The Role of the Kindergarten Teacher in Enhancing the Child's Identity from the Teachers' Perceptions

Sahar Yacoub Abu-Helu

Faculty of Educational Science, The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Abstract: The study aimed to examine the role of the kindergarten teacher in enhancing the child's identity from the teachers' perceptions. The sample consisted of 74 teachers chosen purposefully from the private kindergarten education sector collaborating with the Practical Education Program in the University of Jordan. The child identity enhancement data was collected through a questionnaire designed by the researcher based on the literature review and previous studies related to the subject. The instrument included three domains (Belonging, Being and Becoming) with a total of 41 items. The results of the study indicated that the teachers' estimations of their roles in enhancing the children's identities through the different classroom practices came high in all three domains (Belonging, Being and Becoming). Also, a further result of this study indicated that there were no significant statistical differences attributed to the kindergarten teachers 'academic qualifications, specializations and experiences.

Key words: Child identity, kindergarten teachers, teachers' perceptions, education sector, Jordan

INTRODUCTION

Understanding oneself is a basic human concern in all stages of life. Identity construction is a life-long process which starts from the early years of childhood and continues throughout the different stages of life. However, it is the first stages of life that make the difference forming the foundations of the following years. Children's sense of who they are is shaped by their characteristics, interactions, various experiences and their understanding of themselves, their family and classmates. The various ways children construct their identities reveal their efforts to become. Their senses of belonging and pride can make them emotionally strong, self assured and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. This creates an important foundation for children's learning and development (Ahn, 2011).

Giving children positive messages about who they are gives them confidence to voice their views and opinions, to make choices and to help shape their own learning. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world. These identities are constructed from the senses of a child's Belonging, Being and Becoming. These three elements are fundamental in an interwoven well-constructed identity. Identity is shaped by experiences when children have positive experiences and relationships they develop a sense of belonging. Being involves children developing an awareness of their social culture and well-being. As for

becoming, it includes children shaping their identity through evolving experiences (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). This identity is constructed throughout the early years of pre-school. How children eventually come to feel about themselves is the result of an accumulation of contacts and experiences with other people and with the environment. Thus, teachers must help children in their care experience by providing as many positive interactions with people and things as possible. Children begin to accept themselves in classrooms when they succeed in the activities and tasks they encounter by stressing similarities in children and honoring their differences where every child is unique on his or her own (Beaty, 2004).

It has been well known that all children who have the best start in life have the better chances to create a better future for themselves and for their nations. Many educators view the major goals for young learners that they should become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, active and well-informed citizens. The debate regarding the identity issue, assumes that identity is not an inherent quality of a person but that it is accumulatively constructed. When we turn to the lives of children, early childhood has long been considered a critical time in the formation of self-identity. Erikson developed a widely used model of identity development that focused on developing identity through exploration. In his theory, he stressed the stages in which the identity develops; Erikson's theory paved the way for research on identity Erikson's concept of identity is multidimensional

in its scope. As Erikson considered identity a developmental process, others considered it a character formation process (Schwartz, 2001).

Achieving a positive sense of identity is a core goal of any educational system. It is this positive identity that will enable a child to meet the challenges of growing up by being resilient. Furthermore, it enables a child to feel a sense of individuality and belonging which will lead toward achieving emotional well-being (Brooker and Woodhead, 2008). A child identity is being formed and developed for every child in the nation by a kindergarten teacher (McCreadie, 1999). This will affect the child for the rest of his or her life. The question raised at this point is; how informed are parents of the critical role a kindergarten teacher can play in the lives of their children?

The kindergarten teacher can change the child's life in the years to come, by the different efforts she pays in the formation of the child's identity. Thus, the environment she creates in her class can help the child acquire a sense of belonging with his classmates. Moreover, the activities she applies in her class and the different developmental skills she nurtures can enrich the well-being of a child and his or her becoming future and potentials. Rababah (2012) mentioned in her thesis, how currently early childhood educators are becoming increasingly more aware of the importance of promoting the physical, social, cognitive, emotional and moral aspects of development and learning of a child (Kostelnik *et al.*, 2004). In her dissertation, she stressed the importance that teachers recognize their new roles in neutering the child as a human being active participant who constructs meaning through interaction with others including families, teachers, materials and the environment. Her framework referred to the DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practice) which focuses on the child as a human being and a lifelong learner. Thus, the child continues to develop and revolve where it all starts in that certain specific classroom with that unique teacher.

