

# Kindergarten Children' Possession of Life Skills from Teachers' Viewpoints

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## Abstract

This study investigated kindergarten children's possession of life skills from their teachers' viewpoints. The researchers observed a clear discrepancy between kindergarten children's possession and their real practice of these skills. Thus, the study aimed to shed a light on this phenomenon. The study sample consisted of (200) kindergarten teachers who were selected randomly. A questionnaire including (34) items distributed on four domains, namely, learning, social and environmental communication and hygiene skills was used to collect data from the teachers. The findings of the study showed that the degree of life skills among children came to a moderate degree, with learning skills ranked first, social and environmental communication skills second, and hygiene skills came third. The findings also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for the domains "social and environmental communication skills" and "hygiene skills" due to gender but there were statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for the domain "learning skills" which was in favor of males. In light of the findings, the study recommended to hold training courses for kindergarten teachers and supervisors to make them aware of the importance of the practical aspects in children's activities as well as cognitive activities, especially with regard to developing the life skills of the kindergarten children.

## Keywords

Kindergarten child, Kindergarten teachers, Jordan, Life skills

**To cite this article:** Salah, B. M., Alhamad, N. F., Melhem, M. A., Sakarneh, M. A., Hayajneh, W. S. & Rababah, M. A. (2021) Kindergarten Children' Possession of Life Skills from Teachers' Viewpoints. *Review of International Geographical Education (RIGEO)*, 11(8), 143-156. doi: 10.48047/rigeo.11.08.14

**Submitted:** 09-10-2020 • **Revised:** 11-12-2020 • **Accepted:** 13-02-2021

## Introduction

The kindergarten stage is considered an important stage of preparation and foundation, and its ultimate goal is to provide children with a set of cognitive skills to develop their abilities and attitudes. Kindergarten is of great importance in rehabilitating and training the children scientifically, socially and psychologically, and preparing them properly (Rintaningrum, 2019). The period of childhood, specifically at kindergarten stage, is considered the period of real and basic construction of children. The upbringing of the children is the most important stage in the education stages because it is the stage of planting the seeds and the process of education including many aspects, for example, that the child should be able to help himself by himself and form an independent and distinct personality that has certain characteristics that distinguish him from others, so it is the ground on which all subsequent stages depend (Bulut, 2020). The building process of children is not completed without intensive efforts by the family and kindergarten staff, as each of them has a role and actions in raising children and providing them with the necessary life skills, which have become an inevitable and expected necessity to prepare them to face circumstances or any other developments (Aydin, Ozfidan, & Carothers, 2017; Kurtdede-Fidan & Aydogdu, 2018; Zubaidah, Fuad, Mahanal, & Suarsini, 2017).

Given the importance of the kindergarten stage in education, the first and supreme goal in its various programs should be the comprehensive development of all aspects of the children's mental, emotional, motor, physical and psychological (Anisimova & Ibatullin, 2018; Maunah, 2020). Spolsky (2019) pointed out that one of the disadvantages of traditional education is that it used to ignore teaching children in the kindergarten stage the life skills which aid them to acquire sufficient capabilities for their success in the forthcoming stages.

Children's life skills have received a great attention from all educational institutions. The Arab League Summit Council meeting (2001), held in Jordan in the Arab Framework Document for Childhood, indicated the need to empower the child with his right to upbringing and good quality education that raise his abilities in creativity and innovation, generates moral and social values and develops his life skills (MacDonald, 2015).

Life skills are defined as all the positive adaptive behavior that an individual does that helps him to deal effectively with the demands of life by translating the information he knows, the trends and values that he trusts in, thinks about and believes in with and employing them in the tasks of what they should do, and how they work in daily life (Akhtarieva, Ibragimova, & Tarasova, 2019; AKTÜRK, Demircan, Şenyurt, & Çetin, 2017; Nikitina, 2018). Life is a series of situations that are not clearly defined, and they are distinctly different from the content of learning materials which have clear situations in which some methods can be used to solve them (Schultz, 2012). Despite human's ability to adapt and live within the environment in which he lives, there are many situations in which a person may commit mistakes upon his interaction with them without knowing the type of errors or the reasons that led him to do that (Emelyanova, Borisova, Shapovalova, Karynbaeva et al., 2018). Life skills are necessary skills that an individual cannot give up or avoid learning them, not only to satisfy his basic needs, but for continuity and survival and for the continuation of the process of progress and the development of ways of living in present societies (Bahar & Aksut, 2020; Botvin & Griffin, 2004; Bozhkova, Shatunova, & Shastina, 2020).

