



Teaching Children Moral Values from the Viewpoints of the Kindergarten Teachers and Parents: The Best Practices

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ABSTRACT:

Given the importance of moral values in building the individual's personality and in the cohesion of society. In addition, importance to instilling moral values at an early stage of life, we conducted our current study. The purpose of this study was to find out teachers' and parent's views on the best educational methods for teaching children's moral values. Moreover, the study explores the challenges that parents, and teachers face when teaching children moral values. A quantitative method was used to collect data through a questionnaire answered by 100 parents with children aged 3 to 6 years and 101 female teachers in Saudi Arabia. The results showed that dialogue was considered to be the best educational method for teaching moral values to children. On the other hand, the least popular method for teaching moral values to children was telling a story. The responses showed that parents and teachers considered the impact of technology and the media to be the biggest challenge faced when teaching children moral values, followed by the influence of the group and kindergarten curricula. The study also demonstrated statistically significant differences in the responses of teachers and parents in their views the study's sub-scales.

Keywords: Moral Values, Methods, Challenges.



أفضل الأساليب لتعليم الأطفال القيم الأخلاقية من وجهة نظر معلمين رياض الأطفال وأولياء الأمور

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المستخلص:

انبثقت أهمية الدراسة الحالية من أهمية القيم الأخلاقية في بناء شخصية الفرد والتناعم المجتمعي، إضافة إلى سبل أهمية غرس القيم الأخلاقية في مرحلة مبكرة من الحياة، ويتمثل الهدف الرئيس من البحث الحالي في معرفة آراء المعلمين وأولياء الأمور حول أفضل الطرق التعليمية لتعليم القيم الأخلاقية للأطفال، علاوة على ذلك، تستكشف الدراسة التحديات التي يواجهها الآباء والمعلمين عند تعليم الأطفال القيم الأخلاقية، ولقد اعتمدت الدراسة على المدخل الكمي لجمع البيانات من خلال استبيان أجاب عليه 100 ولي أمر لأطفال تتراوح أعمارهم بين 3 إلى 6 سنوات و101 معلمة في المملكة العربية السعودية، ولقد أظهرت نتائج البحث أن الحوار يعتبر أفضل طريقة تربوية لتعليم القيم الأخلاقية للأطفال، من ناحية أخرى، كانت الطريقة الأقل شيوعاً لتعليم القيم الأخلاقية للأطفال هي سرد القصة، كما أظهرت آراء أولياء الأمور أن تأثير التكنولوجيا والإعلام هو التحدي الأكبر الذي يواجههم عند تدريس القيم الأخلاقية للأطفال، يلي ذلك تأثير المناهج الجماعية ورياض الأطفال، وأشارت الدراسة إلى وجود اختلافات ذات دلالة إحصائية في استجابات المعلمين وأولياء الأمور من وجهة نظرهم بشأن المقاييس الفرعية للدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيم الأخلاقية، الطرق، التحديات.

Introduction

Many researchers have focused on the importance of moral values for the individual and society. Durkheim (1961) argued that moral values are essential to the healthy formation of a child's personality. Fung (2001) indicated that when the child acquires moral values, they strengthen their sense of group belonging and compatibility. This finding was corroborated by Jackson and Vadi (2006): moral values have a role in realising the social harmony of individuals within society. Moral values are also crucial in improving one's quality of life. A study conducted by Nasr (2019) aimed to demonstrate the relationship between quality of life and moral values among secondary school students. The researcher collected the data using the Quality-of-Life Scale (Patrick et al., 2002) and the Moral Values Scale. Two hundred students, ages 15 to 18, participated in the study. The results indicated a positive relationship between the quality of an individual's life and the availability of moral values in his personality. Whereas the higher a person gets in the ethical values scale, the better his quality of life.

Given the importance of moral values, it is essential to teach them during early childhood. Damon (1999) emphasised that the morality and immorality of adult behaviour has its roots in childhood; thus, the irresponsible child becomes an irresponsible adult. Hoge (1996) noted that the seed of morality must be planted at the preschool stage because if the moral foundation of the individual is not laid early, the moral development of young people will be compromised.

There are a small number of studies examining how to teach moral values to children. Greenberg et al. (2003) described the general lack of knowledge of teachers concerning how to teach moral values in the classroom. Brownlee et al. (2012) also reported that academic interest and research focus are limited concerning teaching young children about moral values. In addition, Johansson (2006) argues that there is a lack of knowledge about how schools and kindergartens teach children's moral development.

Aims of the Research

The general aim of this study is to determine the best methods for teaching moral values to children, from the point of view of teachers and parents of kindergartners. This research will contribute to the literature related to teaching moral values to children. Moreover, it is hoped that this research will help teachers, parents and those interested in the educational field to determine the best methods for teaching moral values to children, as well as to identify the challenges they will face in doing so.



The following are some of the study's objectives:

- To determine the moral values that are the most difficult to teach to children from the point of view of the kindergarten teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia.
- To determine the best methods for teaching moral values to children from the point of view of the kindergarten teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia.
- To determine the most significant challenges facing parents and teachers when teaching moral values to children from the point of view of the kindergarten teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia.

Moral Values

For a child to become a citizen with high morals in society, they must have an opportunity to learn moral values (Halstead & Pike, 2006). Moral values are defined as beliefs and ideas about what behaviours are morally right and not right, how to control oneself, and how to understand oneself in relation to others (Scott, 2000). Jarrett (1991) stated that morals consist of values and standards for dealing well with others. Learning moral values causes a person to ask themselves, "What kind of person am I to be?" (Halstead & Pike, 2006, p.15). Learning moral values is essential in helping students be responsible and contributing citizens of society (Lovat & Toomey, 2007). Tomanovic (2003) asserts that children learn a lot about moral values through classroom teaching practices.

Responsibility for Teaching Values to Children

Although the significant role of parents in teaching their children moral values in the early years, Danielson (1998) mentioned that this period is ideal for parents to establish a solid moral foundation since parents are a child's first moral teacher and model. In addition, one of the most important findings from research examining family interactions that facilitate the stages of Kohlbergian's moral reasoning is that emotional components and parent-child interactions such as parental warmth, support, and participation are all linked to the development of moral reasoning (Hart 1988; Powers 1988). Thus, a warm, supportive relationship between children and parents may enhance the likelihood of motivating children to listen to parents' messages. However, the role of the school is critical as it is considered a social institution that includes many habits, norms, and ways of thinking for which the teacher is the vector. Also, not all parents will play a role in moral education, so these children should not be missed (Oladipo 2009). Oladipo (2009) emphasized that teachers are directly

involved in teaching correct behaviours and correcting wrong behaviours for children in school. In addition, Smetana (1997) confirmed a role for peers and social institutions in developing moral values. Pekarsky (1998) also acknowledged the role of culture in the moral education of children. Oladipo's (2009) article "Moral Education of the Child: Whose Responsibility?" concluded that teaching moral values is not the responsibility of one institution only. However, all social institutions must give the child meaningful moral values. Based on the previous studies, it can be said that the development of moral values in children is a shared responsibility between parents, teachers, and social institutions.

Educational Methods for Teaching the Child

There are a variety of methods that are used to teach moral values by parents and teachers. These will be briefly outlined below.

Use of stories

Storytelling can create a relational structure through the listener's relationship with the story's characters. Also, stories present essential life experiences. For the listener or reader, these experiences may help build a vision of oneself and respect for the differences of others (Dyson & Genishi, 1994). Brice Heath (1994) asserted that for personal stories to be successful, the classroom should be a safe place for students, and adults should not comment on the story or explain the moral implications of the story. In this way the child can reach conclusions on their own. The manner of storytelling is also essential in stimulating feelings and their cognitive power, helping moral learning (Winston, 1999). Hunter and Eder's (2010) study examined the process by which fourth and fifth graders engaged in ethical deliberations through storytelling. The study took place in two schools, one homogeneous rural and the other urban and racially diverse. Forty-five students participated in the study. The data was collected through small group discussions in which Aesop's fables were told by a professional storyteller. At the end of each story, open questions were asked to the students to think about the story's events and the relationship of the story to their own lives. Hunter and Eder's (2010) study results showed that the use of stories had remained an essential and central component of moral education. This is because he asked the students to put themselves in the context of the story. Also, these storytelling sessions helped the students express their problems and challenges. Also, because storytelling provides a distinct perspective on the child, teachers can understand the complexity of the child's moral world. This and previous studies show then that the story has benefits for a child's character. However, for the story to prove effective, some conditions must be met, including safety, no adult commentary on the story, and an attractive way of telling the story.



