

An Investigative Study into the Socialization and Learning of Children at a Preschool in Dubai, U.A.E. and the Parental Demographic Factors that may Contribute to it.

Chapter 1. Introduction

There has been considerable research in educational systems and pedagogical practices worldwide. Many similar themes emerge in most research studies, as educationists encounter the complex socio-cognitive demands in the context of managing students, creating pedagogy, putting subject matter into action, and participating in the life of the school (Freeman & Richards 1996). There is a growing recognition that children are directly exposed to the knowledge base and individual experiences of teachers and parents and absorb and process the teachings imparted to them. Teachers, parents and caregivers influence the child's development of self-reliance and social skills, (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2004, 2007, 2008; White & Howe 1998; Thompson 2001, cited in Gloeckler & Niemeyer 2010)

"It is a widely recognized fact that early childhood education is an integral part of basic education and represents the first and essential step in achieving the goals of Education-for-All in particular, and human skill formation in general."(Cunha et al. 2006; Hackman 1999; Currie 2001; Goodman& Sianesi 2005, cited in Woldehanna 2011, pg. 1). Quality education can leave a permanent influence on the life of a student.

Preprimary education can be defined as the developmental and educational support provided to the child aged between two to five years in order to instill confidence and prepare a child for primary school, so that the basic skills in numeracy, literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world are acquired, and the development is enhanced socially, physically and emotionally.

Early quality education nurtures and stimulates the young child. It is imperative that the young child's foundation years are not compromised. Early childhood education creates a sense of security that supports children's learning to trust, to regulate emotions, to be confident, to resolve interpersonal conflict, to develop independence and empathy, and to learn how to relate to others. (Shonkoff & Phillips 2000; Weinfield et al. 1999, cited in Gloeckler & Niemeyer 2010).

The child's active learning experiences start from birth, and the due importance of preschool experiences was initially expounded by educational stalwarts such as Piaget and Vygotsky. Pianta et al. (2009, p.57) state that "the initial effect of the early years education is the equivalent of 7 points on an IQ test or a move from the 30th to the 50th percentile for achievement test scores"

Recent developments in brain research confirm the notion of sensitive periods in which certain things are best learned. Bruner (1999) further highlights the importance of early year's education by pointing out that the developing brain is particularly fit to acquire certain skills. The sensitive periods are not rigid, but if certain stimulation is not provided, the nerve cells become less functional. These findings indicate that learning experiences, both structured and unstructured, are required for children before they enter primary school. There seems to be a bi-directional influence between children and teachers creating a "micro level" of influence, apart from the parental influences where the physical, educational and socio-emotional environments children experience, have a phenomenal effect on their growth and development.

Kaufmann et al. (2009) explain in their study that the previous experiences of children in the preschool, greatly affect their learning's and adaptive behaviors further on in primary school. The vital early years of a child should not be ignored. They form the basis of his or her lifelong learning. It is a proven fact that children with low levels of cognitive development before entering school achieve less and earn lower wages in life. (Currie & Thomas 2000; Macours et al. 2008; Case & Paxson 2006, cited in Woldehanna 2011).

This study undertaken by the researcher intends to explore the learning and socialization of preschoolers and investigate the possible differing parental

demographic factors contributing to it, and the bi-directional relationships if any. Today government bodies, parents and educationists agree that the early stimulation and preparation for education enhance student learning in school.

The study is of high relevance to the researcher as it is her area of work and specialization. The ensuing results would aid in the formulation of new policies and strategies to be adopted by her preschool and may directly affect the community at large. The subject matter holds high importance to the government of United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) as it has set out to introduce regulatory reform, and has increased the budget allocation for the social services and education sector to 47 percent of the total expenditures in the year 2012. (Khaleej Times Oct 2011). Barbara Ischniger, OECD director of education comments, “the UAE government should follow the Finnish model in education where teachers are given incentives and they are among the top four professions in the country.” (Gulf News May 2012)

U.A.E has set out to be a powerful knowledge economy, and aims to house world-class schools. It has implemented high inspection standards in primary and secondary schooling, and will introduce the same in preschools in September 2012 (MoSA 2011). Collaboration and acceptance of shared responsibility between all stakeholders gives an opportunity for heightened reflection in stakeholders. Halverson et al. (2005) point out that accountability systems provide standards for achievement and instructional and assessment practices, necessary to reach high standards and incentives for participation. The shift has to take place from internal accountability to external accountability. Instructional leaders require frameworks, to create schools that can systematically improve student learning.

U.A.E being an expatriate dominated, cosmopolitan country, is home to over 200 nationalities. It has a dynamic social climate, and is a melting pot of all cultures. (Gulf News Nov 2011). The researcher would therefore like to investigate the effect of the multinational and multi cultural forces of the parent’s demographics on the learning outcomes of the preschoolers. There has been little research if any, done in this regard and the subject matter is innovative owing to the uniqueness of U.A.E

The results will throw light on the early years, the intricacies and subtle dynamics of culture, and will help in establishing frameworks for ongoing research and policies. Sianesi&Alissa (2005, p.4) state that “early childcare and pre-school policies have

become an important focus of a government's strategy on improving the well being of children, either through the enabling effect that childcare has on allowing parents to work, or through other more direct effects of early education on children".

Educational research is a powerful vehicle for exposing and developing knowledge of teaching and educational practices. Research can be defined as one of the many different ways of knowing and understanding. It is a process of systematic inquiry that is designed to collect, analyze, interpret and use data. (Mertens 2010).

Research helps in reflection and in making tacit knowledge explicit through practical experiences and theoretical understanding. Creswell (2008) points out that, researchers are like bricklayers, continually adding on to the brick wall, and in the process create a stronger structure.

Many researchers such as Kaufman, Curby, Grimm & Brock (2009) and Berlinski, Galiani & Gertler (2006) have concluded that children having prior preschool experiences perform better in primary school. It is increasingly important that educationists fill in the void of quality leadership in preschools which in the scheme of the bigger political promises, agendas, and inefficiency in fulfilling main schooling needs gets ignored. Sara et al. (2009) highlight that classroom management has great implications for supporting children's early development of behavioral skills and is very important in school settings. It is reiterated by many authors that early childhood may be the single most effective program for helping families; poor children, communities and nations break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. (Woodhead 2009, cited in Woldehanna 2011)

The researcher proposes to investigate cognitive learning and the demographic and cultural play if any on the socialization and learning of the children by comparing differing cultural but similar curricular school environments and hence has chosen the two branches of the same preschool following standardized policies, curricular and teaching practices (hypothesizing a constant), but having differing nationalities of students to understand the demographic play.

The researcher had researched the curricular standardization earlier and the results established through a qualitative approach justify the high similarities in the policies

followed, curriculum, pedagogical practices, and leadership in the two settings (Gandhi 2011)

The research proposes to investigate the following questions:

- 1) Is there a significant improvement in the socialization and learning of the children at the preschool in UAE?
- 2) Is there a significant difference in the comparison of the socialization and learning of children between the two branches of the preschool?
- 3) Do the demographic factors of parents contribute to the socialization and learning in the children of the two branches and is there a relationship?

Whilst the proposition of cognitive learning and the improvement in the preschoolers socialization during their academic year is hypothesized to hold good, the null hypothesis would hold that there is no significant difference when comparing the learning and socialization between both branches of the preschool and also in terms of the effect of parental demographics on the students learning at the preschools. The researcher however would like to hypothesize that parental demographics may play a part in the socialization and learning of the preschoolers.

To examine this, a triangulation approach to research was selected. The research was conducted in the two branches of an ISO 9001:2008 quality certified, private preschool in Dubai, U.A.E, incorporating quantitative research in a quasi experiment model. The researcher would thus be filling in the vacuum of research in the UAE nursery sector and be a pioneer in the field and would also address the worldwide gap in quantitative research in the sensitive area of the demographic impact on learning, which has been predominated by qualitative studies. The intriguing aspect of the topic directly linked to society would make the research and reading interesting. With the aim of utilizing the results in her work organization, the researcher is self-motivated and inspired, thereby has worked with enthusiasm and positive zeal to conduct an efficient research. The research would be shared with the various stake holders and the government organizations in the UAE, so as to contribute to effective policy making and promotion of social responsibility thereby benefiting the extended community at large.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

Piaget's theory forms the basis of many preschools and primary programs. Piaget provides part of the foundation for constructivist learning, in that a child is an active seeker of knowledge. Discovery learning and supporting the developing interests of the child are two primary instructional techniques expounded by him. (Atherton 2011)

Piaget's 'Learning development theory' talks on the importance of assimilation and accommodation as learning techniques (<http://studentlife.tamu.edu/strs>). The preschoolers observed by the researcher in her area of work continuously process the information through mimicking, assimilation and accommodation. Piaget's approach is central to the school of cognitive theory known as "cognitive constructivism": Other scholars, known as "social constructivists", such as Vygotsky and Bruner, have laid more emphasis on the "part played by people in enabling children to learn" (<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/assimacc.htm>)

In Vygotsky's theory of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), he concluded that when children were tested on tasks on their own, they did not do as well as when they were working with adults. The process of engagement with the adult enabled them to refine their thinking or their performance to make it more effective. (<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/constructivism.htm#Vygotsky>)

Parental involvement is one of the major factors contributing to a child's learning & development.

Developmental psychologists have long been interested in how parents impact child development. However, finding actual cause-and-effect links between specific actions of parents and later behavior of children is very difficult. Nevertheless researchers have discovered links between parental interaction and child behavior. Parenting styles differ greatly and may be authoritarian, authoritative, permissive or

uninvolved. (<http://www.about.com>) Parental styles differ due to their “culture, personality, family size, parental background, socioeconomic status, educational level and religion”. Baumrind, D. (1991) cited in [http:// www.about.com](http://www.about.com)

It is interesting to study the various theories on child learning and parenting. It can be inferred that theories are essential tools of research in stimulating the advancement of knowledge still further. “The importance of theory is to help the investigator summarize previous information and guide his or her future course of action” (Bell 2010, p.104). It would be intriguing to explore these theories in a preschool setting, and infer theory linkages between teaching, parenting, demographics of parents and student learning leading to theory verification.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

3.1 Critical Review of a related article

On Critically reviewing the article in Urban Education, 2011: A type of Parental Involvement with an Isomorphic Effect on Urban Children's Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Social Studies Achievement at Kindergarten Entry, the researcher finds that the authors identify a "particular type of parental involvement in children's education and use a representative sample of American urban kindergartners to examine its effect on urban children's academic achievement at kindergarten entry". The findings in this article are "isomorphic or similar in the different subject areas and show that children with more parental involvement tend to have higher academic achievement than their peers".

(Stylianides & Stylianides 2010, p.400), The research problems focused on are:

RQ1) how do urban children's personal and family characteristics influence parent-child interaction at KG entry?

RQ2) Does parent- child interaction influence urban children academic achievement at KG entry? If so how?

The Methodology, research and data gathering are clearly identified. It is very difficult to quantify 'parental involvement' and the researchers have ably done so without bias by creating a factor named 'parent child interaction' incorporating a seven factor model comprising of the following activities:

How often parents

- a) Read to their child
- b) Tell their child stories
- c) Help their child to do art
- d) Build things with their child
- e) Teach their child about nature
- f) Play games with their child
- g) Do sports with their child.

This article provided for good reading and conveyed the importance of parental involvement. The research result showed that “after controlling for all other measures in the model, whites and Asians, males, first time kindergarteners, younger children, children who spent fewer hours in non parental care, children from families with higher socio economic status, children whose mothers did not work full time, and children who did not have siblings had more access to parent-child interaction than the corresponding groups”. (Stylianides & Stylianides 2010, p.400)

The other result derived was that “low level parent child interaction had a significant negative effect on student’s achievement in all three subject areas of math, general knowledge and reading”. (Stylianides & Stylianides 2010, p.400)

Both the research questions were aptly answered. The research fell short of being par excellent if the ‘most important factor’ contributing to parent child interaction was answered clearly!

These results of the research were consistent with the researchers analysis of other articles on authors such as Julia et al. (2007) and Dr Chadwick on parental involvement and the importance of time spent with children (Chadwick 2011). Reynolds et al. (1994) state that many individual studies by Affholter, Connel & Nauta 1983; Johnson & Walker 1991; Seitz, Rosenbaum & Apfel 1985; have studied and proven the positive effects of the family based intervention programs on the cognitive development of children.

