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Evaluating the Issues Facing Investment in (RAHA WA MARAH) Nursery school in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: Various challenges affect investment in Raha wa Marah Nursery School in Saudi Arabia. The declining investments into this level of education in Saudi Arabia form the foundation for our analysis. According to Pressley *et al.* (2009), though elementary education has been perceived as the core beginning of a successful education life, it suffers various hindrances that expose this sub-section of the entire education system to likely extinction or reduced importance.

In forming a reliable and valid research on the factors that may be attributing to truncated investment in nursery education, Duncan and Magnuson (2013) suggest various methodologies which are applicable. Through interviews with resourceful stakeholders in primary education, the challenges that impede nursery education in Saudi Arabia are spelled out. An interview is an important tool to collect primary information about the subject matter since structured questions either written or verbal are important in permitting the respondent to answer the areas of interest only.

In the course of our study, various factors are seen to impede investments in nursery education in Saudi Arabia. Since education is a capital intensive sector, an insufficient fund devoted to the government and private sector hinders development in kindergartens. Other social and political factors are also seen to discourage investments in this section of education. Such social demographic factors like fertility rate and mortality rate play a role in determining the promotion of investment in nursery schooling in Saudi Arabia.

Low investment into nursery education in Saudi Arabia has been impacted by various challenges that ought to be addressed. Lack of enough funds to promote literacy education in the kindergarten calls for enough budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Education that could be used in promoting investment.

Keywords: evaluation, school, investment, leading, nursery, issues, trade, challenges, factors

تقييم المشاكل التي تواجه الاستثمار في مدرسة (روح ومرح) للحضانة في المملكة العربية السعودية

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المستخلص: تؤثر التحديات المختلفة على الاستثمار في مدرسة روح ومرح للحضانة في المملكة العربية السعودية. ويشكل تراجع الاستثمارات في هذا المستوى من التعليم في المملكة العربية السعودية الأساس لتحليلنا. ووفقا لما ذكره بريسلي وآخرون (2009)، على الرغم من أن التعليم الابتدائي كان ينظر إليه على أنه البداية الأساسية لحياة تعليمية ناجحة، فإنه يعاني من عوائق مختلفة تعرض هذا القطاع الفرعي من النظام التعليمي بأكمله لخطر الانقراض أو انخفاض الأهمية.

عند إجراء بحث موثوق وصالح حول العوامل التي قد تنسب إلى الاستثمار المقتطع في تعليم الحضانة، يقترح Duncan and Magnuson (2013)منهجيات مختلفة قابلة للتطبيق. من خلال المقابلات مع أصحاب المصلحة ذوي الحيلة في التعليم الابتدائي، تم توضيح

التحديات التي تعيق تعليم الحضانة في المملكة العربية السعودية. تعد المقابلة أداة مهمة لجمع المعلومات الأولية حول الموضوع نظرًا لأن الأسئلة المنظمة سواء كانت مكتوبة أو شفهية مهمة في السماح للمجيب بالإجابة على مجالات الاهتمام فقط.

في سياق دراستنا، لوحظ أن هناك عوامل مختلفة تعيق الاستثمار في تعليم الحضانة في المملكة العربية السعودية. بما أن التعليم قطاع كثيف رأس المال، فإن التمويل غير الكافي المخصص للحكومة والقطاع الخاص يعيق التنمية في رياض الأطفال. كما يُنظر إلى العوامل الاجتماعية والسياسية الأخرى على أنها تثبط الاستثمار في هذا القسم من التعليم. تلعب العوامل الديموغرافية الاجتماعية مثل معدل الخصوبة ومعدل الوفيات دورًا في تحديد تشجيع الاستثمار في رياض الأطفال في المملكة العربية السعودية.

لقد تأثر الاستثمار المنخفض في تعليم الحضانة في المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال العديد من التحديات التي يجب معالجتها. إن نقص الأموال الكافية لتعزيز تعليم محو الأمية في رياض الأطفال يستدعي تخصيص ميزانية كافية لوزارة التربية والتعليم يمكن استخدامها في تشجيع الاستثمار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم، مدرسة، استثمار، قيادة، تمريض، قضايا، تجارة، تحديات، عوامل.

1.1 Introduction

Education is defined as a process of instilling knowledge into an individual especially in a school or college setting (Draxler, 2014). Education is a fundamental right for all and is critical to the future development of any nation. It enhances individual independence and empowerment and yields important development benefits (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2016). There is always a price tag to education. However, the only more expensive thing to invest in rather than education is failing to invest in education (Otaibi and Swailm, 2002). Inadequate investment in education produces increased costs for a society regarding spending by the public, crime rate, health, as well as economic growth. There is no single country in the world that can afford to leave the majority of its children uneducated and not help them in achieving the competence required for a life that is self-fulfilled in economic independence (Hanushek, 1996).

School education plays a significant role for the citizens of any country. The education system in Saudi Arabia is divided into three major categories: primary education, secondary education and higher learning (Flug et al., 1996). All the categories have their own significance and importance. Each level builds the foundation of the next level. Primary education is the foundation on which life is built. Secondary education prepares an individual for further studies, while higher level education prepares an individual for the ultimate path of their lives (Draxler, 2014). Thus, it is the good or bad education that individuals get that determines the person they would become in the future.

As nations realize the importance of education in their economies, some countries such as Arab Gulf countries are implementing an 'Education for All' framework as their aim towards making all their citizens educated. For this reason, countries are investing more and more in education. This investment is done in the form of infrastructure, training teachers and increasing the number of teachers in schools, among others. However, investing in the education sector is challenging for many countries due to various reasons. Investing in education should start from nursery schools since it is the foundation of all the other levels of education, all the way to institutions of higher learning.

