



**How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early
Childhood Learning: A Case Study of Parents in Saudi Arabia**

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Institute of Education

By

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Declaration of Original Authorship

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Arwa Mohammed Alkhamis

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of cultural background on parental involvement in early childhood education, with a particular focus on Saudi parents. Using a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group studies, the study aims to examine aspects of Saudi cultural background that contribute to Saudi parents' involvement in their children's learning, in terms of the impact of cultural values, beliefs, and practices on parental involvement with their children's educational endeavors. It also seeks to examine the role of culture, the role and expectations of communication, the role of parents, and the impact of these norms on the nature and degree of parental involvement in young children's educational processes. To achieve this, an inductive framework was used, along with an interpretive research philosophy and a qualitative research method. The value of the study lies in several points: First, it contributes to bridging a knowledge gap about the interaction between culture and parental involvement in early childhood education, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Analyzing this relationship may contribute to developing a more accurate understanding of the factors influencing and barriers to parental involvement in their children's learning. Furthermore, the results of this research will not only be useful to education professionals and policymakers but will also be relevant to Saudi society as a whole. By identifying the key players influencing parental involvement, stakeholders can develop effective interventions and programs that help improve parental involvement in early childhood education. This, in turn, facilitates the holistic development of children. The research also adds value to the academic literature on the three dimensions of culture, education, and child development. Specifically, the target group was Saudi parents. Interviews were conducted with 18 participants: 6 Saudi mothers and fathers, 2 managers, and 4 practitioners. Interviews were conducted in a public and private kindergarten in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The data were analyzed using NVivo software. The study results revealed the varying and diverse roles of parents in their involvement in their children's education, based on several cultural, social, and economic factors. Furthermore, the results revealed the perceptions

of practitioners and kindergarten managers regarding the level of parental involvement. The results also highlighted several obstacles facing families and practitioners in this context. For example, some parents from more conservative religious backgrounds preferred a curriculum focused on religious and Arabic language instruction rather than other languages, while a number of parents who enrolled their children in private schools tended to delegate educational responsibilities entirely to the school in exchange for the money paid. Other participating parents, particularly those with higher levels of education or who grew up in urban areas, were more involved in their children's early learning and believed in the importance of engaging with the school. The findings also revealed practitioners' and kindergarten administrators' expectations of parental involvement in their children's education, with many indicating that mothers are typically more involved than fathers, perhaps due to traditional gender roles. Furthermore, the study highlighted several obstacles facing families and practitioners, such as time constraints for parents, particularly those working, a lack of awareness of the importance of early education, and weak communication between schools and families.

Keywords

Culture background, Parental involvement, Early childhood, Obstacles and barriers, Gender and Cultural Studies.

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Abbreviations

ECE Early Childhood Education

KSA Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

MoE Ministry of Education

ECD Early Childhood Development

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

RQ Research Question

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the level of parental involvement in their children's early childhood education, particularly among Saudi parents who have a child in early childhood, and how their cultural backgrounds influence this level. It also examines the cultural factors that influence their level of involvement, the obstacles they encounter, and the perspectives of kindergarten professionals on this context. The introductory chapter begins by defining the problem and its significance, as well as the primary research question and its sub-questions, and concludes with a description of the thesis's structure.

1.2 Rationale

The motivation for studying the impact of Saudi parents' cultural background on their children's education and sharing their parenting experiences was the researcher's role as a member of the Early Childhood Department in Saudi education. Her journey toward this position began in 2010 as a teaching role and then became a family counseling supervisor. After obtaining a master's degree in parental counseling from the United States, the researcher became involved in family counseling at several educational centers in Saudi Arabia. From 2016 to 2022, the researcher worked at King Saud University as a lecturer in the Early Childhood Department, a member of the Children's Rights Association, and a member of the Family Guidance Association. The researcher's personal experience as an academic in the Early Childhood Department at a Saudi university, as well as their membership in the Family Guidance Association, spans several years. This enabled her to observe the situation of Saudi families and how they interact with their children's education, based on their cultural background, and the impact this has on their involvement. This was a golden opportunity to

involve Saudi parents and examine the issue from all angles, from public education to private education. This extensive experience provided the researcher with a basis for defining the study's objectives and guiding the research to understand the roles of cultural factors in parental involvement in their children's education.

It is also worth noting that since the launch of the government's Vision 2030 in 2017, which included numerous points about supporting and empowering Saudi families, the researcher has not found any studies evaluating the first years of Vision 2030 implementation from the perspectives of parents and early childhood education practitioners in public and private kindergartens. This increased the researcher's desire to investigate the views of parents and practitioners regarding the effectiveness of the government's efforts to support and empower families. Most importantly, through this dissertation, the researcher seeks to inform government decision-makers and those interested in research about the effectiveness of Vision 2030, as perceived by actual stakeholders, including Saudi families and practitioners in the context of early childhood education, regarding the support they received during the first quarter of the launch of Saudi Vision 2030. This dissertation is expected to be critical in enabling officials to modify or develop plans in line with achieving the goals of Vision 2030, which supports the Saudi family. Furthermore, as a result of the researcher's reflections, one of the motivations for this research was to provide mothers in Saudi society with an equal opportunity to share their views on the nature of their maternal roles and the obstacles they face as women in the Saudi social and cultural context.

In summary, the above-mentioned situations and experiences provided the researcher with a clear and direct view of the situation, highlighting the ambiguity and complexity of the impact of cultural background on parental involvement in their children's education, as well as the obstacles faced by families and practitioners in this context. This experience initially prompted the researcher to examine the situation in greater depth, thereby exploring parents'

perceptions of their parental roles and the associated obstacles they face as educators. The motivation for this study also arose from the need to fill the gap in the literature regarding the impact of cultural background on parental involvement in their children's education.

1.3 Context to the Focus

The literature review on parental involvement in early childhood education is growing, but a clear gap remains in knowledge regarding the impact of cultural heritage on parental involvement in this context. According to Al-Obaydi (2019), cultures evolve under the influence of a complex set of historical, geographical, social, and economic conditions, which in turn impact a nation's worldview, morals, and traditions. Foulidi (2022) acknowledges that cultural diversity is an essential factor in parental involvement, but there is a lack of literature that studies the specific pathways through which diverse cultural backgrounds affect various aspects of parental involvement. Parental participation in classroom discussions, participation in school activities, and motivation of their children at home are some of the consequences that can be at the forefront of this responsibility. The current academic literature on parental involvement in a child's education focuses on general ideas but overlooks the specific and context-dependent impact of cultural values, beliefs, and practices (Boonk et al., 2018; Kartel et al., 2022; Muller, 2018; Muller & Kerbow, 2018). Proper focus should, therefore, be maintained to ensure thorough investigation of various implications of parental cultural backgrounds. The research should also examine the impact of factors such as ethnicity, religion, and place of upbringing on parents' attitudes and behaviors towards their children's early education through individual interviews and analyses, we can identify cultural factors influencing parents' involvement with their children's education.

The Saudi Arabian context reveals that parental involvement in their children's educational activities is low, because many Saudi Arabian parents do not get involved in their

children's education due to social and cultural norms (Al-Salloum, 2017). These separate education and parenting in the traditional setting, and a study by Al-Jadidi (2012) found that in rural areas, there is minimal parental involvement due to limited awareness and poor educational backgrounds. Several other obstacles exist that prevent better parental involvement. These obstacles include traditional gender roles and perceptions of authority, as well as social and economic barriers. There are also institutional challenges, such as communication gaps and psychological barriers, including a lack of confidence, which require concerted efforts to address these obstacles and enhance awareness. The efforts also include improved communication between parents and schools, as well as the provision of more meaningful opportunities for parental involvement.

Most research on parental involvement has been conducted in Western contexts, resulting in a scarcity of information regarding the involvement of parents from non-Western cultural backgrounds, such as Saudi Arabia. To enhance parental involvement and improve early childhood education, it is essential to thoroughly understand the unique cultural, social, and educational context within which Saudi parents are situated. Learning about Saudi parents' unique concerns and preferences will allow for more targeted and effective interventions for this cultural group. The cultural and economic landscape of Saudi Arabia is rapidly shifting (Custers, 2022), making it especially timely to examine how these shifts influence parental participation in early childhood education. An in-depth investigation into how changes in family structure impact parental involvement can yield new insights and strategies for overcoming obstacles to involvement. These changes could include, for instance, adapting to societal norms, language, and educational systems. However, these changes could affect parents' understanding of their children's educational expectations and requirements.

Policymakers, educators, and practitioners may encounter significant challenges in developing programs that are culturally specific and responsive to the needs and perceptions

of Saudi families (Maddux et al., 2011). This further underscores the need for research on the exploration of how and at what levels Saudi parents involve in educating their children. Thus, without a proper understanding of the factors influencing this involvement, schools may fail to establish productive relationships with parents, missing excellent opportunities to significantly contribute to the learning experiences of students (Custers, 2022). In-depth knowledge of the selected approaches and cultural influences on parental involvement in Saudi Arabia may provide valuable recommendations regarding the various methods of involving children in their educational careers, as well as the elements that either support or oppose parental involvement. Additionally, Saudi Arabia is a country that reflects a culture and society shaped by its unique traditions, values, and beliefs. The study by Maddux et al. (2011) can clarify the approaches to parental involvement that they share and contrast where they differ, as well as how the subtle cultural differences that contribute to these differences might be understood. The cultural variance in gender roles and parenting affects the abilities of Saudis to create supportive and inclusive educational environments (Maddux et al., 2011).

Addressing and resolving differences is essential for achieving equal and efficient parental involvement, which can transform Saudi Arabia's early childhood education, as well as that of its children. Children are viewed as a social resource in a sociological context (Sampson et al., 1999). The Saudi society is not an exception. Consequently, addressing such differences and enhancing parental involvement will yield numerous benefits for Saudi society. For example, Saudi parents may observe enhanced academic achievements in their children. Additionally, their children will have higher cognitive development. Parental interactions encourage cognitive development among children by offering opportunities for learning and exploration. Lastly, the parent-child bond in Saudi society is expected to be strengthened (Al-Essa et al., 1998). All these will mean children develop well-balanced in every way; socially, psychologically, and educationally.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Mazikana (2023) notes that involvement is one of the key reasons why parents play a significant role in their child's early education, as it can significantly impact a child's educational path and future success. Cultural backgrounds also have an impact on the extent and nature of parental involvement, as these backgrounds vary significantly in different environments. The paper proposes research on how cultural background influences parent involvement in early childhood education with special reference to Saudi parents. By using a mix of semi-structured interviews, the research intends to examine the aspects of Saudi cultural background that contribute to Saudi parental involvement in the learning of their children, concerning the influence of the cultural values, beliefs, and practices on parental involvement with their children in their educational pursuits. It also seeks to study the role of culture, the expectations of communication, the role of parents, and the impact of these parameters on the nature and degree of parental involvement in the education process of young children. To achieve this, an inductive framework was employed, utilizing an interpretive research philosophy and qualitative research methods.

The subject matter of this study is one of the key reflections that must be applied to early childhood education, which includes the cultural backgrounds of parents and the learning processes of their children. Using the targeted population of Saudi parents, the research aims to shed light on the issue of cultural heritage in shaping parents' attitudes against the instrumental influence of education on the development of their children. Understanding this dynamic is necessary for several reasons. First, it addresses a knowledge gap in terms of understanding the relationship between culture and parental involvement in early childhood learning, with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia. By evaluating their association, it may be possible to create refined interpretations regarding the determinants of influence and obstacles

to parental involvement in their child's learning. Additionally, the findings of this study will benefit not only those professionally involved in the field of education and policymaking but also have broader implications for the overall Saudi society. By identifying the key factors that influence parental involvement, these stakeholders can devise effective and workable interventions and programs to enhance parental involvement in early childhood learning. This, in turn, can facilitate holistic child development, leading to improved academic performance, socio-emotional success, and overall preparedness for future success.

The study also contributes to the scholarly literature of the three aspects of culture, education, and child development. It introduces theoretical levels of exploration and approaches to early childhood by augmenting our understanding of how cultural diversity shapes practice and thoughts about educating children who are parented by parents. This knowledge is applicable not only in the context of Saudi Arabia but also holds broader significance in terms of general knowledge about educational practices worldwide, as it confirms the importance of culturally responsive approaches to early childhood practice in multicultural contexts. In essence, the findings of this research study can be used to create positive change by informing policies, practices, and intervention procedures that can transform parental involvement in early childhood schooling in Saudi Arabia and other regions. It is a crucial step towards enabling a nurturing and conservative education process that propels parents and children to excel.

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

1.5.1 Research Aims

This study's primary aim is to investigate how the cultural backgrounds of Saudi parents with children in early childhood education impact their involvement in their children's education.

The overarching objective is to help fill a knowledge gap regarding the interaction between culture and parental involvement in early childhood learning, particularly in the Saudi Arabian context.

1.5.2 Research Objectives

- 1- To understand the key factors related to cultural background that influence Saudi parents' involvement in their children's learning in Saudi cultural contexts.
- 2- To shed light on the gender and parental involvement that impact the perspective of Saudi Arabian parents.
- 3- To determine the barriers that constrain the involvement of Saudi parents in the learning process of their children in Saudi Arabia.
- 4- To present recommendations for the benefit of decision-makers and policymakers at the government level regarding the parental involvement of Saudi parents in the context.

1.6 Main Research Question

This study is aimed at answering the following main research question:

- *How much does a parent's cultural background have an impact on the level and type of involvement a parent has in early childhood education?*

1.6.1 Research Sub-questions

The following research sub-questions:

RQ1: How does Saudi parents' cultural background influence their involvement in their children's education, from the perspective of parents and practitioners?

RQ2: What are the key factors related to cultural background that affect Saudi parents' involvement in their children's learning within Saudi cultural contexts from the perspective of parents and practitioners?

RQ3: What is the link between gender and parental involvement from the perspective of Saudi Arabian parents?

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters, the content of which can be summarized as follows:

Chapter One: The introductory chapter provides a brief overview by defining the research problem and the purpose of the study, as well as the research objectives, through the main research question and its sub-questions.

Chapter Two: This chapter provides a detailed overview of the study, including a general introduction to Saudi Arabia, as well as an examination of issues related to cultural background, education, and family.

Chapter Three: This chapter presents a literature review and theories related to the study's topics, along with an analysis of previous studies relevant to the research.

Chapter Four: This chapter presents and describes the selected methodologies, including data collection and analysis, as well as the ethical considerations related to the research. Furthermore, the validity and reliability of the study are established.

Chapter Five: In this chapter, the results of this study are presented as qualitative research results.

Chapter Six: This discussion chapter presents the results from Chapter 5, linking them to the theoretical framework and previous literature.

Chapter Seven: In the conclusion chapter, the main findings of the study are summarized to answer the research questions. The contributions of this study are also listed, along with limitations. Furthermore, the research's implications are highlighted, and recommendations for future implementation are provided. The chapter concludes by highlighting potential future studies, with some general reflections on the topic and the thesis as a whole.

Chapter Two: Context of the Study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides some background about the research context, which starts with a historical background of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including changes and developments that each stage witnessed and that many generations experienced. It further discusses political, cultural, economic, social, and educational viewpoints. Additionally, the researcher will equally give a clear description of the family, culture, language, religion, and education policy since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established up to now. The concluding section of this chapter will review the government activities and support for Saudi families and education.

2.2. Background of the Research

Human beings have evolved unique lifestyles throughout history, with philosophies, traditions, languages, and customs that have evolved by necessity in response to their geography and interactions with other peoples and led to different central beliefs and values (Ferguson et al., 2017). Motives that lead to such diversity are rooted in factors like the current economic, political, technological, and social environments. As a way to contemplate how societal norms influence parental involvement, it is imperative to consider societal norms and their influence on parental involvement. In other cultures, these norms could be stronger about children and the network of family and friends growing together. Therefore, children theoretically might be subjected to the educational perceptions of two or more caregivers, which may also affect parental involvement. This latter is therefore not only a product of personal bias, but a wider cultural and social environment in which families are placed.

Saudi Arabia is a Middle Eastern monarchy whose culture is defined by a rich history and observation of Islamic values, but the country is experiencing a great transformation in its society. Over a third of the populace is below the age of 18, and the nation has been strongly

dependent on early childhood education and parental involvement for the future prosperity of its nationals. Politics, demographics, language, religion, beliefs, tradition, and patriarchal norms all contribute to Saudi Arabia's intricate social fabric. Gender segregation and other traditional mores are severely enforced due to the conservative nature of Saudi cultural values.

Early childhood development (ECD) is a critical stage during which the groundwork for children's future academic and social success is laid (Anishchenkova, 2020). The current absolute monarch in Saudi Arabia is capable of transforming the educational system and establishing policies that impact parental participation in early childhood education (Kruse, 2016). Much credit is attributed to parents in Saudi culture, who played vital roles in the upbringing and subsequent marriage of their children. The role of a parent in educating their children cannot be overestimated, not only in terms of the learning opportunities at home but also when it comes to formal preschool enrolment. Traditional gender roles, however, can be detrimental to the participation of a mother in the education of her children, and the value accorded to education between families as well as between communities can vary.

Despite these barriers, Saudi Arabian culture is becoming increasingly supportive of parental participation and involvement in the early childhood process through government initiatives and community initiatives (Banks, 2021). They are trying to enhance links between families and schools by promoting greater and open communication between parents, teachers, and schools. Among the targets of Vision 2030, there is an intention to expand the range of high-quality early education and care facilities in the country, providing parents from diverse backgrounds with an opportunity to contribute to their children's education (Anishchenkova, 2020). According to Anishchenkova (2020), although parental involvement is highly regarded in Vision 2030, the plan acknowledges that involvement may vary due to variations in socioeconomic status. The ultimate goal of the vision is to provide learners from every socioeconomic background with equal access to high-quality education. Its primary focus is on

closing the achievement gap, particularly for underserved populations, so that every child can receive an education that sets them up for success. Presumably, achieving such an objective will result in establishing a favourable and attractive educational environment where parents are motivated to participate in educating their children with a view to their future prosperity (Anishchenkova, 2020). In the literature review chapter, the meaning of parental involvement will be investigated.

In other countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, gender equity is emphasized in relation to responsibility in early childhood education. Mothers and fathers are also encouraged to become active participants in their child's learning process, fostering a sense of mutual responsibility for their child's education. This gender-balanced model can create a supportive and affirming atmosphere among early learners as parents collaborate to create a harmonized learning experience (Harcourt & Einarsdottir, 2011). Cultural dissimilarities can be significant when it comes to parental influence in early childhood learning, as different societies hold varying ideologies and values that shape what is considered acceptable parenting behaviour. It also requires a cultural exploration of the same to understand what leads to various types of parenting, communication practices, and educational priorities across cultures. This knowledge will enable early childhood educators, policymakers, and researchers to develop more culturally sensitive approaches to teaching young children, thereby fostering growth, learning, and promoting fairness in cross-cultural understanding. In the literature review, the concept of gender will be defined.

Finally, the paper shall discuss the sensitive relationship between culture and parental participation in education in the early stages. In Saudi Arabia, parental involvement is influenced by traditional values and gender roles, as well as government programs such as Vision 2030. In contrast, in countries like the UK, parental involvement is shaped by multiculturalism, complemented by a combination of education and gender equality. The

involvement of parents requires an understanding of these cultural particularities to develop effective educational policies and practices that meet the needs of individuals and their families in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Understanding these cultural differences will help educators, policymakers, and researchers foster environments that promote healthy development and equitable learning opportunities for all children.

2.3 The context of Saudi Arabia

The KSA is a Middle East nation that borders Jordan, Kuwait, and Iraq and is the most populous in the Arabian Peninsula. It also became independent in 1932, and the discovery of oil deposits came in 1938. The Saudi Arabian State covers an area of approximately 2,150,000 Km², making it the second-largest state in the entire Middle East and the fifth-largest state in Asia. The country is located in the center of the Middle East; its fusion of religious values and historical traditions has withstood the wave of modern culture associated with globalization and the spread of the internet (Anishchenkova, 2020). It is an Islamic state governed and ruled by Islamic principles as written in the Quran. Saudi Arabia is associated with its rich heritage, culture, and traditions; its society is a complex fabric made up of various strands, including politics, demographics, language, religion, beliefs, traditions, and patriarchal norms. The General Authority of Statistics in Saudi Arabia reported that in 2020, the Saudi Arabian population was estimated to be approximately 34.81 million. In this population, the proportion of persons aged 15-64 years and those aged 15 years and below was approximately 60 percent and 37 percent, respectively. This means that over 33 percent of the Saudi Arabian population is below 15 years (Al-Khraif et al., 2022). Also, the demography of Saudi Arabia will change slowly over the years because of changes in birth rate, death rate, and migration patterns. The general tendencies of a rather young population have been quite stable throughout the recent few years, which implies that early childhood education has never been more significant.

A significant area of focus in this thesis is early childhood development (ECD). ECD plays a significant role in establishing future behaviours and learning in children (Anishchenkova, 2020). Parents have significant roles to play in supporting the educational and general development of the child during this critical period of development (Richerson et al., 2016). The children shall be taught to grow up to become responsible adults who have a strong foundation. To establish such a foundation, involvement of parents with the center will be central and perceived to be contributing significantly in the early childhood education environment towards their subsequent academic success (see e.g., Kambouri et. al., 2021). The social background and neighborhood environment are associated with the feasibility that a child can study and succeed academically (Richerson et al., 2016). The goal will be to develop a knowledge base of the social base conditions that influence parental involvement in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia and the importance of developing a more accommodating and inclusive learning environment, as will be covered in the study (Banks, 2021).

2.3.1 The political situation in Saudi Arabia

The politics of Saudi Arabia is an unusual combination of historic monarchic law and ongoing modernization, where the traditions of the state began in 1932 when Ibn Saud declared the independence of his state. Since then, the country has experienced the most significant political shifts, which can be explained by the unique history and the issues that the country encounters regarding the process of entering the modern world civilization (Anishchenkova, 2020). The Al Saud family has been in power since Saudi Arabia's independence in 1932. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is the present king. He came into power in 2015 when his half-brother, also named and titled the same, passed away. However, the modernization initiative of the kingdom began in 2017, when Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the son of the former king Salman, initiated changes that were later manifested as Vision 2030.

The absolute monarchy provides a centralized government that dictates the extent of parental involvement in early childhood learning. The government's power extends to the educational sphere and policy formation that may influence the interaction between parents and educational institutions during the key years of child development (Scholte et al., 2015). One way culture can influence parental participation in the political environment is through the emphasis on obedience to authority inherent in traditional Saudi Arabian culture. The culture in Saudi Arabia is deeply rooted in a norm that places great importance on respect for people in positions of authority. This comprises, but is not confined to, the government and school authorities. Consequently, not all Saudi parents will be bold enough to challenge or question the course of action taken by school administrators to determine the educational path for their children.

This cultural disposition of deference can reduce their ability to assert the needs of their child or participate in politics (Richerson et al., 2016). Conversely, a family of a culture that may prize individual rights and freedoms or that has a history of political action is more likely to challenge the decisions made by the government or press on behalf of a child, particularly when they believe the government or school authorities are not acting in the best interest of their child (Mercer, 2016). Such a cultural distinction leads to a striking disparity in evidence that reflects the spectrum of perspectives and approaches to parental involvement in matters related to education in Saudi Arabia, and, eventually, leads to the degree of persistence and access of parents in decision-making about their child's education.

The Saudi Arabian government has also implemented measures to promote parental involvement in the political environment. The Saudi Arabian government is working to create education councils and commissions as part of an effort to develop a school organization, where they can involve parents in the decisions made about their child (Banks, 2021). Such an action will allow parents to be more active in shaping their child's education. In addition, the

Saudi government has initiated initiatives that stimulate higher voter registration and political involvement. It will also help parents to participate in social activities that will improve their social well-being, such as improving children's education. Participation in politics helps parents to have a say in the decision-making process, and it also gives them an avenue of presenting their issues by involving in politics.

For instance, the parents will be allowed to express their views on education and how the educational structure in the country can be improved. The scope of cultural background is essential in establishing parental involvement in the Saudi Arabian political landscape. The influence of obedience to authority, language, and gender roles cannot be underestimated in affecting parental involvement (Mercer, 2016). Nevertheless, the government can deal with these obstacles through promoting political participation, offering support to parents, and creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

2.3.2 The Economic Situation in Saudi Arabia

The oil and gas sector are greatly associated with the economic condition of Saudi Arabia. The country tends to rely on the oil and gas industry as the source of its economic and financial prosperity since the oil deposits were discovered in 1938. KSA is a major oil producer with huge oil reserves that have made it a major stakeholder in the global energy industry. However, with the kingdom having realized the need to modernize in line with the socio-economic practices, the monarchy had been shifting the economy of the state to have less dependency on the oil and gas sector. It has brought about the need to adopt measures to diversify the economy and make it sustainable. In 2016, the Crown Prince launched Vision 2030, which is a plan concerning the economic and social transformation of Saudi Arabia that will release the potential of each area of the national economy and turn the state into a global economic and

investment hub. It seeks to expand the non-oil sector elements of the economy, such as technology, tourism, entertainment, and manufacturing. In an attempt to achieve the Vision 2030, the government has liberalized its business regulations to boost entrepreneurship and contribute towards the creation of a robust private sector (Anishchenkova, 2020). Policymakers have recognized the importance of early childhood education in shaping the future of Saudi Arabia and diversifying the economy. ECD is also the ground basis of lifelong learning and development. It provides the fundamental skills, knowledge, and social emotional capabilities to the children that allow them to become effective members of society.

2.3.3 Saudi Arabia's Language

The official language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic, which is deeply ingrained in the nation's culture (Anishchenkova, 2020). The language, being a key component of Saudi Arabia's cultural background, influences parental contributions towards early childhood learning. Arabic language proficiency is highly valued, and Arabic-speaking parents are more likely to actively participate in their child's education. In the Saudi Arabian culture, Arabic serves as a source of pride and identity. Parents who speak Arabic welcome the opportunity to teach the language to their children by creating an environment that fosters the development of reading and writing skills in children at an early age (Scholte et al., 2015). This practice strengthens the parent-child bond and encourages parental involvement in early childhood education. Arabic fluency enables the parents to interact freely with the teachers and gain a good understanding of the teaching program. This language competency serves as a link promoting smooth collaboration among parents, children, and schools, thereby enhancing the learning process among young learners in Saudi Arabia.

2.3.4 Saudi Arabia's Religion

The religious context in Saudi Arabia has a very strong impact on parental involvement in early childhood education. The predominance of Islam in the country has a drastic influence on most aspects of society, including education (Mercer, 2016). As the teaching of Islam emphasizes the importance of education, particularly the education of young children, parents take an active role in their children's early education, doing so eagerly and promptly with commitment (Sharifian et al., 2008). There is a tendency amongst parents to enrol their children in Quranic schools, where the priority according to the teaching of Islam is on the knowledge of Islam and memorising the Quran.

The focus on religious education can greatly influence parental involvement in early childhood learning in Saudi Arabia. It is the task of parents to provide their children with religious education that aligns with the values and beliefs of their family. Quranic schools also involve parents by paying close attention to their child's religious education and actively attending parent-teacher meetings (Scholte et al., 2015). Nevertheless, parental involvement in early childhood education may also be challenged by the spiritual environment. To illustrate, religious families that do not belong to the Muslim faith might not find information or educational materials tailored to their beliefs and values.

Despite such significant obstacles, the government of Saudi Arabia has implemented policies targeting the involvement of parents in religious education. Amazingly, the parents have been educated on the Islamic doctrine and the spiritual nourishment of their child. In addition, Quranic schools have also offered parental classes, designed to inform parents further on the Quran and its principles. Such activities related to educational efforts enable parents to become more involved in their child's religious upbringing and the further development of their spiritual life (Mercer, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, religion plays a significant role in shaping parental involvement in early childhood education. The Islamic religion has an essential focus

on education itself, and Islam educates the parents into playing an active part in the child's education process. However, parental roles can be constrained by gender and the inaccessibility of educational materials related to religious principles. The government can thus promote parental involvement in religious education and foster a more accommodating and conciliatory atmosphere in schools through its policies.

2.3.5 Family structure in Saudi Arabia

Cultural affiliation is closely connected to family size and may influence parental involvement in young children's education. Families were large in traditional Saudi Arabian society, and extended families often lived together or in close proximity. Family size can have either a positive or negative impact on the learning of early childhood (Scholte et al., 2015). To illustrate, extended families can be an excellent resource for giving advice and providing support to children, especially in matters of language and cultural practices. Nevertheless, the presence of multiple caregivers may result in a situation of sharing, resulting in reduced personal accountability of individual parents towards the education of the child.

Education and globalization have also contributed to the shift of Saudi Arabian society to smaller families, which took place during the past few years. This shift has also resulted in certain implications regarding early childhood education, and, notably, smaller families usually provide more resources and free time to meet the needs of all children's education. In this way, parents will be able to give more specific care and support, and it is also one of the reasons that results in the improvements in educational experiences (Richerson et al., 2016). Parents' cultural background is another contributing factor that affects how the parents view family size and its impacts on early childhood education. One family would be more concerned about the number of their children, and another would be more concerned about being able to provide

more care and many more resources to fewer children. The beliefs of Islam will facilitate the centrality of bringing children and a family, a factor that helps parents to influence their attitudes about their children, what they need, and support their needs.

Early childhood education has been increasingly subject to interest in Saudi Arabia, and parental roles and support in their children's learning and development have become a concern. The correlation between cultural background and family size is quite significant, dictating how parents involve in early childhood learning (Richerson et al., 2016). The extended family in a large family would be less available, whereas the other family might be more comfortable and accessible to the other child and edification. Parents' beliefs and attitudes towards family size can also be identified as a factor in determining whether a parent will be willing to participate in early childhood education. The cultural difference can be overcome by encouraging parents to support and facilitate learning in young children, leading to a more inclusive and supportive early childhood education structure.

2.3.6 Saudi Arabia's Parents and Children

Parental involvement in early childhood learning in Saudi Arabia is greatly affected by cultural background (Kruse, 2016). Family values and expectations have a significant influence on the relationship between children and parents in this cultural setting. The Saudi Arabian society places a lot of emphasis on children, and they want their parents to fulfil their needs spiritually, emotionally, and physically based on the cultural and religious values. This expectation highlights the vital role of parents in nurturing children, shaping their growth and development, and fostering their overall well-being. Saudi Arabia attributes the family unit to be the pillar of society, and parents play the primary role in developing the character of children and equipping them to embrace adulthood (Banks, 2021). The parental role in early childhood learning is

considered critical, and the parent should play an active role in their child's education as early as possible. Parental involvement involves facilitating homework at home and enrolling children in preschool programs. The involvement of parents in the learning process at these early stages is crucial in promoting the child's education by establishing a foundation upon which future academic achievement will be built.

Traditional gender roles are a major challenge to parental involvement in Saudi Arabia since males are usually more privileged and decision makers in the family, and they restrict the participation of mothers in their child's education (Kapalczyńska et al., 2018). Furthermore, there are differences in educational preferences between families and communities, as well as varying emphases on academic performance, manual skills, or vocational training. Moreover, parental involvement can also be hindered by language barriers, as expatriate families may not speak Arabic as their native language, which complicates their communication with teachers and access to inadequate resources. Nonetheless, Saudi Arabian society is becoming more proactive in the promotion of parental involvement and support in early childhood education through activities like campaigns on the promotion of reading and literacy of young children by the Ministry of Education, as well as the programmes and materials provided by local community organisations and non-governmental organisations (Banks, 2021). Family values and expectations are a crucial element of parental involvement in early childhood learning, as cultural background plays a significant role in shaping the way children relate to their parents. Although traditional gender roles and views on education are still prevalent, systematic efforts to raise awareness about parental involvement and support for early childhood education have been growing within Saudi Arabian society, thereby providing a more inclusive and supportive educational experience.

Furthermore, the vision acknowledges the need to strengthen school-family connections (Anishchenkova, 2020). Parental participation is not a purely domestic issue, but

rather extends to schools, emphasizing the need to foster a synergistic relationship among parents, teachers, and schools to ensure the overall development of the child. The vision stresses the importance of effective communication channels that enable parents to stay connected to schools. It is crucial to encourage frequent reports on a child's progress, to keep parents informed about the curriculum, and to facilitate open communication between parents and teachers. Through open lines of communication, all parents from diverse social backgrounds can play a crucial role in their child's education, regardless of their educational background or cultural beliefs.

The Vision 2030 initiative prioritizes early childhood development programs and initiatives (Anishchenkova, 2020). It recognizes the importance of laying a solid foundation in children's early years for their future achievements. To increase parental involvement, the government seeks to enhance access to high-quality early childhood education and care institutions across the country. Its accessibility and affordable costs mean parents of any social stratum can take full advantage of their child gaining the first adventure of education.

2.3.7 Saudi Arabia's School System

In Saudi Arabia, family background can significantly affect the role that parents play within early learning and the impact of the school system (Anishchenkova, 2020). Cultural factors like family values, attitude towards education and learning, and gender roles, among others, can affect the interest rate and character of parental intervention in educating a child. To illustrate, family may value education and grades, so it is not unusual to see parents taking an active part in their child's education (Kahu & Nelson, 2018). This participation encompasses parent-teacher meetings, providing help on homework, and home tutors.

The Vision 2030 project, developed by Saudi Arabia, has ambitious goals for the education sector and places a strong emphasis on early childhood education, recognizing it as a crucial factor in their future success in life (Anishchenkova, 2020). The proposed visionary project aims to support the country in achieving a brighter future, recognizing the importance of the early years in laying a firmer foundation for children. The vision lays great emphasis on instilling a culture of parental participation. Nevertheless, it acknowledges that the social background of people plays a significant role in the type and level of such involvement, and that backgrounds vary extensively within Saudi Arabian society. Vision 2030 is about ensuring that individuals from diverse social backgrounds have access to quality education. The government aims to close the educational access gap, particularly for marginalized groups. Saudi Vision 2030 aims to provide all children with a foundation for a successful future (Anishchenkova, 2020). Vision 2030 seeks to empower individuals to overcome the limitations imposed by their social background. The government's commitment stems from the recognition that parental involvement in early childhood has a significant influence on a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Also, the educational success of children directly relates to the high level of parental involvement in their children's education. Highly educated parents present an increased probability of setting higher expectations for their children's educational attainment. They are likely to practice those activities that could facilitate earlier learning processes, such as reading stories to their little ones, educational games, and helping with academic needs and tasks (Mercer, 2016). This correlation reveals the significance of parent education in establishing a conducive environment that promotes the education and intellectual development of their children. Parental involvement in early childhood learning is one of the main contributors to this academic advantage. Vision 2030 recognizes the importance of creating awareness campaigns, community involvement programmes, and parental education programmes to

eliminate barriers to learning and ensure parental involvement. The concept is to equip the parents with the knowledge and means they need to facilitate the initial learning process in their children regardless of their social status (Scholte et al., 2015). By implementing such a vision, a multicultural and friendly learning environment can be created, within which all the parents will be able to contribute to the learning process of their children positively, thus securing a bright future for the next generation.

Early childhood education in Saudi Arabia holds a prominent position in terms of cultural standards and regulation, particularly within the national education system. Kindergarten in Saudi Arabia typically begins for children between the ages of 3 and 6, and both public and private kindergartens are available. However, the prevalence of private kindergartens has increased, especially in urban areas, due to the historically and educationally limited scope of government services in this sector. Kindergarten attendance is not compulsory, leading to varying access to and quality of early childhood education, as well as differences in parental involvement (Abah & Athir Ibrahim Mohammed, 2021).

The administrative and teaching staff in the kindergarten stage in Saudi Arabia is limited to females only, without men. This reflects the cultural aspect and is consistent with what was presented in the thesis behind gender roles and societal and cultural expectations that are based on women as the basis for the first caregiver and educator, and all laws, regulations and kindergarten curricula are from the Ministry of Education and subject to it (Abah & Athir Ibrahim Mohammed, 2021).

In recent years, the goals and structure of education have been gradually influenced and transformed in accordance with Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasizes the importance of family and early childhood development as a national priority to enhance the well-being of Saudi families and ensure that schools are places where learning outcomes improve. Vision 2030 stresses the availability of high-quality and flexible kindergarten services, improved teacher

preparation through various training programs, and raising community awareness of the importance of parental involvement. All these educational and cultural changes are helping to reshape the early childhood education system in Saudi Arabia, aligning it with global standards while maintaining a foundation for education rooted in cultural expectations and gender norms. Understanding this context is crucial for comprehending the subsequent chapters of this message, particularly regarding how gender, culture, and educational change intersect in early childhood learning environments and how they impact parental involvement in their children's education (Abah & Athir Ibrahim Mohammed, 2021).

2.3.8 The culture of Saudi Arabia

Culture plays a major role in affecting the behaviours and attitudes of people, particularly in parenting and involvement in early education (Scholte et al., 2015). Cultural values and beliefs in Saudi Arabia have a significant impact on the participation of parents in their children's education. One crucial cultural influence is the considerable emphasis placed on family values. Saudi society views the family structure as the pillar of the community, with parents taking their responsibility for every facet of their child's educational journey seriously, for example, by ensuring their children do not miss school days (Kahu & Nelson, 2018). Islam has strong teachings that guide parents in their children's preschool learning. The value and principles of religion also become stronger in shaping parents' perceptions of their children in terms of education. It shows the general cultural and social implications of early childhood education in Saudi Arabia. However, not all aspects of the religion are beneficial or in alignment with modern norms. For instance, the Islamic culture values boys more than girls, thus emphasising outdated gender roles and segregation of the sexes and creating rigid expectations for each gender. Unlike boys, girls are often prepared from a young age to grow into wives in the future.

Further, Saudi Arabian culture has a strong sense of community that encourages parents to take part in early childhood education. The parents depend on the community, which consists of relatives, friends, and neighbours, to help them bring up children and give them good opportunities to grow and learn. This autonomy leads to increased involvement in community-based activities that focus on the early education of their children, which intensifies adherence to collectivism and societal commitment in ensuring an environment that allows learning and growing (Mercer, 2016). Additionally, the fast-paced modernization and globalization that the Saudi Arabian society is going through have brought a change in outlook regarding parental involvement in learning during the early part of a child's life. New concepts among the Saudis, like paying more attention to their children in education, have been created by their capability to share knowledge and information with others in other countries. With the exposure of Saudi people to modern technology and its inevitable influence on society on the rise, the need to identify how learning during early childhood is vital is on the rise. This is a realisation beyond mere acknowledgement of its role in the future success. It also involves understanding that parental participation is crucial in enhancing the child's learning experience. The complex interplay between religious beliefs, gender roles, honouring those in authority, and the importance of social associations then becomes the incubator within which the culture is shaped, forming the attitudes and behaviour of parents about the education of their children.

Nonetheless, language may prove to be a barrier to the participation of parents in early childhood learning in Saudi Arabia. Non-Arabic-speaking parents and children, particularly expatriates, may find it challenging to interact with teachers and understand the curriculum. This can lead to a lack of attachment to their child's education and reduced involvement. Children who are non-Arabic speakers also struggle to grasp the concepts covered in Arabic, and parents may also find it challenging to help them. Recently, the Saudi Arabian government has encouraged bilingualism by introducing English as a second language in schools. This

transition is more targeted on English skills and recognizes their importance in global communication and employment opportunities (Richerson et al., 2016). The difference in the culture of a parent and that of the Arab equips them with information that the education based on Arabic can fail to consider due to cultural reasons.

Such parents can therefore become valuable in helping the child in learning by overcoming the language and cultural barriers that the child who does not speak Arabic would encounter. The cultural background of a parent may also be a great influencing factor since one of the factors that affects the level of participation in early childhood learning is language. The ability to speak Arabic is highly valued, and in a case where both parents are fluent in the language, they are bound to be involved directly in the education of their children. Conversely, communication barriers often negatively affect parents who have little or no knowledge of the Arabic language at all, and existing barriers to communication stress the need to promote bilingualism in Saudi Arabian children and enhance the communicative situation in preschool education.

2.4 Conclusion

Saudi Arabia is an Arab country in the Middle East region with a vast population and has undergone several social transformations. This new shift towards modernity and sustainability has deeply affected the culture of the nation and ECE development. This is explained by the fact that the relationship between social background factors and parental involvement in early childhood development is complex in Saudi Arabia, given the significant association. The introduction considered the significance of social background in Saudi Arabia, especially concerning parental contributions in early childhood development. These results have reinstated the importance of population, cultural norms, religious beliefs, as well as political setting as a variable that will help to shape an individualized context through which parents

will draw their methods of constructing around their children. They may serve as both enablers and impediments of parental involvement due to the range of contextual variables and personal circumstances.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The literature review section reviews the literature that discusses the influence of cultural backgrounds on parental participation in early childhood education focusing on Saudi Arabia. This chapter shall examine the influence of the cultural dimensions of parents on their participation in the education of their children alongside the effect of gender roles and cultural expectations of parent participation in the educational related activities within and outside classrooms. Besides, the chapter will also consider educational theories such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to understand more clearly how social interaction and cultural involvement influence the learning process of children, and how such participation of parents can also be envisioned in the terms of this theory. The chapter also discusses major concepts around the study, including the influence of culture in setting the values of society, the impact of gender roles in schooling, and the influence of the variables on parent contribution in early childhood education.

The chapter has explored the way social and cultural norms can potentially affect the individual understandings of traditional gender roles, especially in Saudi Arabia, where the focus of education revolves around religious and social traditions. This chapter also discusses the effect of local culture, family socioeconomic status in educational environment in Saudi Arabia, and how actively the parents are when it comes to bringing up their children. It further explains how family structure, social expectations, as well as the role of teachers and education resources contributes to the learning environment and children results. In this chapter, the evaluation of existing literature and identification of research gaps to be filled by the present research will provide the basis for understanding the effects of cultural and gender variables on parental involvement in early childhood education.