There is a widespread acceptance among academics that school made a difference. Jordan is considered a pioneer in its focus on developing preschools in the Middle East. The Ministry of Education gives great attention to improving early childhood education in different regions of the country. This view largely stemmed from very influential researchers such as Erikson (Schwartz, 2001) where he reported that educational attainment was largely independent of the schooling a child received. Several researchers were drawing similar conclusions about the influence of schools on development on their pupils. From this point,

this research emerged to find the role of such schooling on child identity. McCreadie (1999) conducted a study which aimed to study:

- How the kindergarten teacher builds a student identity for each individual child
- How teachers utilize student identity information in their classrooms

As represented through formal information, informal observations and teacher perceptions. The researcher designed a questionnaire to answer the questions of the study. The results showed that student identity characteristics as defined by the participants was related to classroom control, behavior, directed by many teachers rather than by their own environments. Moreover, the results showed that there may be a relation between teacher's university degree and years of the teaching experience in how they characterize students' identity. Also, results showed that the student identity information was utilized to guide the teachers' planning and teaching in order to meet the child's needs. The findings also argued that there may be a relationship between the child's self concept and his success in class work.

Colwell and Lindseya (2003) conducted a study that aimed to examine connections between teacher and child interaction and children's perceptions of self and peers. Results revealed that girls spent more time interacting with teachers than boys and had more cooperative and positive interactions with teachers than did boys. The implications of interactions between teacher and child proved to affect children's cognitions about self.

Kim (2008) investigated the effect of the barriers that impede the teacher-child interactions in a voluntary pre-kindergarten program in child care settings. Another concern of this research was the facilitators that help teacher-child interactions. The results of the study showed several barriers to the effective teacher-child interactions existed in the field of early childhood education and should be reduced for better life qualities for children. Results also pointed out the facilitators to such interactions among teachers and children affect problem solving skills which improve the children's daily lives.

Park (2010) conducted a qualitative case study which aimed to investigate how children learning experiences are enhanced when their teachers integrate emotions into their decision-making and practices. Another aim was to enhance the concept of emotional scaffolding in early childhood education contexts. The findings of the study argued that the teachers' personal beliefs about the

emotional support plays a very important role in implementing strategies for emotional scaffolding. Also, the results showed that teachers' capacity to balance students' engagement through emotional scaffolding is the key to maintain their engagement in academic activities.

Pech (2010) conducted a study that aimed to investigate the social-emotional climate of a kindergarten classroom by examining the role of the teacher in establishing a classroom climate that nurtured the social-emotional lives of children. Initial findings showed that democratic practices were responsible for social responsibility, equity and empathy among the kindergarten children. However, further examination identified three components that this research showed to be effective for the climate of the classroom: These areas of care, artistry and reflection which may play a role in children's sense of belonging. The results of this research proved that these areas are essential for nurturing a learning environment that enhances the social-emotional as well as academic climate of any classroom.

Problem of the study and questions: The personal identity is formed starting from the first 5 years in a child's life, thus this stage is considered one of the basic forming stages in a successful human's life and in the life of a good citizen who plays an effective role in his or her society. However, many children suffer from weak characters with lack of confidence in expressing themselves which affects their roles in the future. One of the most factors that affect a child's character development is the kindergarten teacher. Thus, it is essential to examine how far the kindergarten teacher acknowledges the important factors and practices that enrich and enhance a child's identity. Its from this point the importance of this study emerges. More specifically this study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of the kindergarten teacher in enhancing child identity from the teachers' perceptions?
- Do kindergarten teachers' estimations for their role in developing child identity differ depending on qualification, specialization and years of experience?