Hendy (2016) pointed out that the ultimate goal of life skills is to achieve integration between the school and the community. Life skills give the individual the strongest opportunity to live his life better in light of the enormous challenges of the era represented by the successive explosion of knowledge and information, which requires educators to prepare individuals in a way that they should be able to adapt and interact through training them on the necessary skills. They provide the individual (the learner) with direct experience through interaction and direct contact with people, and this gives the learning process meaning and provides the element of excitement and suspense through their connection with reality and providing them with the correct methods for obtaining information from its correct sources. It also gives the individual a sense of societal problems and a great desire to find appropriate solutions to them (Hendy, 2016).

The classification process of life skills is a neurological process, on the basis of which the classification process is determined. These life skills are determined by the needs of the intended age group, knowledge of learners' needs, knowledge of their aspirations, and the most important problems that occur when they reach the stage of achieving desired or expected behaviors. Al Muhtasib (2019) classified life skills into

*Self-awareness skill*: It is the skill that includes knowing the self, its characteristics, sources of strength

and weakness, and what the child desires in his communication with others.

*Transfer and communication skill:* It is the skill that helps the child to communicate in positive ways using the types of verbal and non-verbal communication.

*Creative thinking skill:* It is a mental process that helps the child to make decisions and solve problems and enables him to look beyond the limits of his experience.

*Problem-solving and decision-making skills:* These are the skills that help the child to deal in positive and effective ways with problems and to identify solutions to those problems. Whereas [Jouda \(2020\)](#) classified the children's life skills as follows: environmental skills, preventive skills, hygiene skills, nutritional skills and manual skills.

Educators asserted that the main reasons behind the acquisition of life skills by children is to use the educational process correctly, take care of the children's, provide the appropriate atmosphere for them to live in a hygienic environment and to help in their transition from one age stage to another stage that differs from the previous stage ([Pangrazi & Beighle, 2019](#); [Solem, Lambert, & Sirpa, 2013](#)). [Gould and Carson \(2008\)](#) identified a set of goals for life skills to develop children's self-awareness, develop their social skills, increase their motivation to learn, give them their own responsibility and develop their ability to protect themselves.

Therefore, it is necessary to follow and use the best available educational methods based on the most important strategies, principles and theories extracted from modern learning theories. Many researchers ([Ilhan & Güler soy, 2019](#); [Kazdin, 2001](#); [Nilson, 2016](#)). have unanimously agreed that there are multiple techniques and methods that have proven effective in teaching life skills and behaviors, and the most important of which are:

*Formation:* It is sometimes known as approximation and works on analyzing the behavior into a number of sub-tasks and enhancing them until the final behavior is achieved. Shaping does not always mean creating a new behavior but rather modifying the existing behavior of the child through the behavioral therapist in order to establish it in the children.

*Sequence:* It is defined as the procedure by which the target behavior is evaluated into a number of its constituent rings with the reinforcement of the last link.

*Memorization:* it is achieved through indoctrination and coaching in which the child is aided by cues that help him to perform the targeted behavior. This assistance may be verbal, intuitive or positive.

*Masking:* It is the method of concealment which depends on the type of indoctrination used. It may be concealment of verbal indoctrination or gestural indoctrination.

*Modeling:* It is considered one of the most important educational, therapeutic and guiding methods, and it is complicated by giving the child the opportunity to help a specific behavioral model and then training to imitate that model. Modeling is also a practical experience in training an individual to perform certain behaviors according to a model presented to him ([Kazdin, 2001](#); [Nilson, 2016](#)).

Kindergarten is a fertile environment in which all the ingredients for hygienic growth must be available for children. Through the researchers' field visits to kindergartens, because the nature of their work requires them to communicate directly with the school environment, they noticed, through their supervision of the trainee students in kindergartens, that there was a significant decline in some of the children's life, social and environmental communication, and learning skills. Through the repeated visits, they noticed that there is a clear discrepancy between the children in the degree of their practice and possession of these skills. There was some negligence on the part of the administrative side of those schools in developing children's behavior. Therefore, the researchers decided to conduct the present study to find out the extent to which children possess the necessary life skills and to explain the reasons for the differences and disparities between them. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. Do kindergarten children possess life skills from teachers' perspectives in Irbid Governorate kindergartens?
2. What is the role of kindergarten teachers in developing children learning skills?
3. What is the role of kindergarten teachers in developing children social and environmental communication skills?
4. What is the role of kindergarten teachers in developing children hygiene skills?
5. Are there statistical significant differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in kindergarten children possession of life skills due to gender in Irbid governorate from teachers' perspectives?