3.1.1 Culture

There is no universally accepted definition of the term 'culture', as evidenced by the number (at least 150) of such definitions proposed by social scientists over the last 30 years (Smircich, 2017). As a concept, culture has been subject to widely differing interpretations and remains extremely difficult to define. There have been discussions about culture in a variety of contexts that touch on the many dimensions (scientific, social, economic, and psychological) the concept relates to and its relationship to societies, social change, and human development. Academics have explored culture from many different theoretical perspectives and within diverse social structures. Such studies are highly context-sensitive, making any universal definition unlikely to be agreed upon.

To illustrate some of the challenges, structural approaches to studying societies have led to definitions of culture that are quite specific to that approach. The structural framework spans all social groups or associations, as well as academic, economic, political, and religious institutions. The applicability of particular cultural elements, however, has been assumed to have similar effects on society, irrespective of the context. They are thus presumed to have influences that are independent of the type of society in which they operate. For example, symbols, norms, artefacts, and cultural values, although independent from one culture to the next, are unifying components that define the cultural paradigm of a given society in all disciplines. In practice, what is referred to as a "good culture" (Nelken, 2017) is supposed to produce favourable outcomes, yet the contrary is actually structure. However, it is essential to examine several definitions in order to completely comprehend the cultural concept. A discussion of several definitions will be presented in the parts that follow.

There has been considerable debate about the idea of culture. Scholars' views on culture in all its aspects, including definition, applicability, perception, and theoretical background, are notable for their lack of agreement. For example, some scholars hold the belief that culture is a learned behaviour, while others hold the belief that it is an abstraction from conduct (Smircich, 2017). For others, culture is a reality that exists only in people's minds, or something learned. For example, Sharifian et al. (2008, p. 1) conclude that the concept of "mind" defines the thinking, knowing, and feeling that shape the cultural paradigms of a given society.

However, Cotterell (2017, p. 7) concludes that "culture is a learned behaviour that acts as the mirror of a given society." The context in which the concept of culture is applied therefore has a significant influence on how it is defined. Interestingly, the structure of sentences used to define culture varies from intricate to straightforward. Nelken (2017, p. 281), for example, claims that culture is "a transmitted and created content of patterns of values, beliefs, and other significant systems which shape human behaviour." Since existing content can only be learned, culture in this sense is a learned phenomenon, depending on how the scholars deploy the term created content (Nelken, 2017). However, this definition does not answer the question of the degree of learning versus the degree to which culture is innate. The issue posed in this question is that, certain anthropologists have the view that cultural ideas are instilled at birth, but some anthropologists believe that cultural ideas are developed in the minds of people through an act that is associated with learning (Sharifian et al., 2008). This question arises because some anthropologists hold the opinion that cultural ideas are ingrained from birth, whereas others consider cultural ideas to be formed in people's minds through the process of learning (Sharifian et al., 2008).

An additional definition of culture is offered as a supplementary somatic non-genetic, non-bodily temporal series of objects and occasions founded on symbolism (Scholte et al., 2015). In this case, it is possible to recognize the culture of a specific group examining the

tools, implements, habits, institutions, and beliefs. This perception gives the impression that the understanding of culture by a given population is unique. It also empowers the argument that culture is a construct, learned by manipulation in the context of certain settings. Under this definition then, culture can be broadly defined as learned behavioral patterns and their moral meaning that is practiced in a group of people who hold a specific lifestyle. Throsby (2020, p. 169) asserts that culture is a "patterned way of thinking, feeling, and reacting acquired and transmitted through symbols" and that this process occurs across different contexts. He contends that the distinguishing accomplishments of particular groups of people emerge into the culture of that group, which then continues to shape the group's social concepts and ultimately becomes part of their way of life. He argues that these accomplishments, which develop into a culture, can be conditional, conventional, or historical. Human growth occurs in stages, and individuals are grouped according to specific developmental stages (such as new-borns, infants, children, adolescents, etc.). As an individual moves from being a new-born through the later groupings, they embrace the norms that later come to characterise their culture. Consequently, in this context, culture can also be referred to as a learned idea acquired from interactions within developmentally defined social groups.

Another more "scientific" approach to the characterization of culture has been proposed by some authors. Throsby (2020, p. 170), for example, defines culture as "a shared mental software." In this conception, culture is seen as a programmed state that defines associations. The capability to find association with a particular group is made possible with prior conditioning into the same programmed state. Moreover, this programmed state dictates reactions, behavioural trends, and beliefs, which can be employed to classify other persons in the group to which an individual belongs. This approach also broadens the concept of culture to encompass groups, nationalities, professions, and even genders. Boundaries that can be a principal feature of specific groups are also fundamental factors of their culture.

It would be revealed then that the word culture is one of the most ill-defined terminologies of social sciences, that the methods of distinguishing culture have far-reaching effects on our conception of the same. A similarity is that it is a set of beliefs and practices that one learns in a specific social context. The definition of culture can therefore be translated as a lifestyle determined by beliefs, social arrangements, environmental factors as well as past concepts. Therefore, the culture of a group can be acquired by passive observation or more active contact. Techniques also may involve carrying out group practice and even teaching (Sharifian et al., 2008).

Moreover, because meanings of culture vary on the basis of our own comprehension, as opposed to the actual basis of a particular culture, we have the potential of portraying our own preconceptions on the interpretation of a particular culture. Therefore, in describing a particular culture, we need to understand our prejudices in addition to the dynamics around that society (Cotterell, 2017). Consequently, how one perceives a particular culture can be learned and applied to reveal clues about his own culture. Our assumptions, which we apply to make sense of the culture of another group, can: reveal a lot about our own culture.

In addition, cultures also transform, generation after generation, in a process known to scholars as the conditional revolution (Belman et al., 2019). Societies are compelled to adopt alternative lifestyles to cope with the existing conditions. Such forms of lives are then translated into their culture and act as the direct representation of the conditions in which they originated. These cultural adaptations could be caused by environmental, social, educational, and demographic changes and even natural disasters. The past associations by a community also have to be taken into consideration when deciding what cultural change can occur in it despite the prevailing circumstances. One should therefore become aware of the history of a given community since the reason behind the way the culture is practiced today is mostly seen in the past circumstances that were perhaps greatly different in comparison to the present ones.

Factors such as the previous economic, social and educational experiences of the communities that the civilisation emerged in, e.g., will have had a great impact on how the latter culture of the civilisation will be. The impact of cultural development echoes the social frameworks that were at work in the history of a particular group and influences how individuals view each other, creating the unique social signatures that constitute a particular people with time passing.

3.2 Why does culture matter?

Culture can be defined as everything in a society, and Ostiguy (2017, p. 77) explains why it is called the lifeblood of a lively civilization. Through culture, society can celebrate, narrate through stories, and dream about the future. Moreover, cultural frameworks allow societies to make sense of the world based on the views of other people and define our identities. Culture defines most aspects of society, including the aspects of education, social life, health, and even security.

Culture has great significance because it affects how people view themselves. Identity, in general, refers to how a group of individuals define themselves as well as how others see and define them (Hepp et al., 2015). Culture is the foundation of a person's identity. For example, language, symbols, attitudes, and beliefs are cultural components that define the identity of a person. Individuals develop the social structures, beliefs, behavioural patterns, and perceptions that are the essential elements of identity through exposure to the culture of a group. Furthermore, the concept of identity is crucial because it fosters an understanding of our similarities to and differences from other groups and helps us establish a pattern for forming relationships with others. It can be argued that social cohesion and unity are made possible by the sharing of the cultural practices that define group members' identities. Identity can be thought of as the idea of "self," the qualities that make a person both unique and identifiable as

belonging to a particular group. According to Woodward (2018), one can interpret the idea of "self" as a reflection of social affiliation. However, a person possesses many "selves" which require differentiation of the context in which they are dealing with. An individual has no means of influencing the way people in a particular society may perceive him or her in a particular social context. The concept of identity is superior to the concept of self, in order to establish society as a whole. Identity, by definition, is a social construct designed by culture and deployed to classify people into particular groups (Balkin, 2017).

Identity derives from cultural conceptions through a collective process of cultural learning and internalisation, due to the optimistic character of societies (Woodward, 2018). This means that the impression of one's identity is not only related to an individual but also to the way that people as members of a group reflect themselves. When different societies interact, it is a person's cultural rather than individual identity that plays the most significant part in the interactions. At this level, an individual's identity is strongly influenced by the social structures of the societies to which they belong. It is important to note too that a cultural identity is not a homogenous experience, in that some factors, such as gender, will be a more or less salient aspect of that identity in different social contexts.

In a more developed understanding, a culture may be perceived as influencing social attributes and generating identifiers relatively enduring in time. The very definition of a society implies that it is a combination of interdependent entities with shared elements and a system of similar thoughts (Purnell, 2016). These values however are core to the family and in combination with other families, these become groupings the characteristics of which are then transferable to the entire society. As a result, one can observe how unique features can be traced to diverse groups. Societies come together to blend similar identifiers and features to establish the social structure through mutual interaction and toleration (Grosjean, 2011). A social structure is actually made up of several identifiers and broad frameworks that have been taken

from various different groups (Grosjean, 2011). The cultures of such societies have an impact on those frameworks. In a broader sense, society is the accumulation of connected attitudes, behavioural patterns, and beliefs that take into account the cultural identities of the individual members.

There are several cultural elements in the Saudi context that influence parental involvement in schools, such as a thesis by Aldawsari (2016) showing that a major factor identified through research is the traditional division of gender roles. In this case, mothers are responsible for domestic chores and childcare while fathers are regarded as breadwinners. The social norm has played an active role in making sure that fathers are less involved in the educational matters of their offspring because their primary focus lays on the provision of financial support and the wellbeing of their families (Aldawsari, 2016). They bear no responsibility to contribute to any schooling activities in children. Certain cultural values are also present, underlining the respect to hierarchy and authority, which helps the parents to think that schools are independent institutions that do not need any input as to them.

The conservative cultural environment that is witnessed in Saudi Arabia poses challenges for many parents, especially women, as they try to fit in a healthy involvement with schools. The cultural norms involving gender modesty and segregation limit opportunities for women to have healthy interactions with male teachers or involve in school activities that take place outside their homes (Aldawsari, 2016). Additionally, the influence of tribal affiliations or extended family networks impacts parental involvement in schools because many decisions regarding children's education are influenced by collective opinions and expectations from the family and community in general.

Communication styles and language have a significant role to play regarding parent involvement in schools in SA. The predominant language in this country is Arabic. Therefore,

parents who might not be proficient in Arabic face many difficulties when communicating with school staff, and they also face challenges understanding school and educational materials. If educational materials are available in other languages, such as English, it is possible for parents to restrain themselves from engaging in school activities. Such a language barrier can lead to a situation where collaboration between teachers and parents is hindered, resulting in less parental involvement. Understanding and addressing such cultural elements is crucial because greater parental involvement in schools can be encouraged, and there will also be inclusive spaces where all parents feel valued and respected.

3.3. Culture and education

Importantly, Balkin (2017) contends that culture aids in the development of children's abilities, fosters self-esteem, and also enhances their resilience. The combination of all these advantages improves the educational outcomes for the children. According to Scheneider et al. (2017), pupils are more likely to enrol in higher educational institutions when they have received an arts education that is heavily influenced by their culture. This is because such students not only have art skills but also tend to develop a sense of identity, which fosters resilience and increases creativity, thus increasing the possibility of the students' performance. Many schools in the USA, Canada, and the UK, for example, have arts education that encourages students' creativity and comprehension. It has also been suggested that cultural heritage helps promote pupils' long-term goals.

Research has demonstrated that educating students about their cultural history increases their access to schooling and lifelong learning opportunities (Balkin, 2017). Through comprehending their heritage, students acquire an identity that defines their past and helps mould their present and future. By having an awareness of cultural history, students broaden

their perspective on the cultural norms of other groups, fostering their ability to think creatively and socially in different contexts. Consistent with this is evidence showing that students who study cultural heritage are more socially balanced than their counterparts. Also, it has been demonstrated that students from multicultural environments have stronger social skills (Caligiuri, 2017).

Education plays a major role in every aspect of society. Specifically, scholars have argued that education facilitates long-term socioeconomic growth (Schneider et al., 2017). Education is also identified as one of the elements in combating poverty. Notably, culture is also related to education. For example, Aminah and Asl (2015, p. 14) have shown how particular cultures influence the education system of a society. This can be seen in the Islamic culture, where students and parents tend to perceive the teacher as a source of authority, as within Islam, leaders are perceived as sources of authority. The fact that culture is a way of life and affects how people perceive all areas of their lives is reflected in its influence on education. In the sections below, the variables that influence educational cultures are analysed in detail.

3.4.1 Culture and Family

This concept of family has grown out of its typical understanding to encompass a vast array of organizations and relationships within contemporary society (Fallis, 2002; Giebeler, 2019). The family is regarded as a basic social institution undergoing a significant transition (Fallis, 2002). Historically viewed as the basic building block of human co-residency, modern-day structures now encompass numerous types of families alongside heteronormative and reproduction-centered perspectives (Giebeler, 2019). This broadening outlook mirrors the critical role of the family as a social institution promoting long-run associations, identity

formation, and linking many compartments of the individual life (Turner & West, 2015). The more conventional family arrangements, the two-parent family in particular, are often linked to more positive child outcomes (Barrio, 1998). The efficiency of family, however, is conditional upon perpetual regulating and participation in the child-rearing process as opposed to specific forms (Barrio, 1998). Character development and interpersonal skills have a family-based background (Al-Momani, 2024; Rusli, 2020). The family plays a great role in numerous aspects of the life of an individual, education and personal growth being one of them. It also plays a significant role in the physical, linguistic, mental, social, and emotional development of the child before school attendance (Al-Momani, 2024). According to Islam, a family is considered a learning institution in teaching moral standards and preventing conflicts in society with character training (Rusli, 2020).

Sociology of family involves the analysis of the evolving nature of family life within the broader social context. The domain tests traditional family concepts through exploring the creation of families, distributions of work, and intergenerational bonds (Baber & Elmer, 1945). Family sociology sheds light on societal transformation, focusing on issues relating to socioeconomic discrepancy and parenting (Scott et al., 2003). The concept of family roles is complex and changing in sociology. Synthesis of jobs and family roles is the strategy people use to strike a balance between job and care responsibilities (Kossek et al., 1999). The mother is the one who nurtures, protects, cares, and handles working at home (Shrestha et al., 2019). Over the past 100 years, the role of fathers has transformed substantially: what were once moral and breadwinner functions turned into more affectionate and participatory ways of engaging in family life (Puhlman & Pasley, 2016). Fathers were historically regarded as remote providers, whereas modern fathers carry out childcare and domestic activities to a greater extent (English, 1954).

Recent research on the development of modern father roles emphasizes the importance of family structure, definition of the father, and co-parenting in realizing these positions (Puhlman & Pasley, 2016). Scholars underline the need to consider structural impacts, differences by class, race, and gender, as well as family member experiences (Zinn & Eitzen, 1988). The family has existed throughout human history. Akhmedov (2021) classifies families as social institutions. Further, a family has been classified as the basic unit of society. Through the family, society is shaped. Though there is no universal definition of family, in general, studies hold that the family as a unit has economic, psychological, biological, legal, and social aspects.

The inputs of a family shape the life patterns of a child from birth to death. This assertion places the family unit at the centre of the overall social space. In the context of education, the family is the social unit that is actively involved in decision-making (Lee et al., 2025). As discussed earlier, especially in the context of Saudi Arabia, society is shaped by a collectivist culture. As such, Al-Khreif et al. (2020) highlight that the Saudi family structure stretches to extended families. Further, elders in Saudi families are highly respected, and teachers remain revered by the children and their parents. Nevertheless, given that the culture of Saudi Arabia is collectivist, grandparents and other extended family members have authority over matters relating to education. The experiences of the elders influence the overall educational approach of the children in Saudi Arabia.

Therefore, as discussed earlier, parents in Saudi Arabia focus more on their children's growth. Their approach to education focuses more on teachers, where the teacher makes the child successful (Phipps & Blackall, 2023). As such, parents are unlikely to be involved in educational activities, including looking for after-school activities. Further, since teachers are viewed as a source of authority in Saudi Arabia, parents cannot question their children's

educational progress or suggest any changes that they think might work better for their children.

Bridging the divide between Saudi parents in Saudi Arabia, the concept of family ought to focus on a new goal. Meaning, the family concept takes a new trajectory. Because Saudi culture is collectivist, they have strong family backgrounds. As such, they can provide strong support as Saudi parents adapt to the education system for their children's learning. Further, the extended family connection puts the elders at the centre of the family. These elders cut across grandparents and other extended family members. Therefore, their role can be important in maintaining the traditions and culture of Saudi children.

3.4.2 Socio-economic background

Over the years, scholars have expressed a variety of opinions about the idea. According to Duenas et al. (2016), social background is the history of a person's social environments and interactions. Because social background and biological background share some ideas, the addition of a social perspective ensures that an otherwise purely biological definition can make sense when viewed through the prism of society. Ethnicity, family history, experiences, behavioural patterns, interactions, and cultural constructions are all aspects of social background that are the focus of understanding what family is.

The sociocultural idea is often presented in studies as a psychological concept. For instance, Gee (2021) states that the sociocultural idea offers an account of how personal mental functioning relates to cultural, institutional, historical, and other social concepts, per the sociocultural theory. In this view, mental functioning and its relationship to a sociocultural idea are psychological developments influenced by all the social concepts underlying that idea. In turn, psychological developments influence how an individual interacts, involves in practices,

and participates in society. The mind's conditioning to adopt particular operational frameworks during development means that the sociocultural concept, while described at a societal level, has an influence that is significantly determined at the individual level by the psychology of the society's members.

Concerning the relevance of the sociocultural concept, the research studies have conflicting standpoints. To certain scholars, the concept is dynamic and evolves only in reaction to social changes (Grosjean, 2011). Others are convinced that since the concept is quite basic, it is hard to change a person's mindset. For instance, according to Glaveanu et al. (2020), who advocate directed involvement, the sociocultural idea is of cognitive growth that takes place in a social environment and cannot be influenced by external factors. The idea extends beyond language to include additional elements, the combination of which determines a person's social background and sense of self.

Many elements are involved in discussions of sociocultural notions, with lifestyle being one of the most frequent. In a psychographic study, Tezak (2019) defines lifestyle as the entirety of an individual, encompassing their motivations, personality traits, interests, attitudes, and values. The combination of these elements shapes a person's social behaviour patterns, or what is referred to less formally as their lifestyle. Other social elements include religion and education. Human development cannot be completed without education, but in this context, education refers to more than what takes place in the classroom. It is the way an individual learns and develops all of his sociocultural conceptions, including academic learning ones (Belman et al., 2019). Sociocultural ideas affect the concept of education. Notably, children tend to embrace a specific learning pattern depending on established cultural perceptions and social and cultural concepts, including religious views, which shape the way they perceive learning in schools. Other social variables that are necessary to the sociocultural concept include beliefs, population, and values.

To provide an example, Tezak (2019) notes that the sociocultural views shared by all members of a community are the knowledge of a specific community. Such ideas, however, are also influenced by the demographics of the group. In terms of beliefs, the demographic aspect influences how society is viewed. Even more so, societal values are dictated by the social elements within a society. Gee (2021) argues that values dictate the level of social extremes, operating parameters, and the metric of resolution. That is, values dictate the daily operations of society within the sociocultural conceptions. Outlook and social class also form part of the sociocultural concept. According to Belman et al. (2019), a society's sociocultural conceptions are what determine a person's orientation, attitude, and socioeconomic class. This implies that social class structure and attitude are all strongly influenced by a population's cultural background.

Some definite examples of beneficial sociocultural factors are given in the literature, such as a strong sense of family, participation in local sports and mentoring programmes, a good education and healthcare system, accessibility to leisure opportunities, and exposure to the arts (Duenas et al., 2016). A great sense of family has been termed the core basis on which a civilisation is established. Mentoring and community sports also play crucial roles in redefining the cultural constructions of specific civilisations, and play a key role in determining the way individuals relate to others.

Good education entails equipping learners with a strong base of information to learn so that whatever they learn becomes part of their social life as individuals. Healthy lifestyles in society are also achieved through a good healthcare system. This paper has demonstrated that parental involvement in children's education is a crucial factor that contributes to academic success. The degree of parent involvement in the education of their children is influenced by cultural values, beliefs, and practices, and in certain cultures, parents are more involved in their

children's education than in others (Hardaway & Cornelius, 2014). Culture also determines the way parents can approach their children, teachers, and trust levels in the school system.

Discussion of cultural background raised the sociocultural notion, and illustrations were mentioned of those factors involved. The sociocultural concept simply states that the social and cultural environments of people determine their behaviours and beliefs. The socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and religion are among the sociocultural determinants of parental involvement in the education of children. Conclusively, the role of parents in educating their children in terms of academic performance is important, and culture influences the intensity of parental involvement. By studying this sociocultural influence, educators and policymakers can adapt solutions to promote and improve parental involvement in children's education.

The idea of social reproduction holds a great weight in any society. Stevano et al. (2021) think that social reproduction is where societies will reproduce themselves over time. These reproductions can involve different forms, including economic, cultural, and social constructions, among others. The primary aim of social reproduction is to keep society stable across all its domains. Such domains encompass social norms, culture, behavioural patterns, religious elements, and attitudes. The sociology of education has been influenced extensively by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly his concept of cultural capital (Grenfell, 2019). One of these is the theory of cultural reproduction, developed by Bourdieu and first published in the early 1970s, which states that dominant classes continue their control due to the reproduction of their culture by educational institutions (Jenks, 2002). The concept of cultural capital is at the core of this theory, and this concept is reviewed because parents transmit cultural advantages to their children, which influence their educational and social success (Jagne & Breen, 2016).

According to this theory, cultural capital is a mechanism of social reproduction as parents invest in and can transfer cultural assets to children (Jaeger & Breen, 2016; Ringenberg et al., 2009). Parental involvement in their children's education is marginally predicted by their cultural capital (McLoyd, 2002; Ringenberg et al., 2009). Although the significance of cultural capital has helped define the existence of the difference in educational attainment, the overall theory of social reproduction proposed by Bourdieu faces issues of empirical concern (Tzanakis, 2011). Critics argue that the analytic possibilities of the concept are limited when applied in multicultural societies and that the theory proposed by Bourdieu would have to be substantially revised to reflect the experience of social mobility in the past decades (Savage et al., 2007; Tzanakis, 2011). Other authors propose the separation of cultural capital and habitus and the integration of both into a scientific realist approach to more adequately describe the continued socioeconomic disparities in schooling (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Considering the boundaries within the broader theory of social reproduction of Bourdieu, others state that cultural capital must be substituted by a more differentiated model (Savage et al., 2007).

As Stevano et al. (2021) put it, social reproduction helps in analysing the integration of social structures of Saudi parents and how they are similar to or different from the Saudi cultural dynamics, thus presenting a cognitive-logical finding about the overall concept of Saudi parents and their involvement in children's education in Saudi Arabia. Further, while the context of parental involvement in early childhood education remains an important concept, the study of family adaptation through the social reproduction of Saudi parents will shed light on how family units can collaborate. In Saudi Arabia, gender roles are traditionally defined, and mothers bear the primary role in children's upbringing, though education-wise, it becomes a family affair. In the UK, exposure to Western educational ideologies makes overall involvement in children's education a diverse affair. There is no absolute source of authority among the parties involved in children's education. Therefore, through social reproduction, it

is easy to note the overall integration of these diverse and dynamic approaches to early children's education. Nevertheless, Saudi parents face challenges and opportunities. Saudi parents must encounter barriers in social settings, social dynamics, behavioural patterns, and social constructs that might slow their adaptation to the overall Saudi Arabian early childhood learning dynamics.

In conclusion, notably, Saudi society is collectivist-oriented; therefore, the dynamics and approach of early childhood education in the Saudi setting are different, and the Saudi community takes education as a family and social responsibility. This cultural orientation has a great impact on diverse areas of life, such as education and, more notably, early childhood education. This communal attitude to learning can be seen in many aspects, including a high level of family support in learning, community involvement in educational life, and a common feeling of responsibility in children's learning achievements.

Changes in income, education, and cultural identity have been associated with shifts in family structure and norms. Several recent studies have demonstrated a relationship between economic and ethnic factors and family structure in shaping socioeconomic and cultural outcomes (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 2019). In low-income families, there is a clear indirect effect of economic hardship on children's social adjustment through its impact on parents' psychological health and parenting behaviours toward their children. This economic factor appears to operate similarly across gender and ethnic groups, emphasizing the critical role of family processes in mediating the effects of economic stress on child well-being (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 2019; Mistry et al., 2002). Economic stress often increases the incidence of psychological problems among parents, negatively impacting their parenting and social behaviors with their children and the extent of their interaction with them (Conger et al., 1992; Hardaway & Cornelius, 2014; Mistry et al., 2002). Family strength and cohesion are determined by their ability to resolve economic and social problems, particularly in low-

income families (Lee et al., 2025). These maltreated parenting behaviors are often associated with increased negative externalizing behaviors and decreased prosocial behaviors among children and parents (Hardaway & Cornelius, 2014; Mistry et al., 2002).

3.5 Involvement of Parents in Education

Parental involvement is generally understood to mean parents taking part in school activities or events that are arranged by the school authorities, attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in classroom activities, and assisting with homework. This degree of involvement is essential in creating a positive educational setting among children, and it serves as the initial step when parental involvement occurs (Boonk et al., 2018). The parental involvement, however, can be applied to not only the involvement, but also an active and direct involvement on the part of parents in the processes of decision making in the training facility. It also allows the involved parents to become members of the school board, foreign policy-making, or collaborate with educators and reach optimal education results. This involvement means that they are more concerned about and interested in the way their children are taught (Boonk et al., 2018). The parental participation issue in Saudi Arabia should be specifically addressed as it can be profitable in various terms, and one of them is the spectral points that are culture- based. In Saudi Arabia, the culture of authority and hierarchy is well established, and so involving parents in decision-making in educational facilities can be time-consuming since it can be a lengthy and culturally changing process that involves the development of partnership and trust (Almalki, 2020).

Since it is more about the involvement by parents, implementation of the participatory practices can be relaxed a bit, taking into account the needs of a person of the specific culture but allowing the parents to be a part of the necessary processes. Almalki (2020) notes that the

Saudi Arabian educational environment offered might differ in the resources, structure, and capacity of an institution. In looking to make the process more approachable, therefore, a stronger focus on parental involvement will offer a more welcoming entrance point in which parents can react to the necessity to contribute to the learning of their children, regardless of whether the school incorporates them in decision-making procedures.

Integration into the community, including focusing on parental involvement, promotes integration with an understanding and appreciation of the many ways parents can assist their children in educational development. The advantage of this approach is that all parents, regardless of the availability of fewer resources, will become actively involved in educating their children. Educational institutions in Saudi Arabia can establish the scope of greater participation through slower steps and by focusing on parental participation in the very early stage, setting a precedent for greater participation later. With improved trust and relations between parents and schools, there might be a chance to increase parental involvement in decision-making processes gradually (Almalki, 2020).

Parental involvement refers to parental participation in the learning and growth of their children, whether at school or home (Foulidi, X., 2022). Examples of parental involvement in their children's learning include frequent communication with the teachers to be aware of the child's development in learning, academic performance, and behaviour.

The second parental-involvement example is promoting learning at home through the establishment of an effective home environment, the provision of materials, and participation in educational activities (Kartel et al., 2022). By participating in school activities such as meetings, assemblies, and volunteering, parents can help shape a positive school culture and enrich their child through education. Parental involvement encompasses parents championing the needs and interests of the child in the schooling system and liaising with teachers and administration

to discuss studies, special needs, or extracurricular activities. This will enable parents to set clear expectations and objectives regarding the academic and behavioural achievements of their children so that they can achieve success in life, both academically and socially (Kartel et al., 2022).

Parents play a significant role in the academic achievements and overall growth of children (Mazikana, 2023). The involvement of the parents in the process of educating their children can result in a broad range of positive outcomes, including an increase in academic achievements. Parental involvement leads to improved performance among children. They attend school more often, perform better, achieve higher grades, and develop positive attitudes to learning. Parental involvement can also increase a child's motivation to succeed in school (Mazikana, 2023). Parents who take an interest in the education of their children convey a message that learning means something and motivates students to have higher expectations of themselves. Improved behaviour and discipline are another advantage of parental involvement in their children's learning. Children who have fathers or mothers who take an active part in their schooling are more likely to exhibit improved behaviour in the classroom and fewer cases of disciplinary action. This is attributed to the fact that parental involvement is associated with strengthening positive behaviour as well as enabling children to grow in respect of taking responsibility (Coleman, 2018).

Moreover, active parents involved in the education of their children would have a better chance of communicating with the teachers freely and successfully. This enables them to observe the development of their child, bring issues to the educators whenever they arise, and work hand in hand to enable the education of their child. Also, understanding that their parents are interested in their schooling would enhance self-esteem and confidence among children. It also sends a clear message that their activity is valued and respected, which has the potential to positively impact their mental health in general (Coleman, 2018). Parent involvement

enables families to share their cultural customs and values and their differences with teachers and peers. This creates a sense of belonging and inclusion in the school community. The benefits of parental involvement are not confined to the classroom but may also have enduring, built-in consequences to educational and professional achievement in later life. With this profound feeling of learning and support instilled in their early years, even at a young age, parents can shape their children to have a lifetime of success (Kartel et al., 2022).

Parental support in Saudi Arabia varies across various aspects of life and is heavily influenced by cultural, religious, and social norms (Al-Khraif et al., 2020). The general attitude of the parents, as portrayed in Saudi families, is of great significance to children, with some form of authority and influence in their lives. This involvement is evident in lots of areas such as learning, matrimonial, and career choices. In Saudi Arabia, parents place great importance on the education of their children. They are also commonly involved in the education of their children, and will push them to attend good schools and perform well academically. Also, parents can keep track of the progress of their children and assist them, such as tutoring or any supplementary educational materials (Al-Khraif et al., 2020).

Within the Saudi culture, the parental role in marriage resolutions is prevalent, especially among the more conservative families. Parents can potentially find appropriate marriage partners for their children, based on their family background, social status, and compatibility. In addition, parents also play a significant role in shaping the careers of their children. They can give suggestions about family cultures, social norms, and financial factors. To some extent, even parents can directly affect the career choice of their children by urging them to enter into a profession that is prestigious or lucrative. Parents in Saudi Arabia tend to indoctrinate their offspring with religious-conservative values at an early age (Chuang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013). They also must instill moral and ethical values, teach appropriate behaviour, and etiquette in different social situations (Al-Khraif et al., 2020). This is essential

in determining the identity of children and how they will face society as responsible members. Despite the high levels of parental involvement that occur in Saudi Arabia, other trends are beginning to be seen, especially among the younger generations, as globalisation, education, and exposure to other opinions are factors. Other families can be more liberal, and children can realize more freedom in their choices, particularly in the education and career fields. Nevertheless, parental authority and familial unity are other important cultural norms in Saudi society (Al-Khraif et al., 2020). In general, parental involvement is crucial in determining the learning experiences and outcomes of children. Through active involvement in their children's education, parents help to create an enabling learning environment that preconditions success both in and outside the classroom.

3.6 The parental role in education

Education plays a critical role in the life of a child, and it facilitates the well-being of individuals and communities, life-long learning, and self-reliance (Chawla, 2015). One of the strongest weapons in shaping the future of a child is education. Along with the role of schools and teachers, parental involvement is also crucial. Educational success of a child starts and ends at home, but not in school. The first teachers, role models, and motivators in the life of a child are parents. Academic degrees are important, but they should be accompanied by practical knowledge and self-awareness (Bano, 2015). Education plays a vital role in the growth of an individual, the enhancement of society, and the development of a nation (Chawla, 2015; Perni, 2019). When parents exhibit good qualities like life-long learning and dependency, this gives a constructive role model to the child.

Moreover, practical experience and emotional support in the family creates such a safe environment where children can achieve harmony intellectually and socially. Lastly, the

learning process of a child is a combination of efforts of parents, teachers, and the community; however, the role of parents at home cannot be underestimated in their effect on shaping the future performance of a child. Children grow up with great examples when parents exhibit good examples like lifelong learning and self-reliance. Moreover, the real experience and emotional sustenance within the household create a secure environment where children can perform well academically and socially. Lastly, the education experience of a child involves the efforts of parents, teachers, and the community but parents at home will play a pivotal role in pre-determining the future success of their child. In subsequent sections, further information to be provided.

3.6.1 Early Childhood Begins at Home

The home environment is essential to early learning, and parent-child interactions and activities have a major influence on language, numeracy, and communications skills (Yu & Daraganova, 2014). Early learning commences during early development when a child is born and contributes to cognitive, social, and emotional health of children (Dawes, 2013; Heckman, 2002). Literature contributes to this focus on investment in early development by stating that success can lead to future success because failure can lead to difficulty in school life and beyond (Heckman, 2002). Nonetheless, children in disadvantaged families often lack access to engaging early learning activities (Dawes, 2013). Therefore, it is important to help parents implement more homogeneous home learning conditions to improve the developmental outcome in children (Hackworth et al., 2013). High-level education during the first three years of the child is associated with cognitive growth, school readiness, and even later academic achievement (Yu & Daraganova, 2014). By engaging in activities such as playing, talking, and reading, parents are able to introduce new materials and offer a diversity of learning experiences (Kumalasari & Sugito, 2020). The interaction between parents and children based

on verbal communication in daily routines, as well as playing, plays a significant role in language and numeracy acquisition (Yu & Daraganova, 2014). Teachers are encouraged to employ methods that involve parents in the learning process of their children, thus establishing continuity between school and home (Auliya & Fauziah, 2020). Such collaborative efforts can contribute to the successful development of children in early childhood education.

3.6.1.1 Creating a Positive Learning Environment

A healthy home atmosphere, together with a supportive school environment, improves student achievement, emotional well-being, and overall development (Sehgal & Kaur, 2024). Parental education, social background, and chances for language development all influence children's academic success (Mehta, 2024). A supportive family environment influences how well a child does in school. Parents who encourage their children to do schoolwork, keep organized, and manage their time effectively are teaching them valuable life skills. The mere availability of a peaceful study environment and even the availability of simple tools like a book or a computer may have a huge difference.

Family contexts have been classified into three categories: cohesive, disinvolved, and problematic, and were shown to be associated with increased social, emotional, and cognitive child outcomes, with cohesive homes having even more positive results (Mullan & Higgins, 2014). A number of studies periodically demonstrate that the parental communication also plays a massive role in the self-confidence of children. Good parent-child communication has proved to increase self-esteem in teenagers and lessen high-risk behaviour (Riley et al., 1977). In addition, interpersonal contact between teens and parents is vital to developing the self-confidence of growing children, and the ways parents communicate with children influence the level of openness of children and, consequentially, their self-confidence (Frieda & Tamburian, 2020). These findings show the significance of frequent, open, and positive communication in

the home environment in building self-esteem of a child, and that parents are needed to employ sustainable communicative styles to support the development of confidence in their children.

Conversely, Home routines are crucial to the development and well-being of children. Studies reveal that preschool routines are linked to higher academic readiness, social-emotional well-being, and physical wellness (Ferretti & Bub, 2017). Bedtime routines are of utmost importance to both academic success and health outcomes, and storytelling routines have a substantial effect on social-emotional development (Ferretti & Bub, 2017). Comprehensively, routines provide order, familiarity, and stability, which help children to develop to the best of their abilities in numerous aspects. When children know what to expect and feel comfortable with their environment and with the degree of influence that routine tasks have, even simple tasks such as helping with dinner or choosing how to spend free time can make a serious difference. Moments like these equip children with the elements of empathy, awareness and confidence without necessarily using a lecture or specific instruction.

3.6.1.2 Parental Modelling of Positive Behaviour

Studies indicate that children pay close attention to things around them concerning their parents (Duckworth & Character Lab, 2020; Horner et al., 2008). Research has continuously shown that parental role-modelling plays an important role in influencing the behaviour and medical outcomes of children. Parents play a significant role as role models, and they can shape the behaviours of their young ones through their activities (Duckworth & Character Lab, 2020). Parents modelling healthy behaviours are better able to encourage healthy behaviours of their children, and there are strong associations between parent and child fruit and vegetable intakes, physical activity, and body mass index (Coto et al., 2019). These results indicate the necessity of parents, who are good role models in the health behaviours of their children and the overall well-being.

Reinforcement is crucial; children tend to repeat a particular behaviour when they are

rewarded or praised by imitating it, as they are more likely to repeat it (Mcleod, 2013). Children observe the actions and their consequences and are also more likely to copy those actions that yield positive outcomes (Mcleod, 2013). The specific advantage of family-based approaches is that they cover both care providers and children and rely on the common environment and mutual interdependence (Vedanthan et al., 2016). Treatments will be most effective by combining both habit-forming and habit-breaking strategies to form healthy habits and disrupt problematic patterns, considering the individual and situation levels (Wood & Neal, 2016). The habit concept presents an effective approach to evolving long-term behavioural alterations as habits are relatively untouched by conscious motivations once formed (Lally & Gardner, 2013). Consistency is required in teaching children. The actions of parents are more critical than their words. When healthy habits are followed on a regular basis it becomes engrained in the environment of the child, the expectation and a part of themselves. Through repeated exposure and normalization, adoption occurs.

3.6.1.3 Emotional Support and Mental Health

When a family establishes a safe place for their children, such as a non-judgmental atmosphere, everyone is allowed to be themselves. Feelings, thoughts, and vulnerabilities are appreciated. Studies have shown over and over again that parenting methods and family support provided to children and adolescents have significant effects on their mental well-being. Children with positive parenting strategies and family support groups have improved mental health attributable to those factors (Kasingku et al., 2023; Sakuramoto et al., 2014). In addition, these studies highlight the role of family bonds, parenting methods, and emotional support in

connection with good mental health among children and adolescents, suggesting the necessity of treatment interventions that enhance these factors of family life (Kasingku et al., 2023; Sakuramoto et al., 2014). Sanchez-Nunez et al. (2020) state that emotional intelligence (EI) in the family significantly affects the mental condition of the children, as both parents and children recognize the EI of their parents. Family support is essential to the healthy development of children.

Parents who give emotional support at home, such as tenderness, encouragement, and validation of feelings, help children feel accepted and gain self-esteem (Despriliani et al., 2024). Enhancing emotional support of children requires time management, enhanced communication, child-oriented attitudes, and enhanced home care recommendations (Sarajarvi et al., 2006). In adulthood, emotional support by parents is associated with fewer externalizing problems in childhood starting as early as the age of two (McCarty et al., 2005). Nonetheless, most families are unable to provide children with sufficient emotional support, which may evolve to behavioural and emotional problems (Тричков, 2020). Mental health and emotional support in childhood are crucial to their whole development and future health. Failure to meet the mental health needs during childhood may lead to difficulties during adolescence and adulthood (McDougall, 2011). Additionally, the reinforcement of the mental health of children is paramount in the exploration of full potential, stress management, peak performance, and service delivery to the community (Lavis, 2014). Among key aspects to emotional well-being are stability, coping capacity, contentment, confidence, and empathy, and family, friends, and schools help to be of aid (Coverdale & Long, 2015).

3.6.1.4 Encouraging Independence and Responsibility

It is necessary to encourage and enhance parent-child relationships and create a collaborative home setting (Meredith & Evans, 1989). Research finds that nurturing independence and

responsibility in children is also a vital aspect of parenting that will aid children in their development. The values that middle-class parents instill in their children are responsibility, self-discipline, and respect, which are often achieved as a result of after-school activities that the child does at home (Dunn et al., 2003). Children's habitual involvement with domestic tasks helps foster social and moral responsibility by increasing awareness of and response to the needs of others (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009). These findings emphasize the importance of parental participation at home and encouraging independence and responsibility in children. Encouraging independence and responsibility at home is one of the most potent gifts parents can offer their children. Children should not just be taught to involve in chores or how to manage their time; they should be taught that they can be trusted, they are able, and that they are loved. By involving the children in most of their daily chores and problem-solving processes, parents can bring out the practical skills and emotional stability in their children.

In a world where children often are overloaded with knowledge, but deprived of experience, parental assistance, and home-based learning appear more vital than ever. It is not perfection but continuing support and confidence. The family environment is considered the first location of the learning process by children, and this has the most significant influence on a child and his or her growth (Degner, 1978). Encouraging independence and responsibility at home has a pronounced positive effect on children at school. By being delegated duties and being allowed to make judgments at home, children learn key skills such as problem solving, time management, and self-discipline.

Studies affirm that parental involvement and family education play a significant role in fostering independence and responsibility in children who subsequently improve their performance results. Parental support is an essential factor in promoting freedom and responsibility during at-home schooling (Pangastuti et al., 2020). These abilities make children more organized and motivated academically. Independent children are more likely to be

initiative, less likely to be reminded of doing homework, and more likely to seek help when necessary. They also become confident, and this allows them to participate more actively in class activities and group projects. In addition, accountability at home teaches children how to cooperate and appreciate others, and hence, their social life improves in school. Generally, home support by parents is a pillar of academic and personal achievement. Promoting independence and responsibility at home can help make children confident, well-organized, and motivated in their learning.