With these conditions in place, the story is essential for moral education in children.

Role model

A second way that children learn about moral values is through role models. Bandura and McDonald (1963) showed that several behaviours could be easily acquired by observing social models. Bandura and McDonald (1963) also mentioned that providing models that show the desired behaviour is a very effective procedure for obtaining appropriate matching responses from others early in learning. For example, when a child sees his father or teacher as honest and respectful, this causes the child to imitate the same behaviour. This is especially true since moral values are abstract, and it is difficult for the child to understand abstract concepts without them being embodied.

Parents are considered the first role models a child sees. As Bandura (1986) mentions, modelling by parents and adults remains a powerful learning source. However, parents are not the only influence on developing moral values in children. Especially with older children, other models such as teachers and peers aid in the development of moral attitudes and beliefs (Perry & Nixon, 2005). Therefore, role models are essential for teaching children's moral values, whether the role models are parents, teachers or coaches.

Extra-curricular Activities

Another source of learning of moral values is through participation in extracurricular activities because it provides students with a challenge, and opportunities to explore new roles and develop new skills (Maher, 1992). A study by Johansson et al. (2011) aimed to learn essential practices for teaching values as described by early-year teachers in Australia. This was done through an online questionnaire with open-ended questions about practices for teaching moral values. 379 teachers participated in the study. The results indicated that involving children in activities was the most prominent method of teaching moral values. The teachers also demonstrated that they believed it was important for children to think about the feelings of others and understanding moral situations. Thus, it can be said that children's involvement in extracurricular activities helps children learn moral values from of viewpoint Australian teachers.

Dialogue

Wells (2007) points out that the essence of dialogue is a conversation with a person with whom they have a relationship. In addition, both Burbules (1993) and Kazepides (2012) affirm that dialogue should not lead to consensus but that both parties gain a deeper understanding of the topic of dialogue. As well as Paul (1994) stated that dialogue promotes critical thinking because dialogue makes it possible to consider the opinions of others. Noddings (1994) emphasized the importance of the partner in dialogue, as children need trust. This confidence is the secret that dialogue has excellent value in moral education. A study was conducted (Al-Saawi, 2019) to determine the effectiveness of the project's approach in developing some moral values among kindergarten children. The researcher used the quasi-experimental approach, and 30 children aged 5 to 6 years participated in the study. They were divided into two groups, control and experimental. The researcher used a note card for some moral values for children prepared by the researcher to collect the data. And the Moral Values Scale for Children designed by Al-Dahan (2002). The results indicated that the researcher's use of the dialogue and discussion method with the children while carrying out the project helped convince them of the importance of values-related behaviours. The researcher reached that conclusion when she noticed the difference in children's justifications in the pre-and post-application in the scale.

Discussion

Discussion is one of the educational methods for children's learning. A study conducted by Hong (2003) aimed at finding out the importance of group discussion about moral attitudes in kindergarten classrooms in Korea. Ninety children and their teachers participated in the study. Through video, interviews and observation, data was collected. The results indicated that ethical discussions helped in understanding what others are thinking and coping with the situation. The discussions also facilitated the establishment of moral values.

Parents and teachers use many teaching methods to raise a child. Some of them were mentioned such as, the storytelling method, which is considered friendly to children. Secondly, role models. Thirdly, extracurricular activities provide children with opportunities to learn. Fourthly, the dialogue method. Finally, discussion. Consequently, the discussion is a crucial way to help develop moral values in children.



Children Encouragement

One way to teaching children to follow moral values is encouragement, for example, saying to children, "You are honest in what you say" or "Thank you for your sympathy." In a study conducted by Spinrad et al. (1999), the aim was to explore the role of parental influence and encouragement in children's response to empathy and moral behaviour. Ninety-seven girls and 119 boys, average age 5-73 months, participated with one of their parents. Data were collected by assessing parental influence and encouragement during parent-child interactions. The results showed that parental encouragement of moral behaviour had a positive relationship with children's empathy. Parental practices containing feelings contribute to the moral development of their children. Therefore, encouragement is essential when teaching children moral values. This method successful is because it contains feelings.

The challenges in developing children's moral values

There are several challenges that parents and teachers face when teaching their children moral values, and they are described below:

Difficulties while teaching and evaluating moral values.

The difficulty of teaching and evaluating values is one of the challenges that parents, and teachers face when teaching children moral values. Gui et al. (2020) aimed to identify the role of the teacher and its challenges in developing morals. Data were collected from an online database. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were reviewed and synthesized in a narrative format. The results indicated that there are many challenges, including the difficulty of teaching and evaluating moral values. Gui et al. (2020) argued that teachers could teach moral concepts and theories effectively, but this does not necessarily mean that the moral values of their students will develop well. Nonetheless, concerning the assessment of moral values, although students may obtain high degrees in moral education, they may not necessarily follow high morals in their lives (Ogama & Alaiyemola, 2015). For instance, a child may describe an ethical behaviour correctly but may be unable to apply it. Additionally, Gui et al. (2020) indicated that individuals may learn moral values in school but not know how to apply them in their day-to-day lives. Based on the preceding discussion, it is clear from the difficulties when teaching children moral values, on the one hand, that it is challenging to teach them, and on the other hand, the difficulty of evaluating them.

Differences between school and family values

Gui et al. (2020) consider the distance between school values and family values one of the challenges. Also, Velea and Farca (2013) pointed out in a survey to identify the difficulties teachers face in moral education. The study results indicated that the difference in school and family values is one of the challenges in moral education. It stated that children often find what is considered good behaviour in school is seen as poor behaviour in society. In contrast, they are considered impractical by their families. For example, if a teacher asks a child not to hit a classmate, their parents often give the opposite advice.

Double standards for assessing moral values between adults and children.

Not only these challenges but also the double standards when assessing values between adults and children. have referred to Velea and Farca (2013) when teachers expected desirable behaviour from students but did not practice that specific behaviour themselves. For example, the teacher may forbid the child from lying, but the teacher lies in the next moment. This behaviour makes the child wonder when the educators themselves do not practice what they teach the children. Hence, double standards are considered as one of the obstacles that hinder the moral education of children. Also, Ojoma and Alaiyemola (2015) emphasized that many teachers or parents ask children what they do not do, as cited among people, "do as I say, not as I do."

Role of kindergarten in developing moral values for children

Moreover, the role of the kindergarten in developing moral values is critical and may be considered a challenge when the kindergarten does not perform its role properly. As Ojoma and Alaiyemola (2015) points out, the teaching of moral values in schools has become very necessary in contrast to that most parents do not have time for their children. A study conducted by Musry (2020) aims to know the role of kindergarten in developing moral values from a mothers' point of view in Khalil. A randomly selected group of 173 mothers participated in the study. The results indicated that the role of kindergartens in developing moral values was significant from the mothers' point of view. This study confirmed the mother's satisfaction with the role of the kindergarten and did not consider it a challenge facing them. On the contrary, its role is an aid to the development of moral values in children. Additionally, a study carried out by Al-Holy and Al-Shammari (2009) aimed to understand the impact of the kindergarten program on children's acquisition of moral values. The study identified eight moral values: truthfulness, honesty, gratitude, loyalty, reasonability, fairness, mercifulness, and patience. The study



used quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. The questionnaire was administered to 600 kindergarten children in Kuwait. The results indicated that more than 50% of children have high morals in each of the eight dimensions. Therefore, the role of kindergarten is essential, as it is a school and therefore is considered one of the institutions responsible for the moral education of children. However, it is a challenge when the kindergarten is lazy to do its part.