Goodman & Sianessi (2005) cite that the findings of the NICHD (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) study in the USA in 1991, and caution that the childcare effect is very dependent on the quality of care, as well as on the characteristics of the family and the child. They further state that another study conducted by EPPE (Effective Provision of Preschool Education) in UK in 1996 found a positive impact of early education in preschools, both on the overall social and cognitive development of the children entering primary school. The ECLS-K study (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study- Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999 in USA) confirmed that the most lasting academic and the largest gains were found for the disadvantaged children (www.eric.ed.gov). Anderson et al. (2003) study and conclude in their research that early childhood developmental programs have a

positive effect in increasing the readiness to learn and on preventing the delay of cognitive development.

Researchers have also investigated the effects of very early childhood education and care before the age of three, at around age one. The Abecedarian study in USA, studied 111 children in care for the full day from 4 months of age to kindergarten entry from birth to age 21. The results showed large initial gains in IQ. The math and reading scores improved with 0.40 standard deviations from ages 8 to 21. Grade retention and special education fell by 23 percentage points (www.nieer.org). The study went on to show a statistically significance in percentages of the children in the care who went on to attend a four year college versus the ones in control group. The treated group also was more likely to have a skilled job, less likely to become teen parents or smoke marijuana. Most importantly the free childcare appeared to have improved the mothers long-term employment earnings and opportunities (Barnett 2008).

The Milwaukee study in the USA of a similar early age group of 53 children showed gain in IQ's and achievement in test scores in early school years. The recent large-scale study in the US, of Early Head Start (birth to three yrs.) is perhaps the most positive for language and cognitive abilities, parent outcomes, and improvements in children's behavior problems, parenting and maternal depression (Barnett 2008)

3.2 A review of previous studies: Experience of other Countries.

There is ample evidence from the U.S.A. on research proving the benefits from high quality early years education. Magnuson (2004) used nationally represented longitudinal data of US children who enrolled for pre primary school in 1998-99, and concluded post the research that prekindergarten increases reading and math skills at kindergarten entry (Woldehanna 2011). Findings from other studies (Reynolds et al. 2000, cited in Woldehanna 2011) further vetoed this fact by using the Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS).

Whilst the broad studies conducted by EPPE (U.K) & ECLS-K and NICHD (U.S.A) looked into the positive short term outcomes (till age 7) of preschool experiences, the study by Goodman & Sianesi (2005) went on to measure the longer term outcomes at age 16 and 33. They conducted a research on the effects of early schooling before age 5 and of pre-schooling on a cohort of British children born in 1958. They found post controlling for child, parental, family and neighborhood characteristics that early education yields large improvements in cognitive tests at age 7, which remained significant up to age 16. The research went on to have deeper implications on the labor market by proving that pre-compulsory schooling was found to increase the probability of obtaining qualifications and to be employed at age 33, and there was also a marginal wage gain of 3-4% at age 33.

The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)(Cleveland & Krashinsky 1998, cited in Goodmann & Alissa 2005) has been viewed as the most statistically convincing study and is described as one of the major studies on British preschool education by many researchers. They study a sample of 8500 children, where they measure the effects of social and cognitive development at age 5 and 10 of several different types of ordinary preschool programs, finding similar types of effects for nearly all. "Based on 'analyses of variance' and controlling for a number of important socio economic and family factors, they find that pre-school generally boosts cognitive attainment at ages 5 and 10 (Goodmann & Alissa 2005). In UK again, researchers (Sammons et al. 2003, cited in Woldehanna 2011) conducted a research following young children

of two yrs. of age attending preschool. Post pre-school, the children have better cognitive skills of reading, language, and early numbers, and enhanced social skills as compared to children without preschool experience. Longer pre-school attendance leads to higher cognitive gains when entering school, which are substantially higher for disadvantaged children.

Looking at the Australian sub continent, it is found that even the starting age of early childhood education was significant in affecting cognitive skills. “Children who started before age two had higher scores in mathematics, curiosity and reading comprehension. Additionally parental education levels and family income affected children’s literacy and mathematic scores positively” (Woldehanna 2011, pg. 9).

A study in Nepal in 2001 showed that investing in the early years of the children resulted in reducing the drop out rate to half, and substantially reduced grade repetitions (www.csae.ox.ac.uk).

In Brazil there were huge increases in grade completion rates from 2% to 40%, due to community centered early years programs A program in Brazil that focuses on including children in good quality programs points out that a child in preschool costs no more than \$100, a child on the street costs \$200, and a child in the penal system \$1000 (Woldehanna 2011).

A well-known study from Jamaica shows that children randomly assigned to receive home-based early stimulation have great improvements in cognitive development and future school performance (Powell et al. 2004, cited in Woldehanna 2011).

Barnett (2008,pg.13) states “a randomized trial with long term follow-up of high quality half day pre kindergarten in Mauritius finds short term improvements in children’s learning and behavior and reduced crime rates into adulthood”.

Similarly in Argentina (Berlinski et al. 2009, cited in Woldehanna 2011) found that the increasing number of preschools increased the attendance of preschool education and showed positive effects of non-cognitive skills and cognitive development scores. “ There was improved classroom attention, effort, discipline,

and participation. The study also showed that preschool attendance has a positive impact on the children's completion of primary and secondary education, accompanied by low drop out rates and repetition rates in each grade for the treated compared to the untreated children”(Woldehanna 2011, p.11).

Existing studies worldwide have proven the importance of the early year's education. This is where the researcher's current paper fits in. The researcher is interested in the causal effect of quality early education on the social and learning development of those children who attend preschools in UAE. UAE being a cosmopolitan country, home to diverse nationalities, could there be demographic factors playing on the early childhood education in the country? As it is widely proven that parental involvement greatly affects children learning. Reynolds et al. (1996) comment that several studies have shown the positive effects of family based intervention programs. They further expound that direct parent involvement in preschool intervention should increase parent-child interactions as well as school attachments and hence readiness for school. The same was re-iterated by the Stylinides article critically examined by the author earlier.

Goodmann et al. (2005) further say that the social, demographic and economic profile of a local environment or a region can exert a strong influence on child development and growth, as well as the pattern of preschool availabilities and usage. Reynolds et al. (1996) state that there are very few studies addressing the role of parental involvement. Demographic variables may also have been ignored to a large extent. Such a study is meaningful for UAE owing to its varied expatriate community with differing nationalities making up a major chunk of its population. Whilst many empirical studies on early childhood education have been done in various countries, and they have clearly established a link between cognitive development and the early years education; there has been no such study carried on in the UAE. There is been no attention given to studying this critical link, and nor any investment in research in UAE proving that early years education be seen as an important foundation for readiness at school and achieving further success in school and life. It is unfortunate that a large number of children do not opt for preschools and join primary schools skipping the nursery, as can be seen further on from the data on UAE statistics.

This research undertaken by the author investigates the effect of preschool education in UAE, and studies the demographic variables that may lead to the ensuing result making the research meaningful.

. The objectives of the research are:

- 1) To analyze the effect of early years education on the cognitive development of UAE's preschoolers.
- 2) To identify the demographic variables affecting the socialization and learning in the preschool and
- 3) To infer possible policy insights for the identified challenges in the early years sector in the UAE.

3.3 UAE's status on Early Childhood Education

Early education has significant impact on basic health, behaviour and learning of children. Unfortunately, however, most governments spend much more on higher education, such as the university level, than on early education. The UAE's public spending on education is highly inadequate, at 1.13 per cent of GDP in 2008 (Gulf News Feb 2011). On average, countries in the MENA region spend five per cent of their GDP on education, similar to most OECD countries. However, the low spend on education is mostly because of the high level of privatisation of the sector (www.socato.org).

Early childhood, up to four years of age, is a very crucial stage as this is when children begin to recognise and build their character (www.socato.org). All previous studies carried out by researchers have proven this across different countries. Maximum attention to early childhood education is essential to ensure that the new generation that is moulded has a solid foundation. The UAE has already achieved several milestones in the field of education, although lagging behind with its social and economic progress (www.zawya.com). In the industrialized countries, many empirical studies linking the pathway between early education and acquired cognitive development have been done, and have proved that the latter is one of the

basic predictor of success throughout life (Susann et al. 2005; Magnuson 2004, cited in Woldehanna 2011). However, very less has been done to studying this link in most developing countries like UAE, and nor investment in this sector seen as critical. The UAE government has just taken cognizance of the importance of this pre primary sector and after having made some standards for the nursery sector in 1983, is now looking at enhancing the same this year in 2012.

In the UAE, 25% of the population is under 10 years old, with an annual growth rate of 3.38%. This is double that of KSA (Saudi Arabia), 4 times that of the USA and 30 times of the European Union (www.ameinfo.com). Whilst there are 300 nurseries that are privately owned as seen in the chart below, only 27 are run by the government exposing a big lacuna in the early years education. The UAE has to increase investment in education, especially early education, and attract more Emiratis to the sector with better salary and benefits, and provide them with adequate training to involve them actively. Most of the nurseries house expatriates children. Less than 5% of eligible Emirati children are enrolled in nurseries as the vast majority are raised at home up to the age of four years! (Gulf News Feb 2011) This trend needs to change. Research has proved the importance of this sector on a country's socio economic fabric.

The U.S department of education 2006 states that as of 2005, 47% of all children aged 3-5 years were enrolled in some form of part or full time early years programs (PCER 2008). In Ethiopia, the gross enrolment rate in Kindergarten was only 4.2 % in 2008/2009(Woldehanna 2011). It is supposed, UAE will find surprising results close to these figures if a survey was to be done! The early years represent a window of opportunity for a lifetime development of an individual (UNESCO 2010). The theory of human capital emphasizes the significance of the early years development for its initial formation (Heckman & Klenow 1997; Cunha & Heckman 2003, cited in Woldehanna 2011)

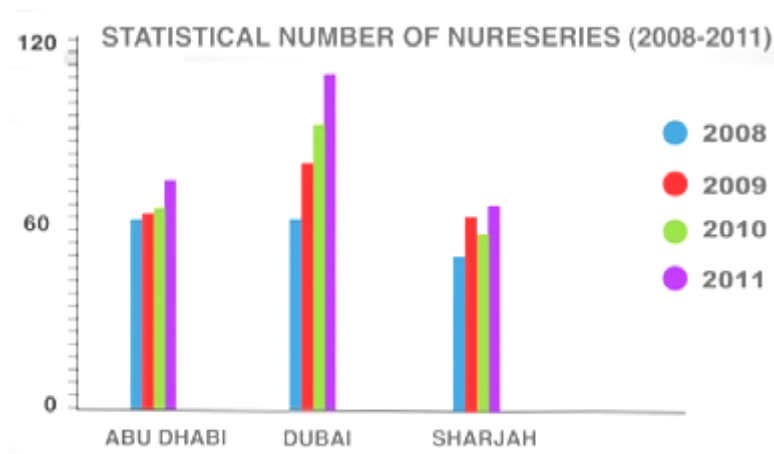
Exhibit 1: UAE Nurseries by Emirates

Emirates	Private	Government	Total
Abu Dhabi	68	3	71
Ajman	6	0	6
Al Ain	16	1	17
Al Fujairah	5	0	5
Dubai	122	9	131
Khorfakkan	3	0	3
Ras Al Khaimah	14	0	14
Sharjah	62	14	76
Umm Ul Quwain	4	0	4
Total	300	27	327

Source: UAE nurseries E gate website

The UAE statistics proves from the charts that the numbers of nurseries are very few when compared to the young children's population. Research has to be done into finding and analyzing the gross enrollment rate. The total number of nurseries in the country is only 327. MoSA issued 31 new licences in 2010 and there were some 20,000 children in the country's nurseries including those established in government departments. In 2009 there were only 82 private licensed nurseries in Dubai with a total of 7551 children enrolled aged 0-4. (www.dsg.ae). The nurseries and enrollment in nurseries in UAE is growing at fast pace. This contribution is led by many factors including the growing population of UAE, growing women job market, better nurturing facilities of nurseries, government controls over nurseries' and many more. There has been an economic boom in the UAE in the past few years and this has created opportunities for the many private owned nurseries.

Exhibit 2: Statistical Number of Nurseries



Source: MoSA 2011

3.4 Is the socio-cultural fabric of homes in the UAE an impediment to the tertiary enrollment rate in nurseries?

The 'Child-at-home' model for children below four is a common phenomenon in the UAE where children spend a considerable amount of time with maids and nannies whose first language is not Arabic. The national culture in Dubai is based on extended families and homecare services, provided by maids who usually hold no qualification for childcare and cost considerably less than the fees for a nursery place.

The child-at-home model is reinforced by the availability of low-paid, English speaking, female labour from Asian countries, notably from India, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Most of the maids in Dubai are educated to lower secondary level, speak English as a second language and receive wages ranging from AED 700-1,184 monthly (equivalent to an annual income range of USD 2,292–USD 3,892), considerably less than the fees for a nursery place which, in 2008, ranged from AED 5,000 (USD 1,369) to AED 50,000 (USD 13,698) annually, depending on the number of hours being used. The use of this labour for rearing young children is widespread in the Gulf States. Housemaids care for 58% of children under the age of three years in the Arabian Gulf for 30-70 hours per week. This length of time is far greater than most institutional childcare hours in the US or Europe, which are increasingly criticised for being too long. Researchers consider that the time spent in housemaid care far exceeds the duration recommended by major studies to avoid harm to maternal attachment or prevent problem behaviours (www.dsg.ae).