3.6.1.5 Cultural and Moral Education at Home

Cultural and moral education provided at home plays a vital role in shaping the personality, behaviour, and perception of the world of a child. Family plays an important role in the educational and moral direction of the children. The family, the first place where children go to live and the most important environment to them, has an immense role in shaping the character, habits, and values of the children (Arief & Afnanda, 2021; Ceka & Murati, 2016). Children learn the most important values such as honesty, respect, kindness, and accountability through their daily experiences, traditions, and discussions. Home-based moral education plays an essential role in imparting ethical norms, compassion, and social consciousness to children (Hafizi, 2023). They are also taught to understand cultural origins, spiritual differences, and the importance of embracing others' diversity. This kind of education will enable students to develop a clear identity, make informed decisions, and form viable relationships. In addition, Islamic education focuses on the role of families in educating children about the religion and shaping the spiritual potential (Arief & Afnanda, 2021). Parents have an especially strong impact on educating their children due to the varied experiences and expectations children may be exposed to by their parent(s) living at home (Ceka & Murati, 2016).

Moral values and cultural practices that children learn at an early age through their family provide a good background for their social and personal development. Moral development depends on the efficacy of home-based early childhood education, which provides a favorable familial environment in which moral development can be reinforced (Hardiyana et al., 2022). Cultural education may also assist adolescents in gaining a sense of belonging to something that they hold dear; a sense of the value of culture, language, traditions, and values, and an understanding of who they are. Simultaneously, cultural and moral awareness of children leads to the development of their open-mindedness and tolerance since they are taught to learn and embrace the differences that exist around them. In this method, the home provides a productive environment to produce well-rounded, responsible, and caring individuals

3.6.2 Research on Parental Involvement in Education across the Middle East

The cross-cultural research in parental involvement in the Middle East reveals a complex setting with a cultural context, socioeconomic factors, and the shift of educational policies. Although the importance of parental involvement, especially by dads, in enhancing student performance is increasingly accepted, barriers continue to exist between recognizing this value and actual sustained parental involvement (Ridge et al., 2020a). Parental involvement can influence the overall growth and academic performance of children, but is also influenced by various variables such as socioeconomic status and attitude (Al-Hassan, 2020). Fathers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are considered more supportive of their children, especially their daughters, in terms of education, but not as involved when it comes to quality participation that can lead to educational achievement (Ridge et al., 2020a). As an example, Emirati parents play an active role in the education of their children, whereas fathers are almost inactive (Ridge et al., 2020b). Dual-earner households in Qatar face specific challenges

encompassing a balance between work and the contribution of the parents with a variable degree of involvement based on gender (Lari & Al-Emadi, 2021).

Fathers who are younger or have a non-GCC nationality are considered to be more active (Ridge & Jeon, 2020). Scholars encourage developing family policy and parent involvement programs that suit the social context of the Gulf region (Brik et al., 2020). Parental involvement was influenced significantly by the COVID-19 epidemic, with parents having to teach in many Saudi Arabian homes during e-learning (Alharthi, 2022). This shift to e-learning has increased the involvement levels of their parents in their children's education, and parents are also in favor of fulfilling their conservative responsibilities over taking on the educational responsibility required of them (Alharthi, 2022). However, obstacles to involvement include poor communication between families and schools and limited time among employed parents (R. Aldawsari, 2020). Parental participation in school is key to performance, although it is being confronted in Saudi Arabia. According to the research, no parental participation is noted, and the lack of communication between families and schools is one of the main barriers to parental involvement (Aldawsari, 2020; Aldosari, 2021). The gender factor determines parental involvement as well as the position on work, income, and the level of education (M. Aldosari, 2021).

Participation is also limited by time constraints of working parents and their unacceptability in schools (R. Aldawsari, 2020). There also exist religious and cultural issues, particularly when Saudi parents are present in the international education system (Walaa Kherais, 2022). Studies hypothesize that to enhance parental involvement, parent-school relationships should be enhanced, interactions between parents and schools should be boosted, and educational systems should be altered to fit family integration (Abed & Shackelford, 2023). These results show that there is a necessity to introduce better school-family communication and support frameworks to fuel parental involvement in Saudi education.

These results demonstrate the necessity of integrated work aimed at enhancing family welfare and achievements in GCC countries. Ridge et al. (2020b) suggest organizing father-specific activities at school and eliminating the barriers to family involvement.

3.6.3 The Benefit of Parental Involvement

Parent-related active involvement can be shaped in many ways, such as correspondence with educators, volunteering at school, and providing help with assignments (Sharma, 2024). Involvement of parents in the education of their children has several times been correlated with excellence in academics. Parental involvement before the age of one is an independent predictor of superior educational outcomes (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). It seems that the advantages of parental involvement are not a result of organized intervention programs but the enthusiasm of parents and good parenting practices (Zellman & Waterman, 1998). The decision to take part is influenced by personal perception of the parental role, their feeling of ability to contribute to the success of their children and their perceived opportunities to get involved (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). This positive outcome remains stable along ethnic and socioeconomic lines, with parental involvement contributing 0.5 to 0.55 standard deviation units to academic success (Jeynes, 2007).

Parent and child interactions enhance child development by modeling, reinforcing, and teaching that lead to skill, knowledge, and a feeling of efficacy toward academic performance (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Studies have consistently indicated that parental involvement enhances the performance of children in school. Children with active parents are more likely to attend school consistently, have stronger social skills, and complete high school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Willigen & Spence, 1973). These advantages extend across socioeconomic backgrounds and are especially substantial at the primary level (Mapp, 2002; Willigen & Spence, 1973). Involvement of parents increases the motivation of pupils, their

self-esteem, and their sense of belonging (Sharma, 2024).

In general, parental effort is always associated with higher achievement and can have a strong positive effect on the overall development of children (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). Although parental involvement is significant, negative attitudes towards schools and the indifference of some parents are among the biggest barriers to participation (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). Besides academic improvement, parental involvement enables children to develop skills of critical thinking, time management, and organization, and these skills are essential in lifelong learning and success beyond school. Research has also shown that higher parental involvement is also related to better social skills and a reduction in problem behaviour (El Nokali et al., 2010). Additionally, involvement with extracurricular choices (like joining clubs or enrichment opportunities) might also serve to bring a child closer to the educational process, as educational life can then be rooted in their tastes and talents.

Studies have shown that parental involvement is effective in supporting cognitive outcomes, self-confidence, and learning behaviours of children (Gregorovic Belaic, 2021), and as such, parental involvement is an important aspect of supporting learning outcomes and academic success outside of grade performance. Parental involvement also minimizes any cultural gap between family and school, especially in a multicultural environment. The involvement of such parents in the educational process can result in a more adequate and expanded evaluation of education because teachers and educators will receive the data about the language, identity, and community history of the children.

Parental involvement plays a significant role in the educational achievements of children, especially in heterogeneous multicultural populations (Georgis et al., 2014; LaRocque et al., 2011). Teachers could be guided by community strengths and parental support

to build a more inclusive, diverse school setting by focusing on cultural heritage (McWayne et al., 2022). Additionally, recent studies have mentioned the growing importance of digital involvement by parents in the education of their children. These include the use of educational apps, the internet, and technology to enable students to learn in their homes and communicate with schools (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2022; Hou et al., 2024). Similar to other authors, Şad et al. (2016) consider the definition of parental e-involvement to be the actions directed at planning, involvement, and monitoring children's learning via electronic devices and media.

3.6.4 The School's Parental Involvement Policy

Most schools now recognize the necessity of parent involvement in a child's development, and some schools have a policy that includes parental involvement in a supportive manner. Parental involvement in schools has emerged as a primary concern in educational policy, with Anfara and Mertens (2008) and Grades (2021) indicating that parental involvement is paramount in student growth and academic reform in schools. These policies are commonly aimed at creating a friendly environment for families, openness in communication between school and home, and enabling parents to participate in academic and extracurricular activities. Such rules will contribute to diversity as they imply providing frequent progress reports, digital updating, and presenting the information in various languages. Parent orientation meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and seminars are some of the keys that schools often use to ensure that parents are kept in the loop and concerned about what their children learn. Schools are advised to devise initiatives and policies that stimulate active participation of parents, including advisory committees and decision-making areas (Grades, 2021). The rationale behind these rules is that children learn better and develop emotionally when parents and educators work together. However, the implementation can only be successful based on trust, cultural sensitivity, and flexibility to accommodate various family requirements.

The Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia focuses on the involvement of the family in the educational process, given its contribution to the improvement of students. Ertiqa is one such major initiative that commenced in 2017 under the National Transformation Program, associated with Vision 2030. Vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program 2020 in Saudi Arabia outlined that education is a vital driver of economic growth and the development of society (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). The vision of Ertiqa is to achieve an 80% parental involvement with the educational process by 2030. This initiative aims to achieve 80 percent parental involvement in school activities in 2030 (Alismail & Faridi, 2021). This is aimed at enhancing the connection between families and schools to improve the quality of education and student achievement. The Irtiqaa program was created to fill the gap in learning between children and parents (Alismail & Faridi, 2021). Saudi Arabian schools are called upon to explore the possibility of setting up Family-Community Partnership Committees made up of school administration, teachers, students, and parents' representatives. The functions of these committees are to establish mechanisms for encouraging collaboration, facilitating cultural activities, and providing parent training programs to support a positive learning environment (Qaralleh, 2021). Studies indicate that these types of collaborations are usually well-executed, and collaborative communication and social responsibility tend to be high (Muqhim, 2023).

Partnership improvement strategies include integrating community individuals into school administration, hiring partnership coordinators, allocating partnership funding, and conducting regular evaluations (Al-Shatiri & Hawil, 2023). These projects support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which promotes the family's involvement in education (Muqhim, 2023). Nevertheless, preschool teachers also describe obstacles to effective cooperation, emphasizing the necessity of enhancement on all levels, including the teacher core, families, and the Ministry of Education (Albaiz, 2020). However, interactions between parents and schools are strained, and this may be attributed to various factors, such as gender and economic

status (Blackmore & Hutchison, 2010). In general, even though some progress has been made, there is still a possibility to develop the successful school-family-community collaborations implementation in Saudi Arabia.

3.7 Gender

Gender can be described as social, cultural, and psychological factors related to being male, female, or non-binary. It involves roles, behaviours, activities, and qualities that a particular society believes are suited to men and women (Ben-Galim et al., 2007). In Saudi Arabia, gender roles are ingrained in the norms within society, and they are greatly affected by cultural and religious factors (Custers, 2022). The traditional gender roles usually assign different roles and behaviour to both women and men, as men tend to be the authorities and maintainers of positions of influence or responsibility outside the home, whereas women are supposed to focus on their duties in the family. This may involve dressing expectations, behaviour in public places, and involvement in many areas of social and economic life. It is important to note, nevertheless, that the perception of gender roles and expressions is changing, especially in younger generations, due to other factors, including urbanization, education, and international trends. However, the conventional gender norms still have a strong impact on the societal structures and expectations in Saudi Arabia.

Gender equality is a concept that all people, irrespective of their gender, can enjoy equal rights and opportunities, and they can be treated equally in society (Ben-Galim et al., 2007). Examples of gender equality include equal access to education, meaning both girls and boys have equal access to and completion of education. This would entail an effort to eliminate such things as gender based discrimination, cultural norms that prioritise the education of boys over girls, and the non-availability of resources to educate a girl. In addition, gender equality, which

is also considered equity in participation, suggests that equal participation and opportunity between men and women in life and the community should be encouraged.

Additionally, gender-based violence prevention, including gender equality, means the contribution to the prevention and practices that can eliminate all violence and gender-based discrimination. This involves attempts to solve the problems of domestic violence, sexual harassment, and abusive traditional practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (Ben-Galim et al., 2007). Gender equality demands the enforcement of laws and policies to advance equity and equality of rights and opportunities to all genders (Ben-Galim et al., 2007). This involves passing laws to alleviate gender-based discrimination, enhance women's rights, and encourage things like parental leave and childcare assistance to enable both men and women to have work-life balance.

Gender equality is one of the topics of discussion that has been used in Saudi Arabia and, most particularly, in the last few years, where the nation has been undergoing social and economic transformations that are aimed at promoting modernization as well as diversification (Custers, 2022). Despite having had progress recorded in some areas, such as female involvement in the labour market and education opportunities, several issues persist with inequalities. Among them are the segregation based on gender in the public sphere, limits to the mobility and agency of women, and the inequality in rights and protection of men and women before the law. Advocacy to achieve gender equality in Saudi Arabia tends to be more of a challenge, interfering with sophisticated cultural, religious, and legal systems, and ensuring that reforms are adopted that can empower every member of the society, irrespective of their gender.

3.8 Educational culture and provision

A significant contributor to the schooling culture of young children is regional variation. Regional diversity is manifested in differences in the culture of social groups (Caligiuri, 2017). For example, children from lowland pastoralist communities have different perceptions of children from the highlands. Geographical areas are divided into different topological zones, such as mountains, hills, and valleys, according to their macroscopic physical form (Caligiuri, 2017). Indeed, the topological characteristics of a region, whether it is mountains, hills, or valleys, play a pivotal role in determining the lifestyle and cultural practices of its inhabitants. These factors can influence everything from daily routines to educational priorities, reflecting the intricate relationship between geography, culture, and education (Caligiuri, 2017). Just as these physical environments have significant impacts on the structure of societies, so too do the non-physical environments created by societies themselves. Societies form social and cultural constructions, including language, that further shape the educational culture by defining what knowledge should be learned in school and how students and teachers should conduct themselves. Moreover, ecological zones specify societal economies (Luthans & Doh, 2018). One result of this is that people's perceptions of education in society are influenced by the financial limitations (socioeconomic factors) of the environments those societies impose. Societal economies also determine whether societies regard education as a fundamental requirement or as a luxury (Banks, 2021).

The perception of education within a society greatly depends on the socioeconomic status of the society. Financial constraints in most situations may determine the quality and accessibility of education among people. This fact influences the perception of education in such a society, either as a necessity for economic growth or as something available only to those who can afford it. Moreover, as it has been highlighted by Banks (2021), economies within societies play a decisive role in determining whether education is a need or a luxury. In

more prosperous societies, education can become readily accessible and is seen as a critical investment in human resources, but in less affluent societies, education may be regarded as a privilege due to financial constraints or other barriers. These dynamics highlight the interplay between the socioeconomic variables and societal views towards education.

The quality of educational provision has been strongly correlated with the educational culture. The educational atmosphere is linked to the family, community, and village cultures (Kapalczynska et al., 2018). Consequently, that environment is mirrored in the culture of education. As an illustration, many societies in the past saw women as domestic servants. Therefore, girls were not allowed to pursue education. This led to discrimination controlling social literacy, thus making the educational systems of such societies of no standard. Moreover, disadvantaged children are usually less educated than children in affluent families (Richerson et al., 2016). The environment, therefore, defines the quality of education for each person. To identify the educational culture in particular circumstances, various social notions that apply in various contexts have been stated. For instance, the boundaries of educational culture are determined by religious and secular surroundings (Richerson et al., 2016).

3.8.1 The teacher and teaching profession

Teachers play a crucial role in determining the educational culture, even though they are only involved in classrooms. For instance, research has shown that pupils frequently imitate their teachers' educational philosophies; they imitate the teachers' delivery style, their beliefs on specific educational issues, and also their codes of conduct. These findings underscore the importance of continuous professional learning among teachers to enhance their knowledge of teaching philosophies and methodologies, thereby improving student outcomes (Jabbar, 2018). Notably, learners are susceptible to accepting their professors' beliefs, which indicates the enormous control that educators have over students' abstract knowledge (Dibbs, 1982). The

pedagogical orientations of the teachers also influence the performance of students, where students in student-centered classes achieved a higher score on the complicated addition problems compared to teacher-centered classrooms (Polly et al., 2014).

In addition, when the students grow up to become teachers, they will employ the same teaching approaches as those they had in the classroom (Mercer, 2016). Richerson et al. (2016) add that the teacher does this early in the life of the pupil to develop an educational culture among them. The learning environment created by a teacher is characterised by specific directions, standards, tolerance limits to other cultures, and socialisation norms. These elements of the learning environment are largely driven by the teachers' opinions and values, making the educational culture of pupils heavily influenced by the teachers' behaviour and beliefs. However, the teacher's own opinions and values are also shaped by the culture to which the teacher subscribes.

3.8.2 Education materials

People from all backgrounds have come together as a result of globalisation, resulting in greater uniformity within educational classes. Globalisation is a huge area and one that is contested; it generally refers to a shrinking world that has a much greater interdependence between world economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by increased cross-border interactions (Mercer, 2016). Educators primarily produce educational resources on a specific lesson basis. Nieborg & Poell (2018) argue that learning material is also affected by the culture of teachers and, consequently, shows the views, beliefs, and behavioural patterns of teachers. Similarly to the learning environment, these teaching resources themselves define the levels of tolerance, learning threshold, and the distribution of the knowledge among classes, based on the cultural backgrounds of the teachers. As a result, the instructional culture of a class is partly defined by the teaching materials. Nonetheless, pupils are exposed to many different educational cultures as they progress through the learning process with different teachers. As a result, they

experience a multi-faceted educational culture that is not defined solely by educational resources. Although educational resources have a significant impact on how students learn, these effects are often limited to the classroom setting and may not have a significant overall effect on pupils.

The foundation of this component, which is built on the idea of culture, is made up of thought patterns—behaviours that are passed down from one generation to the next (Mercer, 2016). As a result, a group adopts these patterns, through which other groups recognise them. Put differently, culture shapes how a group of people act, live, and function in a way that is distinctive from and recognisable to other people.

In summary, a culture of excellence is essential for achieving high-quality education. For instance, languages and family identity are shaped by culture. According to Dee & Penner (2017), families establish unique meanings and life directions based on their childhood experiences of the dominant culture of particular regions and groups. Traditions, ethnic identity, social standards, educational perspectives, and personal preferences are some of the distinguishing characteristics that define a particular culture.

3.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual and theoretical framework dominates any study. Varpio et al. (2020) claim that a conceptual and theoretical framework serves as the compass and anchors of research. It serves this purpose as an ecosystem that brings together all the aspects of the research, thus setting the context of the study and making it easier to analyze the given phenomenon through observation. It also includes the rationale for conducting the study and the importance of the study in terms of adding to the existing body of knowledge in the relevant topic. Thus, the

direction of the study is determined by a brief and reasonable conceptual and theoretical approach.

Three key concepts have been considered within the framework of this study. Gender, parental involvement, and cultural background. Culture is made up of shared beliefs by a given social group. It is based on this definition that Meuleman (2021) presents cultural background as the shared beliefs, attitudes, practices, and values within a given social group, including expectations around gender roles. Shared means they are passed from one generation to another within that group. As such, this set of shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices, generally referred to as the cultural background, shapes how people view, accept or reject, behave, and feel about given day-to-day activities. Within the study, it is possible to consider that cultural background influences parental roles in educating their children, particularly in relation to gender issues.

In the literature review section, used a systematic and flexible system to select and then identify studies relevant to early childhood education, cultural, parental involvement in their children's learning, Vygorski's sociocultural theory, gender, and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Key databases, including ERIC and Google Scholar, were used to precisely search for articles and books related to the research title. Keywords such as early childhood education in Saudi Arabia, Religion and values, sociocultural theory, gender roles, and Vision 2030 were also used to ensure comprehensive coverage of both international and local research. The studies were then grouped into clearly defined thematic areas sociocultural perspectives on kindergarten education from school administrators, parents, and practitioners; gender norms in education; practitioner involvement; and factors influencing policy and highlighted the gaps addressed in this thesis. This approach allowed for a better understanding of early childhood education policies in Saudi Arabia and the formulation of the research questions.

3.9.1 Theoretical Framework

Social-cultural theory is a model that focuses on the effect of social interaction and cultural environment on cognition and the learning process. According to Vygotsky (1978), the people learn and develop skills by interacting with others within their culture, and the most crucial concepts of this theory are the Zone of Proximal Development, which can be described as the gap between what the learner can do without assistance and what he/she can do after being guided by someone more knowledgeable than him/her. Tools, such as language, writing, and numerical systems, are symbolic systems passed down through generations and mediate individual development (Mooney, 2013). Vygotsky believed that interaction had a significant impact on cognitive development, in contrast to Piaget, who believed that children's cognitive learning was internal rather than interactive (Mooney, 2013). As interactions with knowledgeable others, such as parents, teachers, or peers, internalise social norms, values, and ways of thinking, sociocultural theory has been applied across various domains, including education, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, to study various aspects of human development.

This research employs the theory of social-cultural theory, as conceptualised by Vygotsky (1978), to influence the thinking process and actions of individuals, especially as a result of social interaction and cultural activities. Moreover, social-cultural theoretical framework theory has also been employed in this study to understand how Saudi parents in Saudi Arabia negotiate their culture and adjust to the culture of education. The social-cultural theory in this study is applied to understand how cultural beliefs, values, and practices of Saudi parents affect their role in the education of their children. It can be used to investigate how cultural variables like language, social norms, and historical context mediate the ways parents interact with the education system (Mooney, 2013). One such example is the ability to study

the impacts of traditional gender roles in Saudi families in the perception of the mother and father of their role in educating their children.

Further, the research can be focused on the impact of cultural change and conformity in Saudi society on the attitudes and behaviour of the parents towards educating their child. As an example, Saudi parents can derive a new culture as they either introduce new cultural activity or alter the available activity, and in turn, this can influence their rates of involvement in educating their children. The paper also explores the implications that such measures may have on the gender roles of Saudi families. This can align with the sociocultural approach, which does not overlook the fact that cultural beliefs and practices about gender roles can have a significant impact on the behaviours and interaction patterns of people in society (Janse, 2019). This indicates the fact that as Saudi parents integrate into Saudi society, they may have a chance of adopting more egalitarian gender norms, thereby generating a transformation in the way fathers and mothers interact in educating their children. This could entail a shift in roles, decision-making, and participation in educating their children.

Lastly, the study uses the social-cultural theory by posing the question, how do Saudi parents infiltrate other cultures and assimilate in Saudi Arabian education systems. It also recognizes the importance of culture in terms of parental involvement in the lives of their children and how such strategies may impact gender roles within Saudi families. The application of a social-cultural theory, particularly as outlined by Vygotsky (1978), would be beneficial in understanding how Saudi parents learn to conduct themselves within their cultural reality, and how they can navigate their way through the education system.

This study is capable of providing insight by pointing to the role of social interactions and cultural traditions in the formation of cognition and behaviour, revealing the intricacies of Saudi families themselves and in their interaction with the educational context. Social-cultural

theory could be applied to explore the contribution of cultural beliefs, values, and practices in influencing parental participation in their children's education. This entails examining the traditional gender roles as well as the impacts on parents' attitudes about their roles in education. Also, the research will be able to explore the potential effect of cultural change and adaptation to the culture of the Saudi people on attitudes and behaviours related to education, and potentially lead to the modification of the gender norms and the parental interest in the learning process of their children.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter serves as the blueprint of the research. It provides a directional progression towards exploring the cultural background of parental involvement in their children's learning. This section presents the research paradigm and the relationship between ontology and epistemology that guides the lens through which the research journey can be discussed. In addition, this section also introduces ethical considerations, the size of the suitable sample, methods of data collection, and the tools that will be used to collect the data.

4.2 Research Paradigm

Understanding the influence of cultural background on Saudi parents' involvement in their children's early childhood education requires a systematic study that reflects the researcher's approach to understanding this field. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) define it as a paradigm of research that implies ontological and epistemological assumptions. This study was performed within the interpretivist paradigm. The paradigm places much value on the subjective experiences, beliefs, and behaviour of persons of a given culture. The research with the adoption of this paradigm stands a chance of looking into the subjective meanings and interpretations of Saudi parents regarding their roles in the framework of the education of their children holistically. In so doing, it has enabled the researcher to address the role of the Saudi parents in educating their children in a more explorative manner, though in the context of handling such a role in the light of the culture.

4.2.1 Ontology

Ontological approaches are a system of research methodologies that formalize an understanding of the nature of being by the researcher. Ontology approaches to research are extremely varied, with such variants as realism, where there is an assumption that there exists an objective reality, which is outside human perception. It asserts that things are always there with or without being seen (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The other ontological position is idealism, in which it is asserted that the mind/consciousness is the primary constituent of reality creation.

It holds that the truth is a dependent entity depending on a person and that truth is built up by cognition, consciousness, and knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The pragmatic ontological approach is the other approach where the practical effects and also where the practical utilitarianism are highlighted as the ones that identify the truth or otherwise of the claims of knowledge. In addition, as described by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), constructionist ontology is one of the philosophical views where reality is considered as socially constructed because of social interactions in society, language and cultural practices. This perception challenges the very idea of a objective existence which is independent of human perceptions and suggests reality to be a constructed collection of how we visualize and make sense of the world. In constructionist ontology, the knowledge proposed as a passive representation of what has already been established is condemned, and instead, is based on the concept that it is the representation of the things that are negotiated and developed in the social environments. It proposes that various societies, cultures, or individuals can define reality in different ways and consequently, the outcome is the construction of different views and worldviews (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Both ontological perspectives provide insights into what reality is and how reality can be described, perceived, and explored in a study (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The study of

parental involvement in the early childhood learning process can be subjected to different ontological perspectives. Realism might be interesting due to its focus on the establishment of objective truths regarding the involvement of parents, as far as there are truths, independent of cultural context or personal perception. However, it may fail to consider the effect of the cultural aspect on the way parental behaviour is determined and how the latter is perceived. Idealism can describe subjective significance and constructions of parental involvement and is not likely to deplete an objective definition of the broader social and cultural causation of such events.

With the focus on understanding parental involvement within specific cultural contexts and recognizing the evolving nature of the culture-parent relationship in educational settings, a constructionist ontology approach seemed most appropriate. The concept of constructionism is also consistent with the realization that the participation of parents in the education of their children is socially constructed in particular cultures. It allowed us to gain insight into how Saudi parents synchronize and construct their involvement in their children's learning, considering their cultural beliefs and values, and their cultural experiences. With a constructionist ontology assumption, the work set an objective to uncover the delicate interaction of culture and parental involvement, providing valuable insights regarding the complex process.

4.2.2 Epistemology

In the domain of epistemology, several strategies are commonly utilized under the study process, such as the positivist approach, where one assumes that knowledge is attained through the scientific method and empirical observation (Steup, 2005). The complete reverse of positivism, Steve (2005) has described interpretivism as the focus of the organisation of

subjective experiences and meanings attached to social and cultural environments on which people focus.

It recognizes the presence of interpretation, perception, and understanding in the development of knowledge. Another epistemological perspective is critical theory, which criticizes the current power relations and structures present within society to reveal any existing ideology as well as to create social change (Steup, 2005). Steup (2005) also mentions pragmatism, which is a type of epistemology that emphasizes the empirical consequences of beliefs and actions. Pragmatism proposes a pragmatic approach to knowledge where hypotheses are subject to real outcomes, and truth is tentative and contextual.

Interpretivist epistemology was selected because of the kind of study that is going to be undertaken, which is Saudi parental involvement in their children's learning. The decision was taken regarding an interpretivist paradigm based on subjective experience and opinion (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016), which is vital to the case of culturally sensitive names, particularly in terms of parental attitudes toward education and approaches to education. The qualitative inquiry methods, such as interviews or focus groups, would allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences, beliefs, and practices of Saudi parents and obtain insights that cannot be accessed by quantitative approaches only, and learn more about the influence of cultural factors on parental involvement.

4.3 Methodology

Methodology is the process of conducting a study or an experiment. To be more precise, it is defined as the mechanism by which a researcher designs a study and conducts it to come up with viable results that address the stated purpose of a study, its goals, and questions (Bhaskar & Manjuladevi, 2016). An effective research design will be purposeful about research goals, a

formal study plan, and a structured approach to data collection and analysis. Quantitative methods are typically defined as methods used when exploring a phenomenon by focusing on quantifiable data that can be systematically reviewed by statistical analysis. Such approaches are intended to discover patterns, relations, and trends in data sets, frequently to draw generalizable conclusions about a population or phenomenon, due to their perceived objectivity and generalizability; qualitative approaches, in contrast, prefer context-rich data, gathered with techniques like interviews, observations, or content analysis, due to their perceived focus on the researcher and the researcher understanding the phenomenon (Berryman, 2019).

Qualitative tools prefer to explain phenomena by using descriptions, explanations, and interpretations, but not quantitative numbers (Bhaskar & Manjuladevi, 2016). As an example, in a study exploring the experience of Saudi parents, the researcher adopted in-depth interviews, which conveyed the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and burdens of the participants. By analysing these interviews qualitatively, themes and trends can be revealed, which can indicate the human element behind the statistical data.

Given the above and the nature of the study, a qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate methodology for this study. Using this method, the researcher was able to find answers to questions about how cultural background influences parents' interactions with their children's education and their roles and responsibilities as parents of preschool children with empirical data, including in-depth interviews. Among the key features of a qualitative approach to research is that it aids in coordinating the research process with research questions or objectives (Bhaskar & Manjuladevi, 2016). The researchers develop data collection principles, identify the range to be measured as well as the desired variables, and select certain tools of analysis to ensure that the work leads to the specified goals and purposes. Furthermore, the overall research method should improve the validity of the research results and enhance the reliability of the research findings. It offers methods in mitigating subjectivity, bias, and

mistakes in data collection and analysis and, thus, improving the credibility of the results (Patton, 1999).

Subjectivity and bias are minimized by careful research objectives, standardization of data collection, controlled experimentation, and questionnaire design. A researcher can specify the scope of a study by selecting a proper methodology. For example, a qualitative method would limit the degree to which the results can be generalized beyond a specific context, but a quantitative approach may seek greater generalizability. Moreover, ethical guidelines are commonly integrated into methodologies to regulate the conduct of research, thus protecting the best interests and rights of the participants. Ethical considerations in the context of a study are critical when human participants are involved.

To sum up, epistemology and ontology represent some of the most essential philosophical notions that contribute to the development of the research approach. It is crucial to mention, however, that these methods lack the practical methodologies that are needed to gather and analyze data regarding parental involvement in early childhood learning. The philosophical orientations are questions concerning the nature of knowledge and being. Conversely, methodology refers to the methods and procedures to be used in the examination of the research problem on an experimental basis, through which the researchers can find out the complex dynamics between culture and parental involvement among their children in the early childhood education process.

4.4 Research Design

The question was whether cultural background influences parental involvement in their children's learning in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia. A research design refers to how the research approaches of a study are arranged (Salkind, 2010). It can be separated into

three main sections: qualitative study, quantitative study, and mixed research design. Qualitative research design is a style of research that is assumed to be undertaken to obtain the knowledge and comprehension of the experience, perception, beliefs, and behaviour of the individuals within a given setting and among people regarding this setting (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014). Unlike the qualitative studies, quantitative ones are based on the use of numbers and statistics to draw conclusions (Ahmad et al., 2019). Finally, the mixed research design is presented as a special kind of research carried out by a particular researcher, where the reconciliation of quantitative and qualitative analysis is considered (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). A design of this type will allow the researcher to merge the strengths of the two approaches to provide additional depth to the research question/research problem (Schoonenboom et al., 2017).

The decision to use a qualitative instead of a quantitative research design is based on the fact that in the current study the researcher will be able to get a significant insight into the experiences, beliefs, and opinions of the participants (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014), which is not possible as far as the quantitative research design is used in the present study. It is the flexibility of the qualitative methods applied that made it possible to speak about the different cultural backgrounds of the participants, disclose the stories never shared before, and provide some insight into how the Saudi parents act as teachers in the specific environments of the educational phenomena. Additionally, it is a method that would be appropriate to investigate social phenomena in which the cultural context, in this case, is significant.

This qualitative research design is separated into two categories: ethnography, a detailed study of a social group or culture (Dewan, 2018); and phenomenology, the experiences and perceptions of individuals (Finlay, 2009). The research contains comprehensive interviews and analysis to reveal the core of experiences (Finlay, 2009). Third, grounded theory focuses on theory development that is empirically based (Thornberg, Perhamus, & Charmaz, 2014). Data are coded and analysed systematically to produce theories based on the data itself (Thornberg et al., 2014). In addition, a case study enables a detailed consideration of one case or a few instances (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

4.4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of a Qualitative Research

Family research is one area where qualitative research could bring a few benefits in terms of understanding family complexities. The strength associated with richness and depth is one of the major advantages of case studies (Starman, 2013). This method deeply explores the rich details, experiences, and interactions of people within the natural context of family life through an immersive exploration of particular families. Another prominent advantage of case studies is contextualization (Starman, 2013). The experience of sociology of families in the lived social context is how researchers discover the contextual forces that influence the lives of families. This provides a deeper understanding of how personal circumstances affect the experiences of personal families, which adds to the discussion of the assigned meaning to the research findings (Starman, 2013).

Moreover, the overall strategy of such a research project is beneficial. Instead of separating variables, this approach recognizes the interrelatedness of different aspects in a family, allowing the complex nature of familial relationships, patterns of communication, and decision-making processes to be thoroughly examined. It also provides a theory-building

opportunity. By examining the data in detail, researchers can develop theoretical frameworks that help us better understand family dynamics (Starman, 2013).

Despite the numerous strengths of this research design, qualitative research does not lack limitations. One of the greatest weaknesses is that it is not very generalizable. Case studies are founded on a case-by-case basis, and hence they do not apply easily to a general population (Schofield, 2000). This is also related to high emphasis on depth and context that might restrict the general use of research findings to other family contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Specific searches of the selected cases can restrict the instant generalization of findings to the broader populations. To overcome this limitation, however, the study deployed a purposive sampling framework, whereby the study sample was purposefully selected to yield cases representing the fullest extent possible in terms of cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic contexts, and other relevant factors. This intentional disparity enhances the potential generalizability of the investigation in other familial settings. Furthermore, the use of both structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews allowed for a better insight into the object under investigation.

The other limitation is that it brings subjectivity to the research process. By combining data collection and analysis, researchers run the risk of subconsciously introducing their biases, views, and interpretations into the study (Baxter et al., 2008). Such subjectivity creates a possible challenge to the reliability and objectivity of the results since the lens of a researcher can be transferred to data gathering, influencing its interpretation and, finally, the presentation. The study did, however, consider the challenge by using a reflexive approach during the research process. The researcher kept a reflexivity journal where she recorded her thoughts, assumptions, and possible biases. Team meetings were conducted quite often to discuss emerging subjectivity and improve awareness among the researcher. Also, triangulation was based on a decisive strategy using several PhD researchers in providing information and responses to data analysis and interpretation.

Another challenge is the resource-intensive nature of case study research. Investigation into the lives of individual families is a process that requires much time, effort, and means (mostly money) (Baxter et al., 2008). This weakness will limit the cases that can be studied realistically, and this could affect the scope of the study and the extent to which it can capture the variability of family dynamics (Baxter et al., 2008). The resource-intensive characteristic of case study research also challenges the current study. Nonetheless, the research employed a purposeful sampling method to overcome the limitation by selecting cases with rich and varied information within the feasible scope given our available resources. The focus was on the cases having the maximum information value, which enabled us to obtain overall findings using available resources.

4.5 Research Methods

Qualitative research has the strength and potential of examining cultural factors in parents' participation in their children's learning in early childhood education. The method is selected depending on multiple factors, including research objectives, the type of research question, access to participants, and the ontological and epistemological views of the researcher themselves (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). Some of the qualitative methods include participant observation, which involves researchers placing themselves in the natural environments of the participants to have close-up, intimate observations of participant interactions, behaviours, and situations (Henry et al., 2022). Document analysis is yet another strategy that involves systematic examination of texts and documents related to the topic under investigation (Chanda, 2021) Alternatively, another method is an ethnographic study, which focuses on a prolonged and detailed study of a particular culture or group. The second method involves the use of narrative inquiry to collect and analyses the narratives and personal stories of the participants (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012).

Since the study had adopted a qualitative research design, which is part of the interpretive paradigm, the research incorporated the application of qualitative research methods to collect data. One of the semi-structured approaches is in-depth individual interviews, used to give further details about the views and experiences of the participants (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). Such a combination of approaches will provide a thorough examination of the influences of culture on parental involvement in early childhood learning. The in-depth interviews provided participants with the opportunity to elaborate on their perceptions in greater depth than the more limited-range questions presented by the more open-ended questions of the in-depth interviews.

4.6 Sampling and the Study Sample

Sampling is an essential part of the qualitative research process whereby a small group of people or cases out of a bigger population is used to conclude (though not generalize) about a population based on characteristics of that sample (Alvi, 2016; Robinson, 2014). The sampling approach in this research was paramount in ensuring thorough investigative work on the selected research topic, given that the study's focus was on family dynamics. This is followed by a discussion on various sampling strategies and the justification for using the one in this study.

Sampling in qualitative studies is further categorized under the following major groups: First, purposive sampling entails a selective choice of participants based on criteria that would be important to the research questions (Suri, 2011). This method is highly tactical and highly likely to include individuals who have unique perspectives or experience related to the topic of investigation (Suri, 2011). The authors selected the subjects to gather detailed information to help achieve the research objectives. The purposive sampling is of great assistance, especially

in those cases where the most important thing is to establish diversity in the sampling process and, at the same time, make sure that the sampling would be fitted to the aim of the research (Suri, 2011).

Snowball sampling is where the researcher requests the subjects to mention who they know of with similar experiences and who they can refer them to (Parker, Scott, & Geddes, 2019). The approach becomes especially feasible when investigating less salient or inaccessible categories (Parker et al., 2019). It is based on the supposition that experiences or likeness might be expressed by the inhabitants of a certain community or a network. Snowball sampling will guarantee access to the group of participants who are not always easy to access with the usual recruitment strategies, which will lead to a feeling of inclusiveness within the study.

The other sampling procedure of interest is maximum variation; that is, to take a sample of individuals to draw a broad range of differences in the phenomenon under study (Coyne, 1997). In this strategy, more attention is paid to diversity to make the study more comprehensive rather than to homogeneity detection. The recruitment of participants with varied characteristics, origins, or experiences would enable the researchers to obtain a comprehensive vision of the phenomenon under study (Coyne, 1997).

Lastly, the theoretical sampling is a highly adaptable one that will continue to change with time as themes and concepts present themselves throughout the data collection and the meaning of the data interpretation (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). Theoretical sampling can be linked to the grounded theory approaches because in this way, a researcher can test and improve the emerging theories as they continue to immerse themselves in the data (Carmichael et al., 2017). This approach is characterized by its adaptive and flexible sampling, and the theory of participant sampling selection is dynamically produced.

4.6.1 Sampling Strategy in this Research

Researchers ought to keep four issues in mind during sampling procedures, such as the size strategies of the study to be undertaken, the parameters of representativeness, access, and an appropriate sample technique (Cohen et al., 2002). The present study was categorized as a qualitative case study, and thus, a non-probability (purposive) sample was adopted. A non-probability purposive sample implies that the participants are chosen to fit specific criteria regarding the research questions. (Suri, 2011). This is a rather intentional method that aims to involve individuals with different opinions or experiences related to the topic of the research (Taherdoost, 2016). Researchers choose participants to derive detailed information that is predictable and consistent with study objectives (Cohen et al., 2007). Non-probability (purposeful) sampling is very useful when there is a need to capture variation in the sample, while also ensuring alignment with the study's goals (Suri, 2011). This has been achieved through in-depth interviews, as they render more details regarding the perspectives and experiences of the participants (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). As shown in the literature above, this qualitative research case study was conducted using a non-probability (purposive) sample, as stated previously. The kindergartens of the study were designated during the first stage, and the potential participants were selected during the second stage, as discussed later, to specify the research sample.

The purposive sampling criteria of this qualitative case study were highly designed to ensure that participants would provide rich and relevant information on parental involvement. Some of the criteria included

- **Cultural Diversity:** In an attempt to facilitate the inclusion of diverse perspectives regarding parental involvement, participants were selected to reflect a mix of diverse cultures, which may include identity, religious affiliation, and socio-economic status.

- **Parenting Experience:** The research participants had to have a child in kindergarten. This aided them in sharing personal experiences in relation to parental involvement.
- **Educational Context:** To examine how the various environments affected parental participation, the researcher involved parents in various setups of education, including a public and a private kindergarten.
- **Parental Role:** In an attempt to establish any disparities that might exist in parenting strategies and degree of participation along each gender, the researcher involved both the mothers and the fathers. This criterion was set to have a clearer picture of how various parents relate to educating children.
- **Geographic Representation:** The participants were recruited in various neighborhoods on the local level to deal with the geographic differentiation in parenting behaviours and also the availability of resources.
- **Socioeconomic Status:** In an attempt to represent the diverse facilities and problems present in parental involvement, the researcher sought to sample parents of diverse socioeconomic statuses.
- **Kindergarten manager and practitioner experience:** managers and practitioners were selected as individual participants to ensure the presence of considerable and elaborated information on the part of informants with particular knowledge and experience regarding the research topic.
- The standards also serve to capture a rich collection of experiences and practices concerning parental involvement.

4.6.2 Convenience Study Sample

Convenience sampling is an additional layer to the sampling approach and involves choosing participants based on their availability. When compared to other sampling methods,

convenience sampling is typically preferred by researchers because it is straightforward (Ackoff, 1953). Convenience sampling often helps to overcome many of the limitations associated with research, such as a lack of participants.

The literature indicates that there is no set optimal size for a sample used in qualitative research. Rather, the quality of the data gathered to address the study questions is the main priority of qualitative researchers. Sandelowski states, quoting Boddy (2016), that 50 interviews are an excessive sample size for a qualitative study and that fewer than 10 interviews are insufficient for studying a homogeneous group. Furthermore, Boddy (2016) notes that organizing and interpreting data in qualitative studies becomes more challenging when the sample size exceeds 30 in a homogeneous demographic group. Consequently, it was decided that 18 participants would be a reasonable sample size for this qualitative study. Primarily, this number was based on ensuring the manageability of the data, as well as the number of participants who volunteered to take part.