Kindergarten curriculum

Kindergarten curricula are one of the challenges facing parents and teachers. Muhammad (2013) conducted an analytical study of moral values in the Saudi Arabian kindergarten curriculum. The results indicated that in the academic units of curriculum for the Saudi Arabian kindergartens, some citizenship values were contained. Such as security, tolerance, responsibility, fairness, democracy, national belonging, freedom, order and cooperation. Nonetheless, the curriculum objectives did not include satisfaction values. It is clear that the curriculum included few moral values.

Understanding moral values

Sometimes, parents or teachers do not profoundly understand children's behaviours in general. Evidence collected through the interview in the study of Velea and Farca (2013) showed frequent attitudes in which teachers tolerate some behaviours morality of children as condoning some behaviours might exacerbate them. Sometimes, confusion can arise between what is expected and what is not expected for a particular age. For example, a mother may help her child get dressed because she thinks he can't even though he is able. This act makes the child dependent and irresponsible. The mother does not know that she prevented her child from learning the value of responsibility by this act. Thus, a lack of understanding of values may be an obstacle to teaching children moral values.

Peer group effects

Finally, the group effect is one of the challenges that teachers and parents face when teaching children moral values. Thomas (2011) confirmed that the peer's pressure has a significant impact on adolescent delinquency, showing the effects of these pressure on the moral development of adolescents. Bandura (1986) mention that peers can influence how a child learns to behave. It is clear from the above the influence of peers on each other. By analogy, the influence of children may be more potent than any other challenge because the child learns by imitation. For example, a child may imitate the behaviour of another child who has seen him disrespect others or utter inappropriate words. Based on the above, peer group influence is a

challenge when teaching children values, especially in older children.

Research Design and Data Collection Methods

To answer the questions posed, one must choose the appropriate research methodology as it enables the researcher to collect the required data (Lowhorn, 2007). The research methodology is defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) as ‘the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project’ (p. 14). Yin (2009) identifies three main aspects that must be acknowledged, when choosing a research methodology. First, the type of research questions, secondly, the degree of control over behavioural events, and thirdly, the extent of focus on current phenomena. Therefore, determining the research methodology is essential to determine the data collection method that will answer the questions asked. It is divided into three types: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approach. The type of approach is chosen according to the type of data that the researcher aims to collect (Williams, 2007).

Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research includes a numerical or statistical approach to research design (Williams, 2007). Quantitative research is characterized by accuracy as results indicate an accurate reflection of the phenomenon studied (Smith & Heshusius, 1986). Quantitative research often studies individuals' behaviour as predictable, as all events have probabilistic causes that allow them to generalize the outcome (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Quantitative educational research relies on data collection, subjected to quantitative analysis (Harwell, 2011). In quantitative research, the researcher asks specific and narrow questions and collects quantifiable data from the study sample and uses statistical methods to address them (Creswell, 2008). It allows the researcher to control independent variables and then observe what will happen. Therefore, it can be said that educational research is not experimental due to the difficulty of controlling the variables completely. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), in non-experimental or descriptive research, neither the independent variables nor the random allocation of groups can be manipulated.

By examining the purpose of the current study and the research questions, the researcher can decide the research methodology and data collection methods. As stated by Creswell (2009), research objectives, number of participants, and context often influence the researcher when choosing the methodology. Therefore, a quantitative research design was used.



A questionnaire

A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool as the researcher sought to know the point of view of teachers and parents on the best educational methods for teaching children's moral values and the greatest challenges that face them. Moreover, because the number of teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia, who are the study sample, is enormous, the researcher needed significant and objective evidence to generalize the results to the population. Moreover, she needed to collect data in a short period. Given that during the period of data collection, schools were closed, and students studied remotely, due to the Coronavirus Covid 19 pandemic, an electronic questionnaire facilitated access to the study sample wherever the respondents are. This method of data collection was preferable to a paper version due to social distancing and other constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. All of the above factors make the questionnaire the appropriate tool.

Despite the recognition of the usefulness of interviews in the field of educational research because the interview provides a detailed description of individuals and events in their natural place (Weiss, 1994). Kvale (1996) also mentioned that some events could not be observed, so talking to others is one of the most effective ways to know and reach them.

More clearly, since the interviews are interactive, the researcher can ask several questions to get detailed answers. However, in this study, the researcher does not need to know detailed information. The research wanted to know the best educational methods for teaching children's moral values from the point of view of teachers and parents and the challenges. It was not in the research questions. Why is this educational method better? Moreover, why is this considered a challenge.

Questionnaire Components

A questionnaire was designed containing four sections. The first section concerned the characteristics of the sample. In this section, teachers were asked about their academic specialization, education level and teaching experience. Parents were asked about their education level, gender, and age. The second section was about what were the most difficult moral values in teaching. The third section is about the extent of the importance of some educational methods in teaching children's moral values. The last section concerns the greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the children moral values. Under these questions are several statements that measure the participants' viewpoints. Parent and teacher

perspectives were measured about the importance of several educational methods in teaching values, and the greatest challenges they face when teaching children about moral values. Then compared to the views of parents and teachers.

The questionnaire was written considering the principles of Johnson and Christensen (2012), where it is stated that each paragraph should carry one idea avoiding ambiguous or biased phrases. Also, all items should be related to the objectives of the study. Respondents are invited to rate their response using the five-point Likert scale for the second section What are the most difficult moral values in teaching (1 not at all difficult / 2 not very difficult / 3 neutral / 4 quite difficult / 5 very difficult) The third section the most effective educational methods we use (1 very important / 2 quite important / 3 unimportant / 4 not very important 5 not at all important). The fourth section addresses the greatest challenges that face parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values, we use (5 strongly agree / 4 agree / 3 neutral / 2 disagree / 1 strongly disagree).

Sample Size and Sampling Strategies

The research population was represented in two groups: (1) all kindergarten teachers in public and private schools in the Kingdom. (2) all parents in Saudi Arabia who have children in kindergarten in 2021.

The research sample

Bhattacharjee (2011) defined sampling as a statistical process that occurs to select a subset of the research population. This is because it is usually impossible to research an entire society due to cost and time. Therefore, the sample is made up of 100 kindergarten teachers in Saudi Arabia, noting that the teaching of children in kindergartens in Saudi Arabia is limited to women. Likewise, 100 parents with a child aged between were recruited 3 to 6 years old, which is the age of the child's presence in kindergarten.

The sample was reached through “snowball” recruitment on social media. Bhattacharjee (2011) explains the Snowball method that starts with a small group of individuals who meet the criteria of the research community. After participation, they were asked to nominate other individuals who know and meet the criteria of the research community. It was confirmed that the sample represents the research population, which were kindergarten teachers, knowing that all kindergartens in Saudi Arabia have female teachers only, and there are no males. Also, parents have children from 3 to 6 years old. moreover, attention to diversity in age, experience and academic qualifications.



Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed to present the results of the research using SPSS. According to Bryman (2012), SPSS statistics is the most widely used analytical tool with quantitative data. The Cronbach alpha test verified the reliability of the questionnaire, where reliability relates to the consistently measures whatever it is intended to measure. An independent sampling t-test was used to examine the differences between teachers' responses and parents' responses to the sub-scales in the research.

Validity / Reliability

To assess the quality of the research, consideration must be given to reliability, repeatability and validity (Bryman, 2012). Miller (2004) also emphasizes that the reliability and validity of the research tool is an essential factor in proving the effectiveness of the results of the research. Bhattacharjee (2011) notes that metrics should be tested to verify two aspects. The first aspect is that these measures work to measure what they are designed to measure, meaning that they are valid. The second aspect is that these measures standardize the intended structures consistently and accurately, meaning they are reliable.