Significance of the study: The importance of the study can be presented in the following:

- Directing the kindergarten teachers in Jordan to the importance of their role in enriching a child's identity and in translating this realization in actual practices in class where change is made

- Guiding early kindergarten principles, supervisors and the Ministry of Education to the importance of the role of the kindergarten teachers in constructing positive identities for the children they teach
- Directing researchers in Jordan to conduct further studies in which the empirical data can contribute to enhancing the teaching practices in kindergarten which in return can empower child identity
- The value of the topic itself, in realizing the role of teachers in enhancing children's identities through their classroom practices. Thus, constructing better futures with better chances in life

The process of identity construction is a continuous everlasting process throughout the different life stages of a person which starts from early childhood which is the most effective in a person's life and continues throughout the rest of the person's life stages. In this stage the child is directly affected by the kindergarten teacher who plays a great role in guiding the future of a child by producing positive productive citizens to the society. Thus, realizing the importance of the teacher's role, the idea of this arose. The aim of this study is to examine the role of the kindergarten teacher in enhancing the child identity from the teachers' perceptions.

Limitations of the study: The study is limited within: The sample of the study was limited to kindergarten teachers who work at private schools in the private sector in Amman and cooperate with the Practical Education Program in the University of Jordan. This study is original in its form, especially in the Arab World which made it difficult to refer to previous studies, due to its scarcity. The results of the study are limited to its instrument and the research procedures.

Definition of terms
Child identity: It is a formation process where a child's self and characteristics are constructed by means of social interactions. These characteristics are interwoven by three main domains: The belonging (finding oneself among a group of others through positive experiences and relationships), the being (health and social wise) and finally the becoming (where the change in character is observed meanwhile and life-long and where children shape their identity through evolving experiences).

Kindergarten teachers: They are a group of teachers who work at cooperative private schools, in the private teaching sector in Amman. These kindergarten teachers cooperate with the Practical Education Program in the

University of Jordan. Thus, it is believed that their practices can influence the children they teach and the student teachers of whom they train during the practicum course.

Kindergarten teachers' perceptions: They are the teachers views and thoughts of their different teaching practices which enhance the child's positive sense of self and personality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample of the study: The study included all kindergarten teachers who work in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2011-2012 in the private schools sector the Directorate of Private Education collaborating with the Practical Education Program in the University of Jordan. The sample was purposeful; those who have accepted to cooperate voluntary have been chosen to participate in this study. The total number of cooperating kindergarten teachers reached 74 teachers. Table 1 presents the sample's distribution.

Instruments of the study: In order to collect data of the study, a questionnaire was developed to identify the role of kindergarten teachers in enhancing the child's identity as well as the effect of some variables such as education and specialization and experience in their performance from their perception and according to their perception. The questionnaire was constructed based on the literature review and previous studies related to the subject, such as McCreadie (1999), Colwell and Lindseya (2003), Kim (2008), Park (2010) and Pech (2010). The questionnaire in its primary version included 59 items distributed into three domains Belonging 17 items, Being 23 items and Becoming, 19 items which form the concept of identity as defined procedurally throughout this study. The answering of the items required the use of a five Likert-scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always) to determine the degree of the teacher's role in the enhancement of child identity in kindergarten, according to her understanding to the content of the item.

Validity and reliability of the questionnaire: To ensure psychometric characteristics of the instrument, the instrument was translated into Arabic and was presented to a group of specialists in the field of child-education, measurement and evaluation and English who are able to judge the instrument's validity. They were requested to evaluate the suitability of the instrument in terms of the purpose of the study; its proper translation, its clarity and

Table 1: Sample distribution according to variables

Sources	Variables	Count
Education	Bachelor	61
	Diploma	13
	Total	74
Specialization	Childhood education	42
	Other specialization	32
	Total	74
Experience	>5	45
	5-10	12
	<10	17
	Total	74

its well-formed language and the correlation of each item with its domain. They were also requested to add comments or suggestions they consider appropriate in terms of deletion, addition or modification to the content of the items.

