involvement. The study therefore concludes that the age, qualification, income and gender of individual parents are factors that influence their level of involvement in their children kindergarten education. These

factors can either make parents have strong or weaker involvement. Thus the study suggested among others that teachers should understand the level of individual parents' involvement and factors associated to it, as this can help to improve parents' involvement, which is important to the success of children education. And principals ideology of how to improve constant contact with the parents need to be improved, to help parents to develop positive involvement strategies in the education of kindergarten children.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Enhancement in the education of children is associated with parental involvement at the kindergarten education stage. Parents have an essential responsibility toward their children as the first and ‘primary’ guides for the betterment of education (Samples, 1985). Their vital role may guarantee the optimal and possible educational attainment of their children. However, parental involvement is confronted by some obstacles attributed mainly to the parents’ age, qualification, income and gender.

Parental involvement in kindergarten education is necessary for the children’s success. Some facts about the benefits of kindergarten as a result of parents being involved in the children’s learning activities are over whelming. The growing body of research has demonstrated that parental involvement in their children’s learning activities in kindergartens situations, positively affects the children’s kindergarten (Hannon, 1995; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Bakker, Denessen & Brus-Laeven 2007). Increases their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and directs them towards mastery goal orientation (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, Holbein, 2005). It was also reported to help in facilitating their literacy development (Saracho, 1997; Berger, 1998) as well as positively influencing their later school competence because parents’ instruction is likely to remain deeply rooted in their memories even after they leave school (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999).

Previous studies have demonstrated that parental involvement in children's education generally has a positive impact on children's kindergarten (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). However, not all parents take interest in their children's education and, as such, investigators tried their best to identify the nature of parental involvement in relation to personal characteristics, values, socioeconomic norms and cultural background (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Vald'es, 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998). In theoretical models of parental involvement, parents' belief about their role in supporting the child's education and parental self-efficacy in helping the child were found to be critical psychological elements with regard to their decision in the involvement of child's education (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). A few studies have examined predictors, mechanisms and parameters of parental involvement in societies. It is particularly essential to examine the role of parental involvement in societies. Not many researchers have investigated parental involvement across socioeconomic groups, nor have they focused on the associated psychological processes (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model, 1997).

The consensus over the positive influence of parental involvement has extensively grown in present era. Parental involvement has been found to be positively associated with children activities (Griffith, 1996; Englund, Luckner, Whaley, Egeland 2004; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, Duchane, 2007), with improved children learning attitudes and motivation (Gonzalez-DeHass et al, 2005) and with contribution towards children's positive interaction with peers, adults, and learning (Fantuzzo, Tighe, McWayne, Davis, Childs, S 2003; McWayne Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004).

Kindergarten education has an important role in developing high quality human resource. Focus on holistic children development is needed in order to prepare them with the ability to compete and have survival skills to meet global changes. According to (Essa & Burnham, 2001) kindergarten education helps parents to enhance their children development. Kindergartens can provide experiences that may not be provided at home even though the family has sufficient facilities (Majzub, 2003). The first five years or kindergarten age is the best time for parents and teachers to stimulate children because of the fast growth of their brain at this period (Bloom, 1966). Kindergarten education refers to education provided by kindergartens for children aged 4 to 6 years.

The importance of parental involvement has been recognized by researchers. Various studies in the last few decades demonstrated positive effects of parental involvement to children (Taylor & Machida, 1994; Miedel and Reynolds, 1999; Marcon, 1999 and Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff 2008), to parents (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Majzub, 2003; Ozcinar, 2006) and to the kindergarten (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parental involvement determines the quality of kindergartens.