Validity

Validity means the degree to which a research tool measures everything it aims to measure (Slavin, 1992). The validity of the questionnaire was measured by presenting the questionnaire to the academic supervisor to obtain her observations and ensure that the research tool answer research questions. Also, by submitting it to arbitrators, the questionnaire was presented in its initial form to some of the referees from the faculty of the Early Childhood Department - College of Education - King Saud University. They were asked to add, delete, or modify the wording and content as they see fit. This edit allows the researcher to become acquainted with their opinions about the suitability of the questionnaire statements for the research aim.

Reliability

Reliability is defined as the extent to which a survey provides consistent and stable results (Miller, 2004). The concept of reliability is one of the most important features of educational and social research. The term reliability of tools in quantitative research can be replaced by repeatability or dependability (Oluwatayo, 2012). For the research results to be reliable, there must be reliability in the data collected through the reliability of the data collection tool. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient will be used to determine the internal

consistency of various measuring instruments (Bryman, 2012). The Cronbach's Alpha test is a well-known test used for internal reliability. It also checks the consistency between the elements. The general rule of thumb for this test is that when Alpha is 1, it means perfect internal reliability, while 0 indicates internal unreliability (Bryman, 2012).

Research Instruments

This is a questionnaire-based research. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first section includes parents and teachers' characteristics of the sample, and the second section includes the subscales of the research. This section included three subscales. The first part, about the most difficult moral values in teaching for children, contain (8 statements), the second part important considerations when teaching children about moral values (30 statements) and the most significant challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values (22 statements). The response options range from 1 (Not very difficult/Not at all important/Strongly disagree) to 5 (Very difficult/Very important/Strongly agree), where 3 stands for Neutral/Not important. A five-point Likert scale is used as shown in the table below.

Table 1.

A five-point Likert scale

	Options			Weighted mean
Not very difficult	Not at all important		Strongly disagree	1.00 to < 1.80
Not difficult	Not very important		Disagree	1.80 to < 2.60
Neutral	Not important		Neutral	2.60 to < 3.40
Difficult	Little important		Agree	3.40 to < 4.20
Very difficult	Very important		Strongly agree	4.20 to 5.00

Reliability analysis of the tool

In order to determine whether the entire tool is internally consistent, Cronbach's Alpha was used. As shown in Table 2. that Cronbach's alpha for the research sub-scales ranged between (0.748 and 0.953) which indicate high reliability (>.7) showing that the research tool was reliable.

**Table 2. Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)**

<i>Sub-scales</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Most difficult moral values in teaching	.748
Important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values	.953
The greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values	.896

Data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses are reported for the data collected. Measurable parameters were described as mean and standard deviation. Personal characteristics were summarized using descriptive summary measures. The inferential statistics were produced by using Independent Samples T test " t-Student test". A statistical significance level was set at $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Computer software IBM SPSS Statistics 25 was applied.

Results

This research was carried out to determine the most difficult moral values in teaching from the point of view of the kindergarten teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia. Also, this research aimed to explore the importance of some considerations moral values to be when teaching children. In addition, the current research seeks to explore the greatest challenges that faces the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values.

Research participants

The sample of this research comprises of parents and kindergarten teachers. In the following section the characteristics of them. Distribution of the teachers regarding their personal characteristics can be seen in given Table 3.

Firstly: teachers**Table 3. kindergarten teachers' characteristics (n=101)**

	No	%
Experience (years)		
Less than five years	53	52.5
between five and ten years	30	29.7
More than ten years	18	17.8

Qualification

Less than Bachelor degree	7	6.9
Bachelor	84	83.2
M.A.	10	9.9

Academic specialization

Kindergarten.	85	84.2
Another specialty.	16	15.8

The above results show that most of the teachers had less than five years of experience. Only very few had more than ten years' experience. Also, the results show that most teachers held a bachelor's degree with fewer than 10% having a higher degree. The academic specialization for most of teachers was kindergarten.

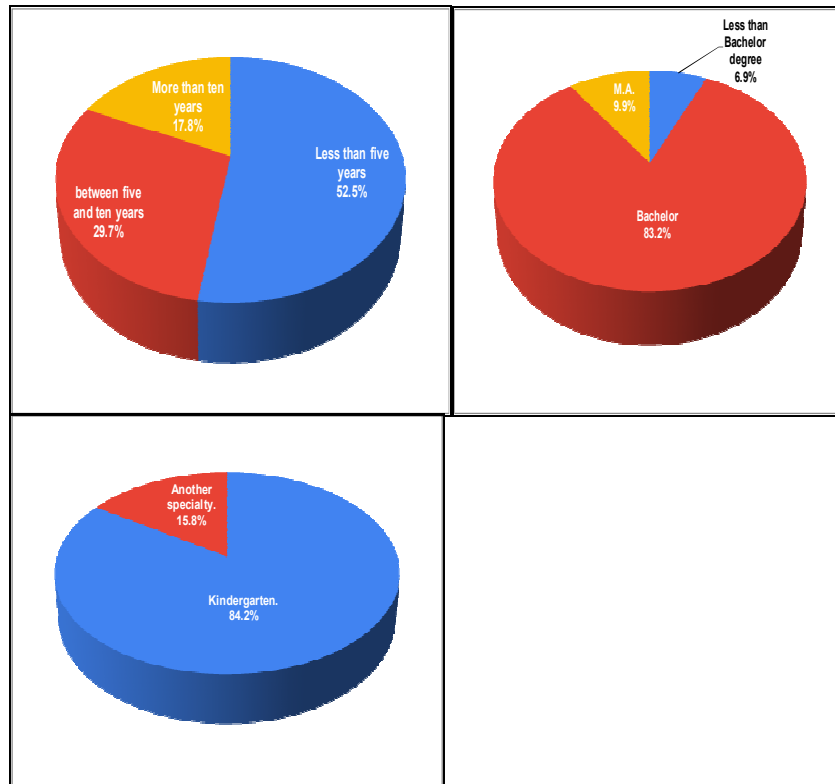


Figure 1: kindergarten teachers characteristics



Secondly: Parents

Table 4. parents' characteristics (n=100)

	No	%
Parent		
Father	32	32.0
Mother	68	68.0
Age		
Between 20-30 years	16	16.0
Between 30-40 years	44	44.0
More than 40 years	40	40.0
Qualification		
Less than Bachelor degree	15	15.0
Bachelor	61	61.0
M.A.	15	15.0
PhD.	9	9.0

Parents were not asked the same questions as the teachers although both groups were asked about their education level. There were about twice as many mothers as fathers in the sample as expected. The level of education was more varied in this group with more participants without a bachelor's degree and also more with postgraduate qualifications. Most parents were over 30 years of age and evenly spread across the two remaining age categories.

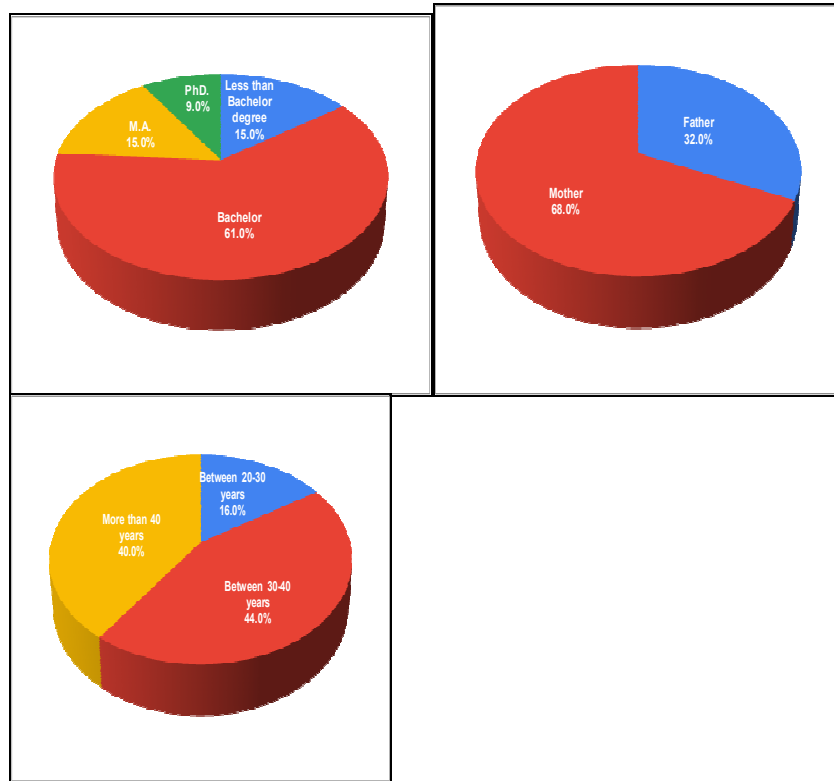


Figure 2: parents characteristics

Research questions

Q1: What are the most difficult moral values in teaching from the point of view of the kindergarten teacher and parents in Saudi Arabia

To answer research question one which concerned the most difficult moral values to teach, means and standard deviation were produced for each of the eight moral values (see Table 5.).