The aim of this research is to establish the issues facing investing in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia using Raha wa Marah Nursery School as the case study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Free and compulsory education coupled with open admissions has enhanced female education in Saudi Arabia. About fifty years ago, girls were never educated. The adequate accessibility and availability of schools together with program quality and human resources, has had a noteworthy impact on female education in Saudi Arabia in the recent past. Because of the increasing education reforms in the country, more people, especially girls, are able to go to school. Furthermore, since girls in Saudi Arabia marry at an early age, most of them have children while still in college (Draxler, 2014). While they go to school, their children also go to preschool.

The basic objective of the education policy in Saudi Arabia is to ensure that education is efficient and can meet the economic, social as well as religious needs of the country and, at the same time, eradicate illiteracy levels among school going children (Otaibi and Swailm, 2002). Generally, the Saudi Arabian education system is made up of kindergarten, primary school (which takes six years) and three more years in each of intermediate as well as high school levels (MOE, 2006). It is the country's Ministry of Education that lays down the standards of education and also oversees all aspects of education in the country (MOE, 2006). The General Presidency for Girls' Education was dismantled in 2003 and the Ministry took over its functions. The functions include administering the girls' colleges and other schools, taking charge of kindergartens and other nursery schools, as well as supporting female programs in schools (MOE, 2006).

The history of nursery school education in Saudi Arabia is more recent. It is mostly non-formal and comprises taking care of young children mostly below the age of seven (Draxler, 2014). The Children's Act of 2005 emphasized the significance of enhancing the training, development and career formation as well as being familiar with the challenges of working with nursery school children (Hanushek, 1996). Nevertheless, it is increasingly becoming alarming that various backgrounds in training have generated tutors with a differing understanding of their roles, the needs of the children, as well as the objectives of the institutions in which they work (Draxler, 2014). This is as a result of their values as well as personal beliefs which influence their work practice and give rise to many controversial issues of concern. In 2002, nursery school enrolment was 8 per cent lower than the number of children (Otaibi and Swailm, 2002). Such low numbers indicate a gap in children practices in their homes as well as their readiness to join schools. It also indicates that there is a need to increase the nursery school centers as well as the number of teachers. The number is relatively better at the national level as the ratio stands at one teacher to thirteen children. However, when the ratio is broken down to the differences in urban/rural

areas, the disparity is high (Flug et al., 1996). According to UNESCO (2004), the number of children entering nursery schools in urban centers is higher than the number in rural areas.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Saudi Arabian government has emphasized the importance of education especially under the slogan "Education for All" and its efforts in allocating a considerable amount of resources to education has been significant in the recent past. The education budget in 1947/48 was about SR 10 million and in 2005/06 the budget was about SR 135 million (Draxler, 2014). However, the proportion of this for nursery schools seems to be very limited. Also, the number of children is higher than the proportion of teachers teaching them. The number of nursery school centers is also lower compared to the number of school going children. In Saudi Arabia, nearly half of the population falls under schooling age (below 25 years) (Otaibi and Swailm, 2002). Furthermore, there are some policy guidelines and regulations for foreign investors in the education sector that hinder investment in this sector. Thus, policymakers, government, and sponsoring entities need to understand the dynamics shaping investment in education to engage in sustainable funding and supportive programs.

1.4 Research Questions

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1- What are the issues facing investing in Raha wa Marah Nursery School in Saudi Arabia?
2- What is the role of the government and how does it affect investment in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia?
3- What are the political, financial, legal and other internal or external environment issues facing nursery school investors in Saudi Arabia?
4- What is the significance of such issues for Raha wa Marah?
5- What are the opportunities that could affect the financing of Raha wa Marah?
6- Based on the findings, what policy recommendations are available for investing in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia?

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

In the broad spectrum, the overall aim of this research is to evaluate the issues facing investing in Raha wa Marah Nursery School in Saudi Arabia.

Specifically, the research objectives include:

1. To evaluate the role of the government and how it affects the educational investment in Saudi Arabia
2. To determine the issues effecting the investors in the educational field including political, financial, legal as well as other internal and external environment constraints

3. To evaluate the significance of the identified issues for Raha wa Marah
4. To establish the opportunities that could affect the financing of Raha wa Marah
5. To develop policy recommendations for investing in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia based on the findings.

1.6 Procedures of the Study

The study employs primary and secondary data collection methods. Firstly, the secondary research focuses on reviewing and integrating literature data and information on investment in education in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, primary data collection method has been used – specifically for gathering relevant data from Riyadh using the interview tool. The primary data has been collected in Raha wa Marah Nursery School. However, no parent or child has been interviewed. After the data was collected, data analysis was done using the NVivo program for qualitative research. The findings have been compiled and policy recommendations outlined.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Since education is a basic requirement, investing in the foundation of this education (nursery) is important. The findings bring out the issues of investing in nursery schools and could offer solutions and recommendations. This will help the government, policy makers and other investors understand such challenges and how they can mitigate them to enhance investment in nursery schools. The study presents a new body of knowledge to researchers and interested individuals. The study also partially fills the gaps in other studies that have looked into this area of research.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The fundamentals of the structure of the brain and lifelong potential are established in the child's early years, with the external environment of the child playing a vital role in this development (Barnett, 2011). Thus, early childhood experiences, whether at home, school, or any other care setting and the community have a large impact on the child, which is also based on the interaction with genetics to develop the child's basic brain design. Basic early skills such as cognition, including language, ability to read and solve complex problems such as math, social skills such as empathy and prosocial behavior, self-control, attention, and voluntary control among others, are formed during this period (Barnett, 2011; Bisell, 1973; Cascio and Schanzenbach, 2013). Thus, as Barnett (2011) argues, later life skills are based on early acquired skills, emphasizing the need to invest in early education. In the first section, I discuss the effectiveness of preschool programs in relation to the benefits of four popular preschool education

programs. Then I focus on the cost-benefit analysis of investing in preschool, and finally, the consideration of state and private investment.