Cordry and Wilson (2004) concluded that a strong networking and cooperation between the kindergarten and family helps to enrich learning and character in the development for the child. Hawes and Plourde (2005) observed that parental involvement has a positive correlation to kindergarten success.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

In conducting the study on the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens, the historical background of Jordan is of paramount

importance. This implies the origin of the Kingdom, provinces, regions, cities and Directorates of Education which served as the population of the study. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Jordan) is part of the Arab and Islamic world and is located in the heart of the Middle-East. Jordan is divided into three regions (Middle, Northern and Southern) consisting of twelve governorates namely: Amman, Balqa'a, Zarqa, Madaba, Mafraq, Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, Karak, Maan, Tafielah and Aqaba, where each region consists of four governorates respectively. Furthermore, each of the twelve governorates is subdivided into educational directorates (Ministry of Education, 2002). The following map shows the locations of all regions of Jordan.



Figure1.1 Map of Jordan Showing Southern, Middle and Northern Provinces of Jordan

In recent years, the Jordanian government has paid great attention to kindergarten education. In July 2003, the Ministry of Education in coordination with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) launched Jordan's Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) programme (Kaga, 2007).

The Ministry of Education-USAID Parental Involvement Initiative aims to empower Jordanian parents to actively get involved in the education of their children in kindergartens. As Kaga (2007) opined, the initiative seeks to acquaint parents with teaching methods, how to get them involved in kindergarten activities and how to take responsibility for the education of their children in kindergartens. The initiative's agenda has been circulated among all Jordanian kindergartens with the hope of encouraging parents to get involved in the education of their children.

Rania (2011) recently played an essential role on the educational process and expressed her interest in the education of children. The queen manifested the rights of children in her words 'I believe in your right to education, opportunity, and a life with dignity', 'Education equals the opportunity; the opportunity to escape poverty, the opportunity to live healthy and the opportunity to hope. Education is a lifeline; education is the key to unlocking all the doors in your minds'. Rania's (2011) words manifest the Jordanian officials' interest in children's education which has led to the commencement of several initiatives across Jordanian schools including kindergartens.

The quality and frequency of parental involvement is referenced to parent-child involvement in kindergartens activities (Vidaurre, 2007). On the other hand, teachers are not prepared by their college training or professional development programmes to involve the parents in the education of their children (Ingersoll, 2005). In conducting research on the obstacles of parental involvement facing Jordanian kindergartens, discussion on the educational system in Jordan in general is of utmost importance, this include its emergence, current status and philosophy of kindergarten.

### **1.2.1 Educational System in Jordan**

Jordan Ministry of Education (JMOE, 2007) observed that it has a commitment towards the statement '*Right to Education for All*' which is taken from the Jordanian constitution and specifically the act of Education that highlights the equal rights for all to receive the same educational opportunities.

The educational system in Jordan is centralized and controlled by the JMOE (Al-Barakat & Al-Karasneh, 2005). The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has a comprehensive and inclusive educational system which performs very well in international comparisons, meeting requirements for a well educated citizenry, thus the development of Jordan's educational system can be described as dynamic, because it is evaluated and restructured almost every year (Tubaishat, EI-Qawasmeh, Bhatti, 2006). Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6-16 (JMOE, 2008).

School education in Jordan is based on two phases: Elementary (Grades 1 to 10 representing the ages between 6-15 years old) and Secondary (Grades 11 to 12 representing the ages between 16-18 years old). The first phase is compulsory for all children. The total enrolment is about 1,380,722 divided on 4675 schools in operation in 1999-2000, sixty percent of which are run by the JMOE, 4.5 percent by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which is responsible for the basic stage education within the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, and 35.5 percent are educated through private schools (Almualim, 1999).

The latest data regarding the existing schools in public, private, UNRWA and military school is presented in Table 1.1



Table 1.1  
*Showing the Information Regarding Schools in Jordan*

Type of Schools	Years	Number of Schools	Percentage of Schools
Public Schools	2011-2012	3433	57%
Private Schools	2011-2012	2254	38%
United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) & Military Education Schools (MES)	2011-2012	284	5%