Firstly: results related to kindergarten teachers

Table 5.

most difficult moral values in teaching for teachers (n= 101)

SN	Moral values	Mean	SD*	Rank
1	Sincerity	2.19	.96	1
2	Patience	2.14	.76	2



3	Fairness	2.02	.92	3
4	Gratitude	1.94	.86	4
5	Reasonability	1.90	.85	5
6	Honesty	1.72	.65	6
7	Sympathy	1.70	.87	7
8	Respect	1.69	.76	8
Overall mean		1.91	0.47	

* SD: Standard deviation

Secondly: results related to parents**Table 6.***most difficult moral values in teaching for parents (n= 100)*

SN	Moral values	Mean	SD*	Rank
1	Patience	3.36	1.14	1
2	Reasonability	2.97	1.06	2
3	Fairness	2.73	1.08	3
4	Sincerity	2.68	1.16	4
5	Gratitude	2.40	1.04	5
6	Honesty	2.17	1.06	6
7	Respect	2.11	0.97	7
8	Sympathy	1.99	0.88	8
Overall mean		2.55	0.56	

* SD: Standard deviation

As shown in table 5. that the overall mean of teachers responses towards most difficult moral values in teaching was (1.91 from 5) with a standard deviation of (0.47) which is less than (1) indicating that the responses of the teachers were focused and not dispersed. By looking at the means of the eight moral values, we can see that all of them lie in the range represented by (Not very difficult) and (Not difficult) respectively. So, we can conclude that Kindergarten teachers do not see that there is any difficulty in moral values in teaching.

In contrast, parents' responses towards most difficult moral values in teaching (shown in Table 6.) showed that the overall mean

was (2.55 from 5) with a standard deviation of (0.56) which is less than (1) indicating that the responses of the parents were focused and not dispersed. The means of the statements were ranged between 1.99 to 3.36 represents (Not difficult and Neutral) according to the 5 Points Likert scale used in this research which indicating more variation in the degree of difficulty towards moral values as compared to the teachers. Therefore, to be more specific, moral values that the parent's thought was not difficult to teach were patience, reasonability, fairness, and sincerity. In addition, moral values that the parents did not give a definitive opinion about its difficulty in teaching was gratitude, honesty, respect and sympathy. Particularly, these differences between teachers and parents responses were statistically significant.

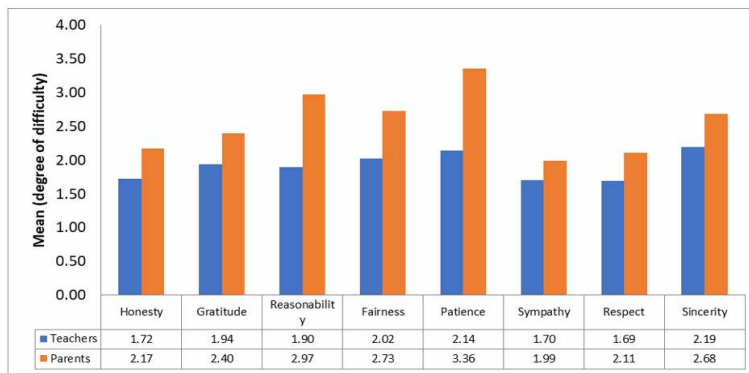


Figure 3: illustrate the degree of difficulty of moral values in teaching as stated by teachers and parents

It appears from the above results that there is a difference in opinions about the easiest moral value in teaching between parents and teachers' responses, where teachers see that (sincerity) is the easiest moral value in teaching, while parents see that the easiest of these values is (patience). The second moral value from the point of view of teachers is (patience), but parents see that (responsibility) is the second easiest value in teaching. Also, the most difficult moral value in teaching from the point of teachers was (respect), but from the point of view of parents' it is (sympathy).

Q2: Which teaching methods are best when teaching children moral values from of viewpoint kindergarten teachers and parents in Saudi Arabia?

To answer research question one which concern about some consideration to be consider when teaching children about moral values, means, standard deviation and ranks according to the means were produced for the statements concerning this question as follows



Firstly: results related to kindergarten teachers

Table 7.

Considerations when teaching children about moral values for teachers (n= 101)

Considerations	Mean	SD*	Rank
Dialogue	4.73	0.56	1
Role model	4.67	0.61	2
Involve activities	4.60	0.65	3
Encouragement of children	4.50	0.65	4
Discussing children	4.50	0.87	5
Role play	4.47	0.77	6
Problem solving	4.41	0.80	7
Children's songs	4.32	0.79	8
Direct instructions	4.16	0.85	9
Punishment	3.66	0.83	10
Telling stories	1.55	0.20	11
Overall mean	4.14	0.55	

* SD: Standard deviation

Secondly: results related to parents

Table 8.

Considerations when teaching children about moral values for parents (n= 100)

Considerations	Mean	SD*	Rank
Dialogue	4.54	0.85	1
Encouragement of children	4.50	0.77	2
Role model	4.40	0.85	3
Discussing children	4.26	0.91	4
Involve activities	4.18	0.84	5
Direct instructions	4.06	0.88	6

Role play	4.00	0.90	7
Problem solving	3.95	0.91	8
Punishment	3.80	0.88	9
Children's songs	3.56	0.94	10
Telling stories	1.37	0.30	11
Overall mean	3.87	0.68	

* SD: Standard deviation

As shown in table 7. that the overall mean of teachers' responses towards the consideration that to be considered when teaching children about moral values was (M=4.14 from 5) with a standard deviation of (SD= 0.55) which less than (1), indicating that the responses of the teachers were focused and not dispersed. By looking at the average scores of these considerations, we can see that the average score of the statements ranges between (1.55) and (4.73) "Not very important" and "Very important", respectively. Which indicating variation in the degree of importance of these considerations from the point of view of teachers.

Moreover, as shown in table 8. that the overall mean of parents' responses towards the consideration that to be considered when teaching children about moral values was (M=3.87 out of 5) with a standard deviation of (SD= 0.68) which is less than (1) indicating that the responses of the parents were focused and not dispersed. by looking at the average scores of these considerations, we can see that the average score of the statements ranges between (1.37) and (4.54) "Not important" and "Very important" respectively. Which indicating variation in the degree of importance of these considerations from the point of view of parents.

Thus, from the viewpoint of teachers, the very important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values was dialogue, role model, involve activities, encouragement of children, discussing children, roleplay, problem-solving and children's songs. While little important considerations when teaching children about moral values, was direct instructions and punishment. However, not very important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values was telling stories.

In the comparison for parents' viewpoint, the very important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values was dialogue, encouragement of children, role model, discussing children. Additionally, the little important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values involved activities, direct instructions, roleplay, problem-solving, punishment, children's songs. By contrast,



the unimportant considerations when teaching children moral values were storytelling.

Especially, these differences between teachers and parents' responses were statistically significant.