2.2 Definition of Preschool Education Programs

The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2016) defines preschool as "relating to the time in a child's life when the child is old enough to talk and walk but is not ready to go to school". Thus, preschool education can be defined as education provided to children before joining elementary school. It is also referred to as nursery education or kindergarten. Swartout-Corbeil (2016) defines preschool education programs as early childhood education programs for children aged between two to five years, combining learning and play, run by professionally trained adults. She adds that preschools are different from daycares in that these programs focus on learning and the child's development as opposed to enabling the parents to pursue other activities (Swartout-Corbeil, 2016). This definition matches with Saudi Arabia's practice in which pre-school centers receive children aged from three to six years (Al-Jadidi, 2012).

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives in Preschool Education Programs

Preschool curricula are based on various theoretical frameworks that provide a model for their program to provide the children an opportunity to balance between development and learning. The Montessori approach, based on Maria Montessori's model of education aims to assist children in developing their senses, educational skills, character, and real-world life skills. According to this approach, children have to be exposed to certain materials that will impart specific skills to them if used in a particular way (Lunenburg, 2011).

On the other hand, the High/Scope approach, based on Jean Piaget's constructivist theory of development, encourages active learning of children, with well-furnished interest areas for children, while establishing a routine consisting of learning, playtime and working together in groups (DeVries and Kamii, 2011). This way, this program encourages children to establish a daily routine in a supportive environment that enhances problem solving, reflections and group work. This program identifies a number of key experiences that are essential for preschool experiences. Similarly, the Kamii-DeVries Constructivist Perspective is based on Piaget's constructivist view. It encourages children to learn from their interactions with the world, with the assistance of teachers who are in touch with their needs (DeVries and Kamii, 2011).

Conversely, Dodge (2010), based on her career as a preschool educator, suggests that preschool teachers must make their practices consistent with the objectives of the learners, through supportive classroom arrangement that enhances appropriate practice and active learning, with an aim of achieving social competence. This program is aimed at implementing a creative curriculum. Then again, the direct instruction model focuses on behavioral learning. This program has a particular focus on educational achievement, with small groups of children per teacher. However, critics accuse this approach of having a

teacher-centered approach, instead of a learner-centered approach, hence making it appropriate for higher education levels such as elementary (Lunenburg, 2011).

2.4 The Effectiveness of Preschool Education

The intense focus on early childhood education in the last few years has stemmed from a number of issues. One of the primary reasons is that preschool education has a significant impact on the later life of children, not only development-wise but also economic-wise in the long run (Barnett, 2011; Bouguen et al., 2014; Darlington, 1982). Thus, a key focus of early education research has been mainly focused on disadvantaged children and providing them access to quality preschool education to enable them to break from the poverty chain (Stefan and Miclea, 2013). This has been based largely on the assumption that leaving them to natural settings will result in undesirable outcomes (Bisell, 1973; Stefan and Miclea, 2013). Thus, the main goals of these interventions have been to alter various aspects including social, cognitive, and behavioural aspects in order to produce desirable outcomes. Consequently, the question has been focused on whether nursery education has an impact on children (Cascio and Schanzenbach, 2013). In this section, these mentioned variables based on popular preschool education programs are addressed, analyzed and evaluated.

2.5 Long-Lasting Impacts

Research by Barnett (2011) indicates that preschool education has long-term impacts on children. His research was based on the Perry preschool program, a longitudinal randomized study targeting low-income African-American children that was intended to demonstrate the long-term impact of preschool education on adulthood. The follow-up by Schweihart et al. (2005) up to the age of 40 indicated that preschool education has beneficial impact on the children. The follow-up was intended to explore the impact of the program on a variety of factors, namely education, crime prevention, and economic performance, for which the researchers found exceptional performances by the experimental group as compared to the control group in all the variables, indicating that these impacts lasted a lifetime.

However, Heckman (2013) is of the opinion that the Perry project did nothing to add to the IQ of the participants. They only benefited from the improved character skills that resulted in better education, hence good economic and life outcomes. Similarly, Gramlich (1986) holds the opinion that while the IQ of the participants was initially high, it declined over time. The Head Start program, a comprehensive educational program intended to provide quality preschool education and enable parental involvement while also providing basic social services to the disadvantaged students to ensure their academic performance was balanced with that of middle-income children to demonstrate this (Mann et al., 1977; Maxon et al., 2015; Shipman, 1971). Initial results indicated that the program was effective in improving IQ and, later, schooling, which indicated its effectiveness (Mann et al., 1977).

2.6 Better Health Outcomes

The Abecedarian Project, on the other hand, was involved in providing intensive early education for low-income children (Irvine and Farrell, 2013). The program groups were subjected to age-appropriate curricula that allowed them to enhance their language and cognitive skills in addition to nutritional supplements, with additional social service support for the parents if required, with an aim of attributing the project's outcomes of the intervention rather than parental support or nutrition (Muenning et al., 2011). Follow-up was conducted with the subjects until the age of 21 years with a focus on three parameters: namely, hospital admissions, self-reported health issues and depression index score. The results indicated significantly lower levels of health risk behaviors, hence, better health outcomes for the program group (Campbell et al., 2012; Campbell et al., 2002; Muenning et al., 2011).

Nonetheless, Marmont (2010) demonstrates that if these children continue to be subjected to social inequalities after these programs, they are likely to experience poor health outcomes. He, therefore, suggests the need for prolonged programs covering the participant's childhood, adolescence and early adulthood (Marmont, 2010). Field (2010), Yoshikawa et al. (2013) and Campbell et al. (2012) are in support of this view, calling for continued interventions beginning from early childhood to adolescence. Preschool children health index is another variable to be analyzed in future research.