4.6.3 The Sample Characteristics

The study population included female academics (managers and practitioners) in Saudi kindergartens and Saudi national parents, including both mothers and fathers, who have at least one child in early childhood in public and private kindergartens. According to the Saudi Ministry of Education Statistics (2024), the number of public-sector education institutions (kindergartens) in Saudi Arabia is now 346 kindergartens and 256 private kindergartens, distributed across all regions of Riyadh. Upon being approved to conduct this study by the Saudi Ministry of Education, after making direct contact with several kindergartens, the researcher chose two kindergartens (one public and one private) located in different geographical areas in Riyadh.

4.6.4 Kindergarten

At least one venue in the western area of Riyadh and one in the northern area of Riyadh, forming a non-probability purposeful sample. This method is best suited to this study due to several reasons, such as limited resources (time and money).

The kindergartens were selected according to the following considerations:

- Kindergarten employing professionals who met the specifications for the study sample, these being females working as managers and practitioners. Hence, it sheds light on the perceptions of managers and practitioners about parental involvement in different early childhood settings in public and private kindergartens.

- To increase diversity and reduce bias in this research, randomly selected participating parents and practitioners were selected. This involved using a comprehensive database of families and practitioners from the kindergarten, ensuring that the sample included individuals from various cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds to gather information about parental involvement and explore the diverse factors that are shaping parental involvement within cultural and educational environments.

- The selected kindergartens, which differed in size, socio-economic profiles, and residential patterns in the western and northern regions of Riyadh, were used to explore parents within different cultural, social, and economic orientations.

4.6.5 Participants

Case studies are usually focused on a small number of subjects and are aimed at analyzing a real-life phenomenon, but not furnishing a statistical conclusion about the population. (Yin, 2003). A qualitative research sample is not usually predetermined in size and is not limited to rigid guidelines regarding sample size. Instead, it should depend on the needs of the research

and its context. In-depth case studies are often best conducted with smaller samples (e.g., 5-30 participants). In contrast, thematic studies probing deeper into a specific issue might be best conducted with greater samples (e.g., 50 or more participants) (Guests et al., 2013). The researcher could create access among the potential participants who fit the study, as well as consult with the key stakeholders and community, hence utilizing the available community network to reach out to them by making the required connection, and hopefully gain access to the suitable participants to complete the study (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). In this regard, the reasonable sample size in this qualitative-interpretive research was 18 participants. The subsequent paragraphs explain the recruitment process for these participants.

Based on the approximate number of kindergartens in public and private sector education institutions, there are 602 kindergartens distributed across all regions of Riyadh. 30 Saudi female potential participants and their families were invited from across the 10 selected kindergartens in urban and rural areas.

Following research ethics, inviting possible participants entailed several steps. In the present study, the researcher sent a letter to the kindergartens to facilitate access to female managers. The letter included a brief explanation of the research objectives and purpose. The response time varied from one kindergarten to another (1-3 months). Some kindergartens did not respond at all. The researcher proceeded to the second step after gathering a list of names and contact information for possible participants. The researcher wrote a letter to each of these people directly, providing a brief explanation of the research topic and purpose. Applying the criteria for the study sample, which consisted of female kindergarten managers, the researcher used email and personal communication to interact with the participants. As a result, each possible participant received a letter outlining the details of the study and its goals. After the female kindergarten managers' approval to participate, the researcher gathered a list of parents' and practitioners' contact information to request their participation as a study sample, too. A

letter was sent to each potential participant containing the research information and its objectives. Some of these potential participants did not accept the invitation to participate in the interviews, possibly due to fear of their identities being disclosed or because they did not have time to participate.

Through communication with the participants, a flexible schedule was created for the interview times, taking into account each participant’s preferred times. The names, contact information, and time and location for each interview were listed in the schedule. Additionally, the researcher was eager to explain to each participant the goals and direction of the study as well as their right to decline participation at any time. Based on this agreement, one participant at a private-based kindergarten withdrew following her interview and was substituted with another. This sample of 18 respondents was selected among the participants who agreed to participate in the personal interviews. This was in an attempt to get the ideas of the parents (father and mother have a child in the kindergarten), female managers, and female practitioners in the kindergarten, regarding principal factors based on the cultural background which affect the involvement of the Saudi parents in their child learning in Saudi cultural settings and the problems that hinder the involvement of the Saudi parents in child learning in Saudi Arabia in various geographical regions in Riyadh: 2 managers, 4 practitioners, and 12 parents as indicated in Table 4.1.

Characteristics of interviewees from 2 kindergartens.

Table 4.1 Characteristics of interviewees from 2 kindergartens.

Participants	Position	Kindergarten	Type of Kindergarten Location	Geographical Area
Participant 1	Managers	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 2	Mother	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 3	Mother	Private	North	high-Income

Participant 4	Mother	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 5	Father	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 6	Father	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 7	Practitioners	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 8	Practitioners	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 9	Mother	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 10	Father	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 11	Father	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 12	Father	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 13	Manager	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 14	Mother	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 15	Mother	Public	West	Low-Income
Participant 16	Practitioners	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 17	Father	Private	North	high-Income
Participant 18	Practitioners	Public	West	Low-Income

4.7 Data Collection

Data collection in qualitative research involves getting holistic, rich data to gain insight into human perceptions and experiences (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). Qualitative data are collected mainly through written or spoken words (Polkinghorne, 2005). Compared to quantitative studies, non-probability sampling techniques are more suitable for in-depth research that can enhance information richness in qualitative research (Balaji Seetharaman, 2016). Data collection involves several steps. Researchers are asked to select the most adequate method of data collection according to the aims of their studies (Doody & Noonan, 2013). It is essential to pay attention to the preparation, such as choosing the right participants and organizing the logistics (Ngumbi & Edward, 2015).

Researchers should also consider the ethical implications and potential biases throughout the process to ensure the validity and reliability of their results (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The current study's data collection process followed these steps, beginning with the identification of the two kindergartens, public and private, as well as their locations in the north and west regions of the aforementioned region. After obtaining permission, the study sample (parents, including father and mother, kindergarten female managers, and female practitioners) was contacted and interviewed, was conducted face-to-face. The interviews were then audio recorded, and the interview data were arranged and stored. The researcher had to obtain the participants' informed consent and formal ethical approval before conducting the interviews (McGrath et al., 2019).

Focus groups, in-depth interviews, and observation are the primary methods of data collection (Balaji Seetharaman, 2016; Dewi, 2021). Others involve audio-visual materials, surveys, documentation, and participatory arrangements (Dewi, 2021). The data collection strategies in qualitative research are dynamic and may change during the study (Balaji Seetharaman, 2016). Qualitative research depends on the ability of the researcher to act as a tool of research by becoming one with the object under investigation to understand and interpret it from the perspective of the subject (Dewi, 2021). Confidentiality, ownership, sharing, storage, and record-keeping are components of effective data management in qualitative research (Lin, 2009). In the planning stage of the current study, it integrated both semi-structured interviews, which is further elaborated below.

4.7.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The use of interviews can be a convenient tool in qualitative research, particularly in social sciences and mental health research (Elhami & Khoshnevisan, 2022; Mueller & Segal, 2015).

Interviews exist in three primary types, including unstructured, structured, and semi-structured (Mueller & Segal, 2015). This approach permits interviewee-driven stories and forms of structure, which can be particularly helpful in examining under-researched ideas or concepts that have not been examined thoroughly (Mulcahy et al., 2021). The unstructured interview in which the respondents should provide some knowledge is good when researchers do not really have an idea of what they require (McCann & Clark, 2005). That is the reason why semi-structured interviews also attract the attention of researchers who use qualitative methods of collecting information because it can widen their horizon regarding the opinion of the people and the experience they underwent (Al Balushi, 2018). Semi-structured interviews can be adjusted and even used to discover something new (Adams, 2015; Mashuri et al., 2022). Specifically, semi-structured interviews may be helpful to qualitative research because they can help the researcher build their understanding of the thinking and experience of people (Al Balushi, 2018). According to researchers, the method of a semi-structured interview is more effective than other ones since it enables the researcher to be attentive and flexible to the development of new information (Mashuri et al., 2022).

The preference for semi-structured individual interviews as the primary source of the present study was conditioned by several advantages attributed to the application of this method, the possibility of providing more detailed accounts of different experiences that make individual parents anxious about their cultural allegiances and involvement in early childhood education. It is a form of intensive one-on-one interview in which a personalized and unique understanding of the views, beliefs, and practices of the parties can be gained. Furthermore, the methodology belongs to the interpretive paradigm, and it emphasizes the role of subjective knowledge in answering the research questions. The one-to-one format of individual interviews tends to be more intentional and individual; the cultural background and its impact on parenting practices will be explored in detail for each of the participants.

Conversely, expression of personal experiences may leave individuals feeling vulnerable, particularly when such experiences are sensitive or traumatic. In addition, respondents can be concerned about being discriminated against or misjudged due to their cultural affiliations or experiences (Appendix 4). Then, semi-structured interviews might be challenging due to the time-consuming data processing and analysis and potential researcher bias (Nomnian, 2009). Another element that influences the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews is how well the researcher can formulate probing questions and how they can interpret answers (Griffiee, 2005).

In addressing the challenges highlighted above during the individual interviews (semi-structured), the researcher informed the participants about the kind of questions to be asked during the interviewing process, either concerning personal experience or concerning their cultures. This helps them prepare mentally and emotionally. Also, the researcher emphasized that nobody should be forced to discuss their personal experiences or cultural background, as it is entirely optional. The interviewing procedure, as such, is simply a voluntary conversation between the interviewer and respondent, with the cognitive processes taking control (Surra et al., 2009). Furthermore, providing breaks or time-outs in case one of the participants becomes visibly upset during the interview will provide them with an opportunity to leave the interview and gather their thoughts or simply get some support.

4.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a complex procedure including text information collection and processing, which may be carried out in combination with data collection. With this framework, one can be able to re-examine emergent themes and refine research questions (Pope et al., 2000). The initial phase of this analysis is transcription of data in English and

identification of the code. They are further subdivided into categories and themes (Paul & Bandyopadhyay, 2018).

The qualitative research analysis embraces a wide array of textual data analysis procedures. There are three types of content analysis that are common, such as conventional, directed analysis, and summative analysis, which all differ in terms of the mechanisms by which coding is performed and the source of the code (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Thematic coding analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis, and grounded theory are also popular (Pope et al., 2019). The factors that impact the choice of methods include research context, objectives, and available resources (Thompson et al., 2022). In the present study, the thematic coding approach helped the researcher analyse his data. This strategy is elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Thematic analysis (TA) is one of the most used qualitative methods of discovering and analysing significant patterns in data that is flexible and can be used in various theories (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Nonetheless, using this method, researchers must pay close attention to their ontological and epistemological positions (Hole, 2023). According to the thematic analysis method developed by Braun and Clarke, researchers would be actively involved in thematic development and coding (Byrne, 2021; Clarke & Braun, 2017). six steps of the process are data familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, refinement, and writing (Byrne, 2021). Thematic analysis is a common approach to analysing qualitative data, particularly semi-structured interviews; this approach is practical in gathering detailed information on the experiences of the participants and exploring the subjective opinions (Evans & Lewis, 2018). Thematic analysis "can be identified in one of two primary ways: in a theoretical or deductive or 'top-down' way, or in an inductive or 'bottom-up' way" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Combining

inductive and deductive methods can integrate theoretical viewpoints with data-driven ones (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Xu & Zammit, 2020).

4.8.1 Phases of Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is complex, and although specific rules can help improve the work of the researcher, there is no universally correct method (Dierckx de Casterle et al., 2012; Hopkins et al., 1989). Qualitative data analysis requires more specific instructions, as experts note that, despite the diversity of techniques, many researchers still have trouble describing their analysis process (Hopkins et al., 1989). In the current case, the interviews were coded based on the six steps (adapted by Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012) as presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012)

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, and noting down initial ideas and coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
2. Generating initial codes	The process involves collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
3. Searching for themes	Checking if the themes work about the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
4. Reviewing themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.
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In ensuring accuracy and dependability, it is important to check the information at various stages in between the procedures given in the table above. Data checking can be time-consuming, but tends to increase confidence in the data and guard against grave errors, particularly with unpublished data (Burdett & Stewart, 2002). The semi-structured interviews in this study were audio recorded in Arabic (the interviewees' mother tongue). To preserve the meanings of the sentences and phrases as well as the calibre of the narration of events and situations, the researcher transcribed these recorded interviews textually in Arabic, in the same order, and Microsoft Word.

Transcription is the process of converting speech into a written form, often based on an audio recording, e.g., an interview (Azevedo et al., 2017; Höld, 2007). This is because it involves translating secondary audio information into tertiary text information, a process that invariably presupposes the shortening and understanding of the transcriber (Hld, 2007). By transcribing the interviews and focus group data and reading the data repeatedly, the researcher gained an initial perspective of the data. Reading the data multiple times helps in interpreting key themes and patterns by moving back and forth between the raw data and interpretive insight (Pope et al., 2000). The researcher could then begin to uncover significant topics, trends, and observations by devising questions, a process that led to further analysis. In the analytic process, formulating questions could clarify meanings and explore participant perspectives (Pessoa et al., 2019). Such questions helped to clarify the core senses, explore the perspectives

of respondents, and define the direction of more detailed research. The researcher used a marginal note to listen to recordings and provide margin notes that were then transcribed to capture important details of each interview.

When it comes to data analysis, especially coding, qualitative researchers must choose between manual and electronic methods. Both strategies have advantages and disadvantages, and the choice is influenced by variables like the size of the project, the resources at hand, and the preferences of the researcher (Basit, 2003). Thus, incorporating both inductive and deductive logic. Given that the data collected was qualitative, based on the lived experiences of a selected sample, a theme grouping software package was needed to group the text into themes, which was used for pattern identification.

The software to be used here is NVivo. NVivo software is a beneficial program that can aid researchers in managing, coding, and examining large amounts of text-based information (Wong, 2008). NVivo can code the prevalent themes in the data according to frequencies. Themes can be developed using the main keywords of the collected data. The progression of the themes can be visualized using code lines in the NVivo software. The main focus of the analysis is to identify the central themes of the overall data, which can be used to conclude the population of interest in the study. Also, these central themes can then be used to develop data patterns that will be used for further exploration of the subject under study.

When researchers use NVivo's coding features to organize and retrieve data, the complexity and time needed for analysis are greatly reduced in comparison to manual methods (AlYahmady & Alabri, 2013). In addition, NVivo is one of the free software programs provided by the University of Reading to learners. The University of Reading also provides specialized training in the use of NVivo software, through its College of Education.

Consequently, the researcher had to become familiar with the use of NVivo in qualitative research by attending such programs, viewing educational YouTube videos, and reading articles on how to use the software. Bazeley enumerates five major steps and processes in which NVivo aids qualitative analysis of data, as indicated in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Qualitative data analysis with NVivo (adapted from Bazeley, 2007, p 6-15)

Procedure	Description
Starting a Project	Create a new project and set a password for confidentiality.
Working with Data Files	Prepare and import qualitative data (documents, audio, and video).
Working with Nodes	Create and manage nodes to categorize data (themes, concepts).
Coding Data	Code data manually or automatically by linking it to relevant nodes.
Further Analysis	Analyze coded data to identify concepts, categories, and themes.

Following the procedures as mentioned earlier, the researcher entered all of the interviews into NVivo 14 software in files numbered 1–18. To protect the privacy of the participants, all personal information was removed. Figure 4.1 below illustrates how this complies with research ethics.

Figure 4.1: *All documents (interviews) in NVivo 14*

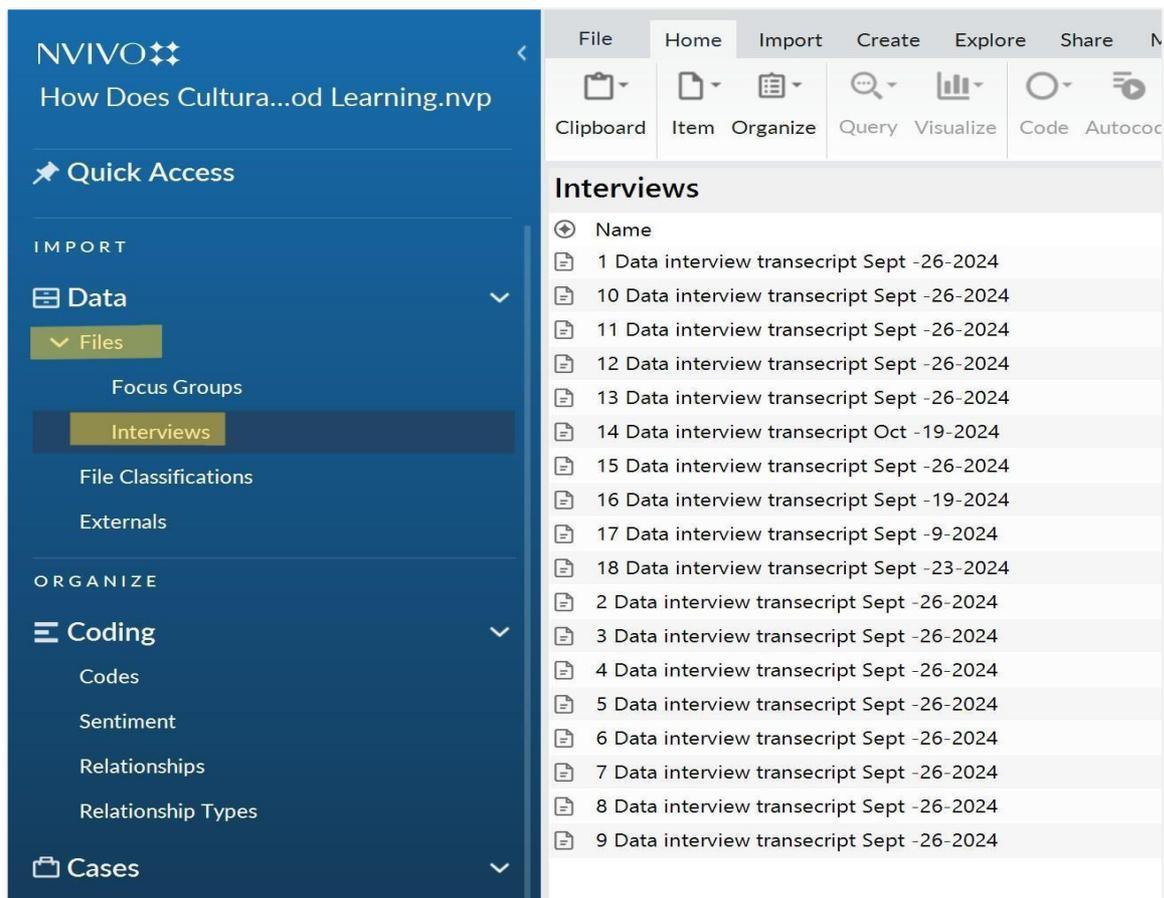


Figure 4.1: All documents (interviews) in NVivo 14

Coding is an important element of the qualitative data analysis and refers to the categorization and organisation of textual data in a way that simplifies its interpretation (Basit, 2003; Saldaña, 2020). The purpose of coding is to find evidence that leads to themes, and researchers can use them to create theoretical constructs with qualitative data (Belotto, 2018; Khokhar et al., 2020). In this study, a simplified coding method began with notes taken by the researcher while transcribing and translating interviews. Thus, preliminary coding could be considered manual. Furthermore, continuously listening to and reading the interviews while transcribing provided an initial overview of the major themes. The researcher inductively did the interview analysis using the NVivo software, extracting the highlighted sentences as coded nodes. NVivo features auto-coding, nodes, and the ability to code within existing codes, making the analysis process

more efficient and dynamic (Sorensen, 2008). Figure 4.2 depicts a sample of collected texts from the interviews.

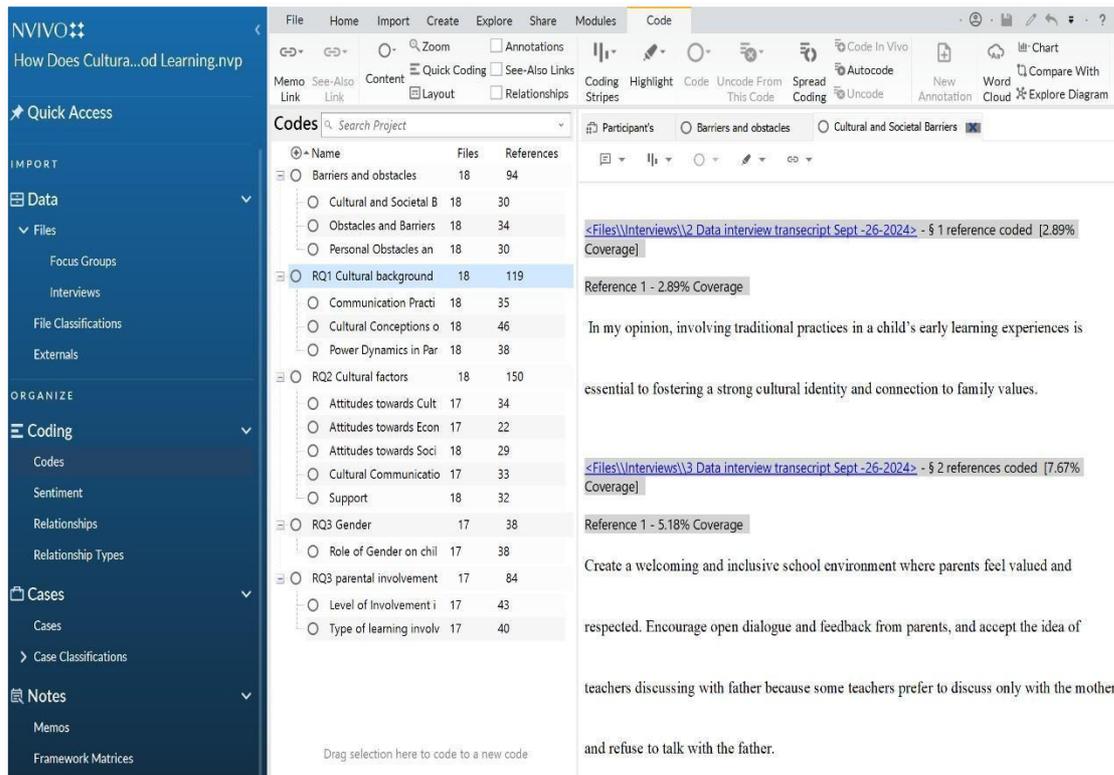


Figure 4.2: A sample of texts extracted from the interviews

This data analysis stage entailed categorizing sentences that related to a certain place in a node.

The researcher wanted to focus on the most significant facts to support the research aims and reduce dispersion. Regardless of its offshoots, this stage grouped nodes with a single association into a sub-theme. This led to the identification of 14 sub-themes, which the researcher attempted to classify under five main themes, with two, three, or four sub-themes each. After combining and reorganizing most of the sub-themes to address the objectives of the research, these became the main themes and sub-themes. The five significant themes of the study emerging out of the analysis included cultural background, cultural influences, gender, parental involvement, hurdles and difficulties, and were identified to suit the research questions

and objectives. The themes and sub-themes identified as a result of data analysis are presented in Figure 4.3, below.

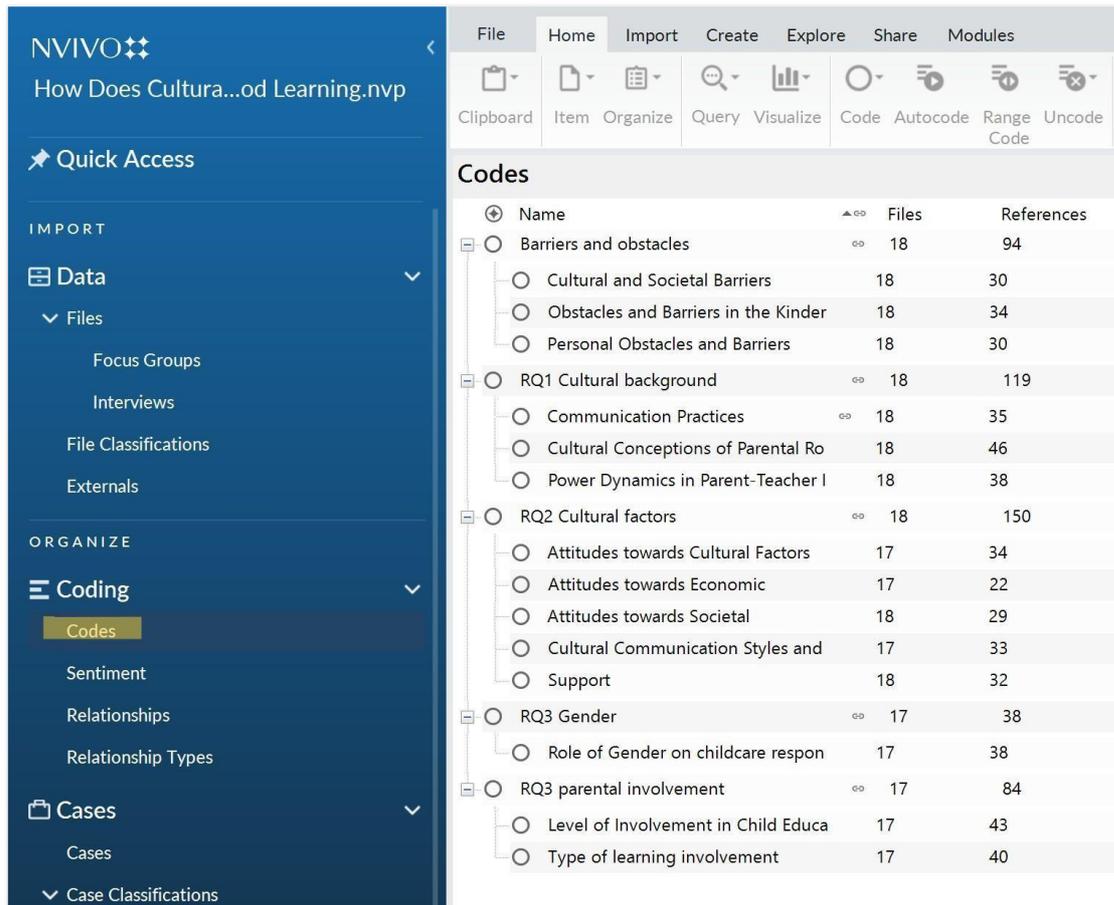


Figure 4.3: Resulting themes and sub-themes

Although the researcher did not expect to see all the codes based on the data, the researcher was able to foresee the main themes based on the research questions and objectives. In this approach, many related texts were included in the selected topics. The codes, sub-themes, and major themes were then fully analysed, after which the extracts of the participants' comments and responses were taken to relate the analytic results to the past literature and research purpose. This made the analysis legitimate. However, this caused delays in data analysis as the

researcher had to spend time and energy integrating the ideas and then organizing them into themes before a coherent report could be produced through discussions with the study supervisor, Professor Carol Fuller.

Although the researcher did not expect all the codes that would arise due to the data, they expected the major themes upon formulating the research questions and objectives. This approach introduced a lot of interconnected texts on the selected topics. The codes, sub-themes, and major themes were then interpreted comprehensively before the production of excerpts of the responses and remarks favoured by the participants to bridge the analytical results with the earlier literature and research questions. This made the analysis legitimate. However, research analysis required considerable time and effort from the researcher because ideas needed to be integrated, and then, once generated, they had to be organized into themes, which required several discussions with the study supervisor, Professor Carol Fuller, to develop a coherent report.

4.9 Trustworthiness and credibility

Reliability and validity are critical principles in both quantitative and qualitative research; however, their use varies between paradigms (Bashir et al., 2008; Vu Thi Thanh Nha, 2021). In qualitative research, validity relates to the data's legitimacy and trustworthiness, whereas reliability ensures consistency (Bashir et al., 2008). To achieve rigor, researchers should be ready to apply verification procedures throughout the process of inquiry (Bashir et al. 2008). Whittemore et al. (2001) propose four major and minor criteria of validity, which include credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. Such measures as triangulation, longer periods of fieldwork, and participant contribution may be strategies that could enhance validity (Johnson, 1997). Although establishing universal validity criteria in qualitative research has been difficult, scholars contend that qualitative studies are defensible and of high quality when their validation is stringent (Bashir et al., 2008; Whittemore et al., 2001).

Strategies for ensuring validity in qualitative research are critical for establishing credibility and rigor. Another effective technique is participant feedback, which involves researchers discussing their interpretations with participants (Johnson, 1997; Sabnis & Wolgemuth, 2023). Some academics advocate for rethinking reliability and validity in qualitative research, emphasizing that measures for maintaining rigor should be integrated throughout the research process rather than assessed at the (Cypress, 2017; Morse et al., 2002).

To improve the validity and reliability of the current study, the researcher took notes while recording, transcribing, and translating the interviews to arrange the major concepts and key information. However, she did not employ real observation of the work in kindergartens or at the family members' homes since it was difficult to gain permission to monitor or observe the family heads in their homes or when they visited the kindergartens. This was owing to the sensitive and private nature of their lives. Nonetheless, the researcher's previous work experience at the kindergarten had given her some insight into the nature of the work and the relationship between family and kindergarten. The researcher's expertise allowed the respondents to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, explaining their opinions and responsibilities, and highlighting the challenges they experienced. For example, their tales made use of well-known incidents and themes, underlined with language like 'You know!' 'You surely witnessed that!' and others.

Furthermore, the researcher recorded, transcribed, and translated the interviews, then collaborated with two bilingual academics (English and Arabic) to double-check the translated versions before storing all of the data in a dedicated file. The researcher also used 'respondent validation' to ensure the correctness of the results, providing a copy to each study participant for evaluation and feedback. However, the researcher did not send the participants copies of the interview transcripts. Creswell (2014) suggests delivering the final findings to the

participants for verification rather than the preliminary texts. In addition, given their hectic schedules, the participants would have found it difficult to go through and become acquainted with the large volume and minute detail of the data transcribed verbatim from each recorded interview. Three of the participants agreed with the results in this phase.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

This study prioritizes the safety and well-being of the participants. There are many ethical guidelines from the British Educational Research Association (BERA), the British Psychological Association (BPS), and the British Sociological Association (BSA). BERA is an acronym of the British Educational Research Association, BPS of the British Psychological Association, and BSA of the British Sociological Association. As highlighted by Suri (2020), the general impact of these bodies is to guarantee the fairness, respect, and autonomy of research participants. The study is based on the ethical guidelines provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA). There are numerous reasons why this is a beneficial approach, including the fact that BERA offers certain guidelines that are specific to the research of education, which can be especially pertinent to cases in which this research is conducted in educational settings, interventional settings, and/or with educational participants.

Furthermore, BERA principles can suggest some subtle considerations regarding the rights and well-being of participants in the educational environment, including informed consent and confidentiality. Nevertheless, based on the subject of this research, BERA was chosen to obtain information or ideas based on various sets of guidelines that offer distinctive opinions or considerations relevant to the study situation. Finally, the idea is to follow a broad but targeted approach in the ethical practice that will give priority to the safety and well-being of research participants and their autonomy.

According to the ethical procedures of the present study, the researcher was approved by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee in response to the Research Ethics Form. The researcher obtained informed consent in two stages, as a simple component of conducting ethics studies (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher identified ten Saudi kindergartens in the first stage, approached them to seek approval to carry out the study, and received their consent. During the second phase, the study participants signed a consent form provided to them by the researcher, who also gave them an information sheet containing the title, aims, methods, and the required participation forms (individual interviews). This information sheet also guaranteed the confidentiality of the information and the identity of the participants, and stated that participation was voluntary and optional. Thus, participants were informed that they might withdraw from the research at any moment with no penalties.

In addition, contact information for the researcher and her study supervisor, Professor Carol Fuller of the University of Reading, was supplied in case further explanation was required. Finally, the participants were informed that all procedures related to the interviews, data collection, recording, and data storage were solely for the research supporting the doctoral thesis and that the research would be published in research journals and presented at scientific conferences. The interviews were conducted according to a schedule that was suitable for each participant in terms of time and place (kindergarten/participant's home/private office outside the kindergarten), within an environment without tension. The researcher asked each participant for permission to record the interview and assured them that their identity, the recordings, and all information would remain confidential and that the procedure followed by the researcher would be to store and transcribe the interviews, then present the results in numbered sequence from 1 to 18 to differentiate between the participants. The names and locations of the kindergartens concerned were also disguised, numbering them from 1 to 2. This corresponds to Creswell's (2007) assignment of numbers or aliases to individuals, rather than revealing their names.

The participants were informed that the researcher herself would transcribe the recordings. After conducting all the interviews, the researcher transcribed them in Arabic using the Microsoft Word program, removing any personal information and numbering them from 1 to 18 for the individual interviews and 1 to 6 for the focus group. The transcripts were then translated, and the translations were checked by two bilingual (English and Arabic) academics. The interviews were saved into NVivo 12 software for data processing, each in its own file (numbered 1-18 for the interviews). During this stage, the researcher saved all of the data in a safe electronic format on a private computer with a secret password. After the study was over, the researcher destroyed all data and recordings. The researcher used an ethical approach in communicating with participants, providing them with a safe space. This enabled participants to freely express their views on any culturally sensitive topics, such as parenting roles. The researcher interacted respectfully and listened to participants' opinions without bias, maintaining a reflective attitude throughout the study, including interviews and focus groups, while continuously checking to ensure and minimize bias.

4.11 General Reflections

As a researcher who was brought up in a Saudi cultural setting, the concept of traditional family member roles and cultural preservation influences in Saudi Arabia helped me formulate my interview questions and evaluate the responses that parents gave. There were moments where I was particularly affected by what the participants had to say about the value of religious beliefs and family unity in child development, leading me to reflect on how such personal affinities would affect my study intentionally. To manage this openly and plausibly, I maintained a reflexive notebook during the research process and sought the input of colleagues to ensure that my interpretations were drawn based on the experience of the subjects, not assumptions.

Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the data collected during interviews and the findings received after analysis of these data and the focus group data. This paper set out to conduct research that explored the areas of Saudi cultural background that affect the development of Saudi parental participation in the learning process of the offspring based on cultural values, beliefs, and practices as they relate to the participation of parents in the learning experience of their children. This was interrogated in a semi-structured interview. As mentioned in the chapter on research methods, a qualitative method was used during a face-to-face interview and focus group with participants (18 persons) in a big city of Saudi Arabia. The researcher translated the Arabic data into English, transcribed it, and then checked whether such translations were accurate by administering them to fluent speakers of both Arabic and English (PhD students) to examine. Data transcription and translation practices have strictly followed ethical and confidentiality standards. The data was then coded using the NVivo 12 software based on the opinions of the participants. The researcher made several changes throughout the coding process, collapsing numerous responses into five main themes, with numerous sub-themes. These significant themes were defined as the cultural background, cultural variables, gender, parental participation, impediments, and challenges, and will be described below.

5.1 Major Theme 1 – Cultural Factors

In response to the questions asked of the participants, they described various aspects related to cultural factors and their role in early childhood education. From the data, the researcher compiled the codes associated with this major theme and organized them into the sub-theme: attitudes towards cultural factors, attitudes towards economics, societal attitudes, cultural communication styles and practices, and support, as shown in Figure 4.3:

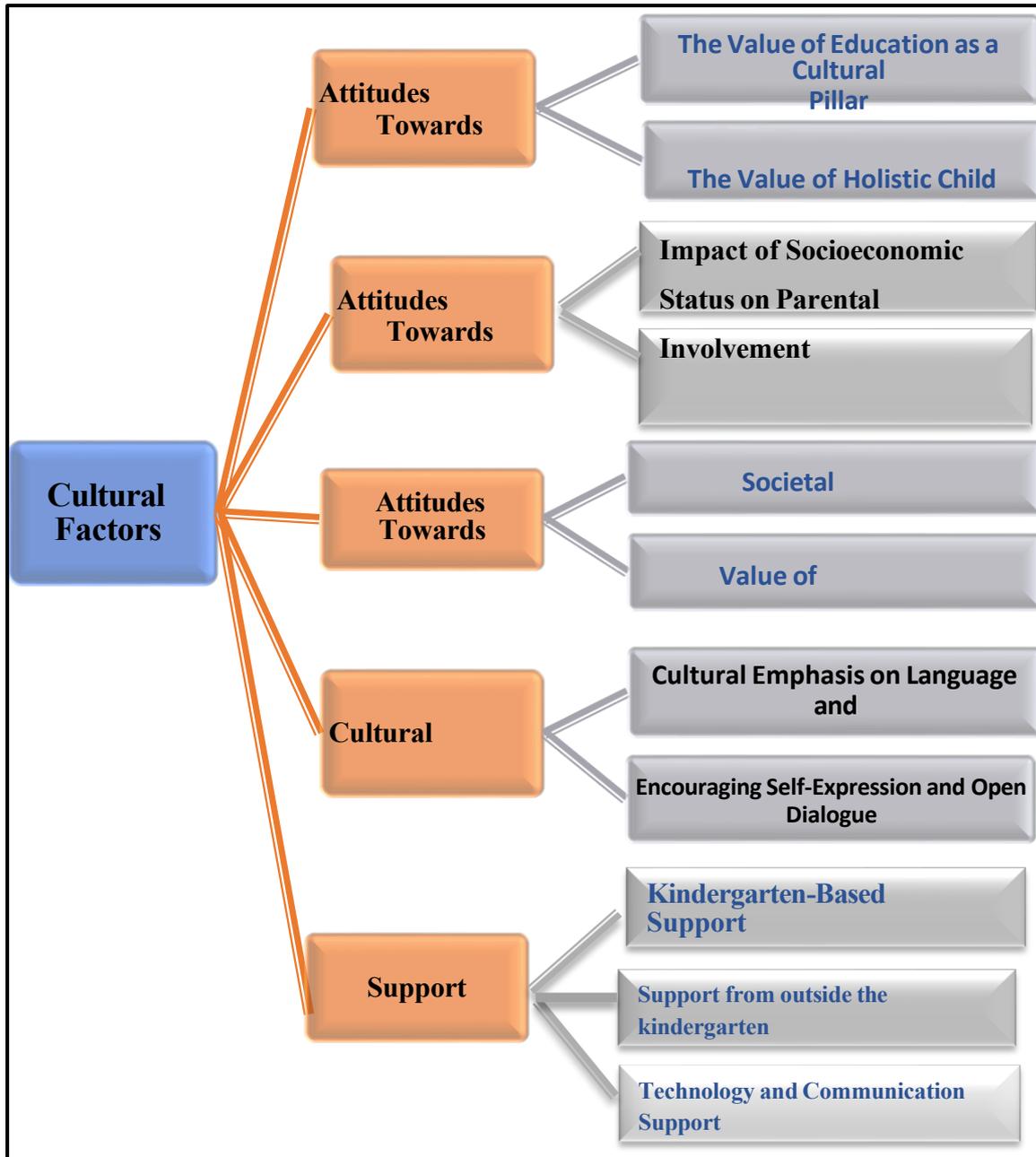


Figure 4.3 : Major Theme 1 – Cultural Factors

5.1.1. Sub-theme – Attitudes towards Cultural Factors

Under the major theme of ‘cultural factors,’ the sub-theme ‘attitudes towards cultural factors’ emerged. The participants expressed different attitudes regarding cultural factors and how these influence their children’s involvement in education. The codes relating to this sub-theme were extracted from the data as follows: the value of education as a cultural pillar and the value of holistic child development as a cultural pillar.

5.1.1.1 The Value of Education as a Cultural Pillar

Saudi families place a high priority on education. Parents perceive education as a familial duty, and academic success is viewed not only as a personal accomplishment but also as a means of maintaining family honour and ensuring a successful future for future generations.

- **Academic Success as a Source of Saudi Family Pride:**

Academic achievements as a source of Saudi family pride, participant 2 (Mother in Public Kindergarten) mentioned their ideas on the topic in the following way:

“As a family, we perceive education as the key to the future of our children. We believe that an educated child brings honour to the family, not just by their grades, but by how they represent our values in society. We always remind them that studying is not only for themselves but also for us as a family.”

Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) also commented on this point, declaring:

“Every achievement, even small ones, in school is celebrated in our family. If my child does well, we feel proud not only for them but also for ourselves. We are a community that believes in working together to bring up educated children who will contribute to society.”

Participant 4 (Father of Private Kindergarten) also remarked about this area, stating:

The values of our family are shown in the success of our children. When they succeed in school, it is not only they who succeed but also us. We always tell them that when you succeed, the family succeeds, and we share that joy. This is how we show respect for education; it becomes a shared pride.”

Passing down the legacy of education, in this regard, participant 9 (Mother from Public Kindergarten), claimed:

“I remember when I was young, my parents would always stress that education is the key to everything. Now, I tell my children the same thing. Education isn’t just for your future; it’s the legacy of our family. It’s something we have to pass down to the next generation.”

From another point of view, participant 7 (Father from Private Kindergarten) indicated:

“We make sacrifices in our family to make sure our children have access to the best education. We cut down costs and save money, make plans, and are even willing to cut down on our lifestyle, to be able to send them to school. That is our duty, and their success is an echo of the values of our family.”

It shows how much families are willing to give up to make sure their children have educational opportunities, reflecting a cultural value that education is a family responsibility to achieve success.

The value of education as a religious pillar:

To encourage parents to be involved in their children's education, it is important to incorporate Islamic teachings into early childhood education. This follows the teachings of the Quran concerning the value of parental responsibility in nurturing and the spiritual upbringing of their children. For example, they can help their children memorize the Quran and teach them how to pray and fast in religious curricula and other religious activities. In this regard, participant 14 emphasis on Islamic teachings in early education and stated:

In reality, a lot of Saudi families attach so much importance to instilling Islamic teachings in their children. This is reflected in their expectations of educational institutions that should include the concept of religious education, and this is why parents become more involved when kindergartens comply with these beliefs.”