In light of these criteria, the proposed modifications were carried out. The questionnaire obtained logical validity indications presented by 80% of the reviewers. Furthermore, 18 items have been deleted based on the reviewers' notes and recommendations. The final version form of the questionnaire consisted of 41 items distributed in three domains: Belonging 18, Being 13 and Becoming 10.

In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, internal consistency coefficients were extracted for the overall instrument and for each of its domains on its own by using Cronbach Alpha Formula. The value of the alpha coefficient of the instrument as a whole showed 0.94. While the value of the alpha coefficient of the first domain on its own showed 0.82 and 0.87 for the second domain, finally 0.85 for the third domain. The different values are considered acceptable values for the purpose of this study.

Study procedures: After going through the different procedures of the study such as: Developing the instrument of the study, verifying its validity and reliability, limiting the population of the study accurately, the questionnaire was distributed to the teachers who agreed to participate in this study. The aim of the study and the questionnaire was explained to the participants. The confidentiality was ensured to be maintained where the responder and the school's identity was not declared. The questionnaires were retrieved from the participants after answering being answered. The number of the questionnaires reached 74 questionnaire with full information. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was applied for statistical analysis purposes. The results were extracted and are presented and discussed as follows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the application of questionnaire, each item was given the following degrees:

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Later, the total score was extracted by collecting the marks of each of the three domains that form the concept of identity. The following criterion was adopted for judging the degree of the teacher's practices and her role in enhancing the child's identity in kindergarten: Low practice (1-2.33), medium (2.34-3.67) and high (3.68-5).

The findings of the first question: What is the role of the kindergarten teacher in enhancing child identity from the teachers' perception? To answer this question, means and standard deviations were extracted according to the teachers' estimations. Table 2 shows the results.

The results in Table 2 show that the average of the kindergarten teachers' estimations of their roles in developing child identity was high for both; the domains of the instrument and the total score according to the standards set forth in this study. From their responses in the identity instrument and according to their perception, they tend to believe that they exercise their role in developing child identity with a high degree on the three domains (Belonging, Being and Becoming). These results could be the natural outcome of the different training programs in which private-sector teachers take which focused on positive teacher-child relations and interactions. Thus, teachers become more aware and well-informed of their developmentally-appropriate practices. Abu Taleb (2013), suggested that teachers become responsive to the different training programs they take in their practices. The results show that if teachers create a supportive environment, children develop academically and socially. These findings can be supported by different research work, such as Coplan and Prakash (2003), Pianta and Stuhlman (2004), Park (2010) and Pech (2010).

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation for kindergarten teachers' estimations to their role in enhancing child identity arranged in descending order

Domain	Mean	SD	Level of estimation
Belonging	4.63	0.34	High
Being	4.60	0.33	High
Becoming	4.33	0.51	High
Total	4.55	0.35	High

The results in Table 2 show that all the estimations of the teachers' role in enhancing child identity scored high for all the instrument domains. The (Belonging) domain came in the first order in which it scored a mean of 4.63 and a standard deviation of 0.34. Then, came the (Being) domain with a mean of 4.6 and a standard deviation of 0.33. Finally, in last order came the (Becoming) domain with a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.51. Thus, the total level of estimation for all three domains came high with a total mean of 4.55 and a total standard deviation of 0.35.

And in order to identify the nature of the kindergarten teachers' responses to the items in each of the three domains separately, it has been analyzed and categorized according to the domains and in descending order as shown in Table 3-5.

Table 3 shows means and standard deviations of the kindergarten teachers' responses to the items of the first domain (belonging) in the identity instrument, according to their estimations.

The results in Table 3 show that the means of the kindergarten teachers' estimations of their role in enhancing child identity came high at the level of each item on its own and at the total level of the Belonging domain according to the standards set forth in this study. Depending on the kindergarten teachers' responses to the items of this domain, it can be argued that the initial focus of the teachers in their performance regarding their roles in developing child identity is to promote the concept of Belonging as a key component of identity in children. According to the content of items (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11) the teacher's role is presented through the integration of children with their peers in different activities practiced in the kindergarten. After that comes the focus of the teachers on developing the concept of autonomy, preferences and interests through peer interaction and negotiation which help them to explore their individual capacities, this appeared in the content of items (12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18). Thus, it is clear that the teachers are aware of the crucial role the sense of security plays in this learning stag where the sense of security allows the child to develop socially and academically as well. These findings are consistent with the results of studies carried out by Park (2010), Colwell and Lindseya (2003) and Pech (2010).