2.7 Improved School Readiness

In addition to long-term impacts, preschool programs have also been associated with improved school readiness for children (Gomley et al., 2008; Gramlich, 1986; Maxon et al., 2015). The result is a readiness to learn initiative that results in higher academic achievements, and, later, enhanced economic performance. Gramlich (1986) attributes this to improved attitudes towards school and teachers. Gomley et al. (2008) investigated this aspect using the Oklahoma preschool program. Findings by Gormley and Gayer (2005) found evidence that disadvantaged children who took part in the Oklahoma preschool program had higher scores on their tests at the end of the preschool period. Here exists the difference in the findings of the Oklahoma program and the Perry Project about the role of preschool education in the enhancement of children's IQ level. However, a study conducted on children of age four to five years in preschool systems of Riyadh city showed the result resembling the Perry Project research. Findings were that children were not taking interest in going to school and taking part in literary activities. However, they showed interest in extra-curricular activities like playing games. When they were older, the preschool system did not have any significant positive effect on their IQ level and personality skills development (Othman et al., 2015).

Alternatively, Fantuzzo et al. (2007) believe that while preschool education plays a significant role in school readiness, there are other factors that come into play in determining a child's attitude to school prior to kindergarten. Magnuson and Waldfogel (2005) attribute ethnic and racial gaps to school

readiness, regardless of whether the child has attended a preschool or not. The quality of care offered determines school readiness too (Magnuson and Waldfogel, 2005). Nonetheless, Bisell (1973) is the opinion that studies focused solely on IQ as the main effectiveness indicator of the program showed decreased or no benefits over extended periods, while those that actively engaged parents resulted in longer lasting impacts. In addition, participants who are included in structured programs showed more progress, while those that were focused on basic skills as opposed to academic achievement also led to positive outcomes (Bisell, 1973).

2.8 Universal Preschool Education

Having demonstrated the impact of preschool education for low-income children, concerns have been raised about whether these programs can benefit other children (Yoshikawa *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, over recent years, research has focused on a more universal preschool program approach, leading to the inclusion of special needs children. The results, according to Yoshikawa *et al.* (2013), Barnett (2011), Cascio and Schanzenbach (2013) and Duncan and Magnuson (2013), indicate that these programs are beneficial to all children, regardless of their family background and special needs. However, at-risk children continue to receive significantly more benefits as compared to the rest of the population (Yoshikawa *et al.*, 2013). These programs have been associated with improved reading, language, writing, and even math skills in children (Cascio and Schanzenbach; Darlington, 1982; Duncan and Magnuson, 2013; Heckman, 2013; Irvine and Farrell, 2013). Further, these programs have also been confirmed to be more helpful for dual language children as compared to native students (Yoshikawa *et al.*, 2013). Here a question arises whether preschool programs are beneficial equally for native and foreign students having different income and social backgrounds or any significant difference, which will be a part of future research.

Overall, the studies highlighted above indicate that participants in preschool programs showed immense improvements in education achievement, reading, mathematics and also social skills that were not seen in their peers not involved in these programs. These children also grew up to be of benefit to the society, in addition to gaining a positive self-perception. They are also more likely than their counterparts to pursue higher education and seek employment. In a nutshell, effective preschool programs have demonstrated the ability to improve the academic performance of disadvantaged children worldwide, which further enforces the need to implement them (Bouguen *et al.*, 2014; Goldstein *et al.*, 2013; Irvine and Farrell, 2013), while as drivers to eradicating poverty (UNESCO n.d. *SDG 4 Education 2030*).

2.9 Benefits versus Costs of Investing in Preschool Education

Cost-benefit frameworks have enabled researchers to determine the value of investing in various preschool programs (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Systemic accounting has been used widely, with comparisons being made between the intervention groups and the control groups to demonstrate

outcomes (Barnett, 2011). Yoshikawa et al. (2013) are of the opinion that these benefits come in either of these two ways: reduced costs during the implementation of the programs such as reduced crime, grade retention and child protection among others; and economic benefits in the long-term such as higher earnings.

Preschool programs differ in costs (Barnett, 2008, 2011; Bouguen et al., 2014; Duncan and Magnuson, 2013; Yoshikawa et al., 2013;). Universal programs are obviously more expensive to invest in than targeted programs as they cover a large number of children. (Barnett, 2010; Gelbach and Pritchett, 2002; Lubienski et al., 2009). However, the benefits of investing in a program rely on a variety of factors. Most of the researchers agree that the benefits of a program are the most important aspect of consideration (Bouguen et al., 2014; Campbell et al., 2012;; World Bank, 2008; Yoshikawa et al., 2013;), as compared to the initial amounts invested in the program.

Gramlich (1986), on the other hand, through an analysis of the Perry Program demonstrates that the benefits of preschool education are more than just saving the taxpayer's money (he sees this approach as a selfish move), but also the subjects too. In his views, the investment in universal programs benefits the child as well as the investor being able to make money in the current era of economic competition. These benefits to the child, Gramlich (1986) adds, can be seen far into the future, long after the study has ceased. Thus, he suggests that researchers devise measurement approaches that will stand the tests of time to show the benefits of these programs, even up to old age. Data from the preschool programs mentioned in this study reveal that investing in early childhood education is a worthy investment (Barnett, 2011; Duncan and Magnuson, 2013; Goldstein et al., 2013; Greenberg, 2005; Muenning et al., 2011; Schweihart et al., 2005). Benefits of preschool programs will be an aspect of future discussion.

Contrariwise, Yoshikawa et al. (2013) also state that measuring the impact of education based on the amount of dollars spent on cognitive and school achievement outcomes is more significant than that of dollars spent on other educational interventions such as reducing the teacher-children ratio. In my view, high quality preschool education does not come cheap, but its benefits, whether in the short or long term, outweigh the costs making them cost-effective approaches to educational interventions. Thus, these interventions are prospectively profitable investments in the states implementing them.