From another point of view, participant 5 indicated direct involvement in religious education and clarified:

“I support my child’s religious education by participating in activities related to Islamic teachings.”

Participant 11 also commented on moral education through Islamic values, declaring:

“I emphasise the importance of treating each other with respect, appreciating different opinions, understanding boundaries, and respecting the elders in the family. I always remind my kids to respect teachers and friends.”

Religious teachings as a foundation for curriculum development, for example, Participant 13 pointed out:

“Many parents emphasize traditional Islamic values, such as respect for elders, community bonds, and moral education, within the curriculum.”

Participant 10 contributed to this point: incorporating religious rituals into education and family life, adding:

“We have family traditions, daily gatherings, eating meals as a family, and celebrating our Islamic holidays, which help us maintain a sense of continuity and joy. Fasting during Ramadan and celebrating before it comes. All of these religious traditions and rituals are very important in our Saudi family and culture.”

Of the participants who made remarks upon this point, storytelling as a religious teacher was participant no. 2, and he stressed:

“I am of the view that involvement of the traditional activities in the learning process of a child at an early age is critical towards the building of a strong cultural affiliation and orientation to family values. I always make sure to tell stories every night before

bed for thirty minutes, such as One Thousand and One Nights or Stories of the Prophets. These stories often carry moral lessons and cultural values, which help children understand their heritage and instill important life lessons.”

By putting more emphasis on religious education and less on gaining skills in childhood, parents can easily end up ignoring the needs of their children. As significant as religious education is, children might not receive assistance in the learning process. Some of the respondents who made comments on this area included participant 5, who highlighted:

We prioritize instilling religious values and Quran knowledge in our children. I think the academic learning will come later when they are old enough.”

5.1.1.2 The Value of Holistic Child Development as a Cultural Pillar.

Those Saudi parents who participated in this study have a point of view, which is that education must focus on building the whole child in a context of academic accomplishment combined with the growth of character, values, and cultural identity. This general meaning of the word education goes beyond the classroom learning to encompass life skills and personal virtues. The opinions of some of the study’s participants were expressed in the form of situations about holistic child development as a cultural pillar. In this regard, participant 3 (Father from Public Kindergarten) declared:

“It is not enough for children to simply do well in their schoolwork. They must also learn to be honest, kind, and respectful. We as parents are responsible for teaching them these values from a young age. School is important, but it is just one part of their upbringing.”

Saudi parents aim to give their children a well-rounded education that will prepare them to compete worldwide while preserving their cultural identity. In this regard, participant 6 (Mother from Private Kindergarten) stated:

“We push our children to excel in school, not just because it’s important for Saudi society, but because the world is changing. We would like them to receive the finest education, to travel and gain experience, and still not forget our tradition.”

Extracurricular activities are a significant section of holistic education, where parents are not merely focused on grades, but also on developing their children into well-rounded individuals with confidence and discipline. Specifically, participant 4 (Father at Private Kindergarten) said the following:

“We attempt a balance between more traditional academic assignments and more play-oriented tasks. I think children should learn by sitting in front of books, but also when they interact with their peers, games, and activities that will assist them to think critically and creatively.”

In summary,

The key theme of cultural factors gave rise to a second sub-theme of attitudes towards cultural factors, with the interviewees having varied perceptions on the impact of cultural practices on their participation in the children’s education. The first sub-theme, the value of education as a cultural pillar, emphasised education as a family source of pride and as a measure of assuring the future. The participants referred to academic success as a family advantage, and sacrifices were made to provide a good education. The second sub-theme, importance of child development holistically as a cultural foundation, was about the necessity not only of academic training but also of character, values, and cultural identity development. Parents pointed out the need to achieve a balance between successful academic work and personal and social

development. The social background of the respective parents of the privately funded schools, i.e., the Participant 6 (Mother of the Private Kindergarten), may emphasize the international exposure and the opportunity afforded to their children to flourish abroad. They advocate a more liberal attitude towards competitiveness and a future-oriented approach, keeping the cultural identity and the goal of a solid academic core. This can reflect on the higher expectations of educational success and preparing their children to survive in a globalized world.

Conversely, the families in the public school system, including Participant 3 (Father at Public Kindergarten), emphasise such principles as honesty, friendliness, and respect, and would like to plant the seeds of these principles early in the life of children. This might be seen as a more local and community-based style of education, stressing not only academic success but also character. The families who choose a private school (Participant 4, a Father in Private Kindergarten) appreciate the balanced model of education, as extra-curricular activities, playful learning, and social interactions complement academic achievements. This strategy means that families attending a private school might feel more inclined to incorporate these activities into their children's routine, possibly because of the available resources in private schools. Families in public school may experience differences, having fewer resources devoted to extracurricular activities or perhaps using a more traditional approach to education. Nonetheless, families in public schools have still been signalling an interest in a well-rounded education, even though the emphasis may differ depending on the resources available and the social environment around them. Priority on cultural identity and global exposure can be different.

Families in the independent schools, like Participant 6, can be keen on nurturing their children as global citizens and also have their Saudi customs. This might be explained by the fact that the private school might have a better global outlook and exposure to international education norms. Conversely, families who send their children to public schools might be more

interested in maintaining community traditions and cultural norms, as evidenced by the emphasis on upbringing and character in the responses of participants from public schools. This may mean that more families in the public schools regard education as a way of maintaining cultural continuity.

The holistic approach to child development might be affected by the level of socioeconomic well-being in families in both private and state schools. Families in private schools might be more financially flexible. Such participants as the families of Participant 6 may be interested in developing their children as global citizens and keeping Saudi traditions at the same time. Although private and public-school families focus more on comprehensive child development, there are slight differences in the way they go about this type of development based on the philosophy regarding resources, values, and future aspirations. Families with private schools can have a wider world perspective, aiming at both academic excellence and exposure to foreign cultures. In contrast, those attending public school may be more focused on local values and developing a strong foundation with personal virtues.

5.2.2 Sub-theme: Attitudes towards Economic Factors

The sub-theme attitudes towards economic factors addresses the different attitudes of the participants on the effects of economic status on parental involvement, accessibility to resources, and the overall role of economics in learning among their children. Participants expressed the impact that economic position had on their contributions, involvement, and expectations in their children's learning process.

5.2.2.1. Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Parental Involvement

Participants of the study explain how the economic situation of Saudi families defines how they will contribute or participate in the educational journey of their child, such as monetary

support, the access to resources, and the time they can dedicated to their child. In that respect, participant 16, the Manager at a privately owned kindergarten, explained:

“High socioeconomic status families might have more means and time to participate in their children’s education, whereas families experiencing economic difficulties might not cope with it and, as a consequence, their levels of participation or even lack of interest in preschool might increase.”

Participant 18 also had a contribution to this topic:

“Socioeconomic status is also a major influential factor in determining parental involvement. Higher socioeconomic status families are more likely to have resources to spend on their child to further their education, whether in terms of sending them to a high-quality/private preschool, offering additional educational programming, or engaging them in extracurricular activities.”

5.2.2.2. Economic Barriers to Parental Involvement in Educational Activities:

The study’s participants explained that economic factors, such as a lack of transportation and budgetary restraints, significantly limit parental involvement in education. Participant 17 explained the economic barriers to parental involvement in educational activities and added:

“There is also a problem with transportation, particularly with the mothers who cannot afford their vehicles, when it comes to going to an event or meeting at the kindergarten. If the father is busy with work or other matters, mothers may find it difficult to attend. Especially if the activities and meetings are within the kindergarten and in person.”

In detail, participant 10 explained:

“On the other hand, families with lower socioeconomic status may struggle with transportation, paying for additional educational activities, or even finding time to involve due to work pressures.”

Some parents in this study believe that they are not required to be as involved in kindergarten matters, expecting that the “private kindergarten institution” will handle everything. Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) contributed to this topic, adding:

“We chose a private school for our child because they are well taken care of there. I don’t feel the need to attend parent-teacher meetings.”

In summary,

Families with limited means or rigorous work schedules find it difficult to attend meetings and events or purchase additional educational activities, resulting in decreased involvement in their child’s development, and how economic status directly affects the level of involvement in educational activities. Families with higher economic standing have the resources to invest in their children’s education, while families with limited financial means may find it more difficult to prioritize or participate in educational activities. Some Saudi families whose children are in private kindergartens in this study see that their participation and interaction have ended at this point. Paying fees is the primary participation and involvement of the parents in their children’s learning.

5.2.3 Sub-theme: Attitudes towards Societal Factors

Within the scope of the main theme of ‘cultural factors,’ the sub-theme ‘attitudes towards societal factors,’ the participants expressed different attitudes regarding societal factors and how these influence their children’s learning involvement. The codes relating to this sub-theme were extracted from the data as follows: societal pressure and value of socialization.

5.2.3.1 Societal Pressure:

The issue related to cultural pressure on parents to take part in education of their children is seen by many participants as both positive and a negative influence as circumstances and world views are different. Other parents, like Participant 13, realize the importance of conformity to community norms and view their participation in it as a means of actively advancing their children academically. Participant 13 shared:

“Parents may feel societal pressure to be involved in their children’s education, participating in school activities, and supporting educational initiatives to align with community standards.”

A sense of belonging to a community that encourages participation inspires them to participate in school activities, which benefits both their children and their own academic achievement. In this regard, participant 14 stated:

“When parents feel connected to others and are in a neighbourhood that is involved with kindergarten events, they may be more likely to actively participate in their children’s education.”

Participant 10 also mentioned:

“Everyone expects you to always encourage your child. If you don’t push them enough, you’re failing as a parent. It feels like society is telling you that educational accomplishment is the most important thing.”

Participant 9 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) expressed her fear of criticism:

“There’s always this need to encourage your child, especially when you see other parents involved in theirs. You believe that if you don’t do it, your child will fall behind,

and it will be your responsibility. People talk, and you don't want to be that parent whose child isn't succeeding.

In regard to perception of 'Good Parenting' based on educational involvement in the Saudi community, participant 5 shared:

"In our society, good parents are seen as those who are constantly involved in their children's schooling, attending parent-teacher meetings, helping with homework, and ensuring children perform well academically. There's almost a fear of being criticized if you don't do these things, so parents feel like they have to keep up with this image of the 'perfect' parent."

Focus group family 3, said:

"Many of the customs and traditions in our culture influence all aspects of our lives, whether we like it or not. As my husband has mentioned, he cannot participate in his child's education, and I appreciate his work, effort, and time, but I wish he would participate even a little in playing with him."

5.2.3.2 Value of Socialization:

In Saudi Arabia, socialization is the process by which people learn and internalize cultural standards, beliefs, and behaviours that are expected in society. This is inextricably linked to both family life and education, as Saudi society places a high value on familial roles, respect for authority, and upholding traditional cultural customs. Socialization affects not only how children behave, but also how parents feel about their obligations in raising their children, particularly in terms of schooling. As mentioned by participant 10 (Mother from private kindergarten), she said:

“Sometimes, we can get support from our relatives and neighbours. This encouragement from those around us motivates us to participate in school activities to set a good example for our children.”

Also, participant 10 honestly links the involvement in educational activities to a desire to socialize and form community relationships, demonstrating how social networks influence involvement, and stated:

“I always attend school gatherings and meet other parents there. It’s not only about my child’s education but also about connecting with others in the community.”

From another point of view, participant shows how family gatherings and rituals can develop a culture of educational participation as a means of sustaining strong familial relationships. Participant 10 indicated:

“We have family traditions, daily gatherings, eating meals as a family, and celebrating our Islamic holidays, which help us maintain a sense of continuity and joy. All of these traditions also encourage us to stay involved in our children’s education.”

Participant 7 Father from private kindergarten clarified how the value of social meetings can take precedence over educational events, reducing a parent’s time available for school-related activities, and stated:

“Our social gatherings are always on weekends, and it’s difficult to attend school meetings or activities because I need to be with family. Sometimes, these social commitments conflict with my child’s school events.”

Participant 1 (Father from public kindergarten) demonstrates how socialization norms may cause parents to prioritize their privacy over public involvement in educational events, restricting involvement, and stated:

“I don’t always feel comfortable discussing my child’s academic struggles in public settings. Socializing in our community is important, but I prefer keeping my child’s education and personal matters private within the family.”

Participant 12 (Mother from public kindergarten) also mentioned:

“Sometimes, I feel torn between attending social gatherings with family and taking the time to attend my child’s kindergarten event. The social events often seem more important, and I end up missing some kindergarten meetings.”

Participant 4, a Mother in a public kindergarten, clarified:

“I acknowledge that it might be complicated to reconcile our customs with the new methods of education. We respect our traditions; however, we also understand that it is essential to implement new ideas that would contribute to the children's learning, such as play-based activities, along with traditional academic activities.”

Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) adding:

“Some families may hold traditional beliefs that limit paternal involvement, and view educational support as primarily the responsibility of the mother.”

The involvement of the extended family and social network in communication is multifaceted.

Among the forms, participant 9 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) pointed out:

“I involve my family, especially my older sister, in helping my child with her activities. She shares wisdom and sometimes helps with education. It’s nice to have the support of my extended family, as they can offer a different perspective on education.”

Participant 2 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) clarified:

“I am part of a WhatsApp group with other parents from my child’s kindergarten. We frequently discuss suggestions, updates, and even arrange events for our children. It’s a great way to keep connected and involved.”

Family 6 contributed to this topic, adding:

“Our child has grandparents, who are involved in his education as they could give us some insights and help in the process. This helps to grow a community spirit and supports the family customs and underlines the value of education.”

Specifically, participant 2 (Mother in Public Kindergarten) stated:

“My child has a peer who is a cousin, and they play with him regularly. They also regularly discuss ideas and involve in educational games. Not only does such peer connection result in language development, it also fosters social communication and collaboration.”

Some participants in the study indicated some barriers and obstacles to the cultural practices impacting the parental involvement in their children’s education families’ views of their involvement in their children’s learning, participant 6 (Mother from Private Kindergarten) explains:

My mother constantly instructs me on how I should proceed with my child’s education. I listen to her because she has raised me, and I trust her.”

When Saudi parents rely too much on the members of their families as a source of advice, and do not associate with the educators or childcare specialists, they cannot access the latest information concerning the education of their child. Such an attachment to casual guidance can limit the success of their participation. Participant 6 (Mother of Private Kindergarten) claimed:

“I’m busy managing the home, and my husband is always working. We do not have time to involve in our children’s schoolwork as much as we should.”

In detail, focus group family 3 explained.

"I see the primary role of parents as providing resources (such as tutoring, paying school fees, and providing financial support) rather than directly participating in learning activities. We parents are generally busy and have a duty to our families to provide for our children's needs (such as food, drink, clothing, and school supplies), so the role of the mother is to educate and care for the child. I cannot do all of these roles."

Cultural practices in some Saudi families might limit the extent of parental involvement, especially when mothers are expected to manage the household while fathers handle the exterior, financial aspects. Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) explained:

"I would never ask for a counsellor for my child; it would make people think I am not capable of helping them myself."

Within certain sectors of Saudi society, few people seek external aid in childcare issues like child counselling or special education assistance, to help them support and manage upbringing. Families might be reluctant to gain additional help out of fear that this can say something bad about their parenting skills or that their child must be doing something wrong. Focus Group family 4, explained:

"I understand maintaining a balance between our cultures and the contemporary means of education can be hard."

To sum up,

Regarding societal factors, participants highlighted societal pressure to be involved in their children's education and the influence of social networks. Some felt community expectations were strong, while others struggled to balance social events with school activities. Socialization

norms also influenced how parents prioritized educational involvement. It seems parental involvement is only a way to make up what a parent ought to be in society, rather than how parents want to do it. As it was stated by Participant 5, the willingness to be seen in the educative process of the children can be fairly communal in terms of the desire to be there in the meetings, assist with the homework and ensure the learning process occurred. This creates fear in parents where they feel that they are obligated to act according to the (assumed) ideals of what constitutes a perfect parent in the given community, even when things do not run according to their beliefs on how to help and support their child.

The thought to involve in such behaviours seems to be motivated more by the fear of negative judgment than intrinsic motivation or personal ideals. Parents might instead be driven to believe they have to use this model of participation to achieve social status or external goals, rather than engaging in their actions out of a desire to do good to their children. Parental involvement can be culturally driven in an attempt to maintain a social construct of ideal parenting other than a genuine depiction of what parents feel is best towards the education of their children. Although some parents might see societal pressure to be involved in the education of their children as a positive relatively helpful motivation to increase their involvement in their children lives, others might perceive it as oppressive or unwanted burden. Their opinions might vary, being predicated on their specific backgrounds; their level of attitude to education and personal views on parental participation.

Parents of some participants might view this pressure as a positive factor, a catalyst towards greater parental involvement and a closer bond with their child. To illustrate, parents might feel that they are making a direct contribution towards the intellectual development of their children by attending events at the school which creates an element of pride and accomplishment. The parents of some of the participants might also be of the opinion that they are held responsible by society to ensure that their children are educated. Parental involvement

may be driven due to the desire to achieve other societal norms, which in turn may contribute to positive academic and social outcomes in children. Consequently, they can perceive the pressure as a positive motivation to continue being active in the education of their children and provide the required support.

Societal pressure in other situations may be viewed as reinforcing important cultural norms. As an example, the promotion of family involvement aligns with a more general culture that sees education as a means of securing the future. Parents can perceive this social pressure as a testimony to the importance attached to education in Saudi culture, and they are reassured that their work is part of a larger cultural push towards improvement and achievement. Conversely, this pressure can be viewed as difficult and or frustrating by some parents. The pressure of constant involvement in school activities and the preparedness to comply with community standards can lead to the feeling of incompetence or stress, especially in parents who have busy careers or limited resources. The pressure of society can sometimes be compulsory instead of an option, and that can negatively affect the parent-child bond or exhaust the parent.

Most participants consider the cultural expectation of parents to play a role in the education of their children as an influence both positive and detrimental, depending on the conditions or outlook. Participant 13, among others, is one of such parents. To most parents, the pressure acts as a drive, and they become more committed to the education of their children and feel the fulfilment of the role of helping their children to achieve academically. Some of the participants, however, reported that the constant pressure to intervene in the learning of their children can be overwhelming. When confronted with potential high expectations to meet community standards this may induce stress particularly on individuals with busy schedules or minimal funds at their disposal. To others, societal pressure is more of a compulsion than a

willingness making it hard to cope with the tension it creates between their values set and those of the society that dictates what they are supposed to be – how they are supposed to live.

Furthermore, there is a chance that there is a smaller group of parents who find this pressure beneficial, but stressful. Despite the feeling of being involved in the process of educating their children, they may also believe that there are unrealistic demands or little room for alternative parenting styles. In some cases, the intensity is not unwanted, but parents might wish they could have more freedom in how they raise their children, particularly in terms of education. It seems that parents in the private school system feel more societal pressure to take an active role in their children's education compared to those in the public school system. Parents of privately schooled children are often subject to increased standards of visible parental involvement, not solely due to the imperative of academic achievement, but also out of a desire to achieve an education as a way of securing or advancing any social position to which they ascribe their families. However, the parents at the public schools may be exposed to various forms of social pressure.

Although anticipation of involvement still exists, it might not be so much about making it in a globalized world but about fulfilling the minimum community expectation and assuring that their children can succeed within a local context. The pressure to uphold cultural values and customs can also be put on parents of the public school, though in this case it is less noticeable and is less associated with social status. It has more to do with meeting the demands of the society and bringing up their children to be healthy, all rounded citizens who conform to the cultural norms. To conclude, the pressure exists in both regular and private school parents, but the latter are more vulnerable to it in a competitive, high-end form related to the social norms, and the former can face it in a more communality-oriented, culturally- concentrated setting.

5.2.4 Sub-theme: Cultural Practices

Under the major theme of ‘Cultural factors,’ the sub-theme: cultural practices emerged. Here, most of the participants in this study reviewed their diverse attitudes towards this factor. The codes relating to this fourth sub-theme were extracted from the data as follows: cultural emphasis on language and storytelling at home, encouraging self-expression and open dialogue, and involving extended family and social networks in communication.

5.2.4.1 Cultural Emphasis on Language and Storytelling at Home:

Some of the study’s participants cited that there are many cultural practices for parents to be involved in their children’s learning. These views on this point are presented below. Firstly, participant 13 explained the situation in the following terms:

“I see our traditions influencing the types of skills we prioritize. For example, our culture emphasizes language and literature, and we place more emphasis on reading and storytelling at home than on math or science.”

Participant 13 promotes language acquisition (especially Arabic) by ensuring communication in their families. The process of telling children stories and discussing the lives of their families and their cultural values is very important in their learning process, and this determines whether they will take part in the learning of their children or not. Contributions to this topic were made by Focus Group 5.

“I see our traditions influencing the types of skills we prioritize. For example, our culture emphasizes language and literature, and we place more emphasis on reading and storytelling at home than on math or science.”

From a different perspective, participant 13 pointed out:

“Reading Arabic stories to my children is something we do together as a family every evening. I believe it is essential to teach children about reading our culture in terms of language and narration, as children must gather attachment towards their heritage as they mature.”

The majority of the participants of the study had the above opinion, and participant 5 also said:

“When I talk to my children, I ensure that I use Arabic, and we are constantly talking about our traditions and history as a family. I want them to be proud to stay who they are and of where they are born.”

5.2.4.2 Encouraging Self-Expression and Open Dialogue:

Saudi parents are more likely to prompt their children to speak up. This communication strategy enables autonomy and self-possession of learning and growth and aligns with the cultural philosophy of developing a sense of confidence and cogitation with a thinking mind. Family 2 explained among the forms:

“We allow my child to share his needs and preferences about his education. This encourages a spirit of ownership and independence and teaches him how to stand up in school.”

Participant 7 (In-house kindergarten Father) reported

“My child tells me about their day and shares their feelings with me, whether the day was good or something bothered them.”

Participant 11 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) stated:

“After kindergarten, I ask my child how she felt about their day, whether they were nervous, joyful, or disappointed. We discuss why she felt that way, which helps children process their emotions and recognize that it is acceptable to express their feelings.”

Summary,

The sub-theme on cultural practices came under the major theme of cultural factors, where participants talked about how cultural values affect parental involvement in children's education. The cultural emphasis on language and storytelling at home was the first sub-theme that captured the significance of storytelling as part of cultural heritage, especially in Arabic. The second sub-theme of promoting self-expression and open dialogue highlighted that the Saudi parents support self-expression by their children and allow them to become independent and think critically. The third sub-theme, inclusion of extended family and social network in communication, highlighted the supportive role of the extended family, including grandparents and other family relatives, in maintaining the children's education and strengthening family traditions; however, it also includes certain cultural impediments, including using family consultations rather than recruiting professional expertise and gendered division of labor. Seeking external assistance in the form of childcare support, whether it is child counseling or particularized learning assistance, is not accepted in certain parts of the Saudi community. They were reported to suppress the involvement of parents in their children's education.

5.2.5 Sub-theme: Support

Under the major theme of ‘cultural factors’, the sub-theme of support emerged, with all participants discussing different levels of support within the range of cultural factors. The codes relating to this second sub-theme were extracted from the data: kindergarten-based support structures, family and community support and technology and communication support

5.2.5.1 Kindergarten-Based Support Structures

Under the major theme of ‘cultural factors’, the sub-theme of support emerged, with all participants discussing different levels of support within the range of cultural factors. The codes relating to this second sub-theme were extracted from the data: kindergarten-based support structures, family and community support and technology and communication support

Some of the Saudi parents participate in this study linked the support they received to the culture and views of Saudi family about enhancing parental involvement in their children learning, and they indicated insufficient support; in this regard, focus group, family 1 stated:

"A preschool that offers programs to educate parents about the education system and developmental milestones enables them to advocate effectively for their children. This knowledge can promote their participation."

The implementation of parent programs can be used to fill the knowledge gaps to empower parents in supporting the learning and development of their children. Focus group Family 6 shared:

"Various support groups hold sessions on child development issues, behavior control, and instruction methodologies, which are rich sources of information and skills."

Focus group family 6, said:

"The kindergarten must understand that the various abilities and preference in participation differ in each family. By giving us flexible facilities as to participation, this assists us to participate and to continue this in the kindergarten."

In a different perspective, family 6 in the focus group observed:

"By inviting parents to volunteer during classroom time or during school activities, you can place parents in that classroom directly into the learning activity of their child. Schools that enable such opportunities create a sense of collaboration between families and teachers."

Family 2, focus group, additional:

Diverse culture in preschool that celebrates diversity fosters an accommodating environment amongst the various families. When cultural events are enthusiastically advertised by preschools it makes us feel that we belong and also makes parents participate."

Encourage volunteerism help parents feel more connected to the learning involvements and enhance the family-school partnership. In this regard, participant 1, father from public kindergarten: stated:

"Establishing advisory committees where parents can provide input on kindergarten policies and programs creates a partnership between families and teachers."

Focus group family1, indicated:

"A Kindergarten that offers programs to educate parents about the childcare and developmental milestones enables them to advocate effectively for their children. This understanding can enhance their involvement."

Participant 2 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) shared:

"Unfortunately, some teachers do not want any cooperation or participation from parents and say, "I am the teacher and this is the curriculum. I do not accept suggestions or contributions!" This is really bad."

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"Unfortunately, some teachers do not want any cooperation or participation from parents and say, "I am the teacher and this is the curriculum. I do not accept suggestions or contributions!" This is really bad."

5.2.5.2 Support from outside the kindergarten

Some participants in the study indicated that the inherited culture of Saudi society impacted the families' view of their involvement in their children's learning and the low level of family and community support. In this regard, participant 17 (practitioner in private kindergarten) shared:

"Extended families may be able to offer emotional and practical support in our Saudi society, and this may influence parental confidence in their potential to participate in the education of their children."

Parents feel like they are a part of something by being in a community network, parent groups, neighbourhood events and this helps them feel supported and more willing and

prepared to give back into the school life and experience. Participant 15 (practitioner in the public kindergarten) contributed to the topic, also adding:

“Good social connectivity in neighborhoods enables parents to exchange information on kindergartens, activities, and opportunities to participate.”

Focus group, family 4 said:

"Having support from family members gives us the motivation we need to stay involved with our children."

Focus group family2, mentioned:

"Such as holding parent workshops and events that provide parents with the tools they need to support their children's learning at home."

Participant 14 (Manger from public kindergarten), contributed to this topic, adding:

"Some parents may not understand the importance of early childhood education or how to effectively support their children's learning, which can reduce their involvement. It is good to provide support not only from the kindergarten, but also from governmental and private educational institutions to cooperate in spreading awareness of the importance of parents' participation in their children's education."

Participant 9 (Mother from Public Kindergarten), also mentioned:

“Providing seminars and lectures on the importance of the kindergarten stage, as well as raising awareness of the importance of participating in the growth and development of our children. Many mothers want to participate in the growth of their children, but they do not have the correct methods for dealing with the child.”

5.2.5.3 Technology and Communication Support

Some of the study's participants cited there is technology challenges for parents to be involved in their children's education. These views on this point are presented below. Firstly, participant Mother from public kindergarten, explained the situation in the following term:

"My children are always talking about the apps their classmates are using to learn, but I don't know how to use these tools myself. I feel like I'm not able to help them properly. I don't want to ask the teacher too many questions, so we're often left on our own."

Focus group family3, said:

"Creating a WhatsApp group and quickly communicating in these groups helps us parents to participate, and the groups are not only for mothers, but fathers are also added to them."

P2, Mother (from public kindergarten) expressed the digital platforms for parental involvement, and said:

"I hope that there could be the system of communication like a site or an application."

Mother of Public Kindergarten, P4 said:

"Conduct virtual parent teacher conferences using Zoom. It is not difficult for us parents to go to conferences given that parents are busy."

Focus Group, family 6, said concerning: real-time updates via an app:

"Parent-teacher communication tools are applications that aid real-time reporting and communications designed between parents and teachers."

By utilising real-time-update apps, parents will be able to stay up-to-date and receive detailed feedback on their child, and the school and family will have more opportunities to collaborate. Family 5, focus group stressed:

“When given a chance to provide feedback on the preschool programs and policies, parents will be able to express their views and requirements, making sure that the preschool is responsive to the different community where it is situated.”

Schools that actively seek parent feedback show a willingness to adjust their practices to better serve the needs of their families, promoting a more collaborative and inclusive school culture.

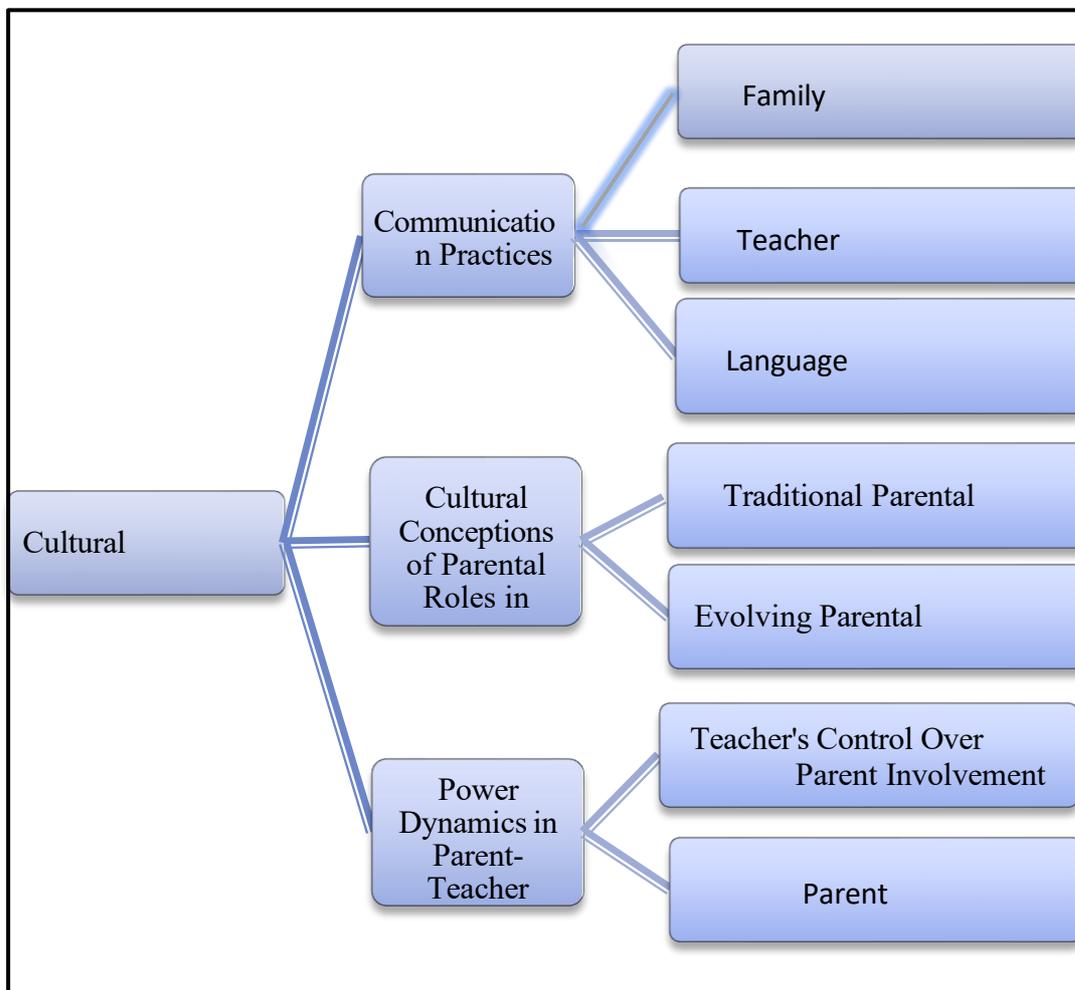
Summary:

The support subtheme, within the overall theme of cultural factors, highlighted several differences in the various levels of support that influence parents' roles and interactions in participating in their children's education. The first subtheme focused on the support structures used in preschool services, and parents emphasized the importance of participating in academic courses and volunteer opportunities. There was, however, an observation by some parents of teachers' unwillingness to involve with them. The second sub-theme was external kindergarten support where the extended family and community networks played a role in promoting parental involvement. The third sub-theme was technology and communication support where parents also expressed that they missed good digital platforms to keep communicating with their children, such as some applications and online meetings, they could stay connected with their children even when they were learning during the pandemic. There are still many other narratives that have been collected from parents regarding how gender influences the distribution of parental responsibilities between fathers and mothers. The researcher will review these narratives under the main heading of gender, through which it will be possible to understand their situation in greater depth.

5.2 Major Theme 2 – Cultural Background

In response to questions posed to participants to consider cultural influences on their involvement in their children’s education, they described the influence of their cultural backgrounds into several overlapping points. From the data, the researcher grouped the codes associated with this main theme and organized them into three subthemes: communication practices, cultural understandings of parental roles in education, and power dynamics in parent-teacher interactions, as can be seen in Figure 5.2.

Figure 4.4: Major theme 2 – Cultural Background



5.3.1 Sub-theme – Communication Practices

Under the major theme of ‘cultural background, the sub-theme “communication practices” emerged. The study’s participants described how cultural values and traditions shaped the way communication occurred within the family unit and between families and educators. The codes relating to this sub-theme were extracted from the data as follows: family communication, teacher communication, and language communication.

5.3.1.1 Family Communication

Parental communication in Saudi families is influenced by their cultural background, as each family in this study looked from its own perspective, and kindergarten workers also expressed their diverse perspectives, including cultural traditions, religious and cultural values.

- **Cultural Traditions:**

There is a link between family communication and Saudi cultural traditions, which include family discussions, involving extended family beyond the immediate family (parents) to include extended family (grandparents). All these cultural traditions that come from the parents’ cultural backgrounds influence the extent of their involvement in their children’s education. Family 9 was among the participants of the parent group who made a comment on this point, saying:

“I talk to my child regularly to understand how they feel about school, how they can talk about their challenges, and solve them.”

Family5 contributed to this topic, adding:

“Because I grew up in a family that encouraged discussion and my father always discussed many things with me since I was little until I grew up, I became the same with

my children, talking to them and communicating with them, discussing their topics and asking them for their opinions.”

Family6 also commented on this point, declaring:

“We involve grandparents in our child’s education, as their beliefs and experiences can provide valuable insights and support.”

P5 contributed to this topic, adding:

“When I invite relatives and friends and welcome them, my child will learn from me generosity and hospitality, and to integrate with others and enjoy with them”.

However, participant 9 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) claimed:

“When my child struggles in kindergarten, my husband insists on talking with him and participating in his education by shouting, even if it goes against what the teachers prescribe. The pressure from my family makes it tough for me to adopt modern practices or kindergarten guidance. My husband seems to be dismissing my decision-making abilities from me; he always justifies his actions by saying that he was raised on this by his family.”

Participant 14 (a manager from a public kindergarten) contributed to this topic: one-sided involvements, adding:

“We have some misguided traditions regarding parenting and involvement in our children’s education. Respect often equates to listening to adults without sharing one’s viewpoints. This fosters an environment where our children are more listeners than active participants or speakers.”

- **Cultural and Social Values:**

Among the family communication that the study's participants commented on were the cultural and social values. In this regard, they agreed that cultural values, such as supporting a child's individuality, the importance of education, preserving cultural identity, listening to emotions, and the importance of community-based events for some families, significantly shape their involvement with their children at home. In this regard, P12 stated:

“Community events, such as cultural festivals or religious gatherings, provide platforms for parents to connect, share experiences, and discuss educational expectations.”

Family6 contributed to this topic, adding:

“When we consider our child's development from an educational perspective, we do so collaboratively. We discuss our hopes for their development, while respecting their individuality.”

Family5, clarified:

“I see our traditions influencing the types of skills we prioritize. For example, our culture emphasizes language and literature, and we place more emphasis on reading and storytelling at home than on math or science.”

From a religious values side, P5 indicated that:

“I am a mother who values religious principles and values, and I am more proactive in communicating my views to teachers.”

P4 also mentioned:

“I try to support Arabic language skills, so supporting my child's Arabic language development at home is crucial. I don't prefer to use English, especially at home, and

when my daughter speaks English, I stop her and remind her to speak in our Arabic language.”

So, family communication, particularly the emotional support provided, is greatly influenced by the values that parents hold, such as prioritizing emotional connection and fostering open and honest communication. For example, 3 stated:

“Sure, this happens a lot when I go to pick her up from kindergarten. Some days she comes out happy and expresses her feelings and what happened at kindergarten. Other days she is upset about a certain topic or sad, so on the way back we talk, and she expresses her feelings to me.”

Participant 14 (a manager from a public kindergarten) contributed to this topic, adding:

“We have some misguided traditions regarding parenting and involvement in our children’s education. Respect often equates to listening to adults without sharing one’s viewpoints. This fosters an environment where our children are more listeners than active participants or speakers.”

In summary, the study’s participants agreed that cultural traditions, social values, native language, and cultural identity greatly influence family communication in Saudi families.

5.3.1.2 Teacher Communication

The study also explored how parents communicated with teachers, revealing that cultural beliefs about the role of education, respect for authority, and parental involvement impacted the dynamics between families and educators.

- **Involvement in kindergarten stuff:**

Some of the participants in this observed that communication channels with teachers remained open and were highly important when working through problems or discussing the learning progress. To illustrate, Focus Group 5,

“I talk to the teacher so much over the phone and ask her questions constantly, particularly since I am more responsible in terms of follow-up than the father is, as he is often busy and traveling, and I am more readily available.”

The above opinion was shared by most of the study’s participants, with Focus Group 1, adding:

“We make an effort to attend events at the kindergarten, such as parent-teacher conferences and open days. This shared participation allows us to gather information from teachers and involve in discussions about our child’s learning in real time.”

However, P9, clarified:

“I also visit parent-teacher conferences and school-related events as much as I can, and this keeps me in touch with the progress rate of my child and the school, too. In case I am not able to attend, I ask my wife to attend the meeting and question her on what transpired.”

However, barriers to involvement were also reported by some participants, which suggests different obstacles to active involvement in learning in the kindergarten environment related to their child. The respondents revealed the key barrier as time constraints due to work and other responsibilities. P9 explained:

“I prefer to attend parent-teacher conferences and school events as much as I can, and this makes me able to be connected to the learning process of my child and the school. If I can’t attend, I have my wife attend and ask her about what happened at the meeting.”

Another hurdle mentioned was traditional gender roles. Participant 14, a manager at a public kindergarten, contributed:

“Islam advocates for equality between men and women; however, due to harmful cultural traditions, there are disparities in rights and responsibilities, resulting in the mother taking on a more significant role in parenting and involvement with children than the father.”

Moreover, logistics problems, including transportation or distance to the kindergarten, were mentioned as barriers. Family 9 points out:

“I am unable to take my child to school functions regularly as I live far away; it is a bit of a distance between our house and the kindergarten. It would be better to attend more often, but the commute is difficult.”

Last but not least, the communication barriers between parents and teachers were discussed.

P5 (mother) commented:

“I sometimes think that the teachers are not giving me the right information. The communication is not always clear, and I find it difficult to understand what is expected of me as a parent, particularly where there is a difference in language.”

To sum up, although most parents surveyed expressed a strong desire to be actively involved in their child’s education, several factors hinder them from doing so. Examples include time constraints, set gender roles, practical barriers, and contact impediments. Overcoming these barriers can help promote greater parent involvement and enhance communication between families and schools.

Cultural Approaches to Parent-Teacher Involvement:

With regard to the cultural approach to parent involvement with teachers, most of the study's participants agreed that it varied depending on family culture in terms of involvement in their child's education. Meanwhile, P2, stated:

“When it comes to communication with teachers, I am respectful and open and emphasize respectful and productive interactions. I also strive to communicate effectively and constructively with teachers and kindergarten administration, whether in person or via email and text messages.”

Focus Group6, added:

“The use of communication platforms such as parent-teacher communication apps enables on-time communication and interactions between instructors/parents. They enable teachers to update parents immediately regarding day-to-day activities, accomplishments, and issues and thus establish a better and informed collaboration between school and home.”

From another point of view, P12 indicated:

“Because I am always in contact with his teacher, I have become very close to her, and she has asked me to cooperate and participate in kindergarten activities and to encourage my son to participate and interact as well.”

In detail, P15 explained:

“Community events, such as cultural festivals or religious gatherings, provide platforms for parents to connect, share experiences, and discuss educational expectations.”

To sum up, the study's participants agreed that effective teacher communication is essential for parental involvement in their child's education, with cultural beliefs and family values influencing the level and approach of communication.

5.3.1.3 Language Communication

The study's participants described how Saudi cultural norms prioritize the Arabic language, giving examples on two axes: emphasis on native language use, and language as cultural identity. The researcher reviewed some of these opinions, presenting them in the following paragraphs:

- **Emphasis on Native Language Use**

The study's participants agreed that Language use within the family was heavily affected by cultural background, with many participants emphasizing the value of using their native languages at home as a means of preserving cultural heritage. For example, P4 stated:

"I try to support Arabic language skills, so supporting my child's Arabic language development at home is crucial. I don't prefer to use English, especially at home, and when my daughter speaks English, I stop her and remind her to speak in our Arabic language".

In detail, P6 explained how the Arabic language plays a role in social interactions where the child learns cultural values by using the native language:

"When I invite relatives and friends and welcome them, my child will learn from me generosity and hospitality. And to integrate with others and enjoy with them."