Exhibit 3: UAE Population Nationality Wise

UAE Population Nationality Wise	2008		2009		2010	
	National	Non National	National	Non National	National	Non National
	904,857	7,168,769	933,381	7,266,615	947,997	7,316,073

Exhibit 4: UAE Population estimates

Indicator	2010	2015	2020
Population (thousands)	7 512	8 374	9 174
Male population (thousands)	5 224	5 755	6 244
Female population (thousands)	2 288	2 619	2 930
Population sex ratio (males per 100 females)	228.3	219.7	213.1
Percentage aged 0-4 (%)	5.6	5.8	4.9
Percentage aged 5-14 (%)	11.4	10.4	10.4
Percentage aged 15-24 (%)	16.1	11.7	10.9
Percentage of women aged 15-49 (%)	68.3	67.3	65.2
Median age (years)	30.1	33.5	36.9
Population density (population per sq. km)	90	100	110

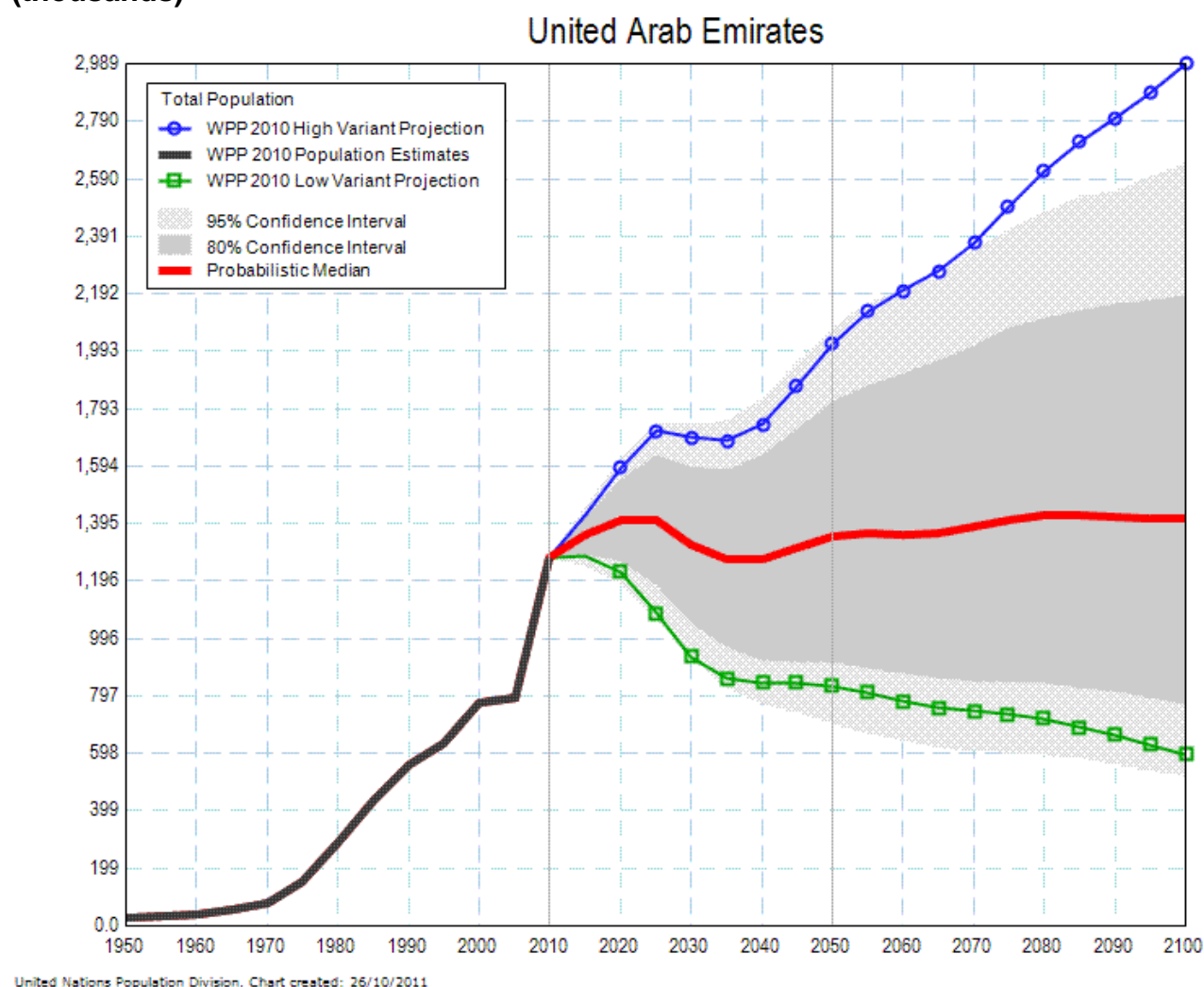
Source: UN Population Division Estimates ([www. UN population forecast](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/forecast/))

Exhibit 5: Demographic Indicators

Indicator	2010-2015	2015-2020
Population change per year (thousands)	173	160
Births per year, both sexes combined (thousands)	97	90
Deaths per year, both sexes combined (thousands)	11	16
Population growth rate (%)	2.17	1.82
Crude birth rate (births per 1,000 population)	12.3	10.3
Crude death rate (deaths per 1,000 population)	1.4	1.8
Total fertility (children per woman)	1.71	1.60
Net reproduction rate (daughters per woman)	0.82	0.77
Infant mortality rate (infant deaths per 1,000 live births)	6.6	6.2
Life expectancy at birth, both sexes combined (years)	76.8	77.4
Life expectancy at birth, males (years)	76.0	76.6
Life expectancy at birth, females (years)	78.0	78.8

Source: UN Population Division Estimates

**Exhibit 6: Growth of Population age 0-14 years
(thousands)**



The nursery workforce in Dubai is almost entirely non-national (89%) and non-Arabic speaking, which may create an additional barrier for some users. The location of services may also not be ideal; very few companies and office buildings have taken advantage of the existing law that allows them to establish nurseries for their working mothers. Serious research on potential interest in early childhood services in Dubai is not available.

Stakeholder consultations conducted by KHDA, however, have indicated the quality and cost of private nurseries in Dubai is variable and that fees are often prohibitive for some families. For all these reasons, demand among national families both for childcare and a pre-kindergarten year may be stronger than enrolment figures

suggest. Results of a questionnaire issued by the Dubai Women's Establishment (DWE) support this assumption (www.KHDA.gov.ae).

According to the questionnaire, issued to 1,186 workingwomen in government departments in Dubai, 62% of the children under the age of 4 years were reared at home by housemaids; 32% by extended family members and 5% were enrolled in private nurseries. Yet, when asked whether they would make use of a quality child care facility if their employers provided it, 92% of the women surveyed confirmed that they would, with 84% stressing their preference for high-quality child care centers offering the expertise of trained educational specialists. Many UAE expatriate women work and do believe that nurseries provide better developmental opportunities for their child than an in-home nanny or maid (www.ameinfo.com).

The new government policies:

The governance of the private services is divided among different ministries. Responsibility for nursery services was first taken in charge by the then Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in 1983 and after the separation of these ministries in 2004, was ascribed to the Ministry of Social Affairs. The achievements of MoSA from 2008 to 2011 in child department in as under:

Exhibit 7: Achievement of MoSA



Source: MoSA 2011

3.5 Entry barriers to educational leaders in setting up a nursery in the UAE.

U.A.E is a unique country in that it is a multi cultural, cosmopolitan economy dominated by expatriates and hence it has rigorous public laws and legalities to be adhered to. Nationality is not granted, and hence there is a compulsion to have a local national sponsor to start any set up. The list of requirements for the initial start of a commercial entity is endless, and permissions for a pre school have to be obtained jointly by four ministries. It requires great resilience on the part of an entrepreneur to set up an organization in the U.A.E.

The systems are complex in a preschool owing the bigger strength of staff required to manage the small body of children.

Social scientists point out that ‘an organization like an organism is an integrated system of interdependent structures and functions’. According to Harold Leavitt in Owens (1998), the interacting subsystems in complex organizations are: task, structure, technology and people. It is important to note that the human subsystem mentioned is the only one that has a non-rational capability (it is affective and not irrational). Schools have a large body of people and have multi directional forces of play working between all stakeholders.

One of the most important management implications of organizational culture relates to ‘**selection decisions**’. Common ethics, qualifications and value systems are key indicators for hiring. In a country like the U.A.E. where the labor laws are extremely rigid, work visas very difficult to obtain, and the work force being 90% expatriate, the hiring procedures can be daunting for any leader as every application has to be approved by three regulatory bodies and takes up to three months! The ongoing problem is also that the population is ‘fluid’ with people constantly moving or relocating. The culture plays a big part in the preschool retaining key talent. Parents tend to be wary of schools where the teacher turnover is high, and this can directly impact the bottom line.

Homeostasis is the biological term applied to schools, by new age authors, and refers to 'the tendency of an open system to regulate itself and stay in balance' (Chadwick 2011). Well-developed communication systems and decision-making processes are important tools to have effective homeostatic environments. The myriad of outdated policies and ineffective regulations makes an effective environment hard to achieve.

The preschool has a 100% woman workforce in accordance with the laws of U.A.E. To manage an 'all women' organization is challenging in its own right, more so as most of them come from differing cultural backgrounds. As an example, the author's preschool employs at least 15 different nationalities of women. Owen (1999) talks about the women issues in organizational behavior. He talks more from a gender bias point of view saying that by the 1980's it had become obvious to woman scholars that educational administration had traditionally been a male dominated area. He goes on to point out that some scholars doubted whether women possess the toughness traditionally thought necessary to maintain discipline in schools. We all know that the feminist critique posits that not only can women succeed in administrative work but also can excel in it.

JPMorgan Chase, a global banking firm believes that women perform as well on jobs as men do. Almost 60 percent of the firm's employees are women, and 50 percent of its managers and professionals are women. (Robbins & Judge 2009)

Emotional Intelligence is one of the key skills required to manage an all women's organization. Women tend to be more emotional. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a person's ability to be self-aware, detect emotions in others, and manage emotional cues and information. (Robbins & Judge 2009, p.198) highlight that "A study was conducted to look at the successes and failures of 11 American presidents. They were evaluated on six qualities- communication, organization, political skill, vision, cognitive style and emotional intelligence. It was found that the key quality that differentiated the successful (Such as Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Reagan) from the unsuccessful (such as Johnson, Carter, and Nixon) was Emotional Intelligence!"

3.6 Lack of a national curriculum for the Early Years Education in UAE

While developed countries like the UK, and USA, Australia, and New Zealand to name a few have a documented and researched national curriculum for the early years. The UAE lags behind in this regard. This could also be one of the major reasons why this critical area of early childhood education is underdeveloped in the UAE.

The U.S.A as a country has looked into the importance of looking into preschool curricula and their effects a decade ago. In 2002, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) commissioned the PCER (Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research) study to conduct “rigorous efficacy evaluations of available preschool curricula”. 12 research teams received peer-review grants and set out to accomplish this humungous task of analyzing curricula and check on their efficiency in pre-reading skills, language skills, numeracy and social skills. This is important to look into as “early childhood center-based programs have been a major, sometimes the sole component of a number of federal and state efforts to improve young at-risk children’s school readiness (e.g. Head start, Even start, public pre-kindergarten)” (PCER 2008, p. xxxi)

OFSTED is the governing body in the UK for the early years. The national curriculum (EYFS) has been researched to be effective, and the on going evaluations help the governing body to make changes into it time and again. A positive change in the six areas of the curriculum was announced as recently as in March 2012. OFSTED do expect every provider to be working towards making his or her provision outstanding. Those who do this will know that to continue outstanding provision means continuing to reflect on what works well and what is not working as well. The very best providers do this all the time. They use their evaluations to strengthen and build on the most effective practice and to remedy any weakness they find in areas that are not as good. (OFSTED 2010)

There has been a considerable rise in the progressive and universal education systems.