## Definition of Terms

*Life skills:* They are set of skills related to the environment in which the child lives in and the knowledge, values and attitudes related to that a child manages to do in a deliberate and organized manner through a set of activities and applications. These skills aim to build the integrated personality of the child so that he can assume responsibility and deal with the necessities of daily life successfully which make him a good individual (Hegner, 1991; Wright, Gottfried, & Le, 2017). Phillips and Pugh (2015) defined life skills as a set of skills that the student needs to manage his life and gain self-reliance, accept the other's opinion and achieve psychological satisfaction for him, and help him adapt to the variables of the era in which he lives, such as acquiring communication skills, leadership, and teamwork, problem solving and decision making. Life skills, procedurally, are life skills in the current study are defined as all behaviors that the child does so that they are properly directed to meet the requirements of daily life without causing suffering, so that the child acquires those skills that refine his personality to become a positive and qualified individual for the future helping him in building his own society.

## Limitations of The Study

*Objectives limit:* The study was limited to the life skills acquired from playing by kindergarten children.

*Human limit:* The study was limited to a sample of kindergarten students in public and private schools in Irbid Governorate.

*Time limit:* The study was conducted in the second semester of the year 2017/2018.

*Place limit:* The study was applied in the city of Irbid.

## Previous Studies

Botvin and Griffin (2004) investigated the importance of life skills and the role they play in the child's life. He built a preparing a program to develop these skills for kindergarten children. The study sample consisted of (60) children (30) for the experimental group and (30) for the control group of children of the second level of kindergarten (KG2) whose ages ranged from (5-6) years. The researcher used a program designed for measuring life skills that included the following: social skills and self-reliance. The results of the study revealed the effectiveness of the proposed program where the experimental group outperformed the control group' performance.

Aasen and Sadownik (2019) studied the effectiveness of an educational program for educating kindergarten children in some life practices and developing their attitudes towards them. The researcher used the experimental method. The study was applied to children of the first level (1 KG) and children of the second level (KG2). The study sample consisted of 30 boys and girls in the first level and 30 boys and girls in the second level who were chosen randomly. The results of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental sample at the first level (KG1) in favor of the post-test, and there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group at the second level (KG2) on the trend scale in favor of the post-test.

Aasen and Sadownik (2019) investigated the implications of a training application to develop the life skills of kindergarten children in Egypt on improving some personality traits. The study sample consisted of (109) children whose ages ranged from (5-6) years, as well as an experimental sample that consisted of (25) children who were selected from the children with the lowest response according to the level of life skills. A descriptive as well as quasi-experimental approach was used to analyze the data. The results of the study showed the effectiveness of the designed training program in developing the life skills of the children of the experimental research sample and improving some of their personal traits.

Quistberg and Mueller (2020) aimed at determining the effectiveness of a proposed program in developing the social skills of kindergarten children who are integrated with their blind colleagues to interact with them successfully. An experimental method was used. The study was applied to a sample of children of the second level (KG2) whose ages ranged from 5-6 years, in one of the kindergartens affiliated to Social Affairs in Jordan. A questionnaire was prepared to determine the social and behavioral skills. The results of the study concluded that the children of the study sample did not possess the necessary social skills to interact successfully with the blind children. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences showing the mean scores of the

experimental group in the pre and post application of measuring social skills which were obviously in favor of the post application group.

[Hanley, Heal, Tiger, and Ingvarsson \(2007\)](#) aimed at dividing a teaching program to develop and enhance life skills for pre-school children, in order to overcome a number of behavioral problems (aggressive or problematic behavior) and other skills including communication, friendship and tolerance. These skills were presented through dialogue activities, role playing, modeling, feedback, free play and meals. The results of the study showed that the life skills program led to a 74% decrease in problematic behavior among children.

[Khalil \(2018\)](#) examined the role of science curricula in developing life skills for primary school students in Egypt. The study used the descriptive and experimental method. The study sample consisted of (123) students in the fourth grade and (159) students in the fifth grade. A questionnaire was used to collect data. It included the following areas: environmental skills, nutritional skills, hygiene skills, preventive skills, manual skills. And another questionnaire was used to examine the performance of science and life skills mentors and teachers, as well as the life skills test for fourth and fifth grade students. The results of the study showed a low level of possession of life skills by fourth and fifth grade students, and the difference in the performance of science mentors and teachers in that the curriculum helped in developing life skills.