- **Language as Cultural Identity in Family Life**

Some of the study's participants believed that cultural norms influence the language used and how cultural behaviours like storytelling, religious ceremonies, and family traditions are conveyed. Focus group6, explained:

“We involve grandparents in educating our child because they may have a different experience and can share valuable views and experiences. This also helps with a belonging spirit and strengthens family customs with a focus on education and its significance”.

Also, focus group 5 stated:

“We value language and literature in our culture and focus more on reading and storytelling at home compared to math or science.

Although many participants emphasized the importance of utilizing Arabic at home to preserve cultural heritage, several expressed concern that this could put strain on multilingual or multicultural homes. For instance, P4 stated:

“I try to support Arabic language skills, so supporting my child's Arabic language development at home is crucial. I don't prefer to use English, especially at home, and when my daughter speaks English, I stop her and remind her to speak in our Arabic language.”

Although Arabic is culturally significant in Saudi Arabia, children who are learning various languages may struggle with speaking English at home. The families of some individuals might not find it easy to balance between supporting Arabic and international languages such as English, particularly among the children attending private schools who learn other foreign languages.

Generational difference in language usage is also another barrier to effective language communication. There is a possibility that older generations might adhere to conventional language practice, whereas young generations might adopt more international languages, especially children. As the focus group 6 observed:

“We involve grandparents in the education of our kids because it is possible to gain valuable knowledge and support through their beliefs and experiences. However, language usage may sometimes become a problem. My child also wants to speak English, and this may cause a communication barrier with the elder relatives who are more familiar with Arabic.”

In conclusion, the study’s participants revealed a consensus that cultural norms significantly contribute to language communication within the Saudi family. There is an undeniable element of observing the centrality of speaking Arabic at home to conserve both culture and identity. Although cultural ways of parent-teacher connection and language communication are important to Saudi families, several barriers exist that hinder successful interaction. Lack of familiarity with digital technologies, language barriers, and the need to preserve cultural linguistic constellation are all barriers that may not allow the parents to be as active participants in their children’s education. Overcoming these barriers could lead to more accommodating and productive communication between parents, teachers, and children, ensuring that all families can participate in the education of their children. This generational gap may cause tensions, especially when it comes to preserving the cultural heritage of the Arabic language while simultaneously responding to the needs of a more globalized environment.

Having explored and cited the opinions of the study’s participants under the first sub theme, ‘communication practices’, specifically in ‘family communication, teacher

communication, and language communication,’ The researcher will now turn to further cultural influences on parents’ involvement in their children’s education, looking at the second sub-theme, ‘cultural conceptions of parental roles in education.’. The participants’ perspectives in this regard are reported in the following paragraphs.

5.3.2 Sub-theme – Cultural Conceptions of Parental Roles in Education

Under the major theme of Cultural Background, the sub-theme of Cultural Conceptions of Parental Roles in Education emerged. This sub-theme incorporates a wide range of roles that parents believe they ought to perform in the education of their children based on cultural and religious implications, as well as expectations of society. The data show that these conventional roles remain robust in most families, particularly in terms of the centrality of mothers and the shifts being witnessed within just a few years, towards increased father involvement and broader family involvement in education. The following categories emerged from the data: Traditional Parental Roles and Evolving Parental Involvement.

5.3.2.1 Traditional Parental Roles

With regard to gendered roles in involvement in education, traditional cultural traditions, and family expectations still place primary responsibility for children’s early education on mothers. Fathers traditionally involve less in day-to-day educational activities but are often involved in providing financial and moral support. The researcher reviewed some of these opinions, discussing them in the following paragraphs.

- **Mother as the Primary Caregiver and Educator:**

Most of the research participants concurred with the argument that traditional roles tend to place the woman in the center of early learning and educational process involving care, care giving and even the general upbringing of their children with most arguing that mothers are mostly tasked with the day-to-day learning experience of a child and not the broader aspect of his/her general upbringing strictly argued by many participants. For example, P3 stated:

"I see the primary role of parents as providing resources (such as tutoring, paying school fees, and providing financial support) rather than directly participating in learning activities. We parents are generally busy and have a duty to our families to provide financial obligations (such as food, drink, clothing, and school supplies), so the role of the mother is to educate and care for the child."

Focus Group5 contributed to this topic, adding

"In the past, there was little awareness and education and the responsibility of the child was completely on the mother while the father was not involved at all. This is one of the old habits that is not good."

P13 also mentioned:

"The curriculum used by many parents focuses on conventional Islamic virtues, which include, respect towards the elders, sense of community, as well as moral development. In early childhood education, mothers are typically the ones responsible for passing along these values."

In a different perspective, Focus Group 3 stated:

"Mothers provide education and take care of the child, particularly in the early years, as fathers are usually busy with their work or other things."

- **Role of Father as a Provider:**

The participants of the study explain that fathers are conventionally regarded as the main financial contributors and that their role in the educational process of their children is usually restricted to financial and moral support, and not the direct educational process. In one example, P3 said:

"I am not able to perform all these functions. The mother plays the role of participating in the day-to-day activities in the schooling operations although the father contributes the finances."

Focus Group 5 added:

"Previously, the father had not played an active role in the schooling of the child. His role was to take care of financial needs, and his mother took the responsibility of educating the child."

P7 added to the discussion:

"Our culture encourages fathers to be more concerned with providing the financial resources of the family, although they, unlike mothers, do not actively educate, provide moral and financial support to the educational process of the offspring."

P13 (Manager, Public Kindergarten) spoke about traditional perception of the paternal role:

"Traditional gender roles in most cases present mothers as the main caregivers and educators, thus making them more involved with early childhood education, with fathers having to participate differently, often being involved with the role of educational support."

Cultural and Religious Influences on Parenting Roles

In terms of cultural and religious traditions reinforcing traditional parental roles, most of the study's participants agreed that they are deeply rooted in cultural beliefs and religious practices involved in their child's education. Among the participants who commented on this point was P6, who emphasized:

"Religious values play a central role in our family life. Our religious practices, such as daily prayer and fasting during Ramadan, are an integral part of family traditions and values. Reading the Quran. Make sure to instil these values in your child so that he or she grows up holding on to it."

In detail, P2 explained:

"We come from a religious family, and this aspect is very important to us. Mothers usually take the lead in imparting these values to their children through daily rituals and storytelling."

P5, also commented on this point, declaring:

"My beliefs and culture emphasize a lot of respect for elders and responsibility in terms of the child's education. The father usually takes a leading example but the mother teaches through nurturing and teaching about religion."

In conclusion, the participants in the study recognized the traditional parenting roles in Saudi families which mostly place mothers at a primary care giving and teaching role, particularly in early childhood education. The Fathers are often taken to be the financial providers, and their role/involvement in the daily activities of education school activities is limited to money and spiritual guidance. These roles are further enhanced by cultural and religious values, and women often become the main proponents of religious and moral education. However, some of the respondents noted the change in how parents should play a significant role in the education process, which is also a sign of the changing cultural norms.

5.3.2.2 Evolving Parental Involvement

Despite the long -established traditional cultural norms, the participants of the study were definite that a clear shift to easier parental involvement has been witnessed over the past decades, which was also found to be connected to the more significant cultural shifts; the researcher assessed some of them in the rest of the paragraphs.

- **Increased Father Involvement in Education**

With regard to the noticeable shift in the traditional roles, most of the study's participants agreed that over time, fathers are becoming more involved in the day-to-day educational involvement of their children. For example, P3 pointed out:

"I see a change where fathers are taking on more responsibility in their children's education. For example, I try to assist my child with homework or discuss what they've learned at school, even though I am traditionally expected to be the financial provider."

Focus Group1, also commented on this point, declaring:

"My husband and I regularly reflect as a family on our educational journey. Discussing what's working and what could be improved allows us to adjust our approach and reinforces our commitment to our child's growth."

In this regard, P17, claimed:

"Now, we encourage the fathers to participate more. It is part of our shift toward creating a balanced environment where both parents are involved in the education process."

For example, Focus Group4, pointed out:

"It is encouraging to find fathers are actively involved now when they were more passive in the past. Now, my husband reads to our child every night, which we never did when I was a kid."

Specifically, P13 elaborated:

"I like the fact that my husband is assisting in the educational process especially in imparting specific skills to our kid such as reading and writing the alphabet."

- **Shift Toward Holistic Child Development**

Some of the study's participants indicated that another significant evolution in parental involvement is the growing focus on holistic development, which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 aims to achieve in all areas, particularly at the family level. The role of society and government in promoting cultural values. In this respect, P2 said:

"We are becoming more concerned with raising resilient, creative, and happy children as well as academically-developing ones. I attempt to make sure my child likes learning, not only because I need him to get good grades, but also as personal development."

Nonetheless, focus group 3 clarified

"Previously, grades and results were given greater priority. Nowadays, preschools specialize in character building and enhancing confidence and self-esteem, which is equally important as academic success."

Precisely, P10 added:

"My family believes that children should be creative and strong. We enhance understanding in various aspects of play, life experience, and emotional development as well as academic achievements."

From a different perspective, focus group 1 stated:

"We are learning to embrace the complete spectrum of development. It is not about grades anymore but ensuring that our child is emotionally intelligent and self-aware, which I believe will serve him/her well long term."

Above opinion was shared by most of the study's participants, with P18 adding:

"We place more emphasis on nurturing well-rounded individuals, which includes understanding their emotional needs and helping them form strong social skills. This is a shift from how my parents' approached things."

Focus group4, also commented on this point, declaring

"There's more recognition now that play and emotional support are equally important in a child's development as academic knowledge. We ensure our children have a balanced routine with both playtime and study time."

Despite a definite sentiment of moving towards higher levels of equity in parental involvement, more conventional gender norms are also a major obstacle. This type of entrenched virtues or beliefs makes a mother to bear the majority of the care and education especially at the beginning years of the existence of a child. As P3 mentioned:

"The role of the mother is to educate and care for the child, especially in the early years, as fathers are often busy with work or other commitments."

While Fathers are increasingly taking an active role, traditional expectations of males as financial providers and women as primary caretakers remain. This can limit the extent to which fathers can or will be involved in their children's learning. According to many participants, fathers, who are traditionally considered financial providers, can still be restricted

by other job requirements and economic preferences without involvement in the educational process of their children. As P13 (Manager, Public Kindergarten) explained,

“Fathers are often focused on providing the financial needs of the family, and while they may not directly teach, they offer moral and financial support.”

Furthermore, although taking on additional roles in education, mothers may be juggling employment and caregiving responsibilities, leaving little time for active involvement in their children's education. This disparity can lead to a situation where the parent's participation is disproportionate, and some family members bear greater responsibility than others. Though the positive tendency to involve parents more in the process of collaboration is present, not all families or individuals can support those changes because of their deep cultural and religious affiliations. As P6 mentioned,

“Family traditions and values are represented by the religious practices we go through like prayer and fasting during Ramadan. The Quran is an important part of teaching our child.”

Families that embrace traditional values deeply may be resistant to practices that do not conform to the traditional norms, like the need for dads to be more active in educational pursuits. Moreover, the religious and cultural emphasis on the role of the mother in religious and moral instruction could limit the family's participation more generally, especially in domains culturally or religiously understood to be the special preserve of one parent. It is positive that more people appreciate the significance of overall child development, including emotional and social skills, as well as intellectual achievement. However, the cultural background influences on parents' involvement in their children's education and the first and second sub-themes, ‘communication practices’ and ‘cultural conceptions of parental roles in education,’ do not exclude the reality of these power dynamics on parents' involvement. This

point was included by the researcher in the third sub-theme, namely, 'power dynamics in parent-teacher relationships,' as discussed in the following sub-section.

5.3.3 Sub-theme – Power Dynamics in Parent-Teacher Relationships

The sub-theme that was identified under the major theme of Cultural Background is that of Power Dynamics in Parent-Teacher Relationships. The present sub-theme dwells upon the influences of cultural norms and expectations of the society on the parent-teacher relationship and cooperation. Statistically, power relations play a very major role in determining behaviour amongst parents in most learning institutions especially in Saudi Arabia, and how much their opinions are sought in making central decisions affecting learning of their children. According to the data, the following categories were distinguished: Teacher Authority, Parent Voice, and Cultural Expectations.

5.3.3.1 Teacher's Control over Parent Involvement

The participants of the study also accepted that teachers, at times, exercise their authority by restricting or outright denying the intervention of parents in education practices, which may distort the power balance. To give an example, P12 said:

"Most teachers dislike or are opposed to the intervention of the mother and claim that the kindergarten child is under the care of his teacher and in his home the child is under the care of the mother! This is not true. Working together is much better."

P10 also commented on this point, declaring

"Unfortunately, some teachers do not want any cooperation or participation from parents and say, 'I am the teacher and this is the curriculum. I do not accept suggestions or contributions!' This is really bad."

In detail, Focus Group3 explained:

"Most preschools only include mothers without fathers in the group and sometimes teachers refuse to include fathers! I don't know why! It might be because of customs and traditions or because there is no guidance from the Ministry of Education to do this."

5.3.3.2 Parent Voice

In describing their voice, the parents participating in this study seek greater communication and collaboration, wanting to have a voice in the educational process and be involved in decisions that affect their children. Their views are explored here in the following terms:

"Effective communication and regular updates from the preschool that maintain open lines of communication through paper bulletins, social media, or apps keep parents informed about preschool activities and expectations. This transparency is essential to fostering parent involvement."

Parents want to involve directly in their child's learning by volunteering, which can foster a healthier parent-teacher partnership. Participant Focus Group6 briefly described this situation, as follows:

"Encouraging parents to volunteer in classrooms or school events allows them to be directly involved in their child's education. Schools which enable such experiences have a sense of collaboration between teachers and families."

Nevertheless, parents insist on more interactive programs in which they can take an active part in the education of their child. Such types of activities have the potential to transform the power imbalance by forcing parents and teachers to collaborate mutually all of which was affirmed by P9.

"Parent-child learning programs (or parent-child competitions), which involve parents and children in educational activities together would not only build their relationships, but also improve educational experiences."

Participant P7 also said:

"Arrange parent-teacher conferences to determine learning objectives and means of meeting them. The collaborative approach aids in pulling efforts together and making both parties work towards the same directions."

In Summary,

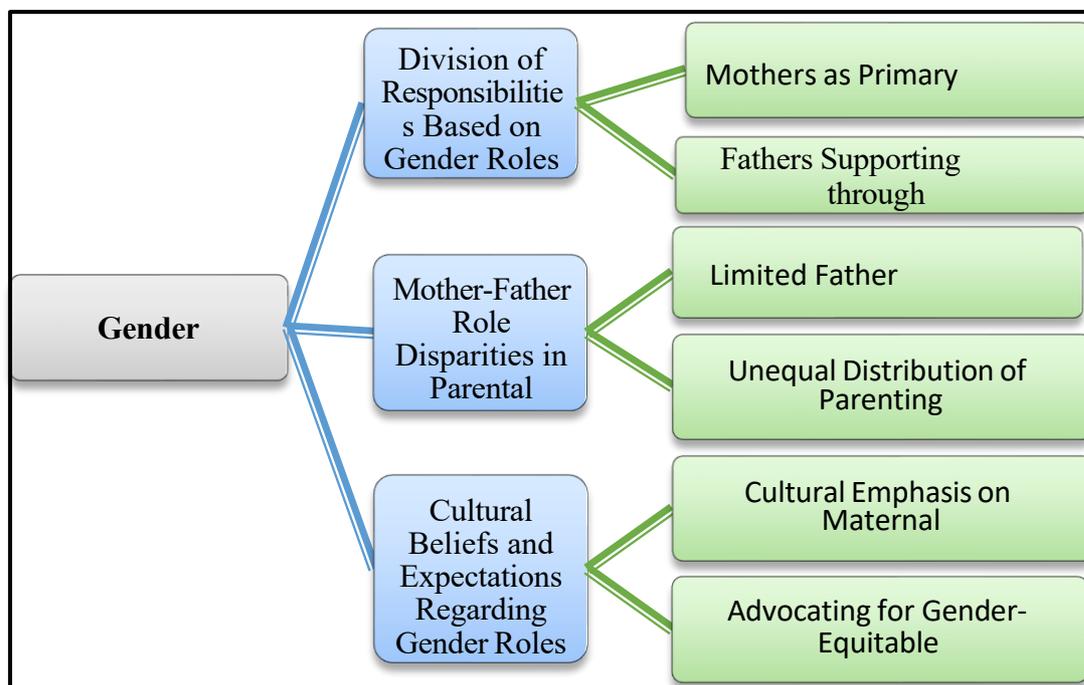
Parent-teacher relations may influence parent/teacher interaction via cultural assumptions. Culturally, in Saudi Arabia, some teachers are assumed to restrict parental outreach because of their traditions, including the belief that mothers are main caregivers and, therefore, downplay fathers. This sort of cultural requirement may create exclusionary tendencies and father nonparticipation thus keeping an inequality of power within the relationship. Focus Group 3 posed the possibility that the exclusion of fathers in early childhood education may have been due to the absence of guidelines or directives provided by the Ministry of Education. The lack of clear guidelines encouraging the inclusion of practices and equal participation of parents could leave the instructors encouraged to maintain a balance of power. Efforts to nurture cooperative relations may be jeopardized by the absence of institutional support on parent-teacher collaborations. Educators might not have sufficient knowledge or skills on how they should incorporate parents in the educational process. In the case when instructors are unable to communicate with parents in a transparent and collaborative manner, the initiative to enhance the relationship between parents and teachers might be undermined. Moreover, not all

teachers will attach importance to parental involvement, or will be aware of the beneficial effect of such involvement on the academic achievements of children.

5.4 Major Theme 3 – Gender

In response to the questions asked of the participants, they described various aspects of how gender roles influence parental involvement, particularly in the context of Saudi Arabian families. From the data, the researcher compiled the codes associated with this major theme and organized them into the sub-theme: division of responsibilities based on gender roles, mother-father role disparities in parental involvement and cultural beliefs and expectations regarding gender roles, as can be seen from Figure 5.3

Figure 4.5: Major Theme 3 – Gender



2 Figure 5.3: Major Theme 3 – Gender

5.4.1. Sub-theme – Division of Roles Based on Traditional Gender Norms

The sub-theme gender roles division of tasks examines the differing views of interviewees on the role played by gender norms status in contributing to parental participation in child learning. Participants were asked to express how their gender norms status influenced their contributions, involvement, and expectations towards their children learning.

5.4.1.1 Mothers as Primary Caregivers

Some of the study's participants cited there is a common pattern in how gender affects the division of parental responsibilities between fathers and mothers. Mothers are typically more involved in the day-to-day learning of the child. For example, participant (Focus Group 3) stated,

“As my husband has mentioned, he cannot participate in his child's education, and I appreciate his work, effort, and time, but I wish he would participate even a little in playing with him. Sometimes I mention this to him.”

Focus Group 5 contributed to this topic, adding:

“In the past, there was little awareness and education and the responsibility of the child was completely on the mother while the father was not involved at all. This is one of the old habits that is not good.”

Participant 1 (Father from public Kindergarten), also mentioned:

“I am a Saudi father for my children, I am interested in focusing on social skills and etiquette that are consistent with our Saudi culture.”

Participant 12 (Mother from Private Kindergarten), also mentioned:

"I communicate a lot by phone with the teacher and ask her questions on an ongoing basis, especially since I am more responsible for follow-up than their father because he travels a lot and is always busy with his work."

5.4.1.2 Fathers Supporting through Finances

On the other hand, fathers typically describe their role as supporting rather than being involved in direct learning. For example, participant (Focus Group 3) stated,

"I see the primary role of parents as providing resources (such as tutoring, paying school fees, and providing financial support) rather than directly participating in learning activities."

In detail, participant 18, Practitioner in Private kindergarten explained:

"The role of the father is not only limited to paying for school fees or supporting the child financially, but it extends to helping with social and emotional development through cultural and family values."

The participant (focus group 4) wrote:

“Although it is my task to bring in the money, I also contribute to determining educational purposes at home, so that the academic progress of our child reflects the principles of the family.”

In conclusion, some participants stated that mothers tend to be the main caregivers and devote more time to their children in everyday learning. They often have the role of relaying messages to teachers and taking actions in matters related to education. Conversely, dads tend to be less directly involved in education and they are viewed to have a major role in providing financial support. Some fathers acknowledged the financial obligation they must respond to in terms of educating their children, but expressed a desire to concentrate within cultural and social context of educating etiquette and family values.

5.4.2. Sub-theme – Mother-Father Role Disparities in Parental Involvement

The sub-theme mother-father role disparities in parental involvement explain the varying perspectives of participants regarding the unequal distribution of parenting responsibilities and the limited father involvement in early childhood learning.

5.4.2.1 Unequal Distribution of Parenting Responsibilities

Some of the study’s participants cited there is the imbalance between mothers and fathers in terms of their involvement. These views on this point are presented below. Firstly, participant (Focus Group family 3) clarified:

“I see the primary role of parents as providing resources (such as tutoring, paying school fees, and providing financial support) rather than directly participating in learning activities. We parents are generally busy and have a duty to our families to

provide financial obligations (such as food, drink, clothing, and school supplies), so the role of the mother is to educate and care for the child. I cannot do all of these roles."

Unequal involvement and result in a mother desiring more participation from the father, particularly in the educational and caregiving aspects. In this regard, Mother from (Focus Group family 3) stated:

"As my husband has mentioned, he cannot participate in his child's education, and I appreciate his work, effort, and time, but I wish he would participate even a little in playing with him. Sometimes I mention this to him."

Focus Group Family 4 contributed to this topic, adding:

"Setting realistic expectations about our involvement helps reduce stress and allows us to participate in a way that is comfortable for both of us. We agree to share tasks and responsibilities in terms of participation. When I am occupied, the responsibility of her child in the context of playing and guiding falls on my wife."

Participant 14 Manager (in public kindergarten explained):

"In other families, the mother is the decision-maker when it comes to the education and other extra-curricular activities of the child; the father mostly does not play a part unless there is a need to make a big decision, such as the choice of places."

However, (Focus Group family 5): clarified:

"In the past, there was little awareness and education, and the responsibility of the child was completely on the mother, while the father was not involved at all. This is one of the old habits that is not good."

While both parents are involved in caregiving, the father's late hours create a default role for the mother to shoulder the majority of the responsibilities. In detail, (Focus Group 4) explained:

"Sometimes, with work, I come home late, so the role distribution is very comfortable."

Participant 15, Practitioner in public kindergarten, also commented on this point, declaring:

"Traditionally, mothers are the primary carers and are expected to take the lead in their child's education, while fathers are often seen as the breadwinners and are not as involved in day-to-day parenting tasks."

Participant 19, Practitioner in Private kindergarten clarified:

"Many parents report that mothers are the primary carers and are expected to manage the child's daily routine, including morning preparations, learning, and bedtime routines, while fathers may only help when asked."

Unequal Distribution of Parenting Responsibilities refers to the overall imbalance in parenting tasks, with mothers often shouldering greater responsibilities. Limited father involvement in early childhood education is a specific facet of this larger issue, focusing on fathers' less involvement in their children's educational learning throughout the early years.

5.4.2.2 Limited Father Involvement in Early Childhood Education:

Some of the study's participants cited that there is lower father participation in their child's educational activities during the early years. These views on this point are presented below.

Focus Group 4 contributed to this topic, adding:

*"Sometimes, with work, I come home late, so the role distribution is very comfortable.
If I am busy, my wife takes on the responsibility for her child in terms of play and guidance."*

Participant 11 (Father from Private kindergarten) also mentioned:

"Because I travel a lot and work outside the home, I may be busy with my children and direct communication through my wife."

Participant7 (Father from Private kindergarten), said:

"As a father, I am busy most of the time with work and often do not have time for my child's education. My wife is more involved because of her role at home, and I feel that is fine."

Summary,

The respondents differ in their attitudes on the unfair distribution of the parenting functions and the secondary role of the father in early childhood education. Participants indicated that the roles of parents are usually not equal, and mothers usually play a larger role in care and educational activities. Owing to occupational demands, some fathers believe they must extend assistance more than involve actively in the education or child care needs of their children, thereby leaving the job to their mothers. The fathers are not as much involved in everyday activities, such as play and mentoring, though they might have to be involved in the bigger decisions, like the choice of educational institutions. This default role of mothers in the education and childcare becomes evident among most families, particularly where the father needs to work late hours. Some respondents said they wished to observe more involvement of fathers and that the mothers wanted their husbands to have a greater role (even in the little things, such as spending time playing with their children). Yet, the established societal roles and conventional expectations often cement this disproportion, with mothers being asked to take care of the day-to-day activities, whereas fathers are not as involved in such activities unless explicitly asked.

5.4.3. Sub-theme – Cultural Beliefs and Expectations Regarding Gender Roles

The sub-theme of cultural beliefs and expectations regarding gender explains the cultural emphasis on maternal responsibility and advocating for gender-equitable policies. Participants shared how the cultural beliefs and expectations regarding gender roles contributed to their involvement in their children's learning.

5.4.3.1 Cultural Emphasis on Maternal Responsibility

Study participants describe how the cultural focus on maternal responsibility in Saudi society, until recently, still focused on the mother as the centre of educational involvement rather than the father's role. In this regard, participant 6 (Mother from Private Kindergarten) stated:

"It is obvious that fathers attend fewer kindergarten meetings and parent-teacher conferences than moms. There is a need for more programs or incentives that encourage fathers to play a more active role in their children's learning."

Focus Group 4 contributed to this topic, adding:

"Although we are seeing progress, many kindergartens and communities still place the responsibility of early education primarily on mothers."

Changing cultural expectations to include fathers, in detail, participant 14 (Manger from public kindergarten), explained:

"We need to create a cultural shift in which fathers participate in learning. Currently, it is considered that the mother will take care of educational matters. This needs to be altered to promote a more collaborative family atmosphere."

Participant4, Mother from Public Kindergarten also mentioned about cultural barriers:

“There are still many cultural barriers that restrict father involvement, such as cultural stigmas and the expectation that mothers should manage everything. Kindergarten should provide targeted cultural programs to enable fathers to participate more effectively.”

Participant 6 (Mother from private kindergarten), contributed to this topic, adding:

“When a father wishes to actively participate in his child's education, he may feel embarrassed due to traditional beliefs, and he may face cultural and social judgment because his participation contradicts our Saudi culture, which holds that raising children and participating in their education is the responsibility of the mother, not the father, which is truly unfortunate for our children in all aspects.”

5.4.3.2 Advocating for Gender-Equitable Policies

Many participants in this study stressed the importance of encourage fathers to attend kindergarten functions and meetings, provide more resources for fathers, and increase support for fathers to overcome barriers. Shifting cultural expectations to include fathers and promoting equal parental roles in early learning. Also, they add more about: kindergarten policies that encourage both parents' involvement, flexible work hours to facilitate father involvement, education programs tailored to fathers, incentivizing father involvement through social recognition, and incorporating fathers into educational decision-making processes. In this regard, Focus Group 4 stated:

“Despite advances, many kindergartens and communities continue to lay the primary burden for early education on mothers. Fathers should be more involved, particularly in involvement.”

Shifting Cultural Expectations to Include Fathers, participant16, Manager in private kindergarten clarified:

"We need a societal shift in which fathers are expected to participate in educational learning. Currently, it is considered that the mother will take care of educational affairs. This needs to be altered to promote a more collaborative family atmosphere."

Giving parents, particularly fathers, more help in overcoming obstacles as argued by Focus Group5:

"Some obstacles to father involvement still remain, such as long working hours, cultural stigmas, and the perception that the moms are supposed to take on everything. Kindergarten must offer certain programs or flexible schedules that allow the fathers to be involved more effectively."

Allocating additional resources to fathers in this respect, participant14, Manager in public kindergarten explained:

"Many fathers often perceive themselves as outsiders in the educational process due to lack of a tool or information about how to participate. Communities and institutions should also make sure that there are increased services such as workshops, parenting support groups, and there will also be an involvement program by fathers."

Kindergartner policies that promote the involvement of both parents, in this respect, Participant 2, Mother (public kindergarten), asserted:

"I believe that kindergarten can adopt policies that will allow both parents to involve their children in parent-teacher meetings, school volunteer activities, or even in the children's homework. No specific policies have been established that emphasise father involvement."

Flexible work hours to support father's involvement, in this Participant (Focus Group 2) pointed out:

"Most fathers work long hours and are unable to attend Kindergarten meetings or participate in after-school programs. If the work place provides more flexible hours or even paid time off to attend school-related events, fathers will be more involved in their children's education."

Education programs designed for fathers, in this regard, participant19, practitioner in private kindergarten clarified:

"We need additional programs that specifically address fathers' roles in early childhood education. Many fathers are unaware of how they can actively contribute to their children's education: therefore, schools could offer father-specific workshops or parenting programs."

To encourage father participation through social involvement, Focus Group 4 claimed:

"In many societies, fathers are not given the same credit as women for their involvement in learning. Kindergartens or communities could provide incentives or social recognition to fathers who are involved in their child's learning path, such as rewards or public acknowledgement."

Summary:

With the overarching topic of Gender, participants deliberated on the ways in which traditional gender roles affect the involvement of parents in early childhood education, with it being applied to the Saudi Arabian family concept. The data presented a variety of opinions that have been categorized as the sub-themes: traditional division of roles by gender norms, differences

in roles adopted in parental involvement by mother and father, and cultural beliefs and expectations towards gender roles.

In the first sub-theme, which is the division of roles according to traditional gender norms, participants discussed how the role of fathers and mothers in the learning process is predetermined by the culture. Several respondents explained that mothers appeared to be more involved in the educational learning process on a daily basis. The second sub-theme, the disparities in the mother-father roles in parental involvement, emphasizes the unequal distribution of roles between mothers and fathers. The participants articulated how mothers tend to dominate the education processes of children by handling most of their schooling duties as opposed to their fathers who tend to be more detached in the early stages of education. In the third sub-theme cultural beliefs and expectations about gender roles, participants concentrated on cultural emphasis about maternal responsibility and requirements of developing policies that supported Gender equitable parental roles. Several participants indicated that a cultural change to incorporate fathers more in the educational process is necessary since fathers are currently perceived as lesser participants in early childhood education.

5.5 Major Theme 4 – Vision 2030: Saudi Arabia’s Family Path to Transformation

During the analysis process, “Vision 2030, The Saudi family’s path to transformation” emerged as an inductive and central theme that participants focused on. Theme 4 also included several intersecting subthemes, which were characterized by many details about the future goals of the Saudi government, as well as its position on Saudi families and children obtaining support and empowerment to ensure family stability and protect the needs of the child. The codes related to this major theme 4 were extracted from the data and arranged into three sub-themes:

government initiatives for family involvement, attitudes to the Saudi family’s path to transformation, and future hopes for family-child dynamics, as can be seen from Figure 5.4:

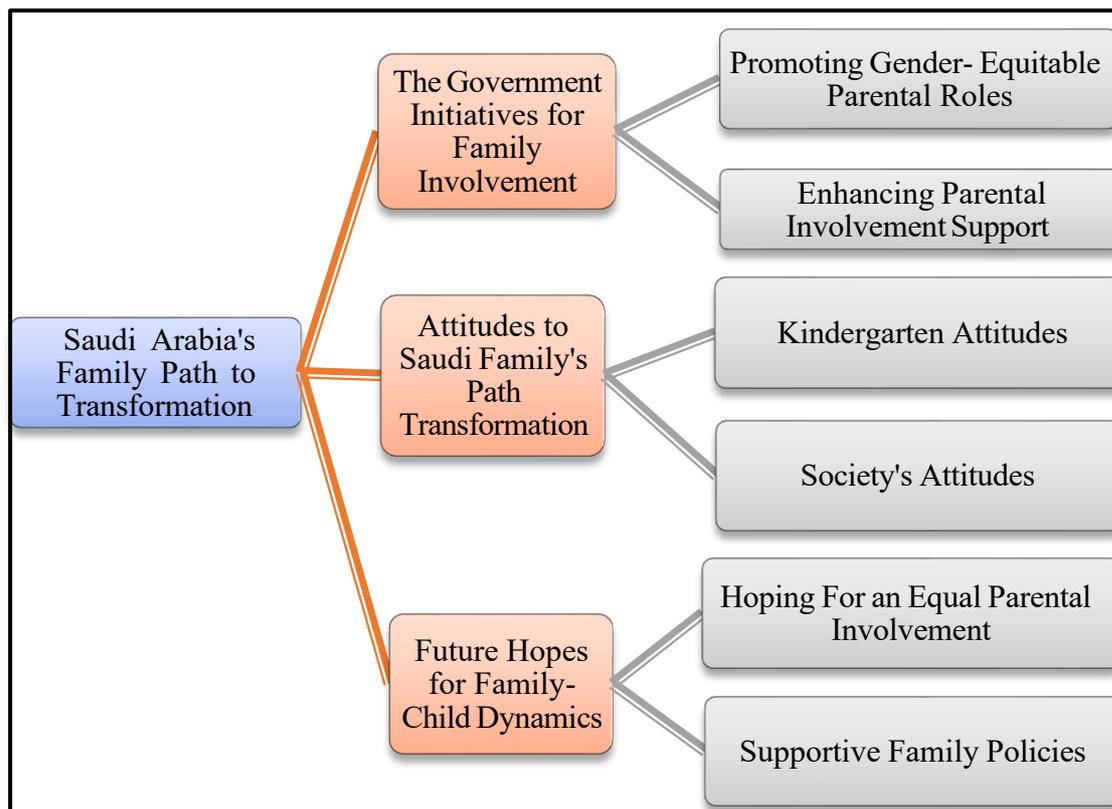


Figure 4.6: Theme 4 - Vision 2030: Saudi Arabia’s Family Path to Transformation

5.5.1 Sub-theme – The Government Initiatives for Family Involvement

Under the major theme of ‘Vision 2030: Saudi Arabia’s Family Path to Transformation’, the sub-theme of the government initiatives for family involvement, whereby some of the Participants described the government’s role concerning promoting gender-equitable parental roles and strengthening support programs. Codes for this first sub-theme were extracted from the data as follows: promoting gender-equitable parental roles and strengthening support programs for parental involvement.

5.5.1.1 Promoting Gender-Equitable Parental Roles:

Altogether, there was unanimous agreement among the study participants that the new Saudi government has taken measures to enhance gender equality in family relationships, which directly affects parental involvement. Policies aim to make mothers and fathers equally responsible for the education and well-being of their children, thereby demolishing outdated gender norms. This attention towards a gender-balanced distribution of responsibilities by the government will aid in making it possible for the two parents to take part in the developmental activities of the children, and a more cooperative method of learning and development is likely. When interviewed with participant 16, a manager in a private kindergarten, explained:

“There are many reforms that can be done at the workplace, allowing both parents to take parental leave or work flex time to allow fathers to become full-time involved parents without jeopardizing their careers.”

Participant 19, Practitioner in Private kindergarten, stated:

“The appointment of women to key positions in government sectors concerned with education and family development, such as the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, where they can implement policies that promote gender-balanced parenting roles.”

Participant 14 (Manger from public kindergarten) contributed to this topic, adding.

“Start working on Father-specific programs, such as parenting workshops or involvement activities focusing on fathers’ involvement in early childhood education, which can help to remove societal stigma and encourage fathers to participate in traditionally female-dominated roles. Cultural initiatives made by kindergarten or community centers to promote father activities at school, parent-teacher meetings, and after-school activities.”

P4, Public Kindergarten Mother, said:

“Divorce and custody laws have been changed to give mothers and fathers equal rights in child custody so that both parents can be involved in the upbringing of their children.”

Participant 15, Practitioner in Public kindergarten, explained.

“There are increased public awareness efforts that encourage fathers to attend educational events or parent-teacher conferences, which can assist in shifting cultural views that place all of the responsibility for childcare and education on mothers.”

5.5.1.2 Enhancing Parental Involvement Support:

The launch of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 has brought with it many initiatives to enhance parental involvement. Thus, Participant 14 (Manger from public kindergarten) stated:

“Having a Family Affairs Council where both mothers and fathers may express their issues and work with experts would be beneficial. It would give us more systematic advice on how to manage family life, parenting responsibilities, and educational involvement.”

Participant 18, Practitioner in a Private kindergarten, also mentioned:

“A centralized entity, such as a Family Affairs Council, might help implement programs to guide and regulate family support services. It may provide resources and programs to encourage more fathers to participate in the daily lives of their children and their education.”

Participant 15, Practitioner in Public kindergarten, added to this topic:

“A children’s rights center would help the parents or guardians know the legal rights of their children in terms of education, health, and emotional support. It would help make sure every parent will feel involved in major decisions that directly impact the well-being of the child.”

Participant 1 (Father of public kindergarten), clarifying:

“One of the ways such centers could get involved would be parenting programs or services that inform parents about the latest law to protect the rights of children and how to promote these rights within their own families.”

Participant 6 (Mother of the Private Kindergarten) answered:

“Research into how both parents may share equally in the role of parenting and educating their children will go a long way in making legislators enlightened in formulating their policies. Evidence-based solutions are urgently needed to empower the fathers and get them actively involved.”

Participant 2 (Mother at Public Kindergarten) said:

“I am optimistic that with research, the role of the father in early childhood education will change the cultural norm. A case study shows that the involvement of a father has a positive effect on the educational performance of a child, and it can reshape orientation related to gender roles in parenthood.”

However, focus group 4 clarified:

“Public campaigns demonstrating how both parents may actively participate in their child’s learning life would challenge old assumptions. If we see more fathers involved in kindergarten activities, it may inspire other fathers to do the same.”

Summary,

The study participants agreed that the Saudi government had taken initiatives to encourage both mothers and fathers to share responsibility for their children's education and well-being, thereby breaking gender stereotypes. Additionally, the government's promotion of gender-balanced parental duties includes assigning women to senior posts in sectors relating to education and family development, where they can enact legislation to encourage shared responsibilities further. Programs explicitly directed at fathers, such as parenting courses and events encouraging fathers' participation in their children's development, were also emphasized as vital in overcoming societal stigma and achieving gender equality. The respondents also proposed that support structures be established, including a Family Affairs Council to facilitate family life and the involvement of parents. These programs would help parents coordinate their activities and encourage collaboration among parents. Additionally, the need to create institutions that safeguard the rights of children and to create evidence-based research regarding father involvement was postulated as another way of shaping policies and changing cultural attitudes. Popular movements to break traditional gender norms and demonstrate the participation of fathers in the education of their children were also deemed necessary to facilitate change on a larger social scale.

5.5.2. Sub-theme – Attitudes to Saudi Family's Path Transformation

Under the main theme of 'Saudi Arabia's family path to transformation', the sub-theme, attitudes to Saudi Family's Path to transformation, emerged. Here, most of the participants noted the attitudes of Saudi kindergarten and local society in light of Saudi Vision 2030 concerning empowering families in parental involvement. The codes relating to this second sub-theme were extracted from the data: kindergarten attitudes and society's attitudes.

5.5.2.1 Kindergarten Attitudes

With the Saudi Vision 2030 focusing on the importance of parental involvement, several kindergartens are altering their policies to facilitate more interaction with the family. Nevertheless, such changes are not fully developed. In some situations, kindergartens are adjusting strategically to entice more fathers than just the moms to participate in kindergarten activities. Thus, Participant 14 (Manger from public kindergarten) stated:

“Our kindergartens have begun to expand chances for father involvement, such as organizing occasions where fathers can involve in learning activities. Previously, most meetings and school activities were attended by moms, but kindergartens are now aggressively pushing fathers to participate in activities such as parent-teacher conferences and field trips.”

Focus group family 1, noted:

“This has been observed in some kindergartens, where special events such as Father’s Day are organized, inviting fathers to participate in events with their children actively. This enables fathers to get involved in their children’s education, which has previously not been encouraged.” The school now sends personalized invites to fathers, which is a wonderful step towards more balanced involvement.”

Participant 15, Practitioner in Public kindergarten, explained.

“Kindergartens now offer flexible meeting hours to suit working fathers. Previously, most parent-teacher conferences were held during the day, when mothers were more likely to attend; however, Kindergartens have begun giving night-time slots to ensure that fathers who work during the day can also attend and be involved in their children’s education.”

Participant 14 (Manger from public kindergarten) also mentioned:

“Kindergartens are also making an increasing effort to organize events such as ‘Dad and Me’ workshops, in which fathers work alongside their children to complete educational tasks. These seminars were not only well-received, but they also strengthened father-child ties and challenged the traditional belief that early childhood education is entirely the duty of mothers.”

5.5.2.2 Society’s Attitudes

Traditionally, the social perception of gender roles in parenting has placed the primary responsibility for childcare and initial education on mothers. Nevertheless, the recent change in societal outlooks can be observed, and the role of a father in educating his children is more recognized due to the Saudi Vision 2030 initiative. Nonetheless, cultural norms still affect the level of comfort that fathers will be involved in certain learning activities. On a social level, the new reforms mentioned in Vision 2030 seemed difficult for society to accept. On this point, Participant 15, Practitioner in public kindergarten, stated:

“As much as society is pressuring men to get more active, there is some opposition, especially among the older generations, who believe that parenting is the responsibility of mothers.”

Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) also commented on this point, declaring:

“If I attend a parent-teacher meeting, I feel like I am straying out of the norm, as it is usually my wife that do it.”

However, Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) clarified:

“I believe that more men desire to be involved, but in my culture, there is an unspoken rule that mothers handle everything related to their children’s education. Even though Vision 2030 encourages fathers to participate, there is significant pressure from extended family members who believe it is inappropriate for fathers to attend kindergarten meetings.”

Participant 9 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) claimed:

“While fathers are more encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences, some family members still question the need for fathers to participate, stating that it is the mother’s responsibility. Some guys want to participate but fear they are going against tradition.”