If curriculum content is the 'meat' of the curriculum plan, then experience planned for the children is the 'heart'. It is the experiences that eventually shape the learners orientation to the content and ultimately their understanding of it. When talking on curriculum experiences, the focus is on curriculum as the verb, which is to be lived rather than a noun. Teachers and caregivers of young children set the daily academic, social and emotional tone and climate of their classrooms, thereby influencing children's development of self reliance and social skills, (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2004,2007,2008; White&Howe 1998;Thompson 2001, cited in Gloeckler&Niemeyer 2010). Julia et al. (2007) state that thousands of classrooms, and all the children in them are affected by quality childcare. The PCER study of 2008 (USA) states that a potential avenue for improving school readiness amongst young children who are at risk of school dropouts or failures is through early years education.

The progressive movement earlier consisted of child centered and activity centered curriculurists, Kilpatrick being a famous one, who propagated child centered activities and who asserted that the emphasis of education should be the student, who is interested and active, interacting with his fellow students in school and adults in the community (Ornstein & Hunkins 2004). Hence over time with various theories put together by educationists, the conceptual curriculum evolved and had to be derived not from organized bodies of subject matter but real life experiences and expressed in terms of purposeful activities.

The PCER study (2008) did confirm that 8 of the 14 treatment curricula had a positive effect on the student-level outcomes and 10 of the 14 had positive impacts at classroom level on classroom quality and early literacy instruction and 1 had a negative impact! (www.ies.ed.gov). The study explains the importance of curriculum design, and warns that children who enter KG with poor literacy skills tend to show poor reading achievement in the early grades, and this poor performance goes on up to early and even late adolescence. (Cunningham& Stanovich 1997; Cunningham, Stanovich & west 1994; Echils et al.1996; Juel 1988; Lentz 1988; Stanovich 1986,

cited in PCER 2008). In contrast children who are exposed to a strong curriculum with good emergent literacy and language skills, learn to read earlier and develop better skills, thus gaining a foundation of better academic competence. (Downer & Pianta 2006; Princotta, Flanagan & Germino-Hausken 2006, cited in PCER 2008). Ornstein & Hunkins (2004) assert that no curriculum regardless of its design can ignore content and experiences. Content and experiences do not exist apart, they comprise curriculum unity. Students cannot engage in learning without experiencing some activity and some content, and likewise teachers cannot deal with content without being involved in some activity.

In the Paideia Proposal by Adler (Ornstein & Hunkins 2004), he developed three types of curriculum to improve the intellect: acquisition of organized knowledge, development of basic learning skills and ideas and values to be taught.

Enhanced learning of sound mathematical skills and social behavior has also been linked to later school successes. (Downer & Pianta 2006; Miles & Stipek 2006, cited in PCER 2008). Phonological awareness cannot be ignored, and is an integral part of reading ability. Effective curricula set the blue print for a school to ensure the child's learning. This holds more important for a preschool, owing to the dynamic nature of teaching the young ones.

Quality surely matters. Barnett (2008) comments that research finds that the programs with the largest and longest lasting effects are the most educationally intensive and expensive. The desired outcome will not be achieved through poorly implemented low quality childcare and education, or with instructionally weak or shallow curricula! Educators now have to think of incorporating critical thinking skills. There are new age theories on lateral thinking too. Watson & Charles (2008) state that critical thinking can be taught in the classroom from as early as preschool. Gordon Brown at the first Transforming Education Summit in UAE said, "The global financial crisis calls for educational reform that will help develop children into critical thinkers." He went on to recommend that teachers and parents must tap on children's creativity even before five years of age. Other experts also spoke about establishing a creative curricula (Gulf News May 2012). A rich national curriculum for the UAE is of paramount importance to its diverse community. Learning experiences vary from learning activities, as the different children experience difference outcomes

for the same activity. The classroom dynamics and teacher innovation bring out rich experiences for the individual child. The young children's curriculum experiences should be such that they see life's wholeness and continuity in activity. Knowledge always opens new forms and is expansive. These learning experiences are a means, and invaluable in themselves, to attain specified consequences. These experiences are more meaningful if the goals of the early Learning program and objectives of the curriculum are aligned. The Education ministries in UAE and their representative bodies (KHDA, ADEC and MoSA) must take cognizance of this and look into curricular reforms as a strategic plan.

3.7 A Paradigm shift waiting to happen?

Each of us is a student of behavior. We watch actions, and interpret it. A systematic approach towards this leads us to believe that behavior is not random and can be predicted. Combining intuition with the systematic study of relationships, conclusions can be made on the best available scientific evidence. The author and researcher believes that she being the director of her preschool in the UAE has taken important managerial decisions in leading her school towards a paradigm shift, carving a niche, having gone on to earn more than 10 governmental and institutional awards.

Scholars have expounded time and again that schools are extremely complex systems with various forces exerting influences on it. Duffy (2008) suggests three change paths or 'interconnected paradigm shifts to create and sustain transformational change':

- 1) "The Primary work processes teaching and learning must be transformed into a paradigm that is customized to learner's individual needs and is focused on attainment of proficiencies
- 2) The schools organization culture must be transformed from a command and control organization design to a participatory organization design
- 3) The relationship between a school system and its environment must be transformed from an isolative and reactive stance to a collaborative and proactive stance". (Duffy & Reigeluth 2008, p.43)

It is very difficult to achieve the three paradigm shifts and achieve systemic change as school organizations are highly complex and resist change. Transformational leaders need special knowledge and skill set to implement this change. Whilst it is difficult, it is not impossible.

Charismatic leaders such as Steve Jobs and Michael Dell (C.E.O.'s of the U.S.A companies Apple and Dell respectively) have been agents for paradigm shifts in the IT fields. Such leaders have a vision; they are willing to take personal risks to achieve that vision, they are sensitive to follower needs, and they exhibit extraordinary behaviors and implement change.

“Nobody succeeds beyond his or her wildest expectations unless he or she begins with some wild expectations”- Ralph Charell.

The ‘inner leader’ has to be followed to allow people to offer gifts and their contribution to the world. Leaders must have the courage to dream and act with conviction on their ideas. The bar has to be raised.

The author has worked on her vision amidst the challenging environment and has grown her organization to a five branched nursery chain across the U.A.E. The school also houses the first specialized children’s gym of U.A.E. Innovation into the pre-schooling industry was the key. In the absence of a standard national curriculum, the management team worked relentlessly to pursue the challenge of doctoring a standardized curriculum based on the U.K. National Curriculum, linking it to baseline assessments for effective monitoring of the academic achievement of the children. Attendance is also monitored and continuous staff training is provided to ensure high pedagogical skills. The feedback from all stakeholders is analyzed and action plans are put into place. Self-evaluation is ongoing. The school is a learner-centered organization. The child’s learning, safety and security is the ultimate focus. Offering the best practices, against all odds, the preschool continuously developed on quality. In order to maintain quality it is important that the process of change and continuous evaluation is ongoing. Quality assurance schemes are shown to increase the standards of a setting (OFSTED 2008). Facing the many external and internal challenges the preschool finally went on to become the first nursery chain in the Middle East to be ISO 9001:2008 quality certified by UKAS in 2011.

Leaders in the UAE government have to focus on creating this shift towards providing a wholesome early years education for the country by creating reforms and encouraging the 'edupreneurs'. UAE has grown tremendously in its economic outlook, and boasts of world class cities. The preschool education sector has however been shortchanged and while a few nurseries including the authors have made the leap into the quality arena, most others lack the will and resources to do so. It is the vision of the government that needs to implement the much needed paradigm shift.

The road is never easy, and meanders its course through challenges and 'more challenges'. Lance Armstrong quoted "Pain is temporary, Quitting lasts forever".

Ultimately the buck stops with leaders. Robin Sharma has said that in the new world of business, the riskiest place you can be, is trying to do the same things in the same way as was always done before. Paradigm shifts must be thought of by leaders and governing bodies. Old behavior cannot present new results.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1) Introduction:

This study examines the socialization and learning of preschoolers in UAE, and the demographic influence on it. The researcher has utilized the quantitative research methods for analyzing the results of the instrumentation used across all the stakeholders viz, the children's test scores, and the questionnaires on parent feedback, staff feedback, and principal feedback. This method of quantitative research selected would aid in the credibility and in the generalization of the investigation as it will be gathering the view points of all involved. A mixed method design can be defined as "collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand the research problem". (Creswell 2008, p.552.) There is a great divide on views on various methods used in research. Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches give a portion of reality and on combination; the result ensuing is often a more accurate understanding of human reality (Carter 2001).

The research conducted has an experimental design. Carter (2001) further explains that the experimental method is the most persuasive means the scientists have developed for establishing causality (the relation between cause and effect).

"The use of experimental designs received increased attention with the passage of the No child left behind legislation (Department of Education U.S.A 2001). The act calls for evaluating the effectiveness of school based practices using 'scientifically based research' that uses 'rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge' This created a political climate that supports the use of quasi experiment and experimental designs probably with political implications relating to the funding for innovative programs". (Mertens 2010, p. 124)

4.2 Data Source:

i) Population, Sampling procedures & Sample

The population estimate of nursery children in UAE is 20,000 as per MoSA across the 327 nurseries. As the researcher could not practically reach out and conduct her studies, she has chosen the two nurseries in Dubai, which were happy to participate, and where the access to data was available. The researcher has carried out quantitative research on two nurseries in Dubai, UAE, on a sample of 116 randomly selected students for ease of generalizability. Two branches (Mankhool and Jumeira) are chosen of the same parent nursery for the research, so as to have a similar curricular and teaching set up but differing nationality, based on the varied demographics across each branch. The Mankhool branch has a majority of Asian nationals. The Jumeira branch has a majority of Arabs and western expatriates. This gave credibility to the research, as the learning can be measured across the different nationality of students and 'doubly checked' too in both the schools. 58 children were selected from both the schools. The targeted children were 2 to 5 years old, divided into 3 age ranges; nursery (2-3 yrs., 22 children), foundation (3-4 yrs., 31 children) and upper foundation (4+ yrs., 5 children.). The two branches have similar fee structures thus reinforcing the similarity in the socio-economic status of the parents. Both the branches follow the same curriculum, have similar facilities and have standard recruitment practices. The data covers a comprehensive range of topics including the parental and children's information.

4.3 Instrumentation:

The following instruments were used for the research across both the nursery school branches.

i) Pretest and post test instrument:

The learning and socialization scores were collected from the nursery for the batch of the 2011 cohort for all the 116 children. The cognitive development was measured by the 'school developed instrument' to test a set of standard questions to the children on the six areas of the nursery curriculum followed viz language and literacy, numeracy, creative development, personal, social & emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. There was a pre test and a post-test done by the teachers on the same children to evaluate the learning at the end of the academic year 2011. The value added scores (progress scores) were assigned by the individual teachers in the preschool branches after marking and assessing the young children on the various parameters. (See Appendix 1 & 2)

ii) Parent & Staff Questionnaires:

Parent & staff questionnaires are a standard instrument of the nursery with questions covering their views on the nursery and the progress of the children were sent out in the mid year of 2011. The questions are from a standard set, which the nursery sends out to the parents and staff each year, and then evaluates their feedback. The questionnaires are given to the parents by the respective class teachers and then collected back. The human resources department collects the staff questionnaires. The data is then analyzed to understand the feed back each year. Such a rigorous system followed each year by the nursery ensures credibility and validity of the feedback. (See Appendix 3 & 4)

iii) Principal feedback:

The feedback and self-appraisal of the feedback of the principal is on a standard form used by the nursery to evaluate the principals and get their view on the nursery school and children's progress across both branches respectively. (See Appendix 5)

iv) Staff & Children attendance:

The attendance of the staff and children is monitored daily by the nursery. The data was collected and percentages calculated to standardize it over the 8 months of the academic year (See Appendix 6 & 7).

4.4 Data Collection and Preparation

The raw test scores of the pretest/ posttest instrument were then collected from the individual nurseries and adjusted to standardized scores by the researcher. It was imperative that the data collected was standardized, as though the curricular practices followed by both schools was uniform, the rubric to evaluate was different with a different marking structure and hence the total score for evaluation different. After the due analysis on the data of the children, the children's learning scores (final mark-Initial mark) were selected and tabulated based on the similarity in age and class (nursery, 2-3 yrs.; foundation, 3-4 yrs.; and upper foundation, 4+ yrs.) of both branches ensuring consistency in testing. The value added scores of socialization and learning across both the branches were measured and assigned as the dependent variable. The author has identified the dependent variable (socialization and learning), control variables (curriculum and pedagogical practices), moderating variables (attitude and motivation of teachers and principal, school facilities, socio economic status of parents) and the independent variables (demographic factors such as nationality, mother tongue, mothers working status, and gender of each of the children; the data of which was collected from the nursery school and incorporated) in the research design. (See Appendix 8)

The questionnaire samples of parents, staff and principals and the corresponding quantitative results of the feedback and staff and children attendance were also collected from the nursery school and checked, sorted and analyzed through excel and bar graphs. (See Appendices)

4.5 Statistical tests:

Descriptive and Inferential

Theories and literature suggest that both forms of statistics; descriptive and inferential are to be used in quantitative research to get the maximum results in the study. The researcher used both the tests in the research. The descriptive tests investigated the mean, mode and median of the sample under study, whilst the inferential tests (t-tests and multiple regression etc.) tested the hypothesis. The group statistics was conducted on all age groups separately for the samples of the nursery, foundation, and upper foundation students using SPSS, excel, and graphical representations.