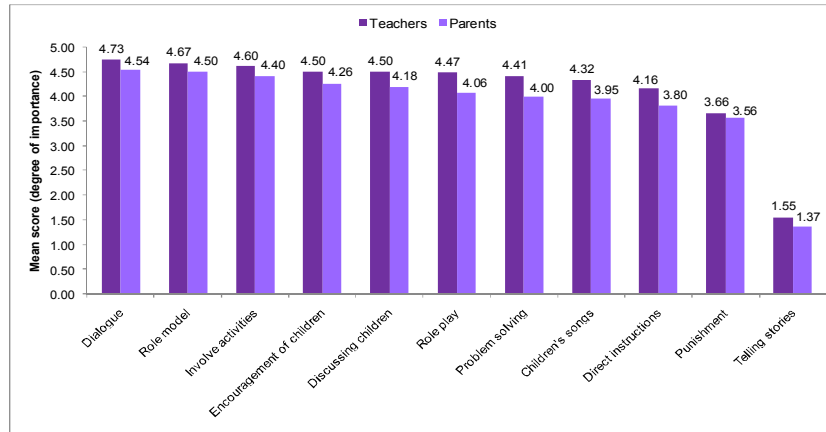


figure 4: The important when teaching children about moral values as stated by teachers and parents

Q3: What are the greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values from the point of view of the kindergarten teacher and parents in Saudi Arabia?

To answer this question, which concern about the greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values, means, standard deviation and ranks according to the means were produced for the statements regarding this question as follows

Firstly: results related to kindergarten teachers

Table 9.

challenges that face the teachers when teaching the child moral values (n= 101)

Challenges	Mean	SD*	Rank
The effect of Technology and media	4.29	0.72	1
Curriculum of kindergarten	4.29	0.93	2
Peer group effects	4.18	0.78	3
Difference between school values and family values.	3.83	1.18	4

Lack of educational sources to teach moral values.	3.79	1.01	5
Double standard for assessing moral values between adults and children.	3.62	1.12	6
Understand moral values.	3.28	0.84	7
Role of kindergarten in developing moral values for children.	3.24	0.77	8
Difficulty teaching moral values and evaluating them	2.81	1.12	9
Lack of time to teach the child moral values.	2.66	1.10	10
Overall mean	3.60	0.60	

* SD: Standard deviation

Secondly: results related to parents**Table 10.***challenges that face the parents when teaching the child moral values (n= 100)*

Challenges	Mean	SD*	Rank
The effect of technology and media	4.30	0.92	1
Group effect.	4.09	0.87	2
Curriculum of kindergarten	3.97	1.07	3
Double standard for assessing moral values between adults and children.	3.37	1.10	4
Understand moral values.	3.19	0.84	5
Role of kindergarten in developing moral values for children.	3.14	0.71	6
Difference between school values and family values.	3.09	1.22	7
Lack of educational sources to teach moral values.	3.06	1.26	8
Difficulty teaching moral values and evaluating them	2.93	1.00	9
Lack of time to teach the child moral values.	2.77	1.04	10
Overall mean	3.39	0.70	

* SD: Standard deviation

As shown in table 9. that the overall mean of teacher's responses towards the challenges that face the teachers when teaching the child



moral values was (M=3.60 from 5) with a standard deviation of (SD=0.60) which was less than (1) indicating that the responses of the teachers were focused and not dispersed. The teachers "agree" to all challenges proposed by this research (Table 9.). By looking at the average scores of these challenges, we can see that the average score of them ranged between (2.66) and (4.29) "Neutral" and "Strongly agree" respectively. Which indicating variation in the degree of agreement towards these challenges. Also, the parents' response was the average scores of them ranged between (2.77) and (4.30) "Neutral" and "Strongly agree" respectively.

Hence, challenges that teacher strongly agreed were. technology and media effect and curriculum of kindergarten. Moreover, challenges that teacher gave neutral responses towards it was understood moral values, the role of kindergarten in developing moral values for children, difficulty teaching moral values and evaluating them and lack of time to teach the child moral values.

In comparison, the challenges that parents strongly agreed was technology and the media effect. However, the challenges that parents gave neutral responses towards it were double standard for assessing moral values between adults and children, understand moral values, the role of kindergarten in developing moral values for children, difference between school values and family values, lack of educational sources to teach moral values, difficulty teaching moral values and evaluating them and lack of time to teach the child moral values.

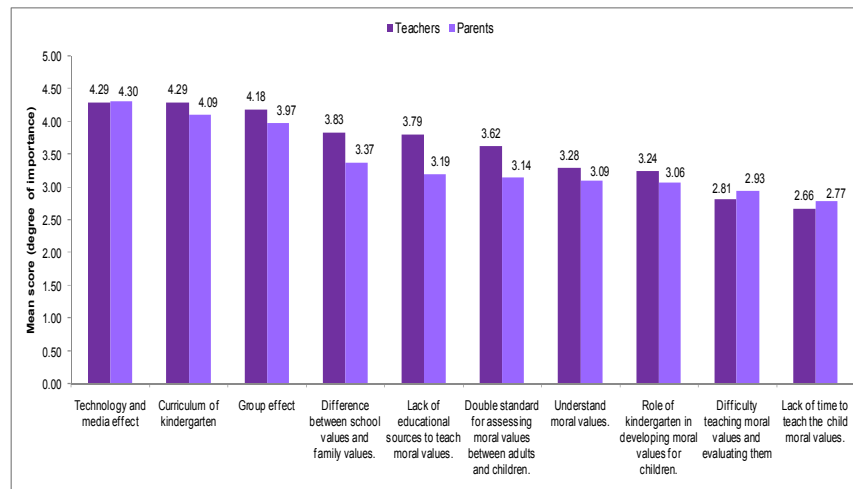


Figure 5: The greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers

Differences in teachers and parents’ responses towards the subscales of the research.

Table 11.

Independent sample t-test results

Subscales	Sample	n	Mean	SD	t	DF	P value
Most difficult moral values in teaching	Teachers	101	1.91	0.47	8.703	199	0.000**
	Parents	100	2.55	0.56			
Important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values	Teachers	101	4.14	0.55	3.074	199	0.002**
	Parents	100	3.87	0.68			
Greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values	Teachers	101	3.60	0.60	2.296	199	0.023*
	Parents	100	3.39	0.70			

*Significant at 0.05 level

**significant at 0.01 level

Clearly, in table 11. to form these subscales, the average scores of all items for each question were calculated to show the result. To test these differences, an independent samples t-test was employed to examine any significant difference between teachers and parents’ responses to the subscales of the research. Data analysis showed that there was a significant difference between teachers and parents responses towards the subscales of the research (most difficult moral values in teaching), (important considerations to be when teaching children about moral values) and (greatest challenges that face the parents and teachers when teaching the child moral values) ($t(199) = 8.70, p < .001$), ($t(199) = 3.07, p < .002$) and ($t(199) = 2.29, p < .023$) respectively.

The most difficult moral values to be taught to children

From the results, it was noted that the teachers found it easy to teach children empathy and respect, while sincerity and patience were cited as difficult. Conversely, from the parents’ perspective, teaching children patience and responsibility was thought to be the most difficult, while the values of respect and empathy were described as easy to teach. To elaborate on this further, Bergin (2011) defines empathy as the ability to understand the feelings of others and respond appropriately. While the parents believed empathy to be the easiest moral value to teach children; the teachers ranked it lowest for ease of teaching. This finding is consistent with Bergin (2011), who asserts that it is easy for parents to teach empathy to their children, but before the age of 18 months. However, Upright (2002) indicates that it is easy for teachers to teach empathy to children by emphasising the importance of feelings.



In addition, it was clear from the results that the parents and teachers found it more difficult to teach children gratitude than to teach them honesty, respect, and empathy, although Visser (2009) notes that it is easy to teach children to say 'Thank you' after receiving a gift. However, both Freitas et al. (2011) and Froh et al. (2010) demonstrate that conforming to the rules of etiquette does not represent strong evidence of gratitude. Despite this, there is evidence that five-year-old children can indeed understand certain critical components of gratitude (Nelson et al., 2013).