Participant 3 (Father from Public kindergarten) clarified:

“I want to be more involved in my child’s school activities, but my parents always tell me it is not my place. They still believe it is a woman’s responsibility. Even if I am more supportive of my wife in this matter, I am sometimes hesitant to attend school gatherings because of their judgement.”

Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) explained:

“My wife wanted me to attend my child’s first parent-teacher meeting, but I hesitated. In our society, there is a deeply held belief that men do not need to participate in school activities. I felt weird being the only father present when all the other mothers were gathering.”

Participant 2 (Mother from Public Kindergarten) also mentioned:

“I think Vision 2030 is pushing the idea of shared involvement, but in my circle, there is still resistance.”

5.5.3. Sub-theme – Future Hopes for Family- Child Dynamics

Under the main theme of ‘Saudi Arabia’s family path to transformation’, the sub-theme, future hopes for family-child dynamics, emerged. Here, most of the study’s participants elaborated on their expectations of the future of Saudi families following the full implementation of Saudi Vision 2030, particularly regarding parental involvement. The codes relating to this second sub-theme were extracted from the data, hoping for equal parental involvement and supportive family policies.

5.5.3.1 Hoping for Equal Parental Involvement

Some of the study’s participants were unanimous in their optimism regarding ‘Saudi Arabia’s family path to transformation to better under Saudi Vision 2030. The interviewees made many statements to express this optimism, including the following comment by participant 3 (Father from Public kindergarten), which clarified:

“In the future, I hope to be as interested as my wife in our children’s academic and extracurricular involvements. At the moment, I feel obliged to make additional efforts to contribute to debates or make decisions concerning their education. My dream would be that one day you would have two very, very involved parents, and that the father is supposed to participate in everything and not just the financial aspect of it.”

Participant 15, Practitioner in public kindergarten, adding:

“I hope that in the future, both parents will share equal responsibilities. Fathers must participate as fully as moms in their children’s education. We are heading in that direction, but there is still a long way to go.”

Participant 6 (Mother from Private Kindergarten) stated:

“I anticipate a brighter future in which fathers play a more active part in early childhood education. Right now, it feels like I manage most of the educational aspects, but I would like to see fathers stand up and participate in all aspects of their children’s learning journey, not just monetarily.”

Participant 8 (Father from Private Kindergarten) explained:

“As much as I cherish my position, I feel that fathers should not be passive characters in the background. We should be partners in all aspects of parenting. I hope that soon, it will be normal for both parents to take time off work to attend kindergarten events or meet teachers. Both of us must be equally present at parent-teacher meetings and kindergarten projects.”

5.5.3.2 Supportive Family Policies

Some of the study’s participants related to the theme of supportive family policies in the context of Saudi Vision 2030, reflecting the perspectives in this regard; participant 6 (Mother from Private Kindergarten) stated:

“I think supporting measures, like flexible working hours for both parents, would be beneficial. It would enable me to attend my children’s learning activities without feeling as if I were abandoning my career. This kind of balance is required for both parents to be fully involved in their children’s education.”

Participant 19, Practitioner in Private kindergarten clarified:

I would like to see a policy that allows both men and mothers to be involved equally in workshops or training sessions focused on improving parenting abilities. These

regulations will make it easier for families to share the task of involvement in their children's learning."

Family 5 contributed to this topic, adding:

"These supporting family policies would provide us the time and incentive to be fully involved in our children's learning.

"Participant 4 Mother from public kindergarten, clarified:

"My vision is to have a policy in the future whereby there is equal parent involvement in early childhood education. For instance, both parents should be entitled to pay maternity leave (not just the mother) so that the fathers can have access to their children and the teachers indoctrinate them into their education systems at an early age. That would lend credence to the thought that all persons did make an equal input to the family factor."

In Summary,

The sub-topic "Future Hopes for Family-Child Dynamics," part of the larger theme of 'Saudi Arabia's Family Path to Transformation,' highlights the participants' aspirations for the future of parental involvement following the full implementation of Saudi Vision 2030. Many participants expressed optimism about a future in which both parents share equal responsibility for their children's education and upbringing. Fathers planned to be more actively involved in scholastic and extracurricular activities, to achieve a balance in which both parents contribute equally outside of financial support. The existing disparity in which the role of mothers in raising and educating children predominates was revealed, and there was a wish that the

involvement of fathers in early childhood education and activities like parent-teacher conferences should increase.

Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of family-friendly policies in supporting this transition. They supported the idea of flexible work hours and paid maternity leave to both parents, thereby enabling them to remain in their careers and have greater interest in their children's education. The presence of policies that enhance equal parental involvement would help to create a better balance in the family unit and enable parents to work together in their child's learning journey.

Chapter Six: Discussion

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the analysis of the interview and focus group data from the preceding chapter. In the interview and focus group, the Saudi parents, educators, and practitioners shared valuable experiences and opinions about the role of cultural factors and background and their influences on parental involvement in early childhood education, as well as gender roles. Participants in this study also explained the barriers and concerns. In this chapter, results will now be compared and placed in the context of chapter two's literature review, through the theoretical and conceptual lens of social interaction and cultural practices: a construct offered to research from sociocultural theory. Figure 6.1 below illustrates a simplified representation of the theory used in this study, showing its connection to the research questions and results.

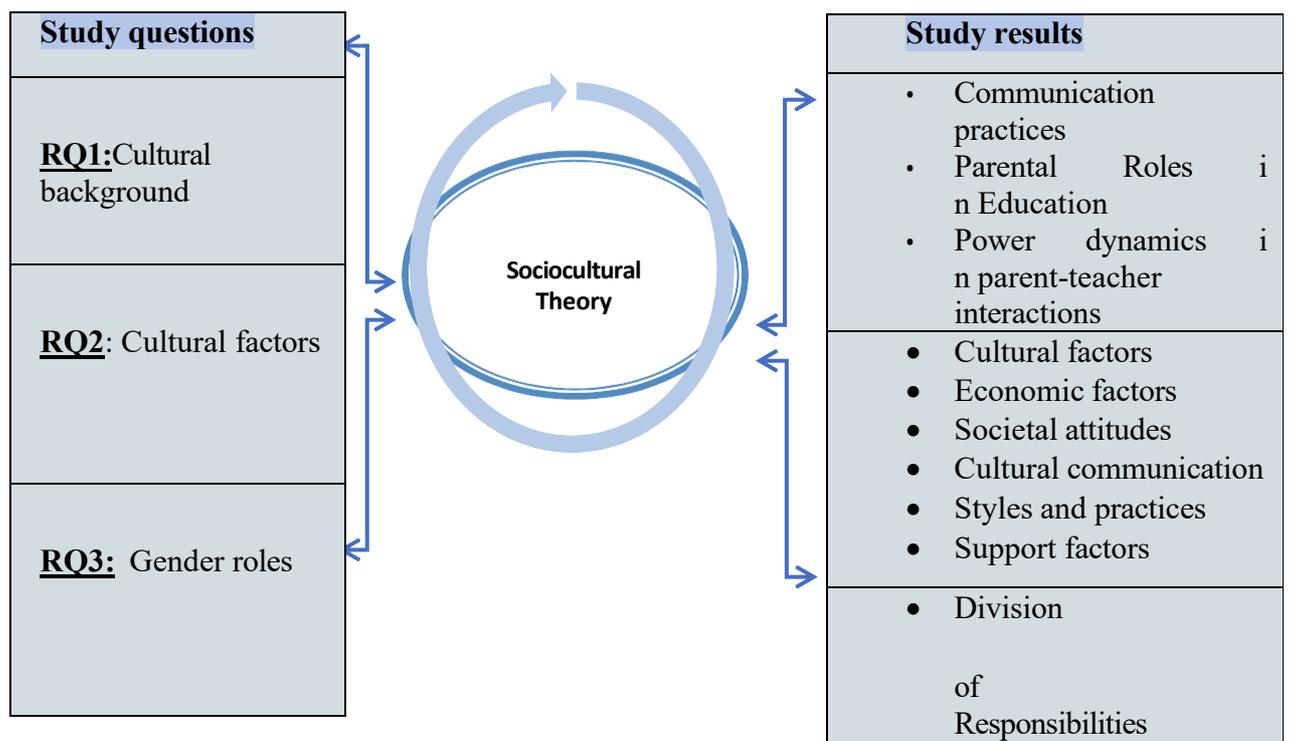


Figure 4.7: The theoretical and conceptual framework – findings

The research findings will be addressed in the following section according to the principal research question: how much does a parent's cultural background have an impact on the level and type of involvement a parent has in early childhood education? In particular, this chapter will respond to the following sub-questions that guided this study:

RQ1: How does Saudi parents' cultural background influence their involvement in their children's education, from the perspective of parents and practitioners?

RQ2: What are the key factors related to cultural background that affect Saudi parents' involvement in their children's learning within Saudi cultural contexts from the perspective of parents and practitioners?

RQ3: What is the link between gender and parental involvement from the perspective of Saudi Arabian parents?

6.2 A Description of Cultural Background (RQ1)

The discussion in this section concentrates on the findings for RQ1: How does the cultural background of Saudi parents influence their involvement in their children's education from the perspective of parents and practitioners? The results presented in the data analysis (Chapter Four) show how the sample of 18 participants described their opinion about how cultural background influences their involvement in their children's education. The results of this present study showed that, from the perspective of the parents and practitioners included, cultural background plays a central role in shaping the nature, extent, and form of parental

involvement in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia on three levels: communication practices, cultural conceptions of parental roles, and power dynamics in parent-teacher relationships. These findings align with existing literature on parental involvement and also contribute new cultural insights into the specific case of the Saudi context. Each of these three levels will now be discussed.

6.2.1 Communication Practices

Communication practices were one of the most significant themes that arose in the responses that participants gave under the cultural background. The theme involved three broad categories: family communication, Practitioners' communication, and language communication. These dimensions define the extent to which cultural values and customs affect how parents talk to their children at home, how parents talk to nursery practitioners, and how parents participate and interact in their children's learning. The participants described the impact of the traditional cultural approaches on the dynamics of participation in the family, specifically, the participation of children in their education. Culturally, the communicative practices cannot be dissociated from the values, customs, and cultural, social, and language traditions of the Saudi family. Rather, they are deeply rooted within it, as the participating parents explained. Cultural customs, such as respect for elder family members and giving them direct priority and entitlement to express their opinions and advice, viewing this as a duty rather than an interference, also shape communication within the immediate and extended family, and between families and teachers. For example, decision-making strategies are employed by engaging grandparents in their opinions and seeking their advice on their children's education.

Communication is not only linguistic but also emotional support stemming from traditions of love, compassion, and a sense of responsibility and duty on the part of grandparents toward their grandchildren, as well as moral guidance derived from religious, social, and cultural norms. For example, many participating parents expressed their views that

talking about their children's feelings, challenges, and difficulties is a method of emotional and social education inherited through Saudi family traditions. However, others revealed authoritarian methods inherited from older generations, such as traditional Saudi parenting methods, such as insisting on and constantly using yelling as a form of discipline and not interrupting or disobeying elders, which conflict with modern child-centered parenting methods. These opinions obtained from participating parents are not individual choices, but rather practices acquired from Saudi cultural and social traditions.

Furthermore, these perceptions not only influenced family communication but also the communication between parents and practitioners in terms of respect for teacher authority and gender roles. Some participants explained that there is a traditional cultural concept of respecting teachers and that they have greater authority than parents, especially in educational matters. Furthermore, mothers often bear greater responsibility than fathers due to the traditional cultural understanding prevalent in Saudi Arabia. The results of the participants' opinions from the interviews also revealed that there is a cultural influence on linguistic communication and that Saudi families focus on teaching their children Arabic not because it is the mother tongue, but rather as a sign of identity and heritage, and reducing the use of English as a preventative measure to preserve cultural identity, which sometimes conflicts with the policies of international schools in private schools that use English for communication and education.

In addition to the above description of how cultural background influence Saudi parents' involvement in their children's education, the analysis of the interview and focus group data revealed other aspects. For example, some participants explained the conflict between modern curricula and traditional education. Some mothers described the respectful approach as obligatory for children and that they do not have the right to discuss it, which is a common aspect of the old traditional culture. From the traditional perspective of respecting

elders in extended families, participating mothers emphasized the need for children to respect their elders, refrain from opposing or discussing them, and simply listen to them. This reflects a traditional cultural model stemming from obedience and compliance with traditional patriarchal authority in Saudi culture. However, it certainly conflicts with modern educational curricula, which call for developing children's confidence, strengthening their role within the family, and providing them with sufficient space to contribute their opinions. They also advocate open dialogue, effective critical thinking, and collective participation in decision-making, and asking questions as an essential part of the learning process, which begins in kindergarten.

As a result, their use of traditional methods can generate learning problems, e.g., challenging the integration and adaptation of children to these curricula. Moreover, practitioners can experience difficulties like the necessity to strike a balance between respecting these cultural norms and the requirements of contemporary curricula, like promoting independence in children. These cultural problems and issues demand both methods and approaches that reconcile the demands of modern curricula and the dominant cultural values and practices in Saudi society. The participating kindergarten directors expressed their concern about not giving a child freedom of expression, good, effective listening, and the cultural interpretation of the concept of respect in families.

Traditional cultural education differs from what it is in reality and may lead to one-sided communication, making children passive listeners who lack an opinion, instead of actively participating in dialogue and good, healthy communication. As mentioned in the literature review in Chapter Two, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory asserts that learning is fundamentally shaped by social interaction and cultural context, and that cultural tools, such as language and communication styles, play a significant role in a child's cognitive and behavioural development. In that regard, the lack of freedom of expression and the inability to

listen were among the issues that concerned participating kindergarten directors the most, which is, perhaps, the most remarkable result of this study. This is an indication of the cultural meaning of respect among family members. To show their respect towards adults, other families might perceive that a child should be silent and obedient, thus they might not get a chance to express themselves and develop their communicative potential. This is consistent with Vygotsky's point that social and cultural upbringing shape the frameworks through which a child learns how to think and interact. This also reflects how a family's cultural background influences the home-school relationship and, consequently, the level of parental involvement in supporting a child's development in the early education setting.

Some participants from families expressed a strong desire to participate in active involvement by using phone calls with teachers or kindergarten managers, attending events, and using the kindergarten's communication apps. However, they mentioned that challenges came from barriers such as time constraints, traditional gender roles, transportation difficulties, and unclear communication channels between teachers and parents. As indicated during the literature review in Chapter Two, there are indeed identified cultural obstacles that can cause difficulty in the involvement of parents in early childhood education, according to some researchers. One of the recent examples is Al-Shatiri and Huwail (2023), who stated that to develop a functional family-school alliance, it is essential to have a constant, clear communication plan, support of school employees, and constant assessment. This implies that a lack of effective communication channels may be one of the impediments to parental commitment to the school. Traditional gender roles, which still prevail in Saudi society, as Kusters (2022) points out, also play a role in determining who participates in education. Mothers are often tasked with educational tasks with their children, such as explaining and following up on lessons, while fathers are expected to assume the role of breadwinner, which reduces their participation in school activities. This also aligns with Blackmore and

Hutcheson's (2010) assertion that gender and socioeconomic status significantly influence the nature of family relationships and interactions with school. Albaiz's (2020) study also indicates that kindergarten teachers consider significant practical barriers, such as time constraints and transportation difficulties, to be persistent challenges that impact family-school collaboration. This literature directly relates to the findings of this study, as participants indicated that time constraints, gender role expectations, transportation difficulties, and poor collaboration with teachers were among the most prominent barriers to their active participation in their children's kindergarten learning experience. Some of the participating families pointed out the importance of the Arabic language and the challenge of kindergartens with international curricula that also use another language, such as English. They expressed their fear of their children mastering another international language instead of Arabic, their primary language. Some participants emphasized the importance of using the Arabic language at home to preserve Arab identity and prevent children from forgetting it or not learning it. The concerns expressed by participating parents regarding the importance of their children's proficiency in Arabic stem from a deep cultural unease between globalization and modernity and their desire to preserve their national, religious, and cultural identities. This is particularly true following years of sending families with their children abroad for education or health reasons and returning home with children who do not speak Arabic.

There may be several reasons that increase these concerns among Saudi families. One example is the proliferation of international schools, which primarily rely on international curricula at the kindergarten level and teach their curriculum in English. This enables children to learn English more than Arabic, negatively impacting their education in terms of religion and values. Some participants explained that they use Arabic at home and refuse to speak English in an attempt to preserve their heritage and cultural identity and reduce the risks of using a non-Arabic international language. The study's findings highlight that several parents

expressed their concern about the impact of using international curricula based on foreign languages such as English in kindergartens on their children's acquisition of Arabic. They found it threatening and challenging to their cultural and religious identity. The findings are associated with the literature in Chapter Two on how the cultural background is relevant to determining the practices of family education. As Meuleman (2021) elucidates, cultural background relates to the beliefs and practices passed down through the generations by a community, and such also entails language as a form of identity.

Further, Vygotsky's provocative sociocultural theory, which is explained in Chapter Two, underscores that social interaction and cultural instruments like language are the critical instruments of cognitive and cultural development of a child. Based on this theory, speaking Arabic at home is not only a communication tool but a cultural experience that will define a child in terms of their awareness and social self. Thus, parents' interest and desire to promote the Arabic language at home represents a direct example of how parental culture, influenced by religious and cultural identity, directs their involvement in their children's education.

Whilst this study is focused on a small sample of Saudi parents and practitioners, this does not mean that the nature of the cultural impacts differs radically from those previously identified in literature. For example, in the interviews, the sampled parents identified their communication practices, which indicate that Saudi cultural values significantly influence how families communicate with each other and with educators.

Al-Khraif et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of collective thinking within Saudi society. This is what the results of this study agree upon regarding communication practices between family members, the extended family's participation in children's education, and the respect that exists between generations as a social cultural form in the Saudi context. They noted in particular the importance of broad family structure, intergenerational respect, and ways in which the youth are expected to show deference to older individuals. These traditional

values often prioritize moral education that comes from the Islamic religion, as Rusli (2020) said, where the family is viewed as a moral institution rooted in Islamic learning. This is supported by Phipps and Blackall (2023), who said that Saudi parents often defer educational authority to teachers, which can indirectly lead to less open educational involvement from parents.

Respect for authority and elders, deeply rooted in the cultural and religious traditions and customs of Saudi society, poses a challenge to the reforms the Saudi government is pursuing in all aspects, including academic education, particularly Vision 2030, which calls for Saudi Arabia to become a global power by building an educational system that focuses on the student as an independent, more innovative, and more competitive individual, through creativity and positive parental involvement, free from the control of the extended family. Also, some families still believe in traditional religious and cultural practices that are not in line with the aims of the policies based on the new vision in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Also, these traditional cultural values may limit the mutual partnerships between the family and the school that the modern vision aspires to, for example, given that parents see the teacher as having the sole educational authority and that they do not have the right to participate or demand changes in educational systems or decisions. This, in turn, reduces the quality of education and the achievement of the vision.

However, the success of this vision and its realization in the desired manner requires respect for these values and the gradual encouragement of more open and participatory approaches for both parents and teachers. Nonetheless, the sampled parents stressed the significance of talking to children to offer emotional support and developmental advice. This study aligns with some of the studies as observed by Mazikana (2023) and Coleman (2018), which draw connections between parental communication and enhanced levels of motivation, behaviour, and self-esteem. The research findings also indicate the existence of a generational

divide relative to family age. Supported by Chuang and Tamis-LeMonda's (2013) view on the restrictive impact of traditional values, older family members tended to practice rigid or authoritarian control over media usage within the household. This double-edge function of cultural tradition for communication is further highlighted by Zinn and Eitzen (1988), who stress the extent to which family dynamics, generational order, and cultural explanation impact upon household interpersonal connections.

Language was indicated as an essential element for cultural identity, and respondents emphasized the use of the Arabic language as a preferred language but also as a means to maintain not only Islamic identity but also national identity. These findings conform to those by Al-Khraif et al. (2020) on the impact of cultural heritage and religious principles on the families in Saudi Arabia. Parents interviewed expressed their view of the Arabic language as a symbol and cultural emblem of Islamic national identity. This explanation can be both supportive and challenging in the cultural context of Saudi Arabia. In a positive and empowered sense, this strong connection with the Arabic language can lead to the preservation of Saudi national identity and heritage. Keeping Arabic intact among children maintains the survival of the Saudi national culture and helps in maintaining religious knowledge, as Islamic religious doctrines are based on the Arabic literature. On the other hand, the preference for Arabic may become a challenge when the Kingdom's Vision 2030 aims to increase the teaching of languages such as English and Chinese, particularly in international and private schools. Parents' refusal to use English at home, fearing their children's weak Arabic proficiency and the loss of their national identity, may leave children linguistically unprepared to compete educationally and academically. Balancing the promotion of Arabic with the teaching of other languages helps achieve modern goals. The increased awareness about the learning of the English language, and especially in the context of private and international schools, gives an indication of greater discrepancy between cultural identities and global demands of learning

through education (Cummins, 2000). As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, Cummins (2000) believes that language is closely associated with identity, culture, and power, and if a minority language is suppressed by dominant global languages, cultural atrophy and self-identity diminishment can take place, which particularly impacts children. Bilingualism is not just a matter of learning a second language, he observes, it is about identifying, supporting, and respecting a first language, which in the case of many families is bound up with notions of family, religion, and cultural values.

This perception can be correlated with the results of the given study, which found that a significant percentage of Saudi parents perceive Arabic as not merely a tool of communication but also a constituent element of their culture and religious identity. Families expressed concern about their children's use of English at home, losing contact with Arabic, and thus losing their cultural roots. This concern relates to the research question of this study, which examines the influence of cultural background on Saudi parents' involvement in their children's kindergarten education. Parents' adherence to Arabic as the primary language and their desire to maintain it reflects a cultural decision to create a linguistic environment at home and a rejection of the use and practice of English. Thus, Cummins' theory demonstrates that language is not simply a pedagogical tool, but rather a personal cultural tool that influences how and why Saudi parents involve in their children's education in specific ways.

Moreover, the respondents expressed that there were culturally-based behaviours in communication between parents and teachers that were informed by the traditional perception of authority and gender roles. Schools primarily communicated with mothers (Chuang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013), and less often with fathers, who may be limited by structural and cultural factors that constrain their roles (Al-Khraif et al., 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2023). These patterns highlight how language, gender expectations, and education come together to influence the ways in which families are involved with their children's modern schooling

in a context of traditional culture. Some participants accepted this as part of their cultural identity. However, several participating mothers and practitioners expressed concerns about the change, such as the use of yelling as a means of participation, which is inconsistent with early childhood education policies. Some participating mothers rejected unilateral parenting methods in which the child must listen and not participate in interactions, which impacts their linguistic and psychological integration as interacting individuals within their family and community. All these views and experiences, irrespective of the reason behind the cultural shift, echoed the demands of the transformation of a modern approach considering cultural values and modern trends in education due to enlightenment and initiatives of mothers and practitioners.

6.2.2 Cultural Conceptions of Parental Roles in Education

Beyond the role of communication described by the participants, the examination of the interview data presented further aspects. For example, participants indicated that norms of parental behaviour still influence fathers' involvement in their children's learning. Mothers are still considered the main educators and caregivers, those who must give day-to-day support, while fathers are supposed to provide both economically and morally. This is seen in the responses of a number of the participants, which reveal persistent social norms about the allocation of paid work between parents. Those functions are culturally supported since the mother is generally considered the principal educator of moral and Islamic principles.

This double expectation supports the notion that maternal practice is both practical and symbolic, particularly in the field of early childhood education. From this, our results are also comparable with those of Sharifian et al.'s (2008) view that culture is learned through social interactions and habitualized patterns of thinking, as well as feeling, and consequently, Saudi parents' roles are heavily shaped by religious and social traditions. Throsby's (2020) concept of culture as a 'shared mental software' additionally reinforces this, as it may be argued that

Saudi parents behave according to a socially coerced understanding of gender roles and family work. Many parents might have a high regard for education, but cultural upbringing may have made them inactive academically, especially fathers.

The study's findings are consistent with the view of Sharifhan et al. (2008), which states that culture can be acquired and learned through social interaction and multiple thought patterns. Parental interaction, especially fatherhood, is a crucial aspect that is affected by religious and cultural traditions in Saudi society. The ideas expressed by Throsby (2020) on the notion of culture as a shared mental interaction also explain how practices and behaviours are not human choices, but individual, coordinated socially, especially when it comes to the roles and responsibilities of family members.

Although parents attach importance to education and see it as an honour to the family, because of cultural mental programming, their participation in the education of their children is reduced, particularly fathers, who see educational and pedagogical participation and interaction as the role of the mother. The results of this work can also be applied to the Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia since it deals with the educational system, policy changes, and reforms. An example is a program that demands parental involvement in their child's education and the development of more cooperative learning. Provided that the cultural practices are not encouraging parents to be involved in teaching their children, this can undermine the efforts of the government aimed at the development of a more interactive learning atmosphere.

However, to achieve the goals of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's vision, a major cultural shift must occur that promotes participation and interaction, and encourages all parents, without exception, to embrace modern changes. Furthermore, educational policies must not focus solely on teaching methods and curricula, but must develop solutions that address these cultural attitudes through awareness-raising and the establishment of volunteer courses and programs to educate and train parents on effective ways to participate in their children's

education. School-based initiatives must also promote parent-family involvement, encouraging practitioners to embrace, rather than reject, interaction.

6.2.3 Power Dynamics in Parent-Teacher Relationships

Parent participants in the interviews also raised the issue of the cultural perspective of parents, as well as how educators see them in the school system. In many cases, they explained teachers as guards holding parents back, adhering to a power-based structure of education. This is consistent with wider cultural morals, which position teachers as the knowledgeable authority, and questioning their practice may be construed as disrespectful. The present study adds support to Cotterell's (2017) claim that we stereotype the behaviours of others, being influenced by our cultural beliefs, obscuring how parents perceived their roles and how educators viewed paternal input. Among the Saudis, the fact of hierarchy in school settings creates the opportunity that these assumptions could counter and impede the predictability of the home school; hence, to make sense of the patterns of involvement that are evident in this study, it is necessary to analyse the cultural logic underpinning parental expectancies and teacher-parent relationships.

Parents agreed that there can be occasions where teachers take the high ground and may not even support their involvement in their child's learning, resulting in an evident power differential. Parents in this sample voiced their desire to have more communication and collaboration, along with a real opportunity to be part of education and decision-making in the lives of their children. They also noted the importance of transparent, regular communications in paper bulletins, through social media, or an app to inform parents about preschool activities and expectations, leading to involvement. Meanwhile, many other parents are calling for more inclusive and collaborative options – like attending school events, volunteering, and co-

learning with their children. These initiatives are a thorn in the side of traditional hierarchies and demonstrate a growing understanding of the potential role of parent–teacher partnership. The teachers who participated in the study noted that they had seen a change in parental attitudes, particularly in more educated or urban families. This is consistent with the findings of Belman et al.’s (2019) “conditional revolution” model, which states that cultural norms change in response to societal developments, including exposure to world views or increased maternal education. Yet the effectiveness of these efforts is predicated on schools being willing to reconceive the parent–school relationship in more equitable terms.

In conclusion, the results concerning RQ1 indicate that the cultural context of Saudi parents has a significant influence on their involvement with their children’s education in terms of communication, role expectations, and teacher–parent relationships. The respondents concurred that more traditional norms are still strong regarding gender roles and language, but the new cultural trends, changes in national policy, and shifting parental care abilities are starting to question them. Some parents in the sample acknowledged that although many of them would like to be more involved, there are structural, cultural, and communicative barriers that must be addressed through inclusive policies and school practices that are respectful of cultural values and promote parental involvement. Moreover, some parents said some teachers discourage parental involvement by mired-in-convention traditions that put mothers as primary caregivers and fathers secondary.

This study is consistent with Nelken’s (2017) idea about culture being a system of transmitted values and ideas that influence various human behaviour of parents, and how they view their roles within the family. These norms favour exclusionary practices and power asymmetries. Several of the parents indicated that fathers are not involved in preschool training because there are no indications from the Ministry of Education about their participation. Institutions will have to do without explicit institutional support for the kind of parenting

involvement that is more inclusive. Teachers might find it acceptable to keep the power imbalance.

Some parents pointed out that the lack of institutional training and knowledge in working effectively with parents may limit the extent to which collaboration is achieved. A couple of parents suggested that some teachers may not recognize the importance of parental involvement or may be unaware of its benefits to children's academic success. This situation threatens to undermine efforts to improve parent-teacher relationships. In summary, the current study mirrors the literature reviewed in Chapters One and Two of this study, where the participants shared their experiences about their cultural identity. Some participants may not realize these facts, specifically the culturally driven communication and gendered parental responsibility influenced by culture and religion. The study participants also identified that they had to overcome these challenges and barriers in being involved in educating their children, which originated from cultural, religious, and social contexts. This is echoed by, for example, Cotterell (2017), Belman et al. (2019), Nelken (2017), Throsby (2020), and Sharifian et al. (2008).

6.2.4 Summary of Discussion for RQ1

To answer our first research question, which calls for an examination of how culture shapes parents' participation in their children's schooling, this study analysed the sample's respondents' testimonies regarding the role that their cultural background plays in the way they participate in their children's education. Patterns of communication including culture-bound communication, hierarchical family communication, Muslim parenting, limited educational discourse, a focus on emotional support, use of the Arabic language, and linguistic tensions, conceptions of cultural parental roles including gendered parental roles influenced by culture and religion and how character-based cultural values affect parental involvement, and power in parent-teacher relationships including teacher authority about cultural hierarchy, cultural

norms restricting teacher–parent interaction, and shifting values and demands. Furthermore, the description of these levels was subject to culture, society, religion, and gender, as evidenced by significant declines in parental participation due to cultural and sociological issues.

6.3 Culture Factors (RQ2)

The discussion in this section concentrates on the findings relating to RQ2: 'What are the key factors related to cultural background that affect Saudi parents' involvement in their children's learning within Saudi cultural contexts?' The results presented in the Data Analysis Chapter revealed that all the sample participants cited several factors that affect the level of parental involvement, which were grouped into five axes: cultural factors, economic factors, societal factors, cultural communication styles and practices, and support factors. Each of these five levels will now be discussed.

6.3.1 Towards Cultural Factors

According to the perception of the study's sample, the cultural issues that have affected their involvement are a significant finding in this study in Saudi Arabia. The results of this study corroborate with previous research, about parents' beliefs regarding the moral, religious, and identity-based duty to educate, as well as the literature on the centrality of family and culture in influencing children's development and educational values.

The study's respondents pointed out that education in Saudi Arabia is more of a shared and family-centric duty bound by prevailing religious and ethical norms. This is corroborated by Al-Khraif et al. (2020), who portray the Saudi family within a collectivist framework concerning the extended family system, which involves active participation of older relatives who usually possess considerable influence over educational decisions. In these types of

cultural contexts, teachers are viewed as leaders, and this becomes clear through the participants' propensity to defer to teachers and view their role as supportive rather than interventionist, a point also raised by Phipps and Blackall (2023).

Moreover, participants' focus on education as a means of continuing religious and moral values is consistent with the Islamic perspective on the family as a moral institution. In the Islamic perspective, the home is a school for character building and conflict prevention in a society (Rusli, 2020). Al-Momani (2024) points out further that the influence of families on the social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development of children before they begin attending formal schooling is substantial.

Likewise, when participants put the emphasis on religion and morality as the aims of education, they correspond to the Islamic understanding of the family as a moral agent. This conclusion agrees with a similar observation in one of the literatures, as shown in Chapter Two by Rusli (2020), according to the Islamic teaching, home is considered a school towards the building of noble behaviour and conflict avoidance in society. In the same vein, Al-Momani (2024) points out that family plays a significant role in the internal social, emotional, cognitive, and moral growth of a child before formal education. Participants also discussed holistic child development as a cultural priority, indicating that education is not only about academic outcomes but also about moral upbringing, cultural identity, and social skills. This perspective is supported by Tezak (2019), who claims that lifestyle, values, and social background induce behavioural patterns and learning attitudes, as well as Coleman (2018), who found that parental involvement contributes to better classroom behaviour and a sense of responsibility for children.

However, participants showed that the distinction in cultural expectations between parents in public and private schools, where the latter are often more globally oriented while

still preserving cultural identity, can be interpreted through Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. According to Grenfell (2019) and Jaeger and Breen (2016), parents transmit cultural capital to their children as a mechanism of social reproduction, ensuring continuity of class and values. In this context, Saudi parents invest in education not only for academic success but also as a way of preserving family identity, status, and cultural values, especially visible in parents who enrol their children in private or international schools.

Lastly in terms of community, there was evidence of shared responsibility in education (as evidenced in this study by Stevano et al. (2021), who claim that social reproduction serves as an explanatory framework with which to understand that family systems adapt to culture, such as traditional gender roles where mothers are the main caretakers but education is understood as a family mission owned by all members.

6.3.2 Economic Towards the economy

In this study, about the literature review, there are the attitudes of the participants concerning economic considerations (which considers socio-economic status in the context of parent involvement) that resonate with some of the theoretical and empirical discussions, about the participants' attitudes to economic factors, of the literature in your review, social background, sociocultural factors, and Bourdieu's theory on social reproduction.

This view is consistent with previous studies. This is highlighted in the literature review in Chapter Two, which indicates that the social background is defined as the sum of one's social environments, interactions, and lifestyle influences, which include economic standing (Duenas et al., 2016). This acknowledges that socio-economic level affects parental behaviour and the chances of accessing education. This complements the present study results, where participants mentioned that insufficient financial resources (e.g., transportation costs) limit

parental involvement or lack of time due to work. This is consistent with Tezak (2019) and Belman et al. (2019), who contest that sociocultural factors, for example, lifestyle and economic resources, condition how people relate to education and society. The study participants echo this scenario, detailing both barriers and privileges associated with economic means.

“Richer families can pay for better pre-schools, private tutoring, and after-school programs,” participants in this study told me. The latter result is in line with Grenfell (2019) and Jaeger and Breen (2016), who noted that the construction of cultural capital, in which parents’ social and economic benefits are passed down to their offspring, affects their schooling achievement. This indicates a well-defined process of social reproduction, whereby economic capital is transformed into educational capital, as argued by Stevano et al. (2021). These findings indicate that some Saudi parents think of paying kindergarten school fees as fulfilling their role in education, similar to Bourdieu’s claim that the function of the institutionalized cultural capital is transferred downward along economic levels.

Although Chafing (1988) and Al-Khraif et al.’s (2020) findings (as well as those in Chapter Two) are from a cultural and religious normative work, this study’s data provides a second dimension: how socio-economic status interconnects with cultural beliefs. For instance, some parents are not involved because they assume the private school will take care of all educational needs, a strategy that may be affordable and culturally acceptable. This is consistent with Almalki (2020), who explains that parental involvement capacities are different according to various infrastructure and economic abilities, which conduct resources as a significant independent variable of parental involvement, especially in the Saudi context.

6.3.3 Towards Societal Factors

The findings of participants on social pressures and socializing point to the findings of contemporary research on parental involvement and cultural influences upon such education in Middle Eastern societies. In discussing societal pressure as an external motivator and a source of stress, participants often reiterated ideas identified within existing research. For instance, the belief of some of the participants that community expectations led to parental involvement is similar to the findings of Ridge et al. (2020) and Al-Hassan (2020), who emphasize that social norms and community values are important in determining the parents' involvement in the education of children. The social convention of parental involvement in child education stems from the cultural element, "positive parenting," which has been documented. This is further corroborated by research emerging from Arabic nations such as Saudi Arabia (McCarty et al., 2005; Sehgal & Kaur, 2024).

The tension, however, is consistent with concerns raised by Lari and Al-Emadi (2021), who write that unrealistic expectations might stress parents, especially those who balance work and family demands, limiting genuine involvement. The fear of stigma, social standing, and societal stigma are correlated with the literature's description of the cultural norms of certain parental responsibilities and behaviours (Walaa Kherais, 2022). The finding is also consistent with participants' reports of traditional beliefs that restrict father involvement in general and the general likelihood for mothers to assume primary educational responsibilities in particular.

The socializing aspects in the participants' experiences provide strong endorsement for the literature's stress on the influence of the larger family and community social networks in shaping parental involvement. Aside from the positive components, the ascribed terms and their relevance to family traditions and social contacts bear semblance to the key variables identified by Ridge et al. (2020) and Al-Hassan (2020), who argue that family and social ties facilitate or hinder involvement in education in the Gulf region. The emphasis on respect for

authority, family obligations, and cultural preservation reflected in the participants' accounts is documented in the literature as elements of Saudi socialization practices that shape parental attitudes (Walaa Kherais, 2022).

Additionally, the participants' discourse about striking a balance between social life and education reflects the results of earlier studies that highlighted how social norms and community regulations may conflict, or restrict, direct parental participation in school affairs (Lari & Al-Emadi, 2021). The significance of social interconnection via WhatsApp groups or extended family support shows the continued combination of digital and non-digital networks in terms of family life (Sehgal & Kaur, 2024). The involvement in such a way highlights the complex connections between sociocultural aspects and parental attitudes.

The challenges expressed by participants with parental involvement, such as the emphasis on familial support over professional support, cultural expectations related to the Saudi concept of parenthood, and embarrassment about accessing external support, are similar to the literature on sociocultural barriers to active parental participation (McCarty et al., 2005; Walaa Kherais, 2022). These problems demonstrate how social norms may undermine successful parental involvement in particular situations when the cultural traditions promote a high value of privacy or when additional resources are culturally forbidden.

6.3.4 Cultural Communication Styles and Practices

The focus on storytelling, home language use, and cultural retention also reflects the findings of the study that home-based activities are the most significant in promoting children's intelligence and emotions. For instance, Ferretti and Bub (2017) highlight how narrative routines play a crucial role in children's socio-emotional development by providing organization and cultural formation.

In addition, the participants reported that they would speak Arabic to each other and when talking with their children, echoing Mehta's (2024) finding on the potential of language development in the home environment as a strong predictor for children's academic success. In culturally rich homes, language is a bonding agent and a bridge to academic smarts.

Parents in this study said that we could use this idea by teaching their children to "say what they feel, or what they think, to go and play, or what they think of their day in school." This helps children to develop a voice, increasing emotional knowledge and independence, both factors associated with better academic and social outcomes. These results emphasize the importance of quality communication patterns in the home, consistent with the findings of Riley et al. (1977) and Frieda and Tamburian (2020) in chapter two, who consider that parent-child open communication increases self-esteem and extroversion.

In addition, parents' experiences of including the extended family in educational discussions coincide with those of Ceka and Murati (2016) and Hardiyana et al. (2022), who noted that moral and cultural values learned as a child in the family environment have a great impact on their behaviour and image in society. In collectivistic cultures such as Saudi Arabia, the contribution of grandparents, siblings, and extended family members to educational and moral development is very significant.

However, responses about yielding to moms' views demonstrate how a cultural appreciation of respect for elders potentially forecloses other avenues of exposure to contemporary educational methods or outside forms of support. The research highlighted that some families do not seek professional input, but rather informal guidance from older family members, a limitation also discussed in Chapter Two. Not enough attention and support, emotional or educational, can be caused by cultural expectations and can negatively impact a child.

6.3.5 Support Factors

Respondents suggested several strategies for the support factors, such as parent education, flexible involvement options, and welcoming environments. Some of the constituents in this study validated the literature cited, which supports the point highlighted by Frieda and Tamburian (2020) that when there are institutional supportive systems, this facilitates effective parental involvement. Similarly, Hardiyana et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of school-family connections in attending to children's development.

Likewise, the habit of involving parents in advisory committees and decision-making was similar to findings reported by Despriliani et al. (2024), who observed that it is necessary in creating a culture of collaboration in the school. Such structures that promote additional parental involvement also increase the chances of parents influencing their children's learning.

Social transformations, such as support by older relatives or family friends, have reflected the changes in external support of children in kindergartens. This observation aligns with Ridge et al. (2020), who reported on common sociocultural directions in association with parenting and community-focused constraints towards parental involvement.

Moreover, the participants' and schools' teachers' beliefs relate to the focus of awareness campaign and external's role organization to provide support for early childhood education are in an agreement with/ are per the Walaa's (2022), findings which established that providing awareness about kindergarten education from different sectors' (public and private) is very important to enhance the role of parents. Similarly, the impact of neighborhood networks and peer support is in line with the results of Ceka and Murati (2016), who found that the involvement of parents in the community will increase the motivation of the family members to attend the activities of the school.

The outlined barriers to the use of technology for educational assistance included a lack of familiarity with learning apps and restricted access to technology facilitating communication, which Mehta (2024) called on scholars to focus concurrently on within existing digital frameworks aimed at parent involvement in underserved settings.

Also, the complaints of participants about WhatsApp groups and digital platform requests conform to the focus of attention in Sánchez-Núñez et al. (2020) on the role of communication technology. These systems allow up-to-the-minute communication and continuous feedback while fostering a solid home-school connection and a sense of belonging.

6.3.6 Summary of Discussion for RQ2

Concerning RQ2, this study's findings indicated that several issues impact Saudi Arabian parents' participation in their children's education. These were organized across five main axes: cultural factors, economic factors, societal factors, cultural communication styles and practices, and support factors. Addressing the cultural background, the participants pointed out that education originated from social obligations, religious duties, and moral responsibilities, as well as from a cultural identity. Families viewed their obligations as supportive; however, educators were often viewed in a shadowed light as authoritarian figures. There was a clear emphasis on moralistic parenting alongside holistic child development frameworks wherein parents spoke about defending culturally cherished values, which is consistent with cultural capital theory.