2.10 Consideration of Private Investment versus State Investment

Having determined the need to invest in education, I turn to the issue of private versus state investment in education. Arguments have been advanced for and against government involvement in preschool education, based, according to Barnett (2010), on the political realities in different nations. These arguments are mainly based on the funding approaches of these programs, with proponents arguing for targeted programs that are aimed at reaching disadvantaged children (Barnett, 2010; Bisell,

1973; Bouguen et al., 2014), while opponents argue for universal preschool education (Kirp, 2007; Lubienski et al., 2009).

Those supporting the targeted approach argue that providing funding for the disadvantaged ensures the funds are devoted to each child, which results in intensive focus, hence more benefits (Barnett 2010). However, Lubienski et al. (2009) argue that taking on a universal approach would mean implementation in state owned schools, run by the country's government giving equivalent opportunities undistinguishably to all people, which would be ineffective especially to the disadvantaged.

On the other side, Kirp (2007) argues that providing universal education to children will ensure greater enrollment of eligible children, covering the disadvantaged children too. Quality will be greatly improved as all children will have equal access to education. But Barnett (2010) points out that providing universal preschool education will result in negative impacts on the disadvantaged children, as the high-quality aspect of the program will be compromised by overstretched funds, resulting in diluted services. At the same time, implementation of universal programs in developing countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka is unlikely to produce expected results. The reason behind low school going rate of children is their involvement in bread earning activities and the high rate of child labor (Zaidi et al., 2013).

Alsuiadi (2015) establishes a relationship between an increase in the enrollment in private schools and government support for these institutions. He attributes this to better curriculum and educational outcomes in private schools as compared to public schools, which have demonstrated a decline in enrollment as a result. The consequence, as demonstrated by Alsuiadi (2015) and Al Masah Capital (2014) in their works, is an increase in the demand for private school education as well as a willingness of parents to spend money on private school education at all levels.

These changes will, in turn, offer massive investment opportunities for investors and stakeholders in this sector. The increase in private schools will also be prompted by various programs to boost private investment in privately-owned schools, such as state funding and administrative support from the government (Smith and Abū ʿAmmuh, 2013). In addition, due to government protection, education firms are not likely to be affected by adverse economic times, further boosting performance in operations, hence, higher returns (Al Masah Capital, 2014).

3.1 Methodology

The test utilized the onion design which as per Dalcher and Brodie (2007: 61) is subdivided into six parts.

3.1.1 Research philosophy

The study pursues comprehension of the respondent's insights on matters that face investment in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia. The examination conforms to the interpretivism philosophy because, according to Tracy (2012), interpretivism philosophy entails the examiner's interpretation of the essentials of the study such as the results from interviews. In developing the research, several paradigms were considered to provide an adequate framework for conducting the study. It is essential to comprehend that the entire study was founded on meta study and using a real sample to support the findings of the previous studies.

Primarily, the inquiry seeks to establish the factors in Saudi Arabia that affect investment in nursery schools. Apparently, the four broad categories that identify the philosophies utilized by researchers in various studies are positivist, social constructivist, pragmatic, and participatory points of view (Levy and Lemeshow, 2013). The current research is based on the social constructivist approaches, which involve the use of political and national factors in deciphering the factors that have a direct influence on the investment in nursery schools. Logically, major stakeholders of the nursery school industry account for the significant parties that should be used for the study (Bevan, S., Baumgartner, F.R., Johnson, E.W. and McCarthy, J.D., 2013).

3.1.2 Research approach

The study employed a method of mixed research which took into account both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Tracy, 2012). The mixed approach strategy is a manifestation utilized to denote the usage of more than two approaches in an examination and is also referred to as a single paradigm (Erickson, 2012). A paradigm can also be founded on mutual expectations, thoughts, performances, and views. The single paradigm was essential in the research as the objectives of the study led to the choosing of the method (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). It created an advantage in the research process as it helped with unveiling the objectives of the study.

The qualitative approach entailed the collection of structured information from literature related to the subject and that from respondents through interviews (Lichtman, 2006). The data was analyzed for its relevance to the research questions of the study to obtain a rich set of information such as the participants' opinions, in the case of the interview, and a broad choice of variables in the event of the data obtained from the related literature.

The quantitative approach involved collecting and analyzing content that included reviewing of available literature. Additionally, the experience of the researcher was employed in conducting the research.

The utilization of the two methods provided a better understanding of the research problem as opposed to when one is used individually (Yilmaz, 2013).

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Data collection

Data collection entails the procedure of gathering data on the variables to give to (or "intending to") obtaining an answer to the research questions. The topic was useful in trying to understand issues facing investment in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia. The study was seeking to solve issues that are facing investment in nursery schools and the role played by government and other internal as well as external factors. The following methods were employed in the collection of data.

3.2.2 Primary data collection

(Amaya et al., 2015) considered that this is the kind of data that is received from its source. It is original data that is collected by the researcher, and it is usually meant for the purpose of the research. The study employed primary data collection methods that involved collecting data from the source. Specifically, structured interviews were utilized in retrieving information from participants (Alnahdi, 2013). One advantage of using structured interviews is that they are easy to conduct, hence many individuals can be interviewed within a short period of time. On the other hand, structured interviews are not flexible, and hence enough information may not be obtained. Spoken directed questions to the interviewees were employed in obtaining information necessary for the study. Interviewees were managers and employees of the nursery school. Children and parents were not interviewed as they were not considered to provide information essential for the study. Every participant was given an EC6 form which contained information of assurance that confidentiality of data provided would be maintained (Jeffrey, 2007). During the process, some difficulties were encountered such as some respondents refused to have their voices recorded. However, to overcome this issue, a written interview was offered and they were guaranteed that would be kept confidential. Additionally, three out of the ten respondents declined to be interviewed and hence provided no information.