Table 3 shows that all the items in Belonging domain scored high results for the kindergarten teachers' role in enhancing child identity. Item 1 (I provide children with assistance for companionship), came in first place in which it scored the highest with a mean of 4.92 and a standard deviation of 0.275 while item 18 (I plan activities to raise children's awareness of the needs and

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the kindergarten teachers' responses to the items in the Belonging domain in descending order

No. of Qs in instrument	Items	Mean	SD	Level of estimation
2	I provide children with assistance for companionship	4.92	0.275	High
1	I encourage children to join in play with other children	4.89	0.313	High
15	I reinforce each child's achievement when appropriate	4.81	0.459	High
13	I encourage children to express their ideas and feelings openly	4.77	0.484	High
9	I encourage children to share their sense of humor, happiness and satisfaction with others	4.73	0.531	High
6	I help children to reach out for friendship with others	4.72	0.537	High
3	I build on the knowledge, skills and dispositions that children bring to my class	4.69	0.495	High
8	I welcome children and families sharing aspects of their culture and spiritual lives	4.58	0.597	High
4	I organize learning environments in ways that promote small group interactions and play opportunities	4.57	0.742	High
16	I provide opportunities for children to engage independently with learning tasks	4.55	0.553	High
11	I promote a sense of community in my classes	4.54	0.645	High
18	I discuss children's individual strengths and interests	4.50	0.667	High
7	I encourage children to collaborate with children to document their achievements and with their families	4.49	0.667	High
10	I plan activities for children to interact with others to explore their self-concept,	4.47	0.646	High
5	I plan opportunities for children to cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes	4.46	0.982	High
12	I provide opportunities for children to engage with familiar and unfamiliar cultural events	4.42	0.702	High
17	I explore with children what makes them special	4.38	0.696	High
14	I plan activities to raise children's awareness of the needs and rights of others	4.24	0.991	High
	Total	4.55	0.350	High

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of the kindergarten teachers' responses on the items of the second domain (Being) in descending order

No. of Qs in instrument	Items	Mean	SD	Level of estimation
24	I model health, nutrition and personal hygiene practices with children	4.80	0.496	High
20	I ensure all children experience pride in their achievements	4.72	0.511	High
22	I talk with children about their emotions responses to events	4.72	0.537	High
25	I model respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment	4.72	0.511	High
26	I engage children in discussions about stories that promote consideration of diverse perspectives	4.70	0.489	High
19	I display children's work where others can see it	4.69	0.572	High
31	I encourage children to complement each other on their achievements	4.69	0.521	High
28	I ask children to use images, letters and words to convey meaning	4.65	0.535	High
27	I encourage children to succeed when they are faced with challenges	4.64	0.563	High
23	I engage children in conversations that promote healthy lifestyles	4.61	0.593	High
21	I provide opportunities for children to investigate ideas that are relevant to their lives	4.55	0.553	High
30	I provide children with the opportunity to make choices	4.54	0.601	High
29	I encourage children to use technologies to explore new information and represent their ideas	4.38	0.696	High
	Total	4.60	0.330	High

rights of others) came in the last place and scored the lowest with a mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.991.

The results indicate in Table 4 that the average of the kindergarten teachers' estimations to their role in developing child identity was high at the items' level and in the total score of the Being domain according to the standards set forth in this study. Depending on the kindergarten teachers' responses on the items of the (Being) domain and according to the content of the items (1, 4), it can be said that kindergarten teachers are trying to present a model in the development of healthy habits

and proper nutrition, personal hygiene and the surrounding environment where children practice educational activities. Thus, teachers maintain children's safety and energy to enable them to accomplish the achievement need as an essential motive at this stage where the teachers' practices are consistent with their roles in promoting children's sense of accomplishment, according to the content of the items (2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11). These findings come in acceptance with Rababah (2012) in which she stressed the fact that currently early childhood educators are becoming increasingly more aware of the importance of promoting the physical, social, cognitive, emotional and moral aspects of the development and the learning of a child.