In contrast, the parents participating in this research pointed out that the most difficult task was to teach children patience. Moreover, according to the participating teachers, the most difficult task, after sincerity, was to teach children patience. This result was supported by the views of the parents. Meanwhile, a research by Bettinger and Slonim (2007) indicated that children aged 5-7 years were least patient. However, as they grew up, they became more patient. Thus, since the current research involved asking parents and teachers about their experiences of teaching values to children aged 3-6 years, it followed that it would be difficult to teach children patience, since children of a very young age are associated with low patience.

The best educational methods for teaching moral values to children

Several educational methods are discussed in this section of the research, to determine their importance when teaching moral values to children. The responses from both the parents and teachers corroborated that dialogue is essential in education, as a means of teaching a child moral value. Conversely, from the participants' responses, it is clear that they believed storytelling to be the least useful educational method of teaching moral values to children.

As mentioned above, the parents and teachers agreed that dialogue was the most effective method of teaching children moral values, revealing the importance of dialogue in moral education among parents and teachers alike. In addition, this result is consistent with Al-Saawi's (2019) findings, where the use of dialogue while undertaking a project helped convince the children of the importance of behaviours linked with moral values. However, unlike Al-Saawi (2019), this current research did not apply a dialogue method to teach children about moral values; instead, opinions were gathered from teachers and parents based on their experiences, thereby expanding the researcher's understanding of the importance of dialogue in moral education.

This result is also consistent with what educators such as Burbules (1993), Claxton (2008), Kazepides (2012), Lefstein (2006),

Matusov (2009), Mercer and Littleton (2007), Wegerif (2006) and Wells (2007) confirm, which is that dialogue is an essential – and even the most critical – educational strategy. Plato also considered dialogue to be the most crucial teaching tool because it leads to rational knowledge (Burbules, 1993; Kazepides, 2012). Therefore, this present research confirms that dialogue offers a meaningful way of teaching children moral values in the Saudi context. In contrast, the participating parents and teachers agreed that storytelling was the weakest method of teaching children moral values, out of all the educational techniques presented. The teachers described storytelling as ‘Not very important’, while the parents described it as ‘not important’. Nevertheless, this result is unexpected in that it contradicts the findings of Hunter and Eder (2010), who emphasised the use of stories as a key component of developing moral values. However, there are differences between Hunter and Eder’s (2010) research and the current research. For example, Hunter and Eder (2010) used storytelling with children in Grades Four and Five, whereas the present research only gathered the views of parents and teachers. The age groups also differed, as the age range in the current research was 3-6 years. Age is a factor that can bear upon the effectiveness of a teaching method.

The results of this current research also differ from those of Al-Rashed’s (2017) research. For example, in Al-Rashed (2017), statistically significant differences were found between the average scores of controls and experimental groups, after undertaking a program that contained stories and songs to develop various moral values in children. However, even though the age of the pupils in this present research were equivalent to the age group targeted in the previous research, the data were gathered from parents and teachers to discover their experiences. Moreover, Al-Rashed’s (2017) research applied a program containing songs as well as stories, which could indicate that the results were due to the inclusion of songs alongside stories, as opposed to stories used alone.

What emerged from the present research was that storytelling was considered as the weakest method of teaching children moral values, maybe because of the lack of appropriate published stories to appeal to children. Moreover, it is possible that even when such stories are attractive and interesting to children, they are not effective for teaching children moral values, because an able narrator is still required to tell the stories in an appealing and persuasive way. A skilled and insightful narrator will be able to communicate the message of a story to children, so that they grasp the corresponding moral values. Given that not all parents and teachers possess this narrative skill, there is the risk that a story will fail to teach any moral values.



Conversely, out of all the educational methods presented in this research, punishment was ranked 10th by the teachers and 9th by the parents. The participants from both groups agreed that this method was of little importance when teaching moral values to children. It is consistent with Wheeler (1959), who concluded that punishment will not effectively enhance children's learning but may even delay their educational process. Moreover, Burton (1944) argues that students do not learn responsibility through harsh punishment, but rather by understanding why they should engage in good behaviour. The importance of dialogue when teaching moral values is again confirmed by this belief.

Alternatively, role models were ranked second by the teachers and third by the parents, with regard to teaching moral values to children. Both sets of participants indicated this method as 'Very important' for children when teaching them moral values. This opinion is consistent with Bandura's theory which asserts that children learn through observation, since most human behaviour is learned by following role models (Bandura and Walters, 1977). Moreover, this finding for the importance of children's role models, according to parents and teachers, confirms Bandura and MacDonald's (1963) conclusion on the importance of role models demonstrating the desired behaviour, and their high effectiveness in obtaining similar or appropriate responses from others, especially in early childhood. Therefore, this research confirms that role models are among the most important elements of teaching moral values to children.

Challenges faced by parents and teachers when teaching moral values to children

As stated above, parents and teachers face challenges when teaching moral values to children. These challenges should not be ignored, because children's moral education is both directly and indirectly affected as a result. From the outcomes of this present research, it is evident that the parents and teachers firmly agreed on the impact of technology and media being a primary challenge. Meanwhile, the lack of time to teach moral values to children was identified as the least challenging obstacle to this task.

The effects of technology and media have been found to be the most potent challenges for teachers and parents when attempting to teach children moral values. In the present research, they were ranked first by both the parents and teachers, with an average rating of 'Strongly agree'. This result illustrates the concerns of parents and teachers over technology and digital media, most likely due to their potential harm and risks. Isawi et al. (2019) found that the use of technology affected the emotions and consequently, the moral values

of adults. Moreover, Onah and Christian (2014) analysed the ethical implications of the social media phenomenon in Nigeria, finding that media use is prevalent among young people and represents one of the main causes of moral decay in Nigeria.

In contrast, this current research explores the perspectives of parents and teachers, regarding the challenges that they face when teaching children aged 3-6 years. Therefore, differences in the age groups sampled across the relevant studies could have produced varying results in the literature. However, several studies conducted on children, such as Singh et al. (2016), have investigated the impact of video and mobile games on children's behaviour in India. In Singh et al. (2016), the sample included 160 children aged 7-10 years with results to suggest an extremely negative effect of mobile and video games on children, causing them to become more prone to anxiety, behaviour disorders, attention deficit, aggressive thoughts, and reduced cooperation.

However, in Saleem et al.'s (2012) research, the aim was to ascertain whether exposure to social video games can bring about a short-term increase in desirable behaviours, while at the same time reducing harmful behaviours in children aged 9 -14 years. The results revealed that video games with positive social content increased healthy behaviours and reduced harmful behaviours in the short term. Conversely, children's games with violent content led to increased harmful behaviour and decreased good behaviour. Moreover, the results of Sestir and Bartholow's (2010) research revealed that some nonviolent games could reduce aggression. These findings show that technology can be beneficial as well as detrimental, depending on the content.

The outcomes of various studies in the field have indeed corroborated the harmful effects of technology on human behaviour and ethics. Here, content is identified as the decisive factor: if the content is good, it can be positive in its effect on children, as demonstrated by Saleem et al. (2012) and Sestir and Bartholow (2010). Therefore, parents should take note of the content being accessed by their children via technology, in order to ensure that they only access content with a positive impact. In this way, children will avoid the harmful effects of technology. Young children need more guidance from their parents and teachers than is the case with teenagers and young adults. However, the implication of this based on previous studies is that the effects of technology and media on adolescents and adults are greater, compared to the effects on children.