In terms of economic variables, participants identified socioeconomic status as a significant effect. Opportunities for parental involvement were limited by material resources, time, transportation, or money, whereas high-income families could afford more educational inputs. Other parents considered private education a fulfillment of their duty, placing

responsibility for the system over individual involvement. Looking into sociocultural factors, participants perceive peer and community pressure leading to a twofold impact: a motivator for participation and as a stressor. Conventional mores, sex roles, and concerns of maintaining status played a role.

Extended family, neighborhood networks, as well as family connections, were either regarded as supportive or hindering, depending on the situation. Storytelling, the use of Arabic language, and the occurrence of emotional talk at home were considered important for children's development. Extended family members often conducted educational lectures. But access to the current practices may be impeded by taking advice from elders; this demonstrates cultural tensions. Finally, support was protective and also reflected in calls for greater institutional support, such as parent education programs and more participatory frameworks. Respondents placed significant emphasis on advisory roles and community assistance campaigns. While digital involvement through platforms like WhatsApp was possible, there were technology-imposed constraints on full participation.

6.4 Gender and Parental Involvement (RQ3)

This section focuses on the answer to RQ3: What is the relation between gender and parental involvement according to the Saudi parents? The findings in the previous chapter are evidence that the roles of parents are heavily influenced by gender in terms of participating in their children's education in the Saudi context. Each of these levels will now be discussed.

6.4.1 Gender Roles and Parental Involvement

The findings of interviews in this study reveal that mothers, in general, appear to be more involved in day-to-day educational activities and school interaction than fathers. Interviewed managers and practitioners involved in this research reported that fathers do not participate as

regularly, mainly in financial provision and not in educational activities. This tendency seemingly reflects social convention based on the average values existing in Saudi Arabia, as stated in the literature.

The gendered division of parenting participation observed here reflects the traditional cultural norms mentioned by Custers (2022), where men have traditionally been in control of managing and making the final decision outside the home, and women are in the home (care) work, which involves looking after and teaching future generations. This dichotomy is also upheld by Ben-Galim et al. (2007), who noted that expectations for men and women further perpetuate the role of mothers as the main educators in the family. While social reforms are occurring and women are pursuing education and employment in growing numbers in Saudi Arabia (Custers, 2022), gender roles continue to play a role in parents' involvement in education and their school involvement. The results reflect the discourse of gender equality in Saudi Arabia, which highlights improvement but recognizes ongoing inequality, such as in limitations placed on women's independence and gender segregation in the public space (Ben-Galim et al., 2007).

6.4.2 Cultural Influence on Parental Behaviours

In line with Vygotsky's theory (1978) employed in the present study, parental involvement is not merely a personal act but is a socially mediated practice under the influence of cultural values and social norms. The results support this argument by indicating that culturally defined gender roles directly shape Saudi parents' involvement in schooling. Low father involvement, for example, is in accordance with cultural expectations that emphasize the role of being a breadwinner for fathers rather than primary caregivers, while there seems to be shared normative attitudes toward mothers as caregivers (Meuleman, 2021).

Participants in the study also convey how the role of parents is shaped by the confluence of cultural background and gender, as the style of communication and the nature of involvement between mothers and fathers differ under its influence. It is supported by Arndt and Bartholomeus's (2022), who argued that structural elements of parental involvement, communication, and attendance at school events exhibit different patterns by gender in the case of Saudi Arabia. The importance of educational culture depicted by Kapalczynska et al. (2018) and Richerson et al. (2016) also provides insight into these gendered patterns. Social pressure, economic status, and family ethos determine the type of education that is valued and practiced at home, often to the detriment of gender equality. For example, stereotypical beliefs that women should be domestic caretakers may reduce girls' aspirations to better-educated futures and mothers' role as primary educational supporters. Furthermore, results can be interpreted as the result of the effect of teachers and educational materials, which, according to Nieborg and Poell (2018), bring cultural meanings to what is being learned, which leads to the reinforcement or challenges of gender norms in the educational setting. Parents' and children's perceptions of gender roles in education may also be influenced by being exposed to different teaching styles and materials over time.

6.4.3 Summary of Discussion for RQ3

The findings of the research confirm the prior findings that gender was a key determinant of parental involvement in Saudi Arabia. Deeply embedded in cultural and religious values, fathers' and mothers' distinct involvement with their children's school life is based on traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, the results also suggest a fluid construct where ongoing social changes and the reformations of education might have an ascending effect on trends, and Vision 2030 encourages more equal contributions in the future.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as a conclusion of the thesis and highlights the main findings. The chapter also reports on the study findings, limitations, and implications, and gives suggestions for practice. This chapter closes with suggestions for future work, constructive critique, and a reflection on the broader research aspects.

7.2 Summary of the Study

This study examined the outlook and the perception of Saudi parents, educators, and practitioners regarding how the cultural context influences parental involvement. This has been through exploration of the setting of their culture, the impacts of their involvement, as well as the impediments to participation. The research describes the perceptions and experiences of Saudi families, educators, and practitioners, and, more specifically, how cultural background shapes parental involvement. It also includes a description of their cultural and educational background, their views on the impact of parental support, and a review of the barriers that they face. Also, the possible impact of cultural aspects on parent involvement was studied.

Respondents in the research were 18 Saudi parents, teachers, and professionals working in a private and a public school in two geographically different settings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The participants were interviewed individually to address the existing gap in literature surrounding the cultural background influences on parental involvement in their children's learning in early childhood education in Saudi Arabia, including the obstacles. This closing chapter provides an overall summary of the significant findings of the research about the major and the sub-research questions.

7.3 Summary of the Main Findings

The following summary presents the main study findings, derived from the results in response to the main research question:

To what extent does parents' cultural background influence their level and type of involvement in early childhood learning?

The findings will first be set out to show how the three sub-questions have been addressed, as detailed below.

7.3.1 RQ1: How does Saudi parents' cultural background influence their involvement in their children's education?

In Saudi Arabia, fathers are generally expected to provide financial support to families, and mothers, who have very little access to work, are expected to be the homemakers, charged with raising children. However, though all of these cultural traditions are old-fashioned, it is possible to observe a certain shift on the threshold of the changing attitude towards the concept of father involvement. Most of the parents involved made known their readiness to participate, which can be seen as a novelty in the line of parental involvement, especially parental involvement that brings balance. However, as far as power is concerned, this research found that there exist certain dilemmas concerning the balance between parents and practitioners. Regarding authority, this study found some difficulties and obstacles related to balancing the power of parents and practitioners. For example, some practitioners expressed frustration with parents' sometimes overstepping their bounds by insisting on implementing certain teaching methods or pursuing academic outcomes that conflict with the modern approach to kindergarten. On the other hand, some parents interviewed expressed exclusion from decision-making within the educational process and believed that their religious and cultural values were not reflected in curriculum planning. All these obstacles and difficulties require solutions to resolve this issue.

7.3.2 RQ2: What are the key factors related to cultural background that affect Saudi parents' involvement in their children's learning within Saudi cultural contexts?

The key findings of this research question showed that cultural aspects are quite influential in determining the role of Saudi parents in the education of their children. These factors may be divided into three major ways, which include cultural factors, economic factors, and societal pressures.

It was also noted in this research study that, culturally, Saudi parents value education as an integral cultural fortress that represents family honour and ancestry. Despite this, the majority of participants stressed that educational success is not only an individual aspiration but a family obligation, closely defined by cultural and social values and, ultimately, future security. Respondents also highlighted the role of religious education, where children should be taught to memorize the surahs of the Qur'an and fulfil their religious obligations, as this establishes the "moral foundation." In addition, many participants stated that the importance of academic education is equal to the concern for personal and moral growth and the preservation of cultural identity. Families with a higher socioeconomic profile tended to follow a more global educational pattern and openness to international education while continuing to preserve Saudi cultural heritage. In contrast, families with a medium and low socioeconomic profile indicated their interest in local cultural values. In terms of economic influences, the results revealed that parents' socioeconomic status directly impacts their ability to participate in educational learning. Families facing economic constraints struggle with practical barriers, such as the lack of transportation to go to kindergarten, the mother's lack of driving experience, and the parents' lack of time, preventing them from participating. Also, some high-income families mentioned that they pay tuition fees to private kindergartens, which reduces their participation, considering that this role is solely for the kindergarten, and they alone provide financial support to the kindergarten.

Due to modern societal pressures influenced by social media awareness that call for participation in children's education and good modern parenting, many parents are forced to participate in compliance with these pressures, which may cause them stress and anxiety because it contradicts the traditional view of the gender roles that fall on the mother and father. Beliefs and practices of socialization foster respect for authority and community solidarity, a force that encourages parental involvement yet discourages open discussion of children's academic problems. In addition, social media and digital communication mediums like WhatsApp groups have emerged as important venues for parents to be involved. Some of the parents indicated the importance of children playing with peers of the same age, with their cousins, or with their neighbourhood friends regularly. Such experiences usually involve exchanging thoughts and experiences, which aids in the development of language and social skills like cooperation and communication.

Some participants in this study mentioned cultural barriers that prevented parents from being involved in their child's education. For instance, depending on advice from extended family members, as opposed to professionals, can limit access to current educational content. This dependence upon an unofficial family counsellor is part of what can undercut parental involvement. Other parents present genuine obstacles, such as busy family schedules with one parent at home managing the household and the other parent who works long hours, making regular involvement in children's schoolwork or activities challenging. Other fathers said their responsibility is to give money, and that they rely on mothers mostly for the day-to-day educational reinforcement.

Among cultural stigmas, barriers to seeking external help (like counselling or special educational assistance) were also cited. Some families feel uncomfortable about getting help from the outside, as it may be seen as a reflection of poor parenting or a child with a problem, and families avoid seeking such resources.

Overall, respondents outlined a complex situation where cultural expectations and norms both support and hinder parental involvement. And while some mothers and fathers find themselves inspired by the pressure on parents from society to be highly involved in a child's education, for others, that pressure is a stress or a burden, not least when it contradicts their cultural or practical realities.

7.3.3 RQ3: What is the link between gender and parental involvement from the perspective of Saudi Arabian parents?

The findings among the participants demonstrated various pathways that the concept of gender affects parental involvement in the Saudi Arabian family context, and one aspect is early childhood education. The findings were assessed under the broad topics, which were the attribution of the duties linked with traditional gender roles, the differences in parent involvement between the mother and the father, the cultural drivers, and the societal expectation. Participating mothers were identified as the primary caregivers and were more involved in the day-to-day learning and care of their children. Participants confess an imbalance of power in parental involvement, with mothers shouldering most educational and caregiving responsibilities, while fathers are less involved. Suggestions included policy reforms to encourage father involvement, such as flexible work hours for parents, father-focused educational programs, and social incentives to recognize fathers' contributions. The managers participating in this study referred to the Saudi government as having plans to support and empower Saudi families and children.

Furthermore, most participants believed that a broad-based public awareness campaign initiative was vital, targeted at challenging traditional gender norms and promoting greater father involvement in their children's early years. Kindergartens have also started adapting policies and have made gradual progress in recent years, especially increasing opportunities for fathers through flexible scheduling and father-focused events. Nevertheless, some of the

parent participants were dissatisfied with the current level of the kindergarten system, and societal attitudes continue to consider traditional views, with some resistance remaining from the Saudi community, particularly among older generations who still see parenting mainly as the mother's responsibility.

Looking to the future, Saudi participants expressed their optimism about the future for Saudi families under Vision 2030, hoping for equal parental involvement where fathers and mothers share responsibilities fully in their children's education. The participants were convinced that more parents would become more involved within the framework of this vision in the coming years.

These findings provide evidence that cultural issues were the foremost contributor to all the challenges reported by the research participants, including those originating from families, Saudi society, the environment, or individuals. Concerning the main research question, it can be concluded, based on the summary of the answers to the sub-questions, that parental involvement in the education of their children is not yet optimal. The reasons for this relate to gender as a result of intertwined societal, economic, and cultural factors within Saudi society, which were discussed in the previous chapter.

7.4 Contribution to Knowledge

It is a small-scale study that is not generalisable yet, contributes to knowledge in that it researches the effect of cultural background on the involvement of parents in their children's education in the early years' environment, which is currently much underexplored. This type of research is lacking in the cultural contexts of societies developing the educational agenda through reform, particularly in Saudi Arabia. To the researcher's knowledge, a few studies have been published to date on the influence of cultural background on parental involvement

or the extent to which they are affected by sociocultural factors and gender. Therefore, this study is considered to enrich and add to the relevant specialist literature. In addition, this study is valuable as one of the few reference studies to examine the gender of parents' justice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and therefore adds to a growing body of parents' and family studies in the Middle East, providing some balance to an overly Western lens in this field. It has allowed Saudi families to have their voices heard by narrating their experiences and stories, through which their feelings and perceptions of parental involvement were elicited. This field has hitherto not been sufficiently addressed. This study is also unique as a contribution to qualitative case study research, which is rarely conducted in the field of parental involvement in Saudi Arabia, as most of the research carried out previously has been quantitative, with a small number of mixed-methods studies. Furthermore, this study makes a valuable contribution to examining parental involvement in early childhood education in both private and public schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whereas most of the previous studies in this field have focused on parental involvement in one type of school.

7.5 Implications and Recommendations

The findings of the study were that increased parental involvement in their children's learning is advisable at a time when the Saudi government is pursuing involvement in family life in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi families are subjected to numerous complications, and the effects of parenthood, whether positive or negative, are limited to cultural beliefs as well as other problems that were brought out in Chapter 4. The researcher believes that the current thesis will shed light on the impact of cultural background on parental involvement, providing a clear image of these conditions to Saudi government decision-makers and policymakers. As a result of this, decision-makers will be able to track progress and promote parental involvement.

The identification of obstacles and their ramifications, and the extent to which they relate to cultural-socio factors and many other factors in this study, could help government officials and decision-makers to reduce or even eliminate the impact of these barriers. From this perspective, several recommendations are made in this thesis for the benefit of decision-makers and policymakers at the government level, as set out below:

1. A culturally sensitive program may be designed to encourage inclusiveness and involvement of mothers and fathers in children's education in Saudi society, keeping in view the traditional role of both spouses and gradually encouraging the sharing of responsibilities.
2. Schools might consider more than one approach, consisting of digital applications, parent workshops, and monthly sessions to involve both parents.
3. Professional development programs and workshops should be introduced to help teachers understand cultural factors and implement inclusive strategies for building trustful relationships with families.
4. The campaigns might be the meaning of parents' role in young children's education that could be broadcast through media, religious groups, and social networks to cover a broad range of people.
5. The shaping of educational policy might be altered to include standards for parental involvement and to hold schools accountable for the formation of home-school relations.
6. The idea of enabling parents with kindergarteners to work flexible hours may encourage more parental involvement.
7. Establish a government committee to evaluate the results of parents' assistance programs and modify or improve the design of the technology.

The implications for the practices and systems of early childhood education in Saudi Arabia regarding the impact of culturally responsive parental involvement are significant. As such, the strengths of the tools lie in their ability to inform government policy makers to create a better approach and roles to address cultural and societal barriers to parental involvement.

Beyond the scope of this thesis, it may have important ramifications for educators and kindergarten directors in adopting inclusive practices that are sensitive to the cultural and social norms of Saudi families. The findings of this study have implications for Saudi families as they provide insight into how cultural and societal norms influence their participation in early child education and what interventions can be established to support them. Additionally, the findings are consistent with the government's mission to reform education concerning Vision 2030 on the family front and on improving the quality of early childhood parental intervention in this context.

7.6 Potential for Further Research

This current thesis suggests several potential avenues for future research to enhance the qualitative and quantitative understanding of parental involvement in early childhood education within the cultural context of Saudi Arabia:

1. According to the current findings, it may therefore be necessary to replicate the study after the completion of the full rollout of Saudi Arabia Vision 2030, to assess the extent to which governance initiatives target family empowerment and parental involvement, especially across the various parts of Saudi Arabia.
2. Cross-sectional comparisons between rural and urban regions would indicate how various norms and socio-economic statuses are affecting the value and amount of parent

involvement. This might aid in the development of more targeted national educational policies.

3. There is also a necessity for further research on the role of fathers in early childhood education since this question has also been considerably undermined because of the historical gender discrimination. This research work may help in terms of Vision 2030, which is about equal joint parental responsibility as well as a more future-oriented family role.

4. In addition to this, the study proposes that there should be an exploration of the perception that children hold regarding how adults involve themselves in their learning process to learn more about how the parental involvement that children go through takes shape and what effect it has on their school life and experiences. It would also be good to investigate how such intervention strategies that aim at increasing the participation of parents, some of which form part of the Vision 2030 reforms, have worked. The best practices and areas of improvement would be established through such studies.

5. In addition, subsequent studies may look into the use of digital technology and communication tools to enhance home-school linkages, particularly in conservative, hard-to-reach regions. This is consistent with the aspirations of Vision 2030 for digital transformation and education access.

6. Finally, cross-sectional comparison of the effect of Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf countries could have even broader implications for other barriers and drivers of parental involvement that may be useful to promote regional collaboration and learning.

7.7 General Reflections and Concluding Thoughts

From a personal perspective, the procedures undertaken in this research and the narrations, details, and challenges that it contains provided the researcher with knowledge and a cultural base regarding the nature of parents' involvement in their children's education in

Saudi Arabia. In this research scenario, familiarity with the parents' involvement role and the obstacles facing parents within Saudi societal culture motivated the researcher to move forward and explore this case further.

In conclusion, this chapter has summarized the current thesis and provided a brief outline of the main research findings. It has also highlighted the research contributions to the field, considering the study's limitations and implications, and making recommendations for policymakers and suggestions for future research. It is concluded with some general reflections.

7.8 Limitations of this Study

As in all research, there are some limitations with this study that need to be noted before any recommendations are made. Therefore, it is important to mention that this is qualitative case study research, so that the results cannot be generalized, also because of the few participants, who may not necessarily be representative. Nevertheless, the researcher was keen to use two areas in a busy city in Saudi Arabia, the North and South sectors, to get diverse views and perceptions.

Second, because this study was intended to explore parents' involvement in children's education at preschool, the findings of this study are not generalizable to other levels of education. This means that the participants' perceptions might not reflect the opinions of other parents in different stages, due to the distinct nature of parental involvement. A further limitation of this qualitative study is that the researcher is responsible for both data collection and analysis, which may have resulted in unintended bias during translation or transcription of the recorded interviews. Nevertheless, this limitation was addressed and minimized by transcribing the interviews in text form using the same colloquial dialect before translation.

However, many of the current findings related to the cultural background of parental involvement, obstacles, and the influence of societal and cultural factors align with the literature referred to in previous studies (as detailed in the Discussion Chapter). Irrespective of the limitations mentioned above, this thesis can be of value to further qualitative and quantitative research on the cultural background of parental involvement, as the results reveal a clear picture of the current situation and accompanying developments in a unique context.

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Appendix 1: Individual Interview Questions for Parents

Dear participant Parent,

Thank you for participating in this research study. This question interview aims to explore the cultural influences on parental involvement in early childhood learning for parents in Saudi Arabia. Your input is invaluable, and your responses will contribute to a better understanding of the complexities surrounding this critical topic.

Please answer the following questions in the interview honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will remain confidential, and your participation is entirely voluntary.

Section 1: Demographic Information

- 1.2. What is your number of children?
- 1.3. What is the age range of your children?

- 1.4. What is your age?

- 1.5. What is your level of education?

Section 2: Parental Involvement

- 1- How would you describe the values and traditions you prioritise in your family?
- 2- To what extent do you involve your practices in your child's early learning experiences? (e.g., storytelling, traditional games, etc.)

- 3- What are the challenges of integrating your values into your child's education, particularly in the context of the educational system?

Section 3: Educational Practices and Adaptations

- 1- How do you adapt your practices to align with the educational system?
- 2- In what ways does your belief influence your communication with teachers and involvement in school activities?

Section 4: Reflection on Cultural Impact

- 1- How have your beliefs positively influenced your child's early learning experiences?

Section 5: Suggestions for Improvement

- 1- What suggestions do you have for educators and policymakers to better support parents to improve their children's learning?

- 2- In your opinion, what particular tools or programs might improve the cooperation between early childhood education and parental involvement?

Appendix 2: Individual Interview Questions for Practitioners

Dear participant practitioner,

Thank you for participating in this research study. This question interview aims to explore the cultural influences on parental involvement in early childhood learning for parents in Saudi Arabia. Your input is invaluable, and your responses will contribute to a better understanding of the complexities surrounding this critical topic.

Please answer the following questions in the interview honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will remain confidential, and your participation is entirely voluntary.

1- From your experience, what are the factors that influence Saudi parents' attitudes toward their involvement in their child's learning?

2- Can you describe how specific beliefs or traditions of Saudi families in Saudi Arabia impact parental involvement in early childhood learning?

3- In what ways do family dynamics, such as extended family involvement or generational differences, influence Saudi parents' expectations regarding their child's educational journey?

4- What are some common challenges or barriers Saudi parents face in actively participating in their child's early education?

5- From your perspective, what role does the socioeconomic background of Saudi families play in shaping their level of involvement in their child's early education?

6- Can you discuss the influence of community support systems or neighbourhood dynamics on parental involvement in early childhood education among Saudi families?

7- In your experience, what are some effective strategies or initiatives that early childhood settings can implement to encourage greater parental participation in their child's learning?

8- What are your thoughts on the role of early childhood education policies and governmental initiatives in Saudi Arabia in promoting and supporting parental involvement in early childhood learning?

Appendix 3: Individual interview questions for Managers

Dear participant manager,

Thank you for participating in this research study. This question interview aims to explore the cultural influences on parental involvement in early childhood learning for parents in Saudi Arabia. Your input is invaluable, and your responses will contribute to a better understanding of the complexities surrounding this critical topic.

Please answer the following questions in the interview honestly and to the best of your ability. Your responses will remain confidential, and your participation is entirely voluntary.

1- Can you share your experiences regarding how beliefs or traditions influence the level of parental involvement in their children in early childhood learning?

2- In your opinion, how do norms in Saudi Arabia shape parents' attitudes towards their roles in their children's education during their early years?

3- From your interactions with Saudi parents, what are some common challenges or barriers related to beliefs that may hinder or enhance their involvement in their children's early education?

4- Are there any specific practices or traditions in Saudi Arabia that you believe positively impact parental involvement in early childhood learning? Can you provide examples?

5- How do you think organizational policies and practices can be adapted to better support Saudi parents in balancing expectations with their responsibilities towards their children's education?

6- In your experience, how do Saudi parents typically navigate the balance between traditional values and modern educational approaches when it comes to their children's early learning experiences?

7- Based on your insights, what strategies or initiatives do you think organizations can implement to encourage and support greater parental involvement in early childhood learning?

**Appendix 4: University of Reading Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Form A (version November 2021)**

Please tick one: Staff: PhD: EdD: Name of applicant(s): Arwa Alkhamis
 Title of project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning, A Case Study of Parents in Saudi Arabia.
 Name of supervisor (s) (for student projects): Professor. Carol Fuller

Please complete the form below.

Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that	YES	NO	N.A
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	✓		
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	✓		
c) gives a full, fair, and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	✓		
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	✓		
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	✓		
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention, and disposal	✓		
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	✓		
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	✓		
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email. If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included, and their name provided	✓		
j) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	✓		
k) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: “This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.”	✓		
l) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: “The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.”	✓		
Please answer the following questions:	YES	NO	N.A
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	✓		

2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to 1)?		✓		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?			✓	
4) Staff Only – Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/PeopleDevelopment/newstaff/humanresources-MandatoryOnlineCourses.aspx) For all student projects, please tick N.A. and complete the Data Protection Declaration form (which is included in this document) and submit it with this application to the ethics committee.			✓	
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form (included below with this ethics application)?		✓		
6) Does your research comply with the University’s Code of Good Practice in Research?		✓		
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?			✓	
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?		✓		

9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?		✓	
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data ¹ , or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	✓		
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?		✓	
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?	✓		
12b) If the answer to question 12a is “yes”, does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?	✓		
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?	✓		
13b) If the answer to question 13a is “yes”, please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.	✓		
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		✓	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is “yes”: My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University’s insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.		✓	
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

- Complete either **Section A** or **Section B** below with details of your research project.
 - Complete a **Risk Assessment**.
 - Sign the form in **Section C**.
 - For all student projects, complete a **Data Protection Declaration form**.
 - Append at the end of this form all relevant documents: information sheets, consent forms, and ALL research instruments which may include tests, questionnaires, and interview schedules, and for staff, evidence that you have completed information security training (e.g., screen shot/copy of certificate).
 - Email the completed form, as a **SINGLE** document, to the Institute’s Ethics Committee for consideration.
- Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

Section A: My research goes beyond the “accepted custom and practice of teaching” but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)



Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g., teachers, parents, pupils etc.

Give a succinct description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments, and procedures) of the project in up to 500 words noting:

1. Title of project
2. Purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. Brief description of methods and measurements
4. Participants: Recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. Consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)
6. A clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.
7. Estimated start date and duration of project

Section B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.



¹ Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

The title of my project is How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning, A Case Study of Parents in Saudi Arabia.

The purpose of this project is to investigate how cultural background influences parental involvement in early childhood learning on Saudi parents in Saudi Arabia. The academic rationale for this study stems from the recognition of the significant impact that cultural background can have on parenting practices and educational approaches. By exploring these differences in the distinct cultural context, the project aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how cultural factors shape parental involvement in early childhood learning, thereby informing educational policies and practices.

The project will employ a qualitative case study design to explore the experiences, beliefs, and practices of Saudi parents, managers, and practitioners regarding early childhood learning. Data will be collected through in-depth four structured interviews, 3 individual interviews, with 12 participants (Parents, Saudi mother, and Saudi father), 2 managers, and 4 practitioners. One focus group interview with a father and mother together) allows for a comprehensive examination of the cultural influences on parental involvement. Additionally, thematic analysis will be conducted to identify key themes and patterns emerging from the data.

Participants will be recruited through purposive sampling, targeting. The interview process will include conducting the individual interviews first with 12 Saudi national parents' participants, 2 managers, and 4 practitioners. From them (6 Saudi parents who have one child, 1 manager, and 2 practitioners from a public Kindergarten), another (6 Saudi parents who have one child, 1 manager, and 2 practitioners from a private kindergarten), and then the group interview with the same 6 families together (including, where possible, both mother and father). The 12 Saudi national parents, including both mother and father, who have at least one child in early childhood (aged 3-5 years) and are willing to participate in this study, without wanting to include single-parent families or families where have someone who is from Saudi but other one is not from Saudi. This selection criterion ensures relevance to the study's focus on parental

involvement in early childhood learning. The choice of 18 participants (parents, both mother and father, managers and practitioners) aligns with the principle of data saturation, where the depth of insights reaches a saturation point. There will be no gender or age restrictions for participants.

Prior to participation, informed consent will be obtained from all participants, outlining the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants will also receive detailed information about the study procedures and their rights as participants. Debriefing will be provided at the conclusion of the study, offering participants an opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback on the study findings. Consent forms and participant information sheets will be attached to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines.

Ethical considerations raised by the project include ensuring participant confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, minimizing harm, and maintaining integrity in data collection and analysis. To address these concerns, measures such as anonymizing data, obtaining voluntary consent, and providing opportunities for participants to withdraw from the study will be implemented. Additionally, ethical approval will be obtained from the relevant institutional review board to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

The project data is estimated to commence on September 19th, 2022, and will have a duration of 3 years. This timeline allows for adequate data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings within the specified timeframe.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Brief Outline of the activity	The research project involves conducting interviews with parents, managers, and practitioners from Saudi Arabia in Saudi Arabia to explore how cultural background influences parental involvement in early childhood learning.
Where will data be collected?	Data will be collected via face to face
Significant hazards:	<p>There is a risk of inadvertently disclosing sensitive information during data collection or storage, compromising participant confidentiality.</p> <p>Participants may experience emotional discomfort or distress when discussing personal experiences or cultural backgrounds during the interviews.</p>
Who might be exposed to hazards?	Researchers, participants, and any individuals involved in the data collection process may be exposed to these hazards
Existing control measure	<p>Confidentiality protocols: Researchers will maintain strict confidentiality measures, including securing data storage devices, anonymizing participant information, and using secure communication channels for data transmission.</p> <p>Project data is expected to begin on June 27, 2024, and will have a duration of 3 months. This timeline allows for sufficient data to be collected, analysed, transcribed, and coded, and results to be it within the specified time frame.</p>

Are risks adequately controlled:	The identified risks are adequately controlled through the implementation of existing control measures.
----------------------------------	---

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:
	NA	NA

Section C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

Have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: Print Name: Arwa Alkhamis Date: 21 /06 / 2024

~~STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE~~
 INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Print Name: Anthony Zhang

Date: 24/06/2024

Signed:

(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative) *

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters.

Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Information Management and Policy Services

Data Protection Declaration for Ethical Approval (PhD/EdD projects)

This document can be used to provide assurances to your ethics committee where confirmation of data protection training and awareness is required for ethical approval.

By signing this declaration, I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the requirements for data protection within the *Data Protection for Researchers*

Document located here:

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/imps/-/media/49b402bbe9a74ae59dd8f4f080652123.ashx>

- I have asked for advice on any elements that I am *unclear on* prior to submitting my ethics approval request, either from my supervisor, or the data protection team at: imps@reading.ac.uk
- I understand that I am responsible for the secure handling, and protection of, my research data.
- I know who to contact in the event of an information security incident, a data protection complaint or a request made under data subject access rights.

Researcher to complete

Project / Study Title: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning: A Case Study of Saudi Parents in the United Kingdom Verses Parents in Saudi.

NAME	STUDENT ID NUMBER	DATE
Arwa Alkhamis	30847722	21 /06 / 2024

Supervisor signature

Note for supervisors: Please verify that your student has completed the above actions

NAME	STAFF ID NUMBER	DATE
Carol Fuller	725714	21 /06 /2024

Submit your completed signed copy along with the other documents pertaining to the ethics application. Copies to be retained by ethics committee.

VERSION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE
1.0	IMPS	Annually	IMPS	

Appendix 5: Information sheet for Parent/ and Consent Form

Information sheet for Parent/

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A case Study of Parents in Saudi Arabia

Project Team Members: Arwa Alkhamis (researcher), and Carol Fuller (Professor)

Dear Parent

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study we are undertaking.

What is the study?

This study aims to investigate how cultural background influences parental involvement in early childhood learning. Specifically, we are interested in understanding the experiences and perspectives of Saudi parents (both Saudi mother and Saudi father) in Saudi Arabia.

Why has Parent been chosen to take part?

Parents have been chosen to take part in this study because they are members of the target population we are interested in studying. We are seeking to include Parents from diverse cultural backgrounds to gain comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Does the Parent have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you take part in this study. If you are happy to take part, please return the consent form to (the researcher, Arwa Alkhamis,). You may also withdraw your consent to their participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions by contacting Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: +447769014137, E-mail: rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if the Parent takes part?

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews (an individual interview as a father or mother, and a group interview as a both father and mother together). where you will be invited to share your experiences and perspectives related to your early childhood learning and family background. The interview will be conducted in a comfortable and supportive environment and will last approximately 45 minutes, via face to face with recording, and will be at a mutually agreed time.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by you in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you nor the University will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the University.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, you may benefit from the opportunity to share your experiences and contribute to valuable research that may inform educational practices and policies.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. All data will be securely stored and will only be accessible to the research team.

In line with the University's policy on the management of research data, anonymized data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use. All anonymized research data will be retained indefinitely, whereas any identifying information, such as consent forms, will be disposed of securely after the research findings have been written up. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles. We can send you electronic copies of these publications if you wish.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the data collected from you.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Carol Fuller. Tel: 0118 3782662, E-mail: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

If you are interested in getting more information you can contact Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: , E-mail: rossha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

If you are happy for you to take part, please complete and return to the researcher Arwa Alkhamis the attached consent form.

Yours faithfully Arwa

DATA PROTECTION FOR INFORMATION SHEETS

The organization responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at imps@reading.ac.uk, or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, Whiteknights, P O Box 217, Reading, RG6 6AH.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares, and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: +447769014137, rossha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

- Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register
- Access your personal data or ask for a copy
- Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
- Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your

personal data

· Restrict uses of your data

· Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.

You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at <https://ico.org.uk>

You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

Consent form for Parent

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A Case Study of Parents in Saudi

Please complete and return this form to: the researcher, Arwa Alkhamis,
rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

1. I have read the information sheet about the project and received a copy of it.
2. I understand what the purpose of the study is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.
3. I agree to me participation in the study
4. I agree to provide any necessary information about my cultural background experiences as requested by research team.
5. I agree to allow the interview to be audio-recorded for research purposes, with the understanding that all recorded data will be kept confidential and anonymized.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent at any time without any repercussions.
7. I understand the information provided in the information sheet and this consent form.

Name of Parent:

Signed by Parent: Date:

Appendix 6: Information Sheet for Manager and Consent Form

Information sheet for manager/

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A Case Study of Parents in Saudi

Project Team Members: Arwa Alkhamis (researcher), and Carol Fuller (Professor)

Dear manager

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study we are undertaking.

What is the study?

This study aims to investigate how cultural background influences parental involvement in early childhood learning. Specifically, we are interested in understanding the experiences and perspectives of Saudi parents (both Saudi mother and Saudi father) in Saudi Arabia.

Why have managers been chosen to take part?

managers have been chosen to take part in this study because they are members of the target population we are interested in studying. We are seeking to include managers to gain comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Does the manager have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you take part in this study. If you are happy to take part, please return the consent form to (the researcher, Arwa Alkhamis,). You may also withdraw your consent to their participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions by contacting Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: _____, E-mail: _____, rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if the manager takes part?

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in one individual interview, where you will be invited to share your experiences and perspectives related to your early childhood learning and family background. The interview will be conducted in a comfortable and supportive environment and will last approximately 45 minutes, via face to face with recording, and will be at a mutually agreed time.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by you in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you nor the University will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the University.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, you may benefit from the opportunity to share your experiences and contribute to valuable research that may inform educational practices and policies.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. All data will be securely stored and will only be accessible to the research team.

In line with the University's policy on the management of research data, anonymized data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use. All anonymized research data will be retained indefinitely whereas any identifying information such as consent forms will be disposed of securely after the research findings have been written up. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles. We can send you electronic

copies of these publications if you wish.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favorable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the data collected from you.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Carol Fuller. Tel: 0118 3782662, E-mail: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk

Where can I get more information?

If you are interested in getting more information you can contact Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: , E-mail: rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Institute of Education

If you are happy for you to take part, please complete and return to the researcher Arwa Alkhamis the attached consent form.

Yours faithfully Arwa

DATA PROTECTION FOR INFORMATION SHEETS

The organization responsible for protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at imps@reading.ac.uk, or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, Whiteknights, P O Box 217, Reading, RG6 6AH.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares, and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: +447769014137, rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

- Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register
- Access your personal data or ask for a copy

- Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
- Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data
- Restrict uses of your data
- Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study

Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.

You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at <https://ico.org.uk>

You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

Consent form for manager/

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A Case Study of Parents in Saudi

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A Case Study of Parents in Saudi

Please complete and return this form to: the researcher, Arwa Alkhamis,
rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

1. I have read the information sheet about the project and received a copy of it.
2. I understand what the purpose of the study is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.
3. I agree to me participation in the study
4. I agree to provide any necessary information about my cultural background experiences as requested by research team.
5. I agree to allow the interview to be audio-recorded for research purposes, with the understanding that all recorded data will be kept confidential and anonymized.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent at any time without any repercussions.
7. I understand the information provided in the information sheet and this consent form.

Name of manager:

Signed by manager: Date:

Appendix 7: Information Sheet for Practitioner and Consent Form

Information sheet for practitioner/

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A Case Study of Parents in Saudi

Project Team Members: Arwa Alkhamis (researcher), and Carol Fuller (Professor)

Dear practitioner

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study we are undertaking.

What is the study?

This study aims to investigate how cultural background influences parental involvement in early childhood learning. Specifically, we are interested in understanding the experiences and perspectives of Saudi parents (both Saudi mother and Saudi father) in Saudi Arabia.

Why have practitioners been chosen to take part?

practitioners have been chosen to take part in this study because they are members of the target population we are interested in studying. We are seeking to include managers to gain comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Does the practitioner have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you take part in this study. If you are happy to take part, please return the consent form to (the researcher, Arwa Alkhamis,). You may also withdraw your consent to their participation at any time during the project, without any repercussions by contacting Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: _____, E-mail: _____, rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

What will happen if the practitioner takes part?

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in one individual interview, where you will be invited to share your experiences and perspectives related to your early childhood learning and family background. The interview will be conducted in a comfortable and supportive environment and will last approximately 45 minutes, via face to face with recording, and will be at a mutually agreed time.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The information given by you in the study will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team listed at the start of this letter. Neither you nor the University will be identifiable in any published report resulting from the study. Information about individuals will not be shared with the University.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, you may benefit from the opportunity to share your experiences and contribute to valuable research that may inform educational practices and policies.

What will happen to the data?

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. All data will be securely stored and will only be accessible to the research team.

In line with the University's policy on the management of research data, anonymized data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use. All anonymized research data will be retained indefinitely whereas any

identifying information such as consent forms will be disposed of securely after the research findings have been written up. The results of the study may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written reports and articles. We can send you electronic copies of these publications if you wish.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favorable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can change your mind at any time without any repercussions. If you change your mind after data collection has ended, we will discard the data collected from you.

What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact Professor Carol Fuller. Tel: 0118 3782662, E-mail: c.l.fuller@reading.ac.uk
Institute of Education

Where can I get more information?

If you are interested in getting more information you can contact Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: , E-mail: rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

DATA PROTECTION FOR INFORMATION SHEETS

The organisation responsible for the protection of your personal information is the University of Reading (the Data Controller). Queries regarding data protection and your rights should be directed to the University Data Protection Officer at imps@reading.ac.uk, or in writing to: Information Management & Policy Services, University of Reading, Whiteknights, P O Box 217, Reading, RG6 6AH.

The University of Reading collects, analyses, uses, shares, and retains personal data for the purposes of research in the public interest. Under data protection law we are required to inform you that this use of the personal data we may hold about you is on the lawful basis of being a public task in the public interest and where it is necessary for scientific or historical research purposes. If you withdraw from a research study, which processes your personal data, dependant on the stage of withdrawal, we may still rely on this lawful basis to continue using your data if your withdrawal would be of significant detriment to the research study aims. We will always have in place appropriate safeguards to protect your personal data.

If we have included any additional requests for use of your data, for example adding you to a registration list for the purposes of inviting you to take part in future studies, this will be done only with your consent where you have provided it to us and should you wish to be removed from the register at a later date, you should contact Arwa Alkhamis, Tel: +447769014137, rosha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

You have certain rights under data protection law which are:

- Withdraw your consent, for example if you opted in to be added to a participant register

- Access your personal data or ask for a copy
- Rectify inaccuracies in personal data that we hold about you
- Be forgotten, that is your details to be removed from systems that we use to process your personal data
- Restrict uses of your data
- Object to uses of your data, for example retention after you have withdrawn from a study

Some restrictions apply to the above rights where data is collected and used for research purposes.

You can find out more about your rights on the website of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at <https://ico.org.uk>

You also have a right to complain the ICO if you are unhappy with how your data has been handled. Please contact the University Data Protection Officer in the first instance.

Consent form for practitioner/

Research Project: How Does Cultural Background Influence Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Learning. A Case Study of Parents in Saudi

Please complete and return this form to: the researcher, Arwa Alkhamis, rossha.alkhamis@pgr.reading.ac.uk

1. I have read the information sheet about the project and received a copy of it.
2. I understand what the purpose of the study is and what is required of me. All my questions have been answered.
3. I agree to my participation in the study
4. I agree to provide any necessary information about my cultural background experiences as requested by research team.
5. I agree to allow the interview to be audio-recorded for research purposes, with the understanding that all recorded data will be kept confidential and anonymized.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent at any time without any repercussions.
7. I understand the information provided in the information sheet and this consent form.

Name of practitioner:

Signed by practitioner:

Appendix 8: NVivo Software: Common Terms in the Data

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface. On the left is a dark blue sidebar with the NVivo logo and project name 'How Does Cultural Learning.nvp'. Below the logo is a 'Quick Access' section. The sidebar is divided into three main sections: 'IMPORT', 'ORGANIZE', and 'Cases'. Under 'IMPORT', there is a 'Data' section with sub-items: Files, Focus Groups, Interviews, File Classifications, and Externals. Under 'ORGANIZE', there is a 'Coding' section with sub-items: Codes (highlighted in yellow), Sentiment, Relationships, and Relationship Types. Under 'Cases', there is a 'Cases' section with sub-items: Cases and Case Classifications. The main window on the right shows a ribbon with tabs: File, Home, Import, Create, and Explore. Below the ribbon is a 'Codes' section displaying a hierarchical tree structure of codes. The tree starts with a root node 'Name' and branches into several main categories: 'Barriers and obstacles', 'RQ1 Cultural background', 'RQ2 Cultural factors', 'RQ3 Gender', and 'RQ3 parental involvement'. Each main category has several sub-categories listed below it.

Codes

- Barriers and obstacles
 - Cultural and Societal Barriers
 - Obstacles and Barriers in the Kinder
 - Personal Obstacles and Barriers
- RQ1 Cultural background
 - Communication Practices
 - Cultural Conceptions of Parental Ro
 - Power Dynamics in Parent-Teacher I
- RQ2 Cultural factors
 - Attitudes towards Cultural Factors
 - Attitudes towards Economic
 - Attitudes towards Societal
 - Cultural Communication Styles and
 - Support
- RQ3 Gender
 - Role of Gender on childcare respon
- RQ3 parental involvement
 - Level of Involvement in Child Educa
 - Type of learning involvement