The t-test is used to determine whether two means are significantly different from one another. There are three types of t-test:

The single sample t-test, which is the most simple, determines whether the observed mean is different from a set value.

The independent t-test is used when comparing means from two independent groups of individuals (this test was used as the means of the progress scores were compared from the two independent nursery schools to infer which school has done better)

The paired t-test is used when comparing the means of two sets of observations from the same individuals or from pairs of individuals. (This test was used in the research as the scores of the pretest and posttest of the same nursery school sample was measured to evaluate if learning and socialization has taken place.)

All forms of the t-test are parametric tests and make certain assumption about the data: that they are measured at interval or ratio level, meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance and are drawn from population that has a normal distribution.

Multiple regression is a statistical technique that allows us to predict someone's score on one variable on the basis of their scores on several other variables

(www.palgrave.com). Multiple regression involves one dependent variable, which is termed the "criterion variable" and many independent variables, which are referred to as the "predictor variables". The predictor variables can be measured using range of scales (although ideally at interval or ratio level) but the criterion variable should be measured using a ratio or interval scale. The researcher used this technique to find out the relationship between the independent variables (of the parent demographics) with the dependent variable (student's progress scores). Human behavior is inherently noisy and therefore it is not possible to produce totally accurate predictions, but multiple regression allows us to identify a set of predictor variables, which together provide a useful estimate of a participant's likely score on a criterion variable (www.ccsenet.org).

As with bivariate correlation, multiple regression does not imply casual relationships unless variables have been manipulated. Multiple regression analysis is often used to make a prediction. One variant of it is 'stepwise multiple regression', which involves taking the predictor which shows the highest correlation with the outcome measure and then combining it step by step with others to improve the correlation (Wragg 1999).

Graphical testing was then done on the feedback received by the various stake holders viz parents and staff to further probe the dependent variable i.e. student progress, and analyze and study its outcome from the differing view points. The questionnaires to parents and staff were standard across both the branches, and the data was reviewed critically and compared and analyzed with the help of bar graphs.

Triangulation design incorporating research using 1) parent feedback 2) staff feedback (both through analysis of questionnaires) along with the 3) quantitative descriptive and inferential research analysis was done and it provided further credibility, validity and reliability to the methodology, leading to a robust research. Creswell (2008) comments that quantitative research allows for greater generalizability of its results and research involving different stake holders provides insights about settings or phenomena.

4.6 Other Research considerations:

i) Accessibility: The researcher has chosen the study carefully to match her area of work specialization, so as to put the research to good use. She works in the same organization and is therefore at an advantage in obtaining important documents and factual information. This aided her in carrying out a robust research in the field of early years. Her prior research conducted in the same organization with regards to standardization of policies, curricular practices and leadership in the same preschool branches helped in the in-depth analysis and aided in the new research to be conducted

ii) Ethics: The research was conducted in a fair and credible manner. Ethics is not something that happens at the sampling stage or any particular stage of the research, it needs to guide the entire process of planning and while conducting the research (Mertens 2010). Due ethical considerations were adhered to, with regards to explaining the purpose and aims of the study to the stakeholders. The privacy, confidentiality of information, anonymity, respect of the individual rights of all the stakeholders viz students, parents, teachers and management of the school were adhered through. An informed consent from all the stakeholders was obtained before conducting the research (Creswell 2008).

iii) Reliability and validity: Bell (1999) points out that the data must be assessed critically to determine its reliability and validity. As the research design was based on an experimental design incorporating triangulation, it enhanced in the reliability of the research and ruled out the threats to external validity by usage of multiple treatments. The threats to internal validity were countered by probing into the aspects of history, maturation, regression, selection, mortality, testing of procedure and instrumentation (Mertens 2010).

iv) Feasibility: The feasibility of the research proposal depended largely on the researcher's skills and knowledge to efficiently utilize the quantitative and qualitative methods collectively. Discussion with peers, research and referring of articles in the same field would enhance the researchers understanding of the subject. Multiple

data collection, understanding and analysis can enhance feasibility and also prove to be an exacting task (Creswell 2008).

4.3 Results and analysis:

i) Analysis of test scores:

A T-paired test was performed to look into the significance between the value added scores of both the branches across all the age groups to determine the significance in the learning socialization within the same branch. (See Figure 1 for Mankhool data and Figure 2 for Jumeira data)

An independent samples T test was then performed for equality of means and the Levene's test for equality of variances was done for all the age groups to compare both the branches.

The independent t-test compares the performance of the participants in Jumeira School with the performance of the participants in Mankhool School. The significance in the difference was looked at. This test should be used when the data meet the assumptions for the parametric test and are obtained using an independent group design. (See Figure 3)

The **multiple regression** method was then applied to study the correlations between the independent variables (comprising of the demographic factors), and their impact on the dependent variable (student progress) across all the age groups. The Pearson correlation was applied and the significance (1 tailed) was measured to determine the outcome. **An independent samples T test** was then again performed for equality of means and the Levene's test for equality of variances was done for all the age groups to compare both the branches for the demographic variable that contributed significantly to dependent variable viz student progress. It was important to compare branch wise to see the results.

Figure 1: Measuring the student progress in the Mankhool branch

Nursery

Nursery										
Paired Samples Statistics										
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Pair 1	Initial Mark	32.9091	22	27.53856	5.87124					
	Final Mark	79.0909	22	23.79057	5.07217					
Paired Samples Correlations										
		N	Correlation	Sig.						
Pair 1	Initial Mark & Final Mark	22	.787	.000						
Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
		Mean	Std. Devia	Std. Error	Lower				Upper	
Pair 1	Initial Mark - Final Mark	-46.18182	17.13708	3.65364	-53.77998	-38.58366	-12.640	21	0.000	Significant difference
Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Nursery level (t= -12.640, df= 21, p=0.000 < 0.05)										

Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Nursery level ($t = -12.640$, $df = 21$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

Foundation										
Paired Samples Statistics										
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Pair 1	Initial Mark	48.4485	31	20.33988	3.65315					
	Final Mark	87.2811	31	12.36519	2.22085					
Paired Samples Correlations										
		N	Correlation	Sig.						
Pair 1	Initial Mark & Final Mark	31	.641	.000						
Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
					Lower				Upper	
Pair 1	Initial Mark - Final Mark	-38.83257	15.62739	2.80676	-44.56474	-33.10039	-13.835	30	.000	Significant difference
Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Foundation level (t= -13.835, df= 30, p=0.000 < 0.05)										

Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Foundation level ($t = -13.835$, $df = 30$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

Upper Foundation										
Paired Samples Statistics										
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Pair 1	Initial Mark	48.3810	5	21.23617	9.49711					
	Final Mark	85.1429	5	5.89400	2.63588					
Paired Samples Correlations										
		N	Correlation	Sig.						
Pair 1	Initial Mark & Final Mark	5	.887	.045						
Paired Samples Test										
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
					Lower					Upper
Pair 1	Initial Mark - Final Mark	-36.76190	16.24082	7.26311	-56.92754	-16.59627	-5.061	4	.007	Significant difference
Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Upper Foundation level (t= -5.061, df= 4, p=0.007 < 0.05)										

Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Upper Foundation level ($t = -5.061$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.007 < 0.05$)

The Results showed significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks of the 22 students at the Nursery level ($t = -12.640$, $df = 21$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$).

Results showed significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks of the 31 students at the Foundation level ($t = -13.835$, $df = 30$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

Results showed significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks of the 5 students at the Upper Foundation level ($t = -5.061$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.007 < 0.05$)

The students in Mankhool across all ages have achieved the learning and cognitive development over the academic year looking at the significant difference between the initial marks and the final marks. The socialization and learning has taken place effectively.

Figure 2: Measuring the student progress in the Jumeira branch

Nursery

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Initial Mark	30.0000	22	14.80028	3.15543
	Final Mark	56.0331	22	20.42166	4.35391

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Initial Mark & Final Mark	22	.642	.001

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Initial Mark - Final Mark	-26.0331	15.74478	3.3568	-33.0139	-19.05221	-7.755	21	0.000 Significant

Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Nursery level ($t = -7.755$, $df = 21$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

Foundation

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Initial Mark	25.6396	31	13.27132	2.38380
	Final Mark	62.4027	31	24.90338	4.47278

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Initial Mark & Final Mark	31	.563	.001

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Initial Mark - Final Mark	-36.7631	20.60032	3.69993	-44.3193	-29.20681	-9.936	30	0.000 Significant

Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in Foundation level ($t = -9.936$, $df = 30$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

Upper Foundation

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Initial Mark	18.6207	5	10.58626	4.73432
	Final Mark	65.5172	5	31.95475	14.29080

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Initial Mark & Final Mark	5	0.747	0.147

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Initial Mark - Final Mark	-46.89655	25.05642	11.20557	-78.00820	-15.78490	-4.185	4	.014 Significant

Results found significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks in upper Foundation level ($t = -4.185$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.014 < 0.05$)

The Results showed significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks of the 22 students at the Nursery level (t= -7.755, df= 21, p=**0.000** < 0.05)

Results showed significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks of the 31 students at the Foundation level ($t = -9.936$, $df = 30$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

Results showed significant difference between the Initial Marks and the Final Marks of the 5 students at the Upper Foundation level ($t = -4.185$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.014 < 0.05$)

The students in Jumeira across all ages have achieved the learning and cognitive development over the academic year looking at the significant difference between the initial marks and the final marks. The socialization and learning has taken place effectively in Jumeira too. These results help answer the first question being probed by the researcher on the significant improvement in the preschoolers.

Figure 3: Comparison of student scores across both branches

Group Statistics										
	School Name	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Marks	Jumeriah School	22	26.0331	15.74478	3.35680					
	Mankhool School	22	40.7792	16.97737	3.61959					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
Students' Marks	Equal variances assumed	.630	.432	-2.987	42	.005	-14.74616	4.93655	-24.70852	-4.78380
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.987	41.764	.005	-14.74616	4.93655	-24.71019	-4.78213
Results found significant difference between the progress of Mankhool School and the progress of Jumeriah school in nursery level ($t = -2.987$, $df = 42$, $p = 0.005 < 0.05$)										

Figure 4: Foundation Group Statistics

Group Statistics										
	School Name	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Marks	Jumeriah School	31	36.7631	20.60032	3.69993					
	Mankhool School	31	38.8326	15.62739	2.80676					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Students' Marks	Equal variances assumed	2.925	.092	-.446	60	.657	-2.06950	4.64407	-11.35901	7.22002
	Equal variances not assumed			-.446	55.938	.658	-2.06950	4.64407	-11.37291	7.23392
Results found no significant difference between the progress of Mankhool School and the progress of Jumeriah school in foundation level										

Figure 5: Upper Foundation Group Statistics

Group Statistics										
	School Name	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Marks	Jumeriah School	5	46.8966	25.05642	11.20557					
	Mankhool School	5	36.7619	16.24082	7.26311					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Students' Marks	Equal variances assumed	.289	.606	.759	8	.470	10.13465	13.35356	-20.65872	40.92802
	Equal variances not assumed			.759	6.857	.473	10.13465	13.35356	-21.57572	41.84502
Results found no significant difference between the progress of Mankhool School and the progress of Jumeriah school in upper foundation level (t=0.759, df= 8, p=0.470 >0.05)										

The results prove that the children of the Mankhool branch have achieved their cognitive learning goals better than the Jumeira branch for the nursery level age 2-3. However no such significant difference can be seen for the children in the foundation and upper foundation level.