[Vernon-Feagans, Mokrova, Carr, Garrett-Peters et al. \(2019\)](#) examined the effectiveness of the existing project method as an entry point for developing skills related to decision-making among pre-school children in Egypt. The study sample consisted of (30) boys and girls from KG2 whose ages ranged between (5-6) years. The results of the study showed that the development of decision-making skills with an impact size that had a great educational value amounted to (3022) and an acceptable statistical effectiveness of (1038). [Kurtdele-Fidan and Aydogdu \(2018\)](#) aimed at developing some skills among children of residential institutions. A program based on various activities was used to determine the impact on the children's harmonious behavior. The study sample consisted of a group of children from residential institutions whose number was (20) girls and their ages ranged between (6-7) years. The researchers used the successive matrices test to measure intelligence, life skills test, and harmonic behavior test. A proposed program for the development of life skills was used. The results of the study concluded that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental group children on the life skills test before and after applying the program in favor of their scores after the test application.

[Shek, Lin, Ma, Yu et al. \(2020\)](#) aimed at developing life skills among secondary education students within the framework of future curricula in Egypt. The researchers used the descriptive analytical method. The study sample consisted of (1195) male and female students from the first year of secondary schools in general and technical secondary schools in Cairo and its suburbs. The researchers identified the areas of life skills (productive skills, environmental education skills, and skills of different ways of thinking). The results of the study came to the following order (hygiene safety and body hygiene, environmental protection and preservation).

[Salonen, Hartikainen-Ahia, Hense, Scheersoij et al. \(2017\)](#) aimed at determining the life skills that should be available in the content of science books in kindergarten in Gaza and the extent to which they are included in the content. The researchers used the descriptive analytical method. Tools used in preparing content analysis include hygienic life skills, safety and security skills, simple problem solving and self-awareness. The results of the study showed that there were critical thinking and decision-making positions (24%), environmental skills (16.5%), communication skills (4%), and problem-solving positions constituted (2%).

[Makransky, Wandall, Madsen, Hood et al. \(2020\)](#) aimed at building a list of life skills to be developed for a pre-school child in Egypt. The list of the study consisted of (11) basic skills, under which (80) sub-skills fall. Three of the basic skills were subjected to field training through conducting many educational situations. The sample of the study consisted of (30) children. The study tools consisted of note cards to measure the effectiveness of educational situations in developing the three basic life skills, namely, communication skills, decision-making skills, and emotional handling skills. The results of the study showed the effectiveness of these attitudes in developing these skills among pre-school children.

[Moser, Reikerås, and Egil Tønnessen \(2018\)](#) aimed to provide an educational program in developing life skills for pre-school children in America. The study sample consisted of (16) children. A questionnaire was built for life skills during the following activities: circle of free play, meals, role playing and modeling. The results showed that the children's life skills were developed through using the program.

## Methods

This section presents the methodology of the study. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study sample according to the levels of its variables.

**Table 1**

Distribution of the study sample according to the levels of its variables

| Gender | Repetition | Ratio | Total |
|--------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male   | 43         | %21.5 | 200   |
| Female | 157        | %78.5 |       |

Table 1 showed that the number of males in the sample was (43) with a percentage of (21.5%), while the number of females was (157) with a percentage of (78.5%).

### Validity of The Study Tool

To ensure the logical validity of the study tool and its domains, it was presented in its initial form to a group of reviewers from Jordanian universities with expertise and competence in the field of education in order to take their opinion on the accuracy and validity of the content of the tool in terms of its linguistic formulation, clarity of items, degree of belonging of the item to the domain, and adding, modifying or deleting what it is deemed appropriate on domains or items. After that, the items that were chosen unanimously appropriate by the reviewers were considered. And then the questionnaire took its final current form.

### Construction Validity

The validity of the construction of the life skills availability degree tool for kindergarten children was checked through the computation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the correlation coefficient for the items of the tool as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Correlation coefficients and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire.

| Domain                          | Cronbach alpha | Correlation |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Learning skills                 | .814           | .873**      |
| Social and environmental skills | .832           | .834**      |
| Hygiene skills                  | .853           | .828**      |
| Total                           | .851           |             |

\*\* Significant at ( $\alpha = 0.001$ ).

Table 2 showed that the values of the internal consistency coefficients for the domains of the life skills availability degree tool for kindergarten children ranged between (0.814) and (0.835) and for the tool as a whole (0.851). While the values of the correlation coefficients for the life skills availability score tool domains for kindergarten children ranged between (.828\*\*) and (.873\*\*).

### Correction Method

The questionnaire in its final form consisted of (57) items. According to Likert-five-point scale which ranges from 1 to 5, it is represented as follows: very high degree =5, high degree = 4, medium degree= 3, weak degree=2, and very weak degree= 1.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the results of the study, by answering the study's questions and hypotheses through the previously mentioned statistical methods.