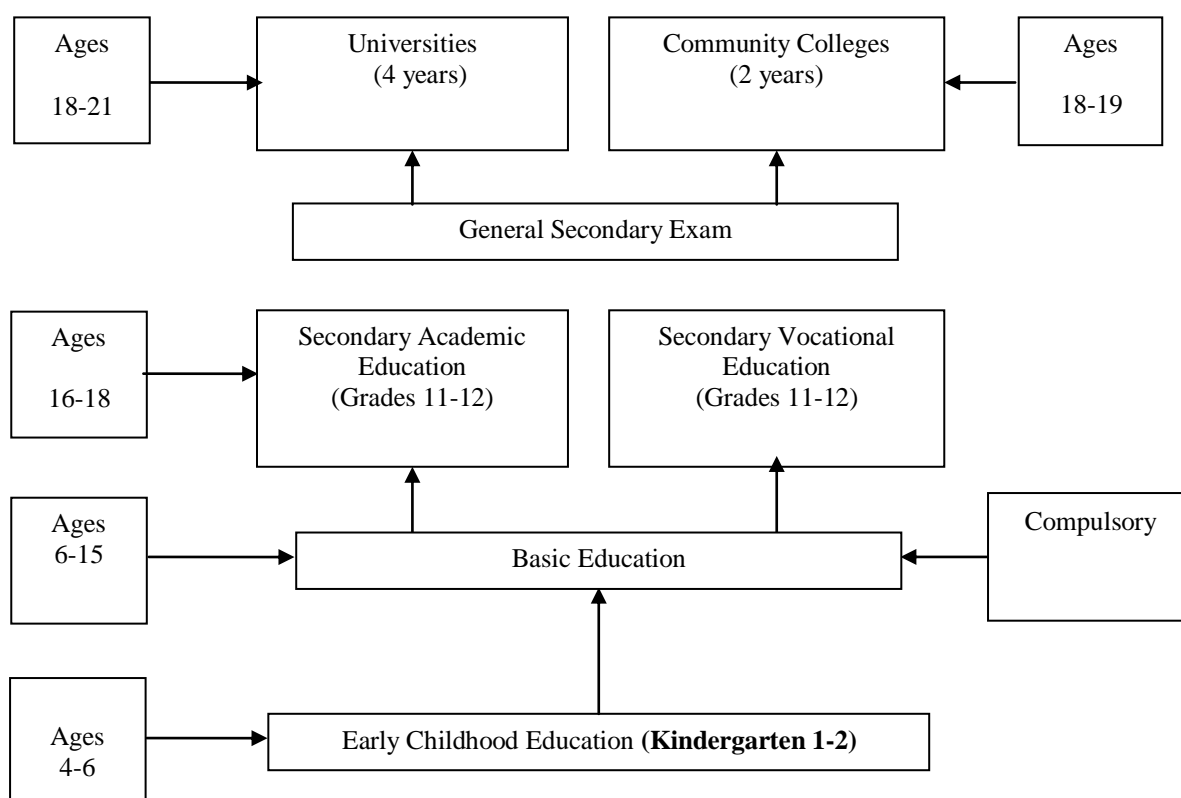


Figure 1.2 Education Structure in Jordan (MOE, 2008)

Meanwhile it is stated that the basic education is compulsory and gratuitous but the secondary education is optional and gratuitous. JMOE Act decided that the kindergarten stage is an optional stage (JMOE, 1994).

The JMOE has twenty departments, eight of which are related directly or indirectly to kindergartens namely, the Department of Educational Superintendent Training and Rehabilitation, the Department of Curriculums and Textbooks, the Department of Planning and Educational Research, the Department of Educational Activities, The Jordanian National Committee for Education, Culture and Science (UNESCO), the Department of Cultural and International Relations, The Board of Culture and Education and Planning Committee Secretariat and finally the department of education which has several initiatives for kindergartens including: The Early Childhood Development Project, The Royal Court Kindergarten Project, The “Together For A Safe Schooling Environment” Initiative, the Family Guidance Division and the Parental Awareness Project. The current research provided a significant contribution for all these departments and projects forming the educational policy makers and implementers, each in its own line of work with respect to kindergartens’ children and their parents’ awareness of children psychology, sociology, knowledge and perception.