3.2.3 Interview

The interview was designed in such a way that the questions would yield the necessary information. The interview style that was adopted was a qualitative interview that involved the use of open-ended questions. The questions were structured in a way that started with easy ones followed by the most complicated ones. Structuring the interview questions in that way helps in building the confidence of the interviewees. Interviews are compared to questionnaires in Table 3.1 below.

Table (3.1) Advantages and disadvantages of collecting information using interviews as compared to using a questionnaire

Advantages	Disadvantages
Personal attributes can be obtained when collecting	It is time-consuming to prepare and administer.

Advantages	Disadvantages
information. Wordings can be tailored precisely to the respondents. There is usually a high response rate.	Different interviewers, when used, can give conflicting information. It is a costly exercise and can be too structured and limiting

3.2.4 Secondary data collection

Secondary data is qualitative data that has previously been composed by somebody else and was probably envisioned to be used for several purposes apart from the one being used (Clark, 2005). Secondary data helps to save time that would have been used for collecting data since secondary data is usually available and documented (Bevan, et al. 2013). Additionally, secondary data helps in saving on expenditure as information is easily accessible.

For the aim of this study, data was obtained online from search engines such as ERIC, Google Scholar, and EBSCO. Peer reviewed articles were also used to derive data for the purpose of the research. The data was classified into three broad categories: data relating to challenges facing investment in education (category 1); data relating to the role of the government, NGOs, and sponsoring entities in elementary school investment (category 2); and strategies for addressing challenges facing investment in education (category 3). All findings are presented in chapter four.

3.2.5 Sampling method

A non-probability sampling approach was utilized to derive information that reflects on a wide perspective of the school, where specific groups from the sample space were identified for the exercise. Non-probability sampling method involves a more controlled selection process than probability sampling (Baker et al., 2013). It is applicable where the sample space includes a field of subjects with significant variations that should be involved in the study to make it apply to the entire area (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). While this study included conducting an interview on workers at Raha wa Marah Nursery School, there are significant groups within the school's workforce and each group should be represented in the study. As such, conducting a probability sampling style may result in some of the groups not being represented, resulting in the inaccuracy of results (Levy and Lemeshow, 2013). The total population is comprised of ten individuals, the owner of Raha wa Marah Nursery School, seven teachers, one volunteer and one cleaner. However, only seven interviewees responded to the invitation to the interview.

3.3 Rationale for the Methodology

The literature review provided a guideline towards specific subjects that relate to the scope of this study. More specifically, it provided a framework for conducting the study including highlighting specific areas of study that would benefit the research. Amongst stakeholders of elementary schools, the

government plays a significant role in facilitating their establishment. Primarily, every government has educational goals to achieve regarding its population, and primary education is the foundation for every child's education (Kim, 2011).

3.3.1 Use of government data

Information about government investment in nursery schools was sought from the government press for the research objective to be achieved. No difficulty was experienced in obtaining the information as the government press were very cooperative, in particular, on the amount of money set aside for ventures into education. Additionally, information on the comparison of how the state invests in the teaching as compared to the private sector was taken into account. Information from the Ministry of Education was obtained to shed more light on the school system influences on investments in education. Moreover, the various legislation that has an impact on the ventures into education is reviewed (Alnahdi, 2013).

3.3.2 Use of political data

Political issues play a role in influencing primary school, especially in advocacy and legislation (Fott, 2009). Significantly, political stability is essential for educational progress at all levels including elementary. Where stability has been achieved, the politics of the nation will determine how legislation for education is made. Important factors here are the educational objectives of the regime in power. Therefore, it is important to establish the role of political stability and legislation and activity in determining investment in nursery schools (Taylor et al., 2015).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process by which data is inspected, cleaned and transformed with an aim of achieving usefulness of the data that can be used for decision making.

Both structured and non-structured data was collected and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis involved the evaluation of the worker's opinions about the research questions of the study and making deductions for results based on these ideas (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). Numerical values were analyzed using quantitative analysis techniques that employed the use of statistical programs such as Excel and were recorded.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The interview was conducted in private where paper notes from the interviews were transferred to a computer that is secured with a password. Additionally, smartphones were used to record information upon which the information was stored in iCloud and Dropbox, which were also secured with passwords.

The participants were assured that the information was secure by issuing them with a copy of EC6 with respect to Protocol number: cBUS/PGT/UH/02447.

3.5.1 Obtaining consent from participants

Before conducting the interview with the employees and other parties at Raha wa Marah Nursery School, communication about the exercise, its objectives, and expected results was given to the school principal, who consented to participate in the activity. Additionally, communication was made to each participant in the study and the respondents were made aware before the interview that participating in the interview process was a free choice (Peterson and Ferrell, 2007).

3.5.2 Informing participants of rights

Each participant was issued with a copy of EC6. It meant to offer assurance that all their personal information was well secured. Communication is a vital aspect especially when it comes to telling other individuals what is required from them (Love, 2012). Suitable communication is essential to guarantee that the participants fully understand the rules and that their participation is fully consenting (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012).

3.5.3 Considering impact of research on participants

While it is the desire of researchers to cause as little impact as possible on the lives of the interviewees, their participation has noticeable effects, and some are positive (Jeffrey, 2007). For example, a respondent may feel proud by participating in an exercise that brings good results (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Research often leads in development, the provision of useful information or discovery of solutions to some problems (Love 2012). Therefore, a person who provides useful data to aid the course of research is a valuable participant and contributes to finding the solutions sought in the research (Hammersley, and Traianou, 2012).