## Kindergarten Teachers' Possession to Life Skills

To answer the first question which states, "Do kindergarten children possess life skills from teachers' perspectives in Irbid Governorate kindergartens?", the means and standard deviations, the rank of the teachers' responses were calculated based on each item of the domain, and the whole domain as shown in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3**

Means and standard deviations of the estimates of the study sample on life learning skills

| Domain                          | Mean | SD   | Rank | Level    |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|----------|
| Learning skills                 | 2.23 | 0.22 | 1    | Moderate |
| Social and environmental Skills | 2.17 | 0.21 | 2    | Moderate |
| Hygiene skill                   | 2.14 | 0.19 | 3    | Moderate |
| Total                           | 2.17 | 0.17 | 4    | Moderate |

[Table 3](#) shows the ratings on life skills of the study sample members on life learning skills, where the first domain "learning skills" was ranked first with a mean (2.23) with a medium degree and a standard deviation (0.22). The domain "Social and Environmental Communication Skills" was ranked second, with a mean of (2.17), and a standard deviation of (0.21), with a medium degree. The third domain, "Hygiene Skills", was ranked third, with a mean of (2.14), and a standard deviation of (0.19) with a medium degree. The mean of the questionnaire as a whole was (2.17) with a medium degree and a standard deviation of (0.17).

These results can be attributed to the very limited practices of teachers of life skills or to the lack of inclusion of life skills and aspects within the preschool curricula and the emphasis of these curricula on the theoretical aspects while the practical application of these skills is disregarded, so as to make curricula in clue of several life skills such as learning skills, social and environmental communication skills and hygiene skills that are appropriate of children's age and their perceptions and mental competencies.

## Kindergarten Teachers' Role in Developing the Learning Skills

To answer the second question which states, "What is the role of kindergarten teachers in developing children learning skills?", the means, standard deviations, the rank and the levels of the teachers' responses were calculated based on each item of the domain, and the whole domain as shown in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4**

The sample's ratings of learning skills domain in a descending order.

| No. | Item  | Mean | SD   | Rank | Level    |
|-----|---|------|------|------|----------|
| 2   | He gets permission before entering or leaving the classroom | 2.41 | .49  | 1    | High     |
| 5   | He discusses politely and respectfully                      | 2.41 | .49  | 1    | High     |
| 1   | He listens well to the teacher                              | 2.40 | .49  | 3    | High     |
| 10  | He tries to read and write by himself as much as possible   | 2.40 | 0.49 | 3    | high     |
| 7   | He takes the teacher as a role model                        | 2.35 | .48  | 5    | High     |
| 3   | He depends on himself in solving homework                   | 2.15 | .53  | 6    | Moderate |
| 8   | He responds to learning in different ways                   | 2.15 | .53  | 6    | Moderate |
| 9   | He often uses technology well                               | 2.12 | .41  | 8    | Moderate |
| 4   | He can learn fast   | 2.11 | .37  | 9    | Moderate |
| 6   | He stays calm and avoid nervousness during the lesson       | 1.80 | .52  | 10   | Moderate |
|     | Total   | 2.23 | 0.22 |      | Moderate |

As seen in [Table 4](#), that the means of the items ranged between (2.41-1.80). The highest was for item (2), which states, "He asks permission before entering or leaving the classroom," with an average score of (2.41) and a high degree, followed by item (5), which states "He discusses politely and respectfully" with an average of (2.41) and a high degree. And in the last rank, item (6), which states that "He stays calm and avoids nervousness during the lesson" with an average

(1.80) and a medium degree. The average for the domain “learning skills” as a whole was (2.23) and a medium degree.

These results are attributed to the kindergarten children’s lack of the meaning of learning skills due to their young age. This requires the availability of highly qualified kindergarten teachers in order to play many overlapping roles and perform varied tasks to develop the learning skills of kindergarten children because the kindergarten stage is one of the most appropriate age stages for developing different learning skills for kindergarten children and preparing them for the next school stage. This requires intensive efforts to provide the children with learning skills so that this concept is should be taken seriously. Teaching learning skills is linked to the role of both the family and the kindergarten. The pursuit of this goal is not an academic luxury, but rather a necessity that requires the cooperation of all.

## Kindergarten Teachers’ Role in Developing the Social and Environmental Communication Skills

To answer the third question which states, “What is the role of kindergarten teachers in developing children social and environmental communication skills?”, the means and standard deviations, the rank, and the level of the teachers’ responses were calculated based on each item of the domain, and the whole domain as revealed in [Table 5](#).