### **1.2.2 The Emergence of Kindergarten in Jordan**

Kindergartens in Jordan emerged, at first, as a refuge for children and shelters for those who have none in order to be taken care of and to have someone concerning about them either because of low income of the family or due to the death of one or both parents, or because of wars occurring at that time. The Montessori kindergarten was the first institute established as a kindergarten which has developed originally from an orphanage.

The Montessori was established as a house comprising of children whose parents struggled due to poverty and suffered from bad social conditions of life in

order to earn their living and, hence, were forced to take less care of their children. Thus, the Montessori kindergarten developed a programme to raise the level of these homeless children to the level of normal children in terms of the acquired habits and the mastered skills. The Montessori proved that kindergartens could modify the behaviour of a child to be better in order to help society and make better life for homeless children (AbdelFattah & Fakhri, 2008). The JMOE worked on the upbringing and help in taking care of this kind of children due to their importance, and there will be benefits from their abilities for development in the future (Mazer & Aladas, 1992).

There is a great influence in the spread of kindergartens, especially for working women at different fields in Jordan, and the increment of parental awareness on the need for taking care of children during their early years, as it is believed that it will help them to excel in their educational attainments, in addition to the high financial revenues for owners of kindergartens (Mazer & Aladas, 1992). This was the gradual beginning of kindergartens in Jordan, where private educational institutions belonging to individuals, charity institutions and voluntary organisations established kindergartens in the fifties of the past century. Yet, the number of children affiliated did not exceed seven percent of the total number of children until the academic year 1966/1967. Since then, the tendency towards the kindergartens have dramatically increased, the number of private kindergartens was elevated significantly as the number of private kindergartens in the academic year 1981/1982 reached 221. The number of kindergartens in the academic year 1990/1991 rose 548 within which 47,971 children were enrolled (JMOE, 1992). It is obvious from the aforementioned details that Jordan knew kindergartens as educational institutions in the second half

of the twentieth century after the ideas and contemporary educational trends about the importance of taking care of children during kindergarten stage became eminent.

Accordingly, the JMOE (2007) sought to provide full educational care for children in the educational institutions supervised by the ministry in terms of licensing and employment. A special section in the *Directorate of Private Education* called the *Department of Kindergarten* was set up in 1994/1995. The department is concerned with the affairs of kindergartens with respect to license and the provision of the required technical or administrative supplies for children like scientific and practical equipment and processes. It is also concerned with overseeing the conduct of the educational processes (JMOE, 2007).

Based on the perspective of UNICEF (2000), Jordanian concerns in kindergarten began by the adoption of the 1999's National Strategy for Early Childhood Development. The axes of the strategy revolve around the goals, policies, and procedures. It was concluded with the following recommendations:

- The establishment of pioneer projects which are able to test the feasibility of various cultural programmes.
- Workforce training on early childhood development through a method depending on the family and society.

Thus, kindergartens began to attract care and attention and evolved in terms of its potentials and media reach, especially in distant cities in the Kingdom. Levels of services provided had improved in most regions of the Kingdom, noting that most of the private educational institutions such as kindergartens are centralized in the

capital, Amman, followed by the number of kindergartens in adjacent cities and so on.

The private kindergartens have contributed in serving children while the responsibility of the Ministry of Education was limited to administrative roles in most cities apart from Amman, the capital, until public kindergartens were established in the year 1999 (Batayneh, 2006). Consequently, one of the motivations of this research came from the importance of handling public kindergartens.

The JMOE (1994) established public kindergartens in public schools in year 1999/2000 based on Article 8 of paragraph (b) from the Education Law No. (3) as amended in year (1994) which states as follows:

*"The Ministry is responsible for the establishment of kindergartens within its limited potentials, according to a phased plan, in females' primary schools or, if not possible, in coeducational or secondary school, especially in areas of demand and/or which is not served by the private kindergartens".*

In 1999, fifteen branches of kindergartens were launched and had enrolled 375 children. In the academic year 2007/2008 the number of kindergartens became 507 with 9828 children from different regions of Jordan. The number of kindergarten became 708 in 2008/2009. In 2008/2009 the number of children belonging to the public kindergartens became 13394 (JMOE, 2008/2009). With this figure the number of kindergartens became 833 and the total number of children in the public kindergartens was 16,000 as shown in Table 1.3 (JMOE, 2009/2010). Table 1.2 shows a summary of the statistics for public kindergartens according to geographic region of Jordan (JMOE, 2010/2011). It also indicates that the Ministry of Education has developed a phased plan whereby it has established about 100 kindergartens yearly in various districts, including

all geographical regions in Jordan, until the number of public kindergartens became 908 Kindergartens in 2010/2011, with a total population of 17646 children belonging to the public kindergarten.