Furthermore, in the present research, parents and teachers were found to be 'Neutral' in their view of kindergarten as a challenge when they attempted to teach moral values to children. This neutral finding



differs from Musry's (2020) research, where the participating mothers were largely agreed on the importance of kindergarten for developing moral values. This present research differs in that it gathered the opinions of male and female parents and teachers, as opposed to mothers alone. The other difference between these two studies consists of their location, as the current research was conducted in Saudi Arabia, while Musry's (2020) research took place in Hebron. It is usual for kindergartens to be culturally different from one region to another, and such differences may account for variation in results. Additionally, this neutral result differs from Kharrazeh and Jibril's (2021) finding for the role of kindergarten in developing children's moral values. The latter research endeavored to discover whether and how kindergarten helped develop the values of pre-school children, according to the perspectives of parents in Libya. The results indicated that the role of kindergarten was essential, in the view of the Libyan parents studied. Conversely, parents and teachers were sampled from the Saudi context in this present research, pointing to the strong likelihood of a different result.

In addition, Al-Holy and Al-Shammari (2009) sought to understand the impact of kindergarten on children's acquisition of moral values. Nevertheless, through observation, nothing was found in Kuwait's kindergarten curriculum to accommodate moral values, and there were no specific activities to teach these values. However, the teachers studied attempted to teach morals in response to impromptu situations in the kindergarten environment. For example, whenever a child borrowed a book from the library to read a story, the teacher would ask him or her to "be honest and research the book", meaning that the children were to strive to learn from books, rather than simply copying content. Thus, when testing the children, the results showed that more than 50% had a strong sense of moral values. This result indicates the importance of the role of teacher-based kindergarten for developing moral values in children.

Furthermore, since Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are two countries that share geographical borders and have similar cultures, with the same religion and language, it is reasonable to compare them. The Kuwaiti research showed that kindergarten was excellent with regard to developing moral values in children. However, the present Saudi research demonstrated a neutral attitude to kindergarten among parents and teachers, and this was identified as a challenge when teaching children moral values. Hence, parents and teachers were expected to dismiss the role of kindergarten as an important factor of teaching children moral values. Nevertheless, the difference between the two studies mentioned above is that the Kuwaiti research implemented a test among the sampled children, aware of their moral values, while

the teachers and parents in this Saudi research were asked to give their opinions based on their experience.

In the present research, the sampled teachers and parents appeared to consider the kindergarten curriculum to be a challenge when endeavoring to teach children moral values, as the average response from the teachers was 'Strongly agree', while the parents' 'Agreed'. The teachers were familiar with the curriculum content, as were the parents. This result is consistent with the outcomes of Muhammad's (2013) analysis of the content of kindergarten curricula in Saudi Arabia, where it was found that these curricula contain very little instruction on moral values. The present researcher is also familiar with the content of Saudi kindergarten curricula and confirms that it contains no units or activities on moral education. This result could provide some justification for the neutrality of parents and teachers concerning the role of kindergarten, as they did not find any content on moral values in the kindergarten curriculum, and they agreed that it was a challenge to them. Therefore, they did not expect Saudi children to be taught any moral values in kindergarten, given the absence of topics and activities in the kindergarten curriculum to foster moral values.

Conclusions

The survey conducted in this research focused on the best educational means of teaching moral values to children and the challenges facing parents and kindergarten teachers when teaching children moral values. The most important results are listed below.

1. Teachers and parents identified the values of sincerity and patience as some of the most difficult moral values to teach children. In contrast, the values of honesty, empathy, and respect were easier to teach.
2. The use of dialogue was selected by parents and teachers as the best educational method for teaching moral values to children in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the use of dialogue with a child aged 3 to 6 years was seen as key to understanding the importance of moral values and their application. Parents and teachers indicated that the use of role models, participating in activities and the encouragement of children were also significant in teaching moral values. However, the results of this research proved that dialogue is the highest method in teaching moral values to children, which is in line with the results of previous studies, which indicate the importance of dialogue with children to teach him or her moral values. Therefore, the selection of dialogue as the best method for teaching moral values to children was recorded as a major result of this research.



3. The story-telling method was ranked last among the methods of teaching moral values to children by parents and kindergarten teachers. This result is unexpected, as there are many studies indicated on the role of the story in teaching moral values to children.
4. The biggest challenge for parents and teachers is the impact of technology and the media, which may endanger children's moral values. Another challenge identified is the kindergarten curriculum and the group effect. Lack of time for parents to teach children moral values was not seen as a strong challenge facing parents and teachers.
5. The research also proved statistically significant differences in the responses of teachers and parents towards the research's sub-scales. Naturally, there are differences between the answers of teachers and parents, as there are differences in their experiences. For example, teachers mostly have a bachelor's degree in early childhood. As the participants in this research, 85% of the teachers had Qualification of early childhood. In addition, the experience of dealing with a large number of children daily. On the other hand, parents, in most cases, have different specializations. Also, their expertise may be with one or two children. These differences lead to differences in the views of both parents and teachers. Moreover, the relationship between the parents and the child is different from the relationship between the teacher and the child, making some methods better than others. For example, encouragement by parents is more important than encouragement by teachers, according to Spinrad et al. (1999) research, whose results showed that parents' encouragement of moral behaviour had a positive relationship with children's empathy. Spinrad et al. (1999) mentioned that parental practices that contain feelings contribute to the moral development of their children.

Limitations of the Research

In educational research, there are unavoidable limitations, especially concerning the research instrument and the characteristics of the participants and the research community.

First, one of the research's main limitations was the difficulty associated with accessing the research sample and obtaining answers to the electronic questionnaire. During the period of this research, in 2021, schools were closed in Saudi Arabia, and education was through distance learning due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. As a result, it was difficult to access the research sample, resulting in a reduced sample size, with 100 parents and 101 teachers. If the sample size had been more extensive, it may have provided different results. These circumstances also made applying the interview method as part of data

collection impossible, therefore the responses were limited to the choices given in the questionnaire.

Secondly, the data collection was in only one city, Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. It is known that Arab culture differs according to different regions. For example, the culture in the Eastern Province in Dammam is different from the culture in Riyadh. This means that the results may relate in particular to the Riyadh region. However, the researcher does not anticipate that there would be significant differences in the data. As the city in which the data was collected is the capital city, its population consists of a mixture of people from all regions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, north, south, east, and west.

Finally, there were demographic constraints on the genders of the parents, as there was a higher number of mothers' responses than fathers' responses. This imbalance in responses hampered the clear presentation of gender-related findings.

Implications of the Research

Based on the discussion of the research and its results, this research has far-reaching effects when teaching children moral values and understanding the challenges that parents and teachers face in teaching moral values to children.

From the evidence collected in this research, most of the participants, parents and teachers, think that dialogue is a critical way to teach children moral values. However, there is no provision in the daily programme for children in kindergarten dedicated to dialogue. Adding a half-hour section in the programme for children in kindergarten, especially structured dialogue about moral values, could have a positive effect on the individual and society, as indicated by the literature.

Moreover, according to what teachers and parents have observed, one of the findings of this research is that the limitations of the kindergarten curriculum is among the challenges faced when training children about moral values. The kindergarten curriculum is based on educational units, with each unit lasting two to three weeks. Each unit has a specific theme, for example: food, animals, sand, and water. Curriculum change is in the hands of policymakers in the Ministry of Education. A unit on moral values in the kindergarten curriculum would make a difference in teaching and understanding moral values for children.

Parents and teachers' participating in the research indicated that the impact of technology and the media was one of the challenges they faced when teaching children moral values. The use of technology has become a normal part of life. However, it is possible to use technology



to create helpful content for children in the Arabic language, for example, cartoon programmes that contain moral values. In this way, technology can be used positively.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current research presents the following recommendations for further educational research on moral values:

- Further research should be conducted on the role of the dialogue method of teaching moral values to children.
- One of the proposed future areas of research is the possible importance of role-play and problem solving as ways of teaching children's moral values.
- Further research could focus on conducting a research to find out the opinions of parents and teachers regarding important values for the family and important values in school and making a comparison between them.
- One possible future research suggestion is the extent to which technology and the media affect children's moral values. The extent to which the group children influence the moral values of the children is also an interesting area of research.
- Another possible area of research would be assessing how teachers and parents are aware of the importance of moral values for children
- Comparative studies could be undertaken by measuring children's values and comparing them to variable factors such as: parents' qualifications, material income, type of school, and the differences between urban and rural children.

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