The results in Table 5 indicate that the average of the kindergarten teachers' estimations of their role in enhancing child identity was high at the items' level and in the total score of the Becoming domain according to the standards set forth in this study. Depending on the kindergarten teachers' responses on the items of this domain Becoming, it can be said that kindergarten teachers are trying to present a model in raising a motive of curiosity, imagination, experimentation and wonder in

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of the kindergarten teachers' responses to the items of the third domain (Becoming) in descending order

No. of Qs in instrument	Items	Mean	SD	Level of estimation
34	I encourage children to develop the capacity to act with compassion and kindness	4.62	0.542	High
33	I use the art such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music, media and storytelling to express their ideas	4.55	0.644	High
36	I model inquiry processes, including wonder, curiosity, imagination, tries out new ideas and takes on challenges	4.51	0.646	High
37	I reinforce persistence in children even when they find a task complex	4.42	0.936	High
35	I encourage children to participate with others to solve problems	4.39	0.755	High
39	I plan a learning environment where children are encouraged to experiment	4.34	0.688	High
41	I design activities to help children transfer knowledge from one setting to another	4.27	0.746	High
38	I plan a learning environment where children are encouraged to explore	4.26	0.861	High
40	I provide children with activities that stimulate thinking and reasoning	4.26	0.777	High
32	I encourage children to experience sensory impairment through playful activities	3.69	1.134	High
	Total	4.33	0.510	High

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation of the kindergarten teachers' responses regarding their qualification, specialization and years of experience

Sources	Variables	Count	Mean	SD
Education	Bachelor	61	4.55	0.37
	Diploma	13	4.55	0.25
	Total	74	4.55	0.35
Specialization	Childhood education	42	4.51	0.36
	Other specialization	32	4.59	0.33
	Total	74	4.55	0.35
Experience	>5	45	4.53	0.36
	5-10	12	4.51	0.36
	<10	17	4.62	0.30
	Total	74	4.55	0.35

Table 7: Results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for significant differences in the responses of the kindergarten teachers on the identity instrument among the study variables (level of education, specialization and experience)

Sources	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Education	0.004	1	0.004	0.034	0.855
Specialization	0.012	1	0.012	0.101	0.751
Experience	0.046	2	0.023	0.198	0.821
Error	7.992	68	0.118	-	-
Corrected total	8.831	73	-	-	-

*Sig. at level $p<0.05$

children. They also tend to employ various arts such as painting, sculpture, theater, dance, movement, music and storytelling to help children express their ideas, according to the content of the items 2, 3. Furthermore, the content of the items 4-9 shows that teachers tend to design the learning environment and activities that encourage children to think, explore and discover through play and experimentation, thus help children grow and learn. This reflects the teachers' tendency to apply the principles of the constructive school as a strategy for teaching and learning, where the child becomes an active productive learner. Moreover, such a reflection displays kindergarten teachers' acknowledgement of the importance of life-long learning for children in this stage. Beats (2004), suggested that it is essential that children accept themselves, where every child is unique on his or her own. Still one must stress similarities and honor differences. The finding come as a relief since the teachers showed awareness of the importance of addressing the child's future. Thus, the becoming domain spreads the seeds of change in the coming lives of the children.

Second question: Do kindergarten teachers' estimations for their role in enhancing child identity differ depending on academic qualification, specialization, and years of experience? In order to answer this question, means and standard deviations were extracted and Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6 shows that the average of the kindergarten teachers' estimations of their role in enhancing child identity was high among all variables in each item of the instrument and in the total score of the identity instrument. In which there were virtual differences in the level of the kindergarten teachers' estimations of their role in enhancing child identity. In order to examine the significant differences to the estimation of the averages of the independent variables in the study which include educational qualification, specialization and experience, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Table 7 shows the results.