Figure 6: Regression on variables

Nursery

Correlations

		Students' Progress	School Name	Sex	Nationality	Mother's Language	Working Mother
Pearson Correlation	Students' Progress	1.000	.419	-.348	-.360	.152	-.148
	School Name	.419	1.000	-.229	-.364	.513	.370
	Sex	-.348	-.229	1.000	.138	-.251	.259
	Nationality	-.360	-.364	.138	1.000	-.233	.000
	Mother's Language	.152	.513	-.251	-.233	1.000	.099
	Working Mother	-.148	.370	.259	.000	.099	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Students' Progress	.	.002	.010	.008	.162	.168
	School Name	.002	.	.067	.008	.000	.007
	Sex	.010	.067	.	.186	.050	.045
	Nationality	.008	.008	.186	.	.064	.500
	Mother's Language	.162	.000	.050	.064	.	.261
	Working Mother	.168	.007	.045	.500	.261	.
N	Students' Progress	44	44	44	44	44	44
	School Name	44	44	44	44	44	44
	Sex	44	44	44	44	44	44
	Nationality	44	44	44	44	44	44
	Mother's Language	44	44	44	44	44	44
	Working Mother	44	44	44	44	44	44

Foundation

Correlations

		Students' Progress	School Name	Sex	Nationality	Mother's Language	Working Mother
Pearson Correlation	Students' Progress	1.000	.057	.015	.133	.115	.045
	School Name	.057	1.000	.032	-.130	.142	-.167
	Sex	.015	.032	1.000	-.130	-.142	.167
	Nationality	.133	-.130	-.130	1.000	-.009	.108
	Mother's Language	.115	.142	-.142	-.009	1.000	-.271
	Working Mother	.045	-.167	.167	.108	-.271	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Students' Progress	.	.329	.453	.152	.186	.364
	School Name	.329	.	.402	.158	.135	.097
	Sex	.453	.402	.	.158	.135	.097
	Nationality	.152	.158	.158	.	.472	.201
	Mother's Language	.186	.135	.135	.472	.	.017
	Working Mother	.364	.097	.097	.201	.017	.
N	Students' Progress	62	62	62	62	62	62
	School Name	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Sex	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Nationality	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Mother's Language	62	62	62	62	62	62
	Working Mother	62	62	62	62	62	62

Upper Foundation							
Correlations							
		Students' Progress	School Name	Sex	Nationality	Mother's Language	Working Mother
Pearson Correlation	Students' Progress	1.000	-.259	-.244	-.152	-.315	-.588
	School Name	-.259	1.000	-.408	.306	.461	.218
	Sex	-.244	-.408	1.000	-.031	.345	.535
	Nationality	-.152	.306	-.031	1.000	.288	.401
	Mother's Language	-.315	.461	.345	.288	1.000	.324
	Working Mother	-.588	.218	.535	.401	.324	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Students' Progress	.	.235	.248	.337	.187	.037
	School Name	.235	.	.121	.195	.090	.272
	Sex	.248	.121	.	.466	.164	.056
	Nationality	.337	.195	.466	.	.210	.126
	Mother's Language	.187	.090	.164	.210	.	.180
	Working Mother	.037	.272	.056	.126	.180	.
N	Students' Progress	10	10	10	10	10	10
	School Name	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Sex	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Nationality	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Mother's Language	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Working Mother	10	10	10	10	10	10

The results show significant difference for nationality $p=0.008 < 0.05$, and for gender of the child $p=0.010 < 0.05$ for the nursery age children (2-3 yrs.). From the previous tables, the results already show that Mankhool and Jumeira have a significant difference in their student progress at the nursery level, hence the significant difference of $p=0.002 < 0.05$, shown here for the school name in the above table is justified.

As can be seen in the figures above, the independent demographic variables of gender and nationality seem to have affected the dependent variable of student progress, and have contributed to the higher achievement of the students in Mankhool at the nursery level with the gender contributing at the foundation level too. The contribution of nationality seems to be more than that of gender looking at the significance score of $p=0.008$ (nationality) $> p=0.010$ for gender. The other factors of mother's language and stance of the working mother offer no significance. However for the upper foundation level, the working mother plays a significant role in the student outcome. This score of the upper foundation can be ignored, as the sample size is too small at 5 students.

Figure 7: Comparison of the independent variable “gender” across both branches

Nursery										
Group Statistics										
	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Progress	Male	25	38.7463	19.37220	3.87444					
	Female	19	26.3796	12.89458	2.95822					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Students' Progress	Equal variances assumed	4.480	.040	2.404	42	.021	12.36674	5.14445	1.98481	22.74868
	Equal variances not assumed			2.537	41.388	.015	12.36674	4.87487	2.52493	22.20854
Results found significant difference between the Male Marks and the Femal Marks in Nursery level (t= 2.404, df= 42, p=0.021 < 0.05)										
Foundation										
Group Statistics										
	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Progress	Male	31	37.5248	20.15256	3.61951					
	Female	31	38.0709	16.28411	2.92112					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Students' Progress	Equal variances assumed	2.970	.090	-.117	60	.907	-.54811	4.65121	-9.84992	8.75770
	Equal variances not assumed			-.117	57.439	.907	-.54811	4.65121	-9.85848	8.76624
Results found NO significant difference between the Male Marks and the Femal Marks in Foundation level (t= -0.117, df= 57.439, p=0.907 > 0.05)										

On further analysing the gender, it can be seen that there are 25 males and 19 females across both the branches Mankhool and Jumeira. The mean of the male progress scores is 38.7463, with a standard deviation of 19.37220. For the female scores the mean is 26.3796 and the standard deviation is 12.89459. There is a significant difference across the scores. Results showed a significant difference between the Male scores and the Female scores at the Nursery level ($t = 2.404$, $df = 42$, $p = 0.021 < 0.05$). The results have proven that male children have done better than the female children at the nursery level (age 2-3) and may have contributed to the higher scores of the nursery students in Mankhool. There is however no significance in the gender scores at the foundation levels for the 62 students across both branches (31 boys, and 31 girls). ($t = -0.117$, $df = 57.439$, $p = 0.907 > 0.05$). The mean and standard deviations are mentioned above.

Figure 8: Comparison on nationality

Nursery										
Group Statistics										
	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Progress	Asia	22	39.7442	20.23535	4.31419					
	Non Asia	22	27.0681	12.50577	2.66624					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Students' Progress	Equal variances assumed	4.552	.039	2.499	42	.016	12.67611	5.07159	2.44122	22.91100
	Equal variances not assumed			2.499	34.999	.017	12.67611	5.07159	2.38022	22.97200
Results found significant difference between Asia Marks and Non Asia Marks in Nursery level ($t = 2.499$, $df = 42$, $p = 0.016 < 0.05$)										
Foundation										
Group Statistics										
	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean					
Students' Progress	Asia	28	35.1671	16.52558	3.12304					
	Non Asia	34	39.9643	19.38222	3.32402					
Independent Samples Test										
		Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Interval of the	
									Lower	Upper
Students' Progress	Equal variances assumed	1.533	.221	-1.036	60	.305	-4.79713	4.63247	-14.06345	4.46919
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.052	59.914	.297	-4.79713	4.56098	-13.92071	4.32646
Results found NO significant difference between Asia Marks and Non Asia Marks in Foundation level ($t = -1.036$, $df = 60$, $p = 0.305 > 0.05$)										

On further analysing the nationality (Asians versus non Asians), it can be seen that there are 22 Asians and 22 Non Asians across the nursery age range in both the branches Mankhool and Jumeira. The mean of the Asian students progress scores is 39.7442, with a standard deviation of 20.23535. For the Non Asian students scores the mean is 27.0681 and the standard deviation is 12.50577. Results showed a significant difference between Asian students progress scores and Non Asian students progress scores at the Nursery level ($t = 2.499$, $df=42$, $p=0.016 < 0.05$).

There is however no significance in the nationality scores at the foundation levels for the 62 students across both branches (28 Non Asians, and 34 Asians). The Results found no significant difference between Asian students progress and the Non Asian students progress levels in Foundation level ($t = -1.036$, $df = 60$, $p=0.305 > 0.05$). The mean and standard deviations are mentioned above. The results throw light on the demographic variable of nationality, in that the Asian students have done better at the nursery level and may have contributed to the student progress in Mankhool at the nursery level over Jumeira, as Jumeira School consists mostly of non-Asians. The nationality variable however does not yield any significance at the foundation level.

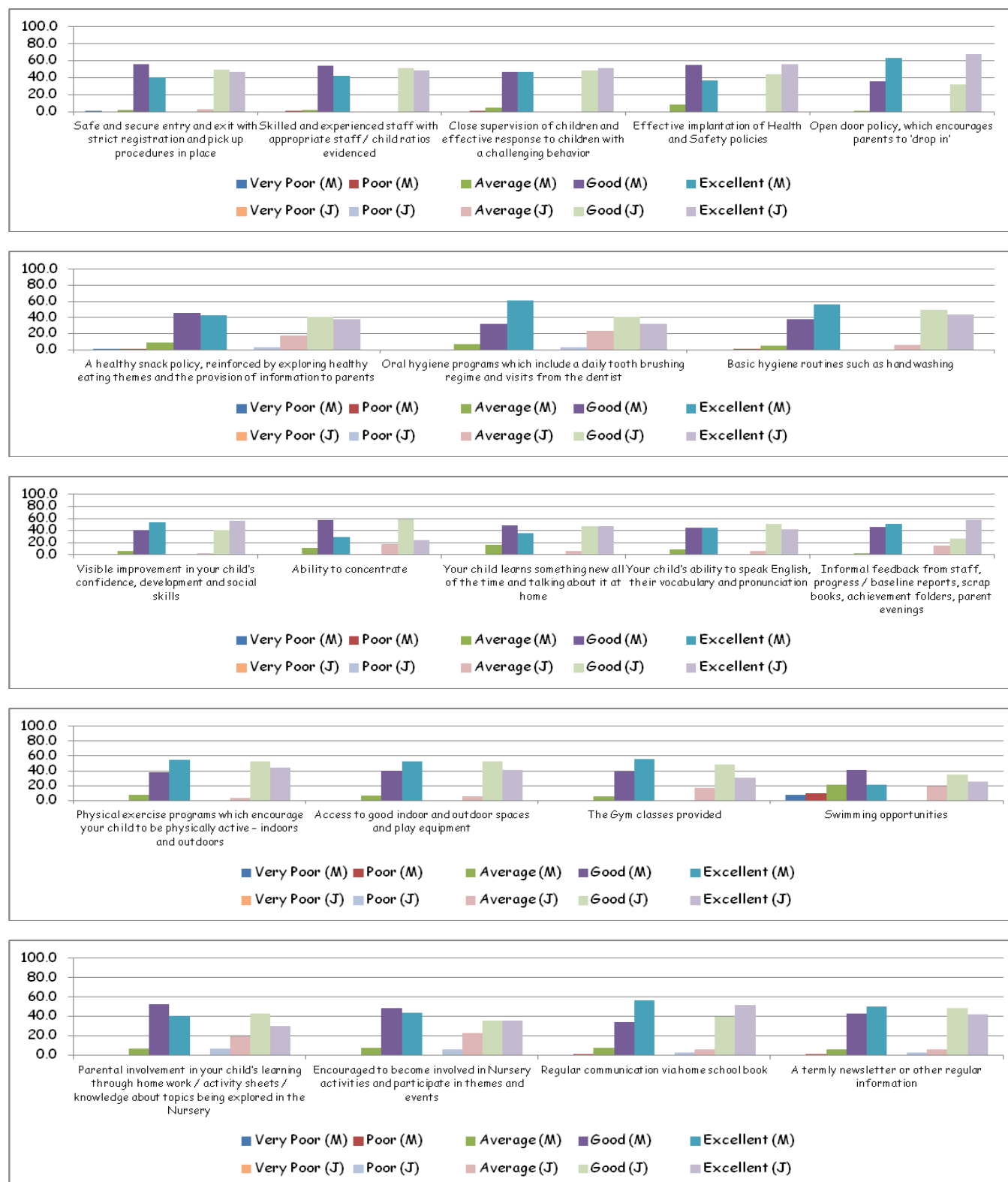
ii) Result and analysis of Parent and Staff Questionnaires:

The questionnaires filled out by parents and staff of each branch were tallied and duly reviewed to find the scores (see Appendix 3 & 4). There were approximately 259 parents in Mankhool, and 104 in Jumeira whose questionnaires were collected and reviewed. The results can be generalized amongst the parents of the sample children selected for the study and the answers were analysed pertaining to the different sections of school standards with graphical representations made and then compared branch wise for easy understanding as can be seen in the tables below.

The aim was to look at the progress and development of the children and the individual schools from the viewpoint of the different stakeholders involved through a set of varied questions. (See Appendix 3 & 4 for sample questionnaire)

Analyzing the parent and staff feedback through questionnaires, observations and focus groups consumes immense time and there may be a potential conflict of bias creeping in as it is a subjective technique (Bell 1999). The researcher has kept a neutral standpoint in her analysis, and has endeavored to be very objective in the treatment of the data.

Exhibit 8: Parent Feedback Analysis



Staff feedback analysis:

Questionnaires handed out to the approximate 63 staff in Mankhool and the 23 staff in Jumeira showed their view points on the schools quality and their own happiness index which can be linked to the children's progress.