3.6 Limitations

The study involved the evaluation of the issues that affect investment in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia. Notably, the nursery school industry has a broad range of stakeholders and engaging all of them in the study is impractical. Therefore, the study included a section of the most significant stakeholders from whom the data was obtained. Precisely, the identified stakeholders for the study included the government, the school administrators and school employees. The stakeholders left out of the study included students, parents, material suppliers, and business/service providers. While these stakeholders are significant, their influence on the school is weak. However, their exclusion from the study denies it some valuable information that would have helped achieve more accurate results. Further, some of the respondents

refused to record their voices while three out of the ten interviewees declined to take part in the interview process.

Additionally, this study involved the use of one nursery school as a case study in achieving results that directly relate to nursery schools. However, the use of only one denies the review a broad spectrum of sample space to guarantee that the consequences of the survey represent the entire nursery school industry. Real research is both generalizable and transferable owing to the inclusion of an extensive sample space that incorporates a larger section of the industry (Amaya et al., 2015).

Transferability refers to the quality of the research to represent other study fields with similar conditions to the area of study (Kane, 2010).

4.0 Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

According to the UNESCO report of 2014, the last 20 years have seen substantial efforts to open up education for all sexes. The above study has revealed that the system used by the government of Saudi Arabia resulted in an increased number of nursery going school children across all levels by inviting private partnership with private investors to cater for these populations. Investors and stakeholders in education have taken a keen interest in developing privately owned institutions. In essence, this is so because, with the recent attempt to put education both in the nursery schools and with the high levels of learning under privatization, a greater number of children are now more attracted to join privately owned institutions rather that the public institutions of learning. Reasonably, this is informed by the fact that the privatization of the core state institutions in all parts of the world has shown increased levels of management and improved service offering as compared to the state-owned and managed institutions of learning.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Primary findings

Close reference was to be taken into consideration as per the study's findings and report that was drawn from the recording and the interviews that were made in the nursery school. The study was subjected to the teacher who works on a full-time basis as a babysitter, a volunteer to the kindergarten section of the nursery school and the cleaning worker in the nursery school.

According to one respondent, there were various challenges facing investment in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia. According to the owner and the principal of Raha wa Marah, there were challenges of approval. Moreover, the consent was taken from the Ministry of Social Affairs. Undoubtedly, there are many conditions to have it such as having a manifest file and an educational university degree. Then an

approval from the Civil Defense is needed and the municipality, as well as a commercial record. Without a doubt, these challenges are seen as a block to investments in nursery schools.

The other challenge as per the respondent was the contradiction in the conditions of all the relevant ministries. For example, the municipality necessitates 400 m2 or above as the area of a kindergarten. However, the above requirements are rare conferring to the Ministry of Social Affairs, so obtaining a license from the municipality took an extended period. Additionally, having the approvals of the kindergarten's neighbors who were afraid of noise was not at all easy. The most challenging factor was the width and length of streets surrounding the nursery; the conditions were very accurate and mandatory.

4.1.2 Secondary findings

According to a study conducted by Hanushek (2006), over 50% of all Saudi Arabian citizens comprise school going children, minors and young adult below the age of 25 years. With the increasing number of children going to schools as shown in Figure 4.2, the study of the problems that private investors undergo in their attempt to better the quality of education in Saudi Arabia is therefore of a fundamental need.

According to the UNESCO report of 2016, enrolment levels in the country in 2013 formed 94.15% of the whole population of children that are enrolled in school programs. With this significant number of children being admitted to the schools, there are major challenges that are affecting the investment opportunities that are presented by the growing privatization of this core institution. A general overview of the interview participants, i.e. the teacher, the private proprietor owning the school and the cleaner, shows significant challenges are affecting private investments in the education sector.

This chapter endeavors to represent statistical facts about the challenges the nursery school in Saudi Arabia faces.