**Table 5**

The sample’s ratings of items of social and environmental domain in a descending order.

| No.   | Item   | Mean | SD   | Rank | Level    |
|-------|--|------|------|------|----------|
| 1     | He participate in school competitions                | 2.41 | .49  | 1    | High     |
| 5     | His colleagues participate in events                 | 2.41 | .49  | 1    | High     |
| 2     | He keeps the school clean                            | 2.40 | .49  | 3    | High     |
| 3     | He treats others with respect                        | 2.35 | .48  | 4    | high     |
| 10    | He avoids writing on walls and seats                 | 2.28 | .45  | 5    | Moderate |
| 6     | He maintains classroom furniture                     | 2.24 | .43  | 6    | Moderate |
| 4     | He walks in the place specified for children         | 2.20 | .48  | 7    | Moderate |
| 8     | He helps his colleagues                              | 2.14 | .35  | 8    | Moderate |
| 7     | He participates in environmental awareness campaigns | 1.66 | .62  | 9    | Low      |
| 9     | He helps his colleagues plant trees and roses        | 1.61 | .63  | 10   | Low      |
| Total |  | 2.17 | 0.21 |      | Moderate |

It is evident from [Table 5](#) that the means of the items ranged between (2.41-1.61), the highest was for item (1), which states “He participates in school competitions” with an average of (2.41) and with a high degree. Followed by item (5), which states that “He participates his colleagues in events” with a mean of (2.41) and a high degree. And in the last place was item (9) which states that “He helps his colleagues in planting trees and roses” with an average of (1.61) and a low degree. The mean for the domain “social and environmental communication skills” as a whole was (2.17), with a medium degree.

These results might be attributed to the faults and deficiencies in the kindergarten curricula regarding social and environmental communication skills in some kindergartens, or to the lack of some kindergarten teachers’ possession of adequate social and environmental communication skills. Therefore, kindergarten directors should give training courses to their staff in the domain of social and environmental communication to develop in turn the children’s social and environmental communication skills. This would create a positive individual in his society.

In addition to, there is a need to include in the kindergarten curricula skills that encourage children to converse and communicate effectively with others. Communication skills are among the basic requirements that a child needs in order to conform with himself and with the society in which he lives, and coexists with other societies. It provides him with the information needed to connect with the environment, learn for life, encourage social interaction and citizenship and helps him plan for his future life. It is also necessary for the child to acquire the skills of environmental awareness and work to raise the level of environmental awareness in order to preserve the environment’s resources from poor consumption, preserve its components from pollution, and implement projects to improve environmental conditions such as afforestation and hygiene.



## Kindergarten Teachers' Role in Developing Hygiene Skills

To answer the first question which states, "What is the role of kindergarten teachers in developing children hygiene skills?", the means and standard deviations, the rank, and the level were calculated on the responses of the teachers based on each item of the domain, and the whole domain as displayed in [Table 6](#).

**Table 6**

The sample's rating of item of the hygiene skills domain and the domain as a whole

| No.   | Item  | Mean | SD   | Rank | Level    |
|-------|---|------|------|------|----------|
| 8     | He uses a tissue when sneezing or having a cold       | 2.37 | .50  | 1    | High     |
| 6     | He washes his hands after getting out of the bathroom | 2.34 | .47  | 2    | High     |
| 9     | He eats calmly  | 2.29 | .50  | 3    | Moderate |
| 1     | He does not put strange objects in his mouth          | 2.27 | .51  | 4    | Moderate |
| 13    | He wears his own clothes                              | 2.26 | .44  | 5    | Moderate |
| 4     | It puts rubbish in its proper place                   | 2.15 | .52  | 6    | Moderate |
| 3     | He washes his hands before and after eating           | 2.15 | .52  | 6    | Moderate |
| 2     | He exercises daily                                    | 2.14 | .81  | 8    | Moderate |
| 7     | He chooses healthy food                               | 2.14 | .81  | 8    | Moderate |
| 14    | He arranges his things after using them               | 2.12 | .41  | 10   | Moderate |
| 5     | He sits right   | 2.09 | .35  | 11   | Moderate |
| 10    | He does not tamper with electricity                   | 2.08 | .31  | 12   | Moderate |
| 12    | He pays attention to personal hygiene                 | 2.00 | .41  | 13   | Moderate |
| 11    | He stays away from places of danger (roof or stairs)  | 1.61 | .63  | 14   | Low      |
| Total |   | 2.14 | 0.19 |      | Moderate |