Exhibit 9: Staff Feedback Analysis

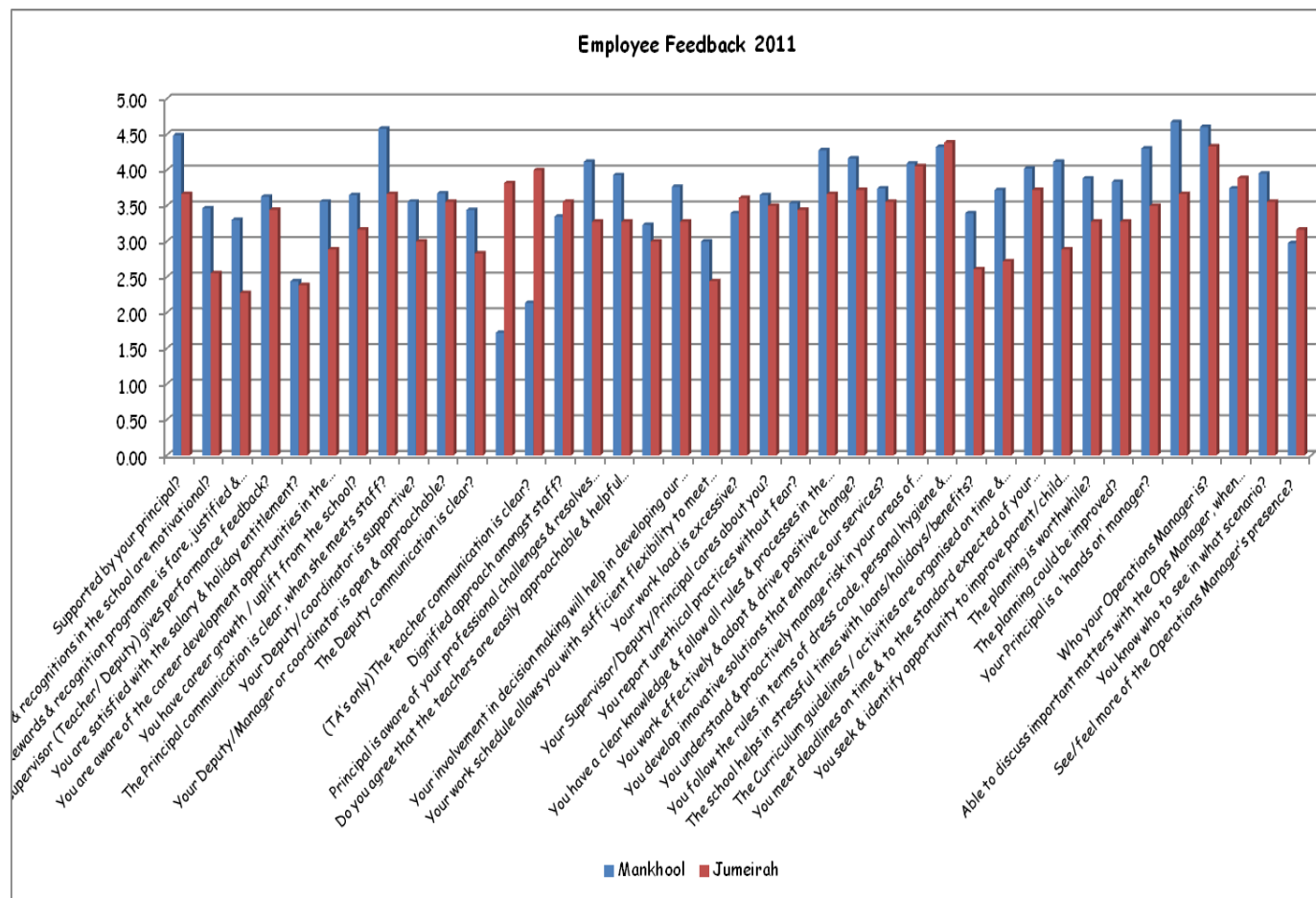


Exhibit 10: Principal feedback analysis

	Mankhool Branch	Jumeira Branch
Delivery of Quality care	The principal feels that she is 67% effective in delivering quality of care and education.	The principal feels that she is 74% effective in delivering quality of care and education.
Planning and Organization	The principal feels she is 75% effective in planning.	The principal feels she is 82% effective in planning.
Communication	The principal feels she is 87% effective in clear and concise communication.	The principal feels she is 78% effective in clear and concise communication.
Policies and procedures	The principal feels she is 70% effective in understanding, implementing and enforcing the policies.	The principal feels she is 68% effective in understanding, implementing and enforcing the policies.
Staff management	The principal feels she is 65% effective in managing HR policies.	The principal feels she is 65% effective in managing HR policies.
Financial management	The principal feels she is 77% effective in managing budgets, purchases, registration numbers, and stocks.	The principal feels she is 70% effective in managing budgets, purchases, registrations & stocks.
Personal attitude	The principal feels she is 90% effective in positivity, motivating, stimulating, and creating a positive environment.	The principal feels she is 80% effective in positivity, motivating, stimulating, creating a positive environment,

iii) Result of Staff & Children Attendance:

Analysis was carried out on the 8-month data of the average attendance for both the branches Mankhool and Jumeira (academic year of September 2010 to April 2011).

The results are as below.

The average attendance for children in Mankhool was 85%

The average attendance for children in Jumeira was 81%

The average attendance of teachers in Mankhool was 87%

The average attendance of teachers in Jumeira was 88.5%

The average attendance of teaching assistants in Mankhool was 94%

The average attendance of teaching assistants in Jumeira was 96%

On analyzing the attendance, the similarities in both schools can be seen, which rules out contamination and distortion of the research result as the attendance of a preschooler and the staff is directly linked to the instructional learning the student receives throughout the year. Any major variance or inequality in this could have affected the dependent variable of student progress.

iv) Triangulation:

The researcher set out to find the causal relationship between early years education and the cognitive development of the preschoolers in UAE. The quantitative research carried out clearly proved that the across both the branches and across all ages of children (corresponding to the nursery, foundation and upper foundation stages), the socialization and learning outcomes have been achieved by the preschoolers, and that the early childhood program is effective. Cognitive development has taken

place. The parent feedback and staff feedback including the principals feedback is analyzed to conclude that they believe that substantial progress in learning has taken place by the preschoolers. They also rate the quality of the preschool high and have expressed satisfaction in the quality of instruction and childcare being imparted. Thus the quantitative results are consistent across all age groups and this triangulation between the 1) Quantitative research on test scores, 2) Staff and Principal feedback and 3) Parent feedback provides credibility to the research. This research conducted in UAE across 2 branches of a preschool can be generalized and is in line with worldwide research on the positive effects of early years programs.

Chapter 5. Discussion

This study attempted to investigate the socialization and learning in a preschool in Dubai and the influence of parental demographics on the individual child's learning experiences. The mixed method of research design incorporating triangulation aided in the authenticity and credibility of the research. The methodology is therefore concluded to be aptly selected. As with any research the limitations anticipated have to be thought of. Triangulation can pose a difficulty in comparing multiple databases (Creswell 2008); and the diversity of the interpretations of data should be preserved so that the "voices" of the least empowered are not lost (Merten 2010). Each method has its own inherent disadvantages as expounded previously.

The results clearly answer all the three questions viz:

- 1) Is there a significant improvement in the socialization and learning of the children at the preschool?
- 2) Is there a significant difference in the comparison of the socialization and learning of children between the two branches of the preschool?
- 3) Do the demographic factors of parents contribute to the socialization and learning in the children of the two branches and is there a relationship?

The quantitative and qualitative analysis proved that socialization and learning has taken place across all the age groups of the ISO certified, UAE preschool. This can be generalized and has many implications on policy formation at the school and the national level with the reiteration of the fact that quality early years education does matter for the young child. Reynolds et al. (1994) and Goodman & Sianesi (2005) clearly state that the early years education and family support factors promote long-term effectiveness in preschool.

In answer to the research question number 2 and 3, significant difference was found in the learning scores in comparisons between the branches of Mankhool and Jumeira only across the nursery age of 2-3yrs (roughly 50% of the sample). The Mankhool children of this age range fared better. On further analysis and probing through multiple regression, the variable of 'nationality' seemed to have an effect. The Asian students at the Mankhool branch fared better than the non-Asians at the Jumeira branch at the nursery level again. The male children have also progressed better than the female at the nursery level.

As these results are not the same at the foundation level (age 3-4) many arguments arise.

The first and foremost is linked to the assessment rubric. Could the differing rubric (See Appendix 1) used in Mankhool by the teacher and her assessment of the nursery level children (age 2-3) be simpler and lenient compared to that of Jumeira? (See Appendix 2) Did this affect the robustness of the research? It is therefore recommended that the rubric used be absolutely uniform with standard assessments by teachers to support the credibility and validity of future research. However the assessments and scores of the foundation stage children (3-4 yrs.) is similar, so the assessment by the teachers and rubric used may not have made any difference at this stage. An other explanation that can arise is that the children on entering the nursery at age two, have greater need for learning, and are like raw material, easily molded and malleable. They are a 'clean slate', having only the past impression of parental teachings and observation based learning's on cultural aspects taught by parents. Is this the reason that the nursery age children who are from Asian background do better at the nursery level compared to other nationalities, or the boys who did better compared to the girls? This effect wears off at the foundation level, owing to the standardized teaching and curriculum and the 'slate' being wiped off for past cultural teachings and standard learning taking over and being written on equally across both branches? Or is it because the parental involvement of the Asian parents and awareness is higher in Mankhool (see parent feedback analysis). The staff of Mankhool branch seem to be more motivated with a higher 'happiness index' than Jumeira (see staff feedback analysis). Could this be a gain for the new nursery age children entering the school at two, and the reason for their enhanced learning,

or is it vice versa, in that the staff is happier owing to happier children who seem to learn more? Again this effect fades off at age three, when the students of Jumeira too 'pick up' and eventually perform and learn equally to the Mankhool counterparts offering no significance difference. Is it that the school characteristic and culture of high standards and quality that plays a part in this shift? The theories are many, and further research is recommended to probe further.

Various other questions arise at this point: Is a causal relationship assumed between the independent variables and the dependent variable? The control variables considered are curriculum and pedagogical practices which are assumed to be standardized, and the moderating variables of attitude and motivation of teachers and principal, school facilities, socio economic status of parents cannot be safely assumed to be equal in their impact on the result. Can the control variables be adequately controlled? What unexpected or uncontrollable factors might have influenced the results? What competing explanations can be explored? There are human elements that are difficult to measure or standardize. The variables of principal and teacher motivation, teaching quality, etc. are only assumed to be constant when making comparisons between both the branches, to measure the learning. However this is very subjective. While both the schools have similar facilities, the Mankhool branch is bigger. Could 'bigger be better'? There could be other demographic factors not researched in this study such as the educational qualification of the parent, presence of a sibling or a nanny at home, time spent by the parent, etc. which all subtly affect the learning outcomes. All these variables and their inequality could have played a major impact in contaminating the end result. There are always assumptions and limitations in conducting any research. Ongoing research eliminating various factors can lead to enhanced credibility in the area of early years research.

Further limitations of self-bias could also have crept in during the research, as the researcher has pre conceived notions about her work place, and may have indirectly influenced the analysis. The external validity issues such as the play of existing cultural factors of the school, or past behavioral ideologies of the researcher, sampling issues and interference of multiple treatments cannot be ruled out.

Conscious safeguarding and peer de-briefing would alleviate these to a certain extent (Mertens 2010).

Although the sample size selected from the population is adequate, and the quantitative research incorporating a quasi-experimental design will permit the generalization, issues of further generalizing of results to the larger database of preschools in U.A.E may be encountered owing to the differing quality of preschools and the fluid and dynamic social culture of UAE. The intra cultural differences between the differing expatriate populations of UAE could also be a hindrance in further generalization.

Reynolds et al. (1996) state that in the past decade, research on the early years programs has shifted from evaluating whether or not they are affective to studying why these intervention programs are effective. Further research can be conducted in other preschools with differing settings, curricula and nationalities of children to generalize the results.

Other considerations exposed by the research are on the qualitative side. The results of the qualitative study on parent and staff feedback between both branches are very similar due to the effective standardization of the schools by the top management, highlighting the importance of enhanced systemization of processes and policies followed by the preschool under study. However it is to be noted that other parameters of staff count and children head count, culture, demographics, size of school, facilities in both schools, previous child experiences, socio-economic and parental factors, are assumed to remain constant. Also the multi directional nature of learning by the children and their teachers, peers and parents is not considered. These factors could tamper with the research.

It is also noted that there is consistency in the results of the relationship between effective leadership and school quality of both schools, doubly emphasizing the importance of principal selection, training and continuous development to enhance the quality early education to be imparted.