Kindergarten is regarded as one of the most important stages throughout the life of a child because it has a large impact on the formation of his or her personality in a manner influencing the rest of his or her life. Hence, the demand for kindergartens in Jordan has recently increased where a four-year old child obtains the interest of both teachers and parents. Subsequently, a comprehensive and desirable change in the children personality and development from all aspects and providing them with competencies that helps to integrate their personality and its coherent compatibility is required.

Table 1.2  
*Public Kindergartens Statistics in Jordan (JMOE, 2010/2011)*

<b>Regions</b>	<b>S/N</b>	<b>DE</b>	<b>KT</b>	<b>KP</b>	<b>TNC</b>	<b>BK</b>
<b>MIDDLE</b>	1	Zarqa 1	3	3	45	3
	2	Zarqa 2	32	32	718	32
	3	Salt	22	22	429	22
	4	South Shonah	15	15	277	15
	5	Dair A'alah	26	26	509	26
	6	Madaba	17	17	370	17
	7	Deban	28	28	432	28
	8	Amman 1	17	17	195	17
	9	Amman 2	18	18	319	18
	10	Amman 3	31	31	771	31
	11	Amman 4	12	12	286	12
	12	Amman 5	27	27	573	27
	13	Ein Basha	16	16	400	16
	14	Jezah	24	24	445	24
	15	Muwaqqar	16	16	309	16
	16	Rusaifah	18	18	414	18
<b>NORTH</b>	17	Irbid 1	22	22	471	22
	18	Irbid 2	25	25	492	25
	19	Irbid 3	12	12	229	12
	20	Northern Ghor	12	12	266	12
	21	Mafrag	29	29	472	29
	22	Northeasterly Badia	35	35	715	35
	23	Northwesterly Badia	50	50	1047	50
	24	Ramtha	8	8	198	8
	25	Koorah	20	20	336	20
	26	Bani Keynanah	22	22	424	22
	27	Jerash	50	50	987	50
	28	Ajloun	35	35	731	35
<b>SOUTH</b>	29	Karak	40	40	674	40
	30	Southern Ghor	12	12	242	12
	31	Maan	15	15	222	15
	32	Southern Badia	30	30	597	30
	33	Petra	24	24	367	24
	34	Showbak	15	15	192	15
	35	Taffelah	20	20	466	20
	36	Aqaba	45	45	961	45
	37	Qaser	36	36	571	36
	38	Southern Mazzar	21	21	329	21
	39	Besera	8	8	165	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>		<b>908</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>17646</b>	<b>908</b>

Notice: DE= Directorates of Education KT= Kindergarten's Teachers KP=Kindergarten's Principals  
TNC= Total Number of Children BK=Branches of Kindergartens

### 1.2.3 Current Status of Public Kindergarten Education in Jordan

It is generally agreed that children at the age of 4-6 years old should be enrolled in Kindergartens' classes. The kindergarten institutions are supervised and provided within its capacity by the Law Division of Ministry of Education (JMOE,

1994). The number of public kindergartens in 1999 was 15 with 375 children, in 2007/2008, the number of public kindergarten was 507 with 9,828 children and in 2008/2009 the number was 708 with 13,394 children. The number of public kindergarten increased to 833 with 16,000 children in 2009/2010; similarly the number increased to 908 in the year 2010/2011 with 17,646 children Table 1.3 shows the number of public kindergartens in Jordan (JMOE, 2010).