The results in Table 7 indicate that there were no significant statistical differences at the level ($\alpha<0.05$) attributed to the kindergarten teachers 'academic qualification, specialization and experience variables as the F-value scored 0.034, 0.101 and 0.198. This finding in particular came unexpectedly and disagreed with the results shown in the study of McCreadie (1999). Such a finding may be the result of different factors; one reason for such a result could again be related to the fact that these teachers have undergone different training programs that guide the teachers in their teaching process. Another could be related to the fact these teachers follow one system in a private school among the private-sector schools where the competition for the qualified reputation is highly recognized, thus the better

should prove itself practically. A final factor that is believed to play a strong role in such an unexpected finding was the fact that the data received was based on the teachers' perceptions. Therefore, their beliefs about their practices caused such an outstanding result and not their actual practices. Many researchers found in their studies that teachers' beliefs are not always truly reflected in their practices. This comes in agreement with the findings of different studies, such as Nespor (1987), Pajares (1992), Fang (1996) and Kagan and Tippins (1997).

CONCLUSION

Developing awareness of the teacher's role in enhancing the child's identity among the kindergarten teachers in the private and public educational sectors should take place through workshops held by the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, teachers with different stories of success in enhancing the child's identity should have the chance to share their fruitful experiences with other teachers, especially the kindergarten novice teachers. The significance of this subject research demands conducting further studies and research. Particular effort should be put in conducting qualitative research where the teachers' beliefs are compared with their actual practices in class in enhancing the child's identity.

REFERENCES

Abu Taleb, T.F., 2013. Necessary school readiness skills for kindergarten success according to Jordanian teachers. Early Child Dev. Care. 10.1080/03004430.2012.759950.

Ahn, J., 2011. Review of children's identity construction via narratives. Creative Educ., 2: 415-417.

Beaty, J.J., 2004. Skills for Preschool Teachers. Prentice Hall, USA.

Brooker, L. and M. Woodhead, 2008. Developing positive identities: Early Childhood in Focus 3-Diversity and Young Children. The Open University, United Kingdom.

Colwell, M. and E. Lindseya, 2003. Teacher-child interactions and preschool children's perceptions of self and peers. Early Child Dev. Care, 173: 249-258.

Commonwealth of Australia, 2009. Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia. The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace. http://foi.deewr.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf.

Coplan, R.J. and K. Prakash, 2003. Spending time with teacher: Characteristics of preschoolers who frequently elicit versus initiate interactions with teachers. Early Childhood Res. Quarterly, 18: 143-158.

Fang, Z., 1996. A review of research on teacher beliefs and practices. Educ. Res., 38: 47-65.

Kagan, D.M. and D.J. Tippins, 1997. How teachers' classroom cases express their pedagogical beliefs. J. Teacher Educ., 42: 281-291.

Kim, S., 2008. Teacher-child interactions in voluntary pre-kindergarten programs in child care settings: A critical analysis of barriers and facilitators. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Florida.

Kostelnik, M.J., A.K. Soderman and A.P. Whiren, 2004. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education. Person, Upper Saddle River.

McCreadie, A., 1999. A study of the development of individual student identity by kindergarten teachers. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Denver.

Nespor, J., 1987. The role of beliefs in the practice of teaching. J. Curr. Stud., 19: 317-328.

Pajares, M.F., 1992. Teachers beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. Rev. Educ. Res., 62: 307-322.

Park, M., 2010. Early childhood educators' pedagogical decision-making and practices for emotional scaffolding. Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Texas at Austin.

Pech, S.L., 2010. A case study of a kindergarten teacher: Examining practices and beliefs that support the social-emotional classroom climate. Ph.D. Thesis, Kent State University.

Pianta, R.C. and M.W. Stuhlman, 2004. Teacher-child relationships and children's success in the first years of school. School Psychol. Rev., 33: 444-458.

Rababah, E., 2012. Multiple case study: Developmentally appropriate beliefs and practice of united states and Jordanian kindergarten teachers. Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Schwartz, S.J., 2001. The evolution of Eriksonian and Neo-Eriksonian identity theory and research: A review and integration. Identity: Int. J. Theory Res., 1: 7-58.