[Table 6](#) displayed that the means of the items ranged between (2.37-1.61), the highest was for item (8), which states "He uses a tissue when sneezing or having a cold" with an average of (2.37) and a high degree, followed by item (6) which states "He washes his hands after leaving the bathroom" with a mean of (2.34) and a high degree. And in the last rank was item (11) which states that "He stays away from places of danger (roof or stairs)" with an average of (1.61) and a low degree. The mean of the domain "hygiene skills" as a whole was (2.14), with a medium degree. This indicates the presence of these skills to a moderate degree among kindergarten teachers in general. The reason for this may be due to students' non-responsiveness to this skill, as they come from different environments that reflect on them family' raising. Consequently, some kindergarten teachers may face problems in how to provide the children with hygiene skills, such as applying hygiene safety, and sitting in a correct manner, which will achieve their integrated growth.

Additionally, the low percentage may be due to children's lack of awareness of hygiene problems and issues, which makes them be engaged in unhygienic behaviors. Some specialists attributed this to infectious diseases among kindergarten children due to their inability to understand the use of other people's tools, in addition to their lack of experience with the disease and lack of awareness of the concept of infection. This should activate the hygiene and safety unit in the kindergarten curricula.

As for preventive methods from some of the dangers that kindergarten children face, such as (do not tamper with electricity, stay away from places of danger (roof or stairs) related to public security and safety. Some attributed the high exposure of children to dangers in various places at home or on the road to lack of experience and lack of awareness of the dangers of some behaviors ([Forastieri, Office, Organization, Takala et al., 2002](#)).

## Differences of Kindergarten Children Possession of Life Skills Due to Gender

To answer the fourth question which states, "Are there statistical significant differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in kindergarten children possession of life skills due to gender in Irbid governorate from teachers' perspectives?", the means and standard deviations, and T-test were calculated, as shown in [Table 7](#) below.

**Table 7**

The means, standard deviation and T-test findings for “gender effect” on their responses

| Domain  | Gender | Mean | SD   | DF  | T     | Sig   |
|---|--------|------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| Learning skills                               | M      | 2.29 | .022 | 198 | 2.05  | 0.024 |
|   | F      | 2.21 | 0.22 |     |       |       |
| Social and environmental communication skills | M      | 2.20 | 0.18 | 198 | 1.070 | 0.286 |
|   | F      | 2.16 | 0.22 |     |       |       |
| Hygiene skills                                | M      | 2.16 | 0.18 | 198 | .918  | .360  |
|   | F      | 2.13 | 0.19 |     |       |       |
| Total Domain                                  | M      | 2.21 | 0.15 | 198 | 1.568 | 0.118 |
|   | F      | 2.6  | .18  |     |       |       |

Table 7 revealed that the value of (T) was not statistically significant for each of the domains of “social and environmental communication skills” and “hygiene skills” from the point of view of kindergarten teachers in Irbid Governorate schools according to the gender variable, where the value of the moral probability was greater than the value of the level of significant at (0.05). And that the value of (t) was statistically significant as it came in the domain of learning skills from the point of view of kindergarten teachers according to the gender variable. The value of the probability of morale was less than the value of the level of morale (0.05). This indicated that there were statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the averages of the answers of the research sample members due to the gender difference variable in favor of males.

These results indicated that the value of (t) is not statistically significant for each of: the domain of social and environmental communication skills and the domain of hygiene skills from the point of view of kindergarten teachers in Irbid schools according to the gender variable. This showed that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the averages of the answers of the research sample members due to the gender difference variable, which indicates that there is convergence in the views of the sample members in the degree of providing life skills for kindergarten children.

The results indicate that the value of (t) is statistically significant as it came in the domain of learning skills from the point of view of kindergarten teachers in Irbid governorate schools according to the gender variable, where the value of the moral probability was less than the value of the level of morale (0.05), and this indicates that there are significant differences Statistical significance at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the averages of the answers of the research sample members due to the gender difference variable in favor of males.

## Discussion

The results are discussed according to the research questions as follows:

### Kindergarten Teachers' Possession to Life Skills

The results indicated that the degree of availability of life skills among kindergarten teachers in kindergartens in Irbid governorate was average, with a mean of (2.17) and a standard deviation of (0.17) where the first domain of learning skills was ranked first with an average mean, and the domain “social and environmental communication skills” came in the second place with an average, and the domain “hygiene skills” was in the third place with an average.

This result can be explained by the fact that the degree of life skills availability for kindergarten teachers is average. And it may indicate the presence of these skills to a moderate degree among kindergarten teachers in general. The reason for this may be due to the lack of experience of kindergarten teachers in life skills, or the weak content of the kindergarten curricula for life aspects and the focus on the theoretical side without paying attention to its practical application, so that the curricula should include several life skills such as learning skill, social and environmental communication skill, and hygiene skills that suit the ages of kindergarten children and commensurate with their awareness and mental abilities of these skills.