Table1. 3  
*Numbers of Public Kindergartens in Jordan*

Year	Number of Public Kindergartens	Children
1999	15	375
2007-2008	507	9,828
2008-2009	708	13394
2009-2010	833	16,000
2010-2011	908	17,646

Public kindergartens is any governmental educational institution in Jordan which is limited to children between the ages of 4-6 years old and perform its duties according to the regulations of the JMOE as depicted in section 3 of Jordanian (Ministry of Education law, 1994).

#### **1.2.4 The Philosophy of Kindergarten in Jordan**

From the primary stages during the 20th century, a profound concentration was given towards the children's rights by individuals, politicians, public and private organizations. The main point of this approach was the fact that a human being is capable of living in dignity from the childhood stage of his or her life, as it is the most important period in shaping their personality and setting up their characters in the future. However, the kindergarten stage is not a compulsory stage (Ministry of Education, 1994). Fares (2006) indicated that the philosophy of kindergarten



programmes is mainly structured in order to shape the child's own knowledge and experiences, construct their own perception about the world, attain basic competencies, and build on some prior positive conducts towards learning as their lifelong objectives. Kindergartens commenced to develop the fundamental knowledge of children learning until the eighth grade. They followed steps and procedures to assess and guarantees its consistent degree of implementation within the kindergartens. Additionally, it is essential for the responsible parties to determine all the anticipated expectations by the end of kindergarten. Kindergarten and Educational boards will identify the optimal expected goals which can be fulfilled within the overall kindergarten programmes which are offered (Fares, 2006).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The standard of education in Jordan kindergartens is at the lowest basic level, as most kindergartens children were totally illiterate. These problems are usually faced from the earlier stages of educational system (JMOE, 2010). The government calls for parents to get involved in the educational process of their children, but the cumulative report from all kindergartens in Jordan showed that parental involvement is seriously lacking in all kindergartens (JMOE, 2010) but, however, this report did not identify the specific obstacles to the almost nonexistent parental involvement in the kindergartens. Leitch and Tangri (1988) asserted that lack of planning and mutual understanding between teachers and parents are the greatest obstacle to kindergarten collaboration. In another literature, poverty and illiteracy are considered as obstacles to parental involvement (Christie, Enz, Vukelich, 1997). Therefore, one main reason why parents are not engaged with their children's learning activities may be due to

their low income (Huss-Keeler, 1997; Hung, 2005; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007).

Looking at the above literature it can be concluded that parental income and education are among the greatest obstacles to parental involvement facing kindergarten of Jordan. Hence, a study on the obstacles preventing parental involvement facing kindergartens was critical and imperative (JMOE, 2010). Therefore, the present study intended to fill this gap by studying obstacles to parental involvement facing kindergarten.

Moreover, the problem of this study emerged out of the need of studying obstacles to parental involvement facing kindergarten of Jordan. Aged parents of kindergarten children encounter a number of problems that hinder their actual involvement in the children's educational process in Jordan as a result of their income, education, gender and age (Al-Omari & Abu-Taleb, 1997). According to Al-Omari & Abu-Taleb, (1997), in order to reduce the level of problems being encountered in Jordanian kindergartens, a study on the obstacles preventing parental involvement in their children's educational process is essential and imperative.

However, the available data from JMOE (2011) asserted that education at kindergarten level is facing various problems due to lack of parental involvement. The data continue to indicate that these problems are associated with parental socio-economic status, age and gender. As a matter of fact, previous studies have shown that these variables play an important role in kindergarten education without which the education will suffer a strong obstacle (Tapia, 2000; Pryor, 2001; Sacker, Schoon, & Bartley, 2002; Li, 2003). Based on this fact, the present study was

intended to explore the obstacles of parental involvement in kindergarten with consideration of parents' socio-economic status, gender and age.

Furthermore, involving parents their children education is considered a new phenomenon in some areas of Jordan, but parents and teachers do not yet aware of their roles in this new trend. Hence, the current study focused more on the lack of parental involvement and the obstacles affecting parental involvement (Ihmeideh, Khasawneh, Mahfouz, & Khawaldeh, (2008). In addition, the perception of Jordanian teachers and principals on parental involvement in their children's education is considered as an equally important issue that should be investigated in order to find a lasting solution (Ihmeideh et al, 2008).