Both the principals seemed to be empowered, and modeling their own behavior has empowered the team to a certain extent. This enhances the feelings of self-efficacy

and pride among organizational members. There is increased collective power, as staff aims to reach the goals together. Data from this study by analyzing the questionnaires also reveals that there is consistency in the results of the relationship between effective leadership and school quality of both schools, doubly emphasizing the importance of principal selection, training and continuous development.

It can also be inferred that the ensuing results and analysis of the questionnaires are all linked. What children do and say in class, set the development plan, and socio-emotional tone for their learning, co-relating to the happiness index of all the stakeholders in the school. Teacher responsiveness, methodology used, appropriate planning followed, health and safety norms followed and more importantly the effective leadership controlling all these parameters lay the framework for the children's learning environment.

This also opens up thoughts on the importance of the social environments of the children at homes and quality parenting. This finding is consistent with research on parenting that supports organization, routines, and order as important for the development of self-control and engagement. (Bates et al. 2002; Brody & Flor 1998, cited in Kaufman 2009).

Pianta et al. (2009, pg. 53) touch base on a demographic study undertaken on preschoolers and point out that "Latino children are the least likely of any ethnic-racial group to enroll in preschool or childcare in USA (Espinosa 2007). There is evidence that this does not reflect a difference in cultural attitudes or preferences but rather a lack of information and unequal access (Barnett & Yarosz 2007). Demographic variables do play a part on the child's growth as culture is ingrained in a child's DNA. The important influence of parental learning and belief systems cannot be ignored. This study did touch base upon a particular set of nationality (Asians) doing slightly better in the nursery range. Further studies must be conducted on a larger scale to probe the influence of the multinational environment on the child's learning in countries like UAE and Singapore who have a huge mix of population.

Chapter 6. Conclusion & Recommendations:

The Current research reinforces the critical importance of the early childhood period in the human development cycle. The early years are the foundation stage not only for education, but also of adult well-being, physical and mental health. The family is the natural environment of the child. Normally, it is within the family that the child's physical, social and learning development first takes place. The socio-emotional development of young children requires warm and stable relationships with nurturing adults (preferably parents) and other children. If both parents are working, qualified preschools can help secure a stable environment for the child during the first critical year of life.

Young children from about the age of one year can benefit from caring, high quality programs, run by early childhood professionals. When of high quality, such programs help to develop children's knowledge and socio-emotional attitudes (such as trust, self-confidence, curiosity and teamwork) and skills that are critical for contemporary knowledge societies. Skills have now become the global currency of 21st century economies. Experts point out that this currency 'depreciates' in value if not used or harnessed well. (Gulf News May 2012)

An organization behaves like an organism. There has to be an ongoing effort on the part of leaders to comprehend and analyze the dearth of quality preschool education.

Snowden & Gorton (2002) emphasize on a collaborative, shared decision-making approach. They talk on professionalism and empowerment in an organization. Organizations have to help staff achieve a work-life balance and finally also to help staff reduce work-life conflicts. Organizations are modifying the workplaces to accommodate the varied need of the diverse workforce. Women with young children or those who relocate or start lives with new partners need the maximum support. The ministry has done well to draft a law to support the women government employees with creating work-based nurseries (MoSA 2012).

The centerpiece for most diversity programs is training. Participants settle down in the organization better, learn to value individual differences and increase their cross cultural understanding. The rewards are immense, and the intellectual capital gets built. Pianta et al.(2009) state that professional development approaches enable teachers to allow for direct tracing of paths of inputs to teachers to inputs to children, and ultimately to children's skill gains. These gains can be considerable-up to half a standard deviation on average. The preschool belongs to the service sector of the UAE's economy and hence is dependent on the human capital it creates and ably employs. The true resource of a preschool is its qualified and trained workforce. Many other questions come to the surface. Would it be imperative for preschools in UAE to provide regular training to the teachers and teaching assistants so that they are also empowered to produce better learning experiences for the children? (Gloeckler & Niemeyer 2010). The MoSA guidelines in 2012 now stipulate a 30 hour training per annum at a cost of approximately USD 1000 for every employee for the preschool to be qualified higher in its inspection. This has not been very welcome as is an additional cost to the schools with no support from the government, in an already fragile system, lacking structure. Educators know about the far-reaching advantages of observation tools and continuous professional development for teachers. Guersey& Ochshorn (2011) state that early childhood centers that used observation tools, mentoring and training, graduated children whose language, literacy and socio-emotional skills were enhanced as compared to children in centers that did not use such programs.

Pianta et al. (2009) state that of all the features of early years programs the adult-child ratio is the most consistent predictor of both the quality of the teachers instruction as well as of child outcomes for infants, toddlers and preschoolers(Blau 1999; NICHD ECCRN 2000, 2002,2004; Phillipsen et.al. 1997).

Enhanced education quality has to be the ultimate aim. HR practices form the major component of a schools management framework. The teacher teaching the child is ultimately responsible. She has to be supported with effective systems. Robust performance management systems incorporating self-appraisals, 360-degree feedback, key performance indicators (KPI's) linked to the targeted goals of the employee should be measured in a timely manner. Reward programs have to be chalked out. These have to be in line with the organization's objectives. These tools

will aid in the preschool development and will serve as ammunition to the leaders. It is also recommended that schools have an open culture incorporating participatory budgeting and participatory reform where everyone has an equal voice in policy making, implementation and outcomes. Regular team meetings should be mandatory. This can cut down red-tapism and bureaucracy to a certain extent.

Learning organizations are where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire; where new ideas are constantly nurtured; where collective aspirations are set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together. The fact that groups can lead, the importance of group cohesiveness in a school comes to mind. A shared dream is at the heart of each 'great group'. In a school the common goal should be the effective development of the child. Robbins & Judge (2009) define a learning organization as an organization that has developed the continuous capacity to adapt and change. They further go on to provide an example of organizational development at Wal-Mart which has introduced a new voluntary program called the Personal Sustainability Project that seeks to improve employee well being and organizational effectiveness. Global organizations study behavior regularly. They adopt new age solutions. C.S.R (Corporate Social Responsibility) and 'Going Green' are the new terms sought after by most organizations. We have to give back to society, and organizations like organisms have realized that.

Schools have to step up as evolving organizations and involve 'process consultants' to delve deep into uncharted territories and improvise systems and introduce positive organizational change. Schools as organizations have to be nested learning communities, and have to aim at continuous improvement (Fink & Resnik 2001).

To manage well a dynamic school setting, and to consistently provide the best quality, it is imperative to keep enhancing and improvising. "The first thought is that it is 'change' in a company, as a priority objective, developing all its human resources, enhancing all their skills, but not being content with that, learning from those people how the company can be improved, so that it becomes a cycle of learning" -----Paul Marsh, Jaguar.

A Quality assurance program provides settings with recognition of the progress that has been made against a set of agreed standards, leading to gaining an accredited level or stage. It is important that schools keep evolving and adhere to strict norms to enhance quality. It is far more revolutionary that schools consider themselves as learning organizations and take bold steps to embrace change and adhere to international quality standards. MoSA (2011) has issued standards for nurseries, however they have to be enforced and acceptable and implemented effectively else they will only have a book value. A study by KHDA in Feb, 2011 titled Early Education in Dubai, cites the many challenges in the nursery sector and singles out the need for quality assurance system, funding and federal support as key considerations. It recommends that public and parent awareness be increased, frameworks be prepared, adequate finance and support be imparted by the local and federal bodies (Gulf News Feb 2011).

The question every organizational member needs to ask is, where are we at this moment and where do we need to go from here? Paradigm shifts do not happen easily and besides the vision of the leader, require the contribution of one and all.

Being a school director, the author has always been intrigued by the role of school owners and the operation manager's quality involvement in school improvement. Educationists have the ethical and moral obligation to see that student's education is not shortchanged as we shape their future. Studies state that a child's competency is to be considered as an important indicator of his or her preparedness (Mieseil 1999, cited in Kaufman 2009).

Woldehanna (2011) comments that Although early childhood education is not a panacea, the results obtained reveal that early years educational programs can improve the academic success and cognitive development by far, thereby benefitting the nation as a whole. Therefore understanding the low participation rate by nurseries and low quality of basic preschool education, the government can drive some learning's and lessons from the empirical analysis of research. He clearly reiterates that governments must be aware that early childhood education is an

important and critical window of opportunity that will help break intergenerational transmission of poverty (Siraj-Blatchford 2009, cited in Woldehanna 2011).

Investing in young children is one of the wisest investment decisions that communities and governments can make. The countries that do this do not do it because they have surplus resources but because they believe in the fruitful results achieved by early childhood education. They appreciate the advantages it brings to children, communities and nations as a whole. Governments instead of spending large amounts on the social services for older and destitute people can invest reasonable parts of it on children who will be more able in future. UAE can achieve great results by building public preschools for the Emirati population to instill life long skills, and social culture. Except in some areas of quality monitoring and technical support, the government has limited intervention in this important area of education. Whilst MoSA is working on implementing quality standards, and through inspections, there is much left to do in terms of research and government spending in this sector.

If UAE is to be a powerful knowledge economy, it needs to formulate stringent policies in education, starting with this critical area of the early years. The human capital argument stresses that there are multiple important skills, both non cognitive and cognitive, and there are the crucial and sensitive periods in a child's lifecycle where investments are particularly effective, and that inadequate investments are costly and difficult to remedy at a later stage. (Cunah et al., 2006; Woessmann, 2006, cited in Woldehanna 2011). As the young child's learning and cognitive ability and social behavior become more malleable compared to adults, the investment in early education gains significance. It is not only the public sector spending that the government should focus on; there must be media campaigns to educate parents, and help stimulate demands. Private provisions should be encouraged. Incentives can be given to private providers, who work mainly with disadvantaged groups. Inclusion should be encouraged. Of course regulations must be ably implemented by the private sector. Bottlenecks removed. High quality should be the common aim. Policies should aim at developing and fostering human capital, the important resource for a developing economy.

Further more, in the education sector it is argued that efficiency and equity objectives have a tradeoff, and only one is normally achievable at the expense of the other. However when viewed in the larger scheme of things, they both are mutually reinforcing, and it is more equitable and efficient to invest in this sector very early. Correcting failure can be more inefficient and costly in future, and families may tend to invest less in the early years of the child due to lack of information or financial constraints. It is proven by researchers that early childhood education can produce long term improvements in the social development, hence public investments by the government in this sector is imperative. “The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) has had a long history of supporting and encouraging interventions aimed at children and families. The human rights argument holds that children have a right to live and develop to their fullest potential” (Woldehanna 2011, p.6). The organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF strongly encourage investment in the early years programs, and champion the cause for child well being and for children to have healthy environments, and the right to education, to fully develop the human person, and considers this as a basic human right.

Strong social, economic and education benefits flow from creating and maintaining national networks of early childhood services. Governments benefit from the investment through more people working, higher taxation returns, more social cohesion at community level, less reliance of families on social security, less criminality, and better quality of intake into the compulsory education system.

Kindergarten learning experiences have the potential to alter the trajectory of the child’s development and are the very framework on which rests the towering potential of the preschooler’s life long learning. These experiences have to be well managed. Ultimately our world’s future is in their hands.

Early childhood education is a child’s fundamental right. The child should be placed at the center and duties and obligations of the different levels of society and stakeholders should be defined to create a child’s rights framework. This should guide the development of policies, plan and legislations. The early childhood sector must not get a compartmentalized treatment when formulating priority policies for healthcare and community development. All the relevant sectors must contribute

synergistically to the growth of the nation and the development of the child. This is beautifully stated in the following paragraph by Professor Woodhead (Woodhead 2009 cited in Woldehanna 2011, p.6).

“Young children are no longer viewed mainly as passive recipients of services, beneficiaries of protective measures, nor objects of social experiments; rather they are seen as subjects who should be listened to and contribute to change. Nor should early education be viewed primarily as an investment opportunity, building human capital to achieve strong economic outcomes for society. Nor should the main motive for early childhood services be to enable women to enter the labour force. These justifications play a role in policy, but they are not the core rationale for building early education and care policies and services. Child rights are the firmest foundation for policy, recognizing that children are social actors, entitled to respect, care, education and comprehensive services in their best interests, and identifying those with responsibility to secure these rights with and on behalf of young children Caregivers, teachers, communities, school owners and governments.”

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Appendix 1 – Pre-test and Post-test instrument(Mankhool)

Appendix 2 – Pre-test and Post-test instrument(Jumeira)

Appendix 3 – Sample feedback form (Parent)

Appendix 4 – Sample feedback form (Staff)

Appendix 5 – Sample appraisal and feedback form (Principal)

Appendix 6 – Staff & Children attendance (Mankhool)

Appendix 7 - Staff & Children attendance (Jumeira)

Appendix 8 – Data collection & preparation