## **Kindergarten Teachers' Role in Developing the Learning Skills**

The results indicated that the role of the kindergarten teacher in developing the learning skills of the kindergarten child in Irbid governorate was average, with an average of (2.23). This may be attributed to the kindergarten children's lack of the meaning of learning skills due to their young age. This requires the availability of a kindergarten teacher at a degree of high efficiency in order to be able to play many overlapping roles and perform varied tasks to develop learning skills for kindergarten children because the kindergarten stage is one of the most appropriate age stages for developing the different learning skills of kindergarten children and preparing them for the next school stage. This requires intensive efforts to provide the children with learning skills as teaching learning skills is very important. This is the role of both the family and the kindergarten. The pursuit of this goal is not an academic luxury, but rather a necessity that requires the cooperation of all.

## **Kindergarten Teachers' Role in Developing the Social and Environmental Communication Skills**

The results indicated that the role of the kindergarten teacher in developing the social and environmental communication of the kindergarten child in the Irbid governorate was average, with a mean of (2.17). This may be due to the inadequacies and deficiencies in the kindergarten curricula of social and environmental communication skills in some kindergartens, or the lack of some kindergarten teachers' possession of social and environmental communication skills. Therefore, kindergarten directors must give training courses to their staff in the domain of social and environmental communication. They should develop children's social and environmental communication skills to be positive individuals in their society. Additionally, they should include in the kindergarten's curricula skills that encourage children to be able to converse and communicate effectively with others. Communication and interaction skills are among the basic requirements that a child needs in order to conform with himself and with the society in which he lives, and coexist with other societies. They provide him with the information needed to connect with the environment, learn about life, encourage his social interaction and feeling of citizenship and help him plan for his future life. It is also necessary for the child to acquire the skills of environmental awareness and work to raise the level of environmental awareness in order to preserve the environment's resources from consumption, preserve its components from pollution, and implement projects to improve environmental conditions such as afforestation and hygiene.

## **Kindergarten Teachers' Role in Developing Hygiene Skills**

The results showed that the role of the kindergarten teacher in developing hygiene skills for the kindergarten child in the Irbid governorate was moderate, with a mean of (2.14). This indicated the presence of these skills to a moderate degree among kindergarten teachers in general, and perhaps the reason for this may due to the children's lack of response to this skill as they come from different environments that reflect on them family raising. Consequently, some kindergarten teachers face problems in realizing how the child acquires hygiene skills such as applying hygiene safety and sitting in a correct manner that will achieve the integrated growth of the child. The low percentage may be due to children's lack of awareness of health problems and issues which make them be engaged in unhealthy behaviors. Some specialists attribute this to infectious diseases among kindergarten children due to their inability to understand the use of other people's tools, in addition to their lack of experience with the disease and their lack of awareness of the concept of infection. This should activate the hygiene and safety unit in the kindergarten curricula.

As for preventive methods from some of the dangers that kindergarten children face, such as (He does not tamper with electricity, and he stays away from places of danger (roof or stairs)) are related to public Security and safety. Some scholars attribute the high exposure of children to dangers in various places at home or on the road to lack of experience and lack of awareness of the dangers of some behaviors (Forastieri et al., 2002).

## Differences of Kindergarten Children Possession of Life Skills Due to Gender

The results indicated that the value of (t) was not statistically significant for each of the domains: social and environmental communication skills and hygiene skills from the point of view of kindergarten teachers according to the gender variable, where the value of the moral probability was greater than the value of the level of morale (0.05). This revealed that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the averages of the answers of the research sample members due to the gender difference variable. This implied that there was convergence in the views of the sample members in the degree of providing life skills for kindergarten children.

The results also indicated that the value of (t) was statistically significant as it came in the domain of learning skills from the point of view of kindergarten teachers according to the gender variable, where the value of the moral probability was less than the value of the level of morale (0.05). This indicated that there was significant statistical significance at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the averages of the answers of the research sample members due to the gender difference variable in favor of males.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study suggests to integrate a course of life skills into the study plan for female student teachers at colleges of education through multi-branch integration and hold training courses for kindergarten teachers and supervisors to make them aware of the importance of the practical aspects and authentic practices in children's activities as well as cognitive activities, especially with regard to developing the life skills of the kindergarten children. The study draws the attention of those in charge of planning kindergarten curricula to include appropriate life skills for children of this stage and to be distributed in an integrated manner with curricula topics.

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