Even though researchers paid more attention to the concept of parental involvement within the context of kindergarten in Jordan, none of the studies explored the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian kindergarten (Ihmeideh et al, 2008). Similarly, no study was conducted on parental involvement in Jordan which investigated, identified and found out the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and principals; and the reasons for encountering these obstacles; likewise no study was conducted that examined the significant difference between parents of different age group, qualification levels, income level and gender in the obstacles they face in parental involvement in Jordan.

Thus, the present research investigated the overall parental involvement practices within the context of kindergarten education in Jordan and the relationship between the kindergarten teachers and principals.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study was to investigate the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and principals. The objectives are to:

1a. Investigate the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents and the reasons for encountering these obstacles.

1b. Investigate the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of teachers and the reasons for encountering these obstacles.

1c. Investigate the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of principals and the reasons for encountering these obstacles.

2a: Examine whether there is a significant difference between parents of different age group in the obstacles they face in parental involvement.

2b: Identify the obstacles of parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and principals; based on different parents' age group based on the interview.

3a: Identify whether there is a significant difference between parents of different qualification levels in the obstacles they face in parental involvement.

3b: Identify the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and principals; based on different qualification levels based on the interview.

4a: Find out whether there is a significant difference between parents of different income levels in the obstacles they face in parental involvement.

4b: Identify the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and principals; based on different income level based on the interview.

5. Identify the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and principals; based on different gender based on the interview.

6. Provide suggestions to overcome obstacles in parental involvement based on parents, teachers and principals' interview data responses based on the interview.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions (RQ) were developed:

RQ1a: What are the main obstacles of parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of parents and why they encounter these problems?

RQ1b: What are the main obstacles of parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of teachers and why they encounter these problems?

RQ1c: What are the main obstacles of parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens from the perspectives of principals and why they encounter these problems?

RQ2a: Are there any significant differences between parents of different age group in the obstacles they face in parental involvement?

RQ2b: What are the parents, teachers and principals perspectives on the obstacles in parental involvement based on different parents' age group based on the interview?

RQ3a: Are there any significant differences between parents of different qualification levels in the obstacles they face in parental involvement?

RQ3b: What are the parents, teachers and principals perspectives on the obstacles in parental involvement based on different parents' qualification levels based on the interview?

RQ4a: Are there any significant differences between parents of different income levels in the obstacles they face in parental involvement?

RQ4b: What are the parents, teachers and principals perspectives on the obstacles in parental involvement based on different parents' income levels based on the interview?

RQ5: What are the parents, teachers and principals perspectives on the obstacles in parental involvement based on different parents' gender based on the interview?

RQ6: What are the suggestions to overcome obstacles in parental involvement based on parents, teachers and principals' interview data responses based on the interview?  
(RQ6)

## **1.6 Hypotheses of the Study**

In relation with the research objectives and questions, the current research includes the following hypotheses:

H01: There is no significant difference between parents of different age group in the obstacles they face in parental involvement.

H02: There is no significant difference between parents of different qualification levels in the obstacles they face in parental involvement.

H03: There is no significant difference between parents of different income levels in the obstacles they face in parental involvement.

## **1.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The conceptual framework of this study is related to the main and sub-variables, and the research questions. Particularly, the framework was designed in line with issues that are strongly attached to parental involvement in the Jordanian public kindergartens. It is in light of this that the research study posits that, Kindergartens schools through Ministry of Education is a link that develops and establish the philosophy of parents involvement in order to improve and sustain relationship between parents and children education at the kindergarten level (Ministry of Education, 2010; Flores-Alcazar, 2014; Mannix-Lesh, 2013).The Ministry of Education through kindergartens expects the educating activities of the

kindergarten to be programmes that will continuously encourage parental involvement in public kindergartens. Kindergartens should be enhanced to involvement program to allow parents be more committed in their children's education. This can be done by opening a friendly (interactive) communication between parents and kindergartens to improve the parents, teachers and principals act of accountability in kindergartens. The importance of teachers and principals to support the development of strategies to facilitate parental involvement in kindergartens, this will encourage parents, especially males regardless of the demographic, status and occupation challenges and differences. However, it can be concluded to be a capacity building programmes to be conducted occasionally for teachers to develop skills and knowledge in order to encourage parents' involvement in kindergartens.

The most important part of a child's life is the early education acquired from the parents and not alone the first day of kindergarten. Education starts in the home, and it has a perennial implications on the child kindergarten preparation and a strong effects the child's later life (Morrison, 2000). Parents and other members of the family are the child's first educators; they are socially responsible for the child's early socialization, which form the basis for social and intellectual skills assumed to be gained in the kindergarten (Kathleen, 1998). To the above position, it implies that parents, teachers and kindergartens officers are involved in educating young children and involving in their daily activities. This is why parents and kindergartens education centres are sustaining strong formal connections around the world are becoming more purposeful, to ensure that all children receive the support necessary for kindergarten success (Mavis & Joyce 1998). Different phases of a child's life, from the parents to kindergarten and back to the parents at home, there is the need to



supply partnerships which can be influenced by each other; throughout these phases the child remain a focus point by the parents and kindergarten. This convinced why the study framework need to integrate parents, teachers and principal importance on the kindergartens children and with strong influence to parents involvement in their children kindergarten activities.

Yang (2005) asserted that parent involvement begins at their child's birth. The most important parent involvement occurs during the early years of children kindergartens, when parents are involved in children kindergartens. At the early childhood education stage, parents continuously interact with the kindergarten; a partnership formed and is affected by parental involvement, and the relationships between parents and kindergartens. Henderson and Berla (1994) indicated that parent involvement in kindergarten can have long-term effects on children education. To assist parents in recognizing their central role in their children kindergarten and to share principles of effective parenting with them, the effort should begin with parents and their children at kindergarten (Nancy, 1997); therefore parental involvement in their children's kindergarten is crucial and important. This position is equally in accord with the justification of this study and why parents, teachers and kindergartens are attached factors to the children early educational training in the Jordan. The study framework is in line with the study instrument which measures obstacles in parental involvement in kindergartens, which primarily was adapted from Gettinger and Guetschow 1998.

Gettinger and Guetschow (1998), when investigating about parental involvement, the authors developed 'Barriers Scale' which was designed to determine potential opportunities and possible barriers to parent involvement in schools, using a total of 16 items questionnaire. The questionnaire of the present

study was adapted from the work of Gettinger and Guetschow (1998). Each item was rated according to how true it is for parents. Items were scored on a four-point scale in which higher scores uniformly reflected greater truth in barriers to parents' involvement in activities.

In the present study, the amount of these items subsequently constitutes the number of obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian kindergartens. All 16 items were under one construct all explaining the obstacles of parental involvement. The items includes: 1) parents do not feel welcome, 2) transportation problem, 3) lack parent knowledge or skills, 4) child does not like parent at kindergarten, 6) time constraints, 6) inflexible work schedule, 7) child care difficulties, 8) teacher and principal do not understand parent needs, 9) teacher, principal and parent from different backgrounds, 10) parents do not understand child's kindergarten work, 11) teacher and principal do not support parents' efforts, 12) teacher and principals never asked, 13) parent not interested in involvement, 14) communication problems, 15) parents do not understand kindergarten policy and item number, and 16) parents are not sure how to contribute.

The above mentioned items are directly talking about the obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public kindergartens. These items were asked in the questionnaire based on the perspectives of parents, teachers and principals.

According to Yang (2005), the questionnaire on the Obstacles of Parental Involvement in Kindergarten (OPIK) was designed for different education level from kindergarten to elementary grades. There are different needs and typical activities for parents to be involved in their children kindergarten education period. Therefore, the instruments measuring barriers to parent involvement facing kindergarten education should be considered. The OPIK questionnaire is also useful in current time and it