4.3 Analysis

4.3.1 Low budgetary allocation in the education sector

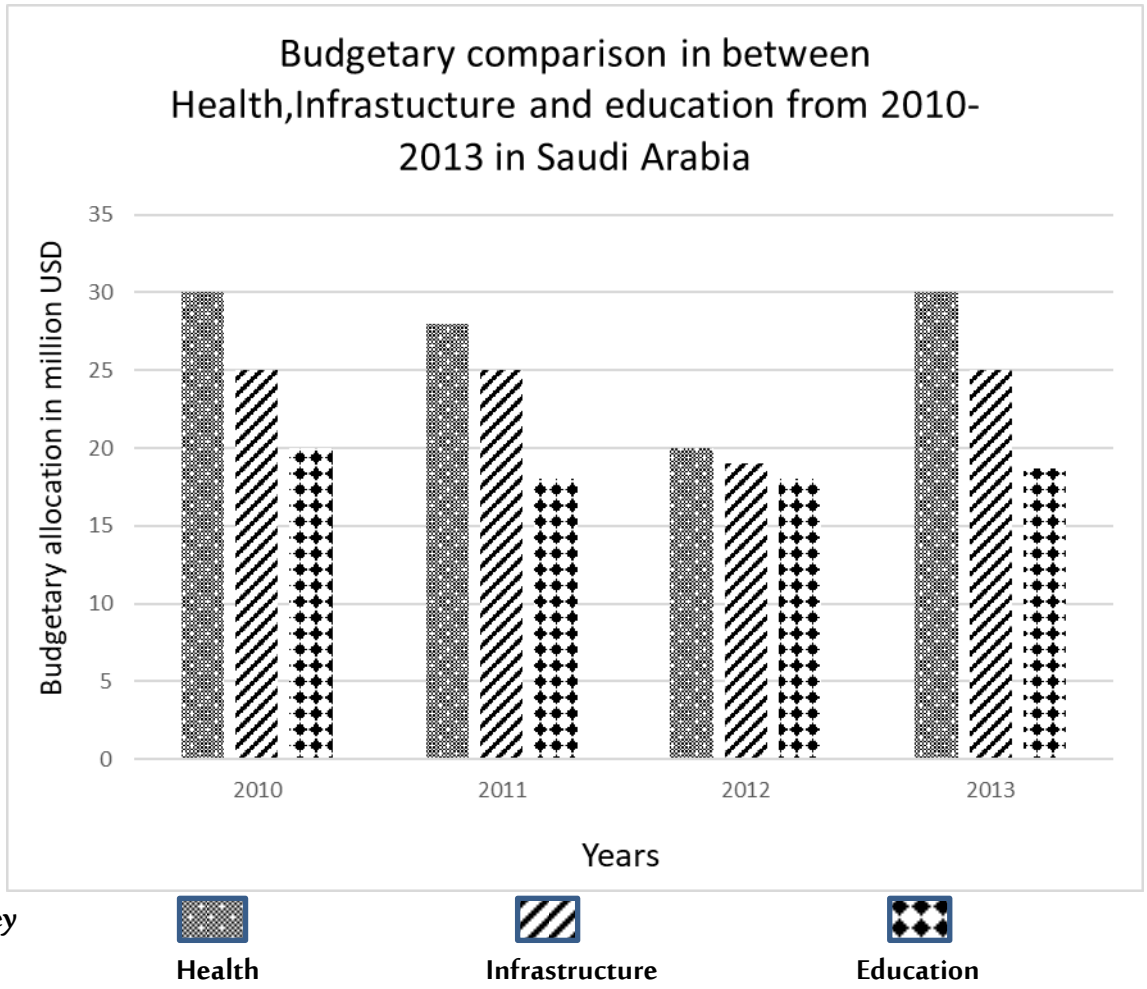

Figure (4.1) Comparison of budgetary allocation in three core areas in Saudi Arabia 2010–2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013)

Comparison Figure 4.1 above represents budgetary allocation in three key sectors (Education, Infrastructure, and Health) in Saudi Arabia 2010–2013. Whereas there is a lack of sufficient data representing a direct investment by private investors in education, the general trend in education investment by the state when compared with equally important sectors shows small investment in education. The figure shows more budget was allocated to health and infrastructure as compared to the education sector.

In 2013, Saudi Arabia's budgetary allocation to the education sector increased as compared to the rest of the fiscal year's budgetary allocation into education. The government investment allocation in all levels of the educational system in Saudi Arabia in this particular year, used as a benchmark for our analysis stood at a budget of US$18.7 billion. In essence, this represented a rise in allocation set aside to cater for the development of education in this particular country. However, the qualitative analysis

according to the amount of money set aside to be used in developing the state and affairs of the nursery school was insignificant when it is carefully compared to the spending that was put aside for other levels of education. The Ministry of Education report of 2013 speculates that approximately 3.7% of the entire budget went to the promotion of nursery schooling creating an annual budgetary deficit of over US$2.2 billion. Following the introduction of a five-year development plan, the government increased its funding that was allocated to the development of intermediate school education and university and college education. (Draxler, 2014).

The building of new schools' infrastructural framework has been hampered mainly.

In Saudi Arabia in 2006 there were 1159 kindergarten schools while there were 5316 intermediate schools (Ministry of Education, 2013). According to the report, this variance represented a deficit level of approximately 33% in the number of nursery schools that the government has invested in. As a way of creating awareness of the education resulting from financial negligence by the state and the private sector, the Saudi Arabian government came up with a policy proposal document in 2013 that aimed at advocating for increased attention to be taken to develop nursery schools.

Through the directive to the Ministry of Education, the government took an initiative to encourage the transition rate of children attending nursery school to the intermediate level. The policy document also points out that there was a need to create an enabling environment to attract private investment into primary education. As indicated by the system, there were deliberate efforts to ease the procedure and the time taken to acquire legal formalities to open up private nursery schools. The system mainly encourages the private sector partnerships because this would not necessarily make the citizen spend more on taxes.

According to Litchman (2006), a quantitative analysis of the policy formulated in this perspective was aiming at increasing awareness of the importance of kindergarten schooling in Saudi Arabia, which had for an extended period been neglected as important in developing the country. Therefore, there is a need to establish a policy that would suggest addressing these key concerns. If the five-year goals of the proposed policy on education are to be achieved, the number of schools that cater for nursery schooling in Saudi Arabia is assumed to increase. No education system can develop at the higher levels of learning in any country without taking an interest in the nursery schools. However, if the higher levels are neglected, then there will be insufficient teachers to deliver preschool education. That fact would strengthen the case for removing babysitting activities from the teachers. Lack of teachers is a significant threat to nursery schools, as parents will withdraw their children.

Additionally, if funding only focused on nursery schools and ignored preparation of teachers, the situation will be same due to lack of qualified teachers. The significance of increasing the need for preschool education considers the fact that, in the short run and the long run, if the number of children in the intermediate, secondary and university level is to increase, there must be a need to establish

mechanisms to develop the nursery schools first. The number of children at the nursery level determines the transition rate into intermediate levels because the education system in Saudi Arabia is structured such that the school follows a particular structure. Largely, direct government funding through the budget is sufficient to promote education at this level.

4.3.2 Dawdling evolution of the population of children in nursery schools

Unlike other Asian countries like Malaysia and South Korea where public a sponsored education system is characteristic, the education system in Saudi Arabia is mostly privately owned. In Malaysia for instance, over 80% of the population embraces the public sponsored education system. On the contrary, in Saudi Arabia, private school sponsored training at all levels of the school system encompasses over 50% of all people, but most cases in the nursery schools. According to the Ministry of Education annual report on education in 2013, the percentage increase in the number of nursery school going children in the country has grown steadily but at a slow rate in a span of four years from 2010 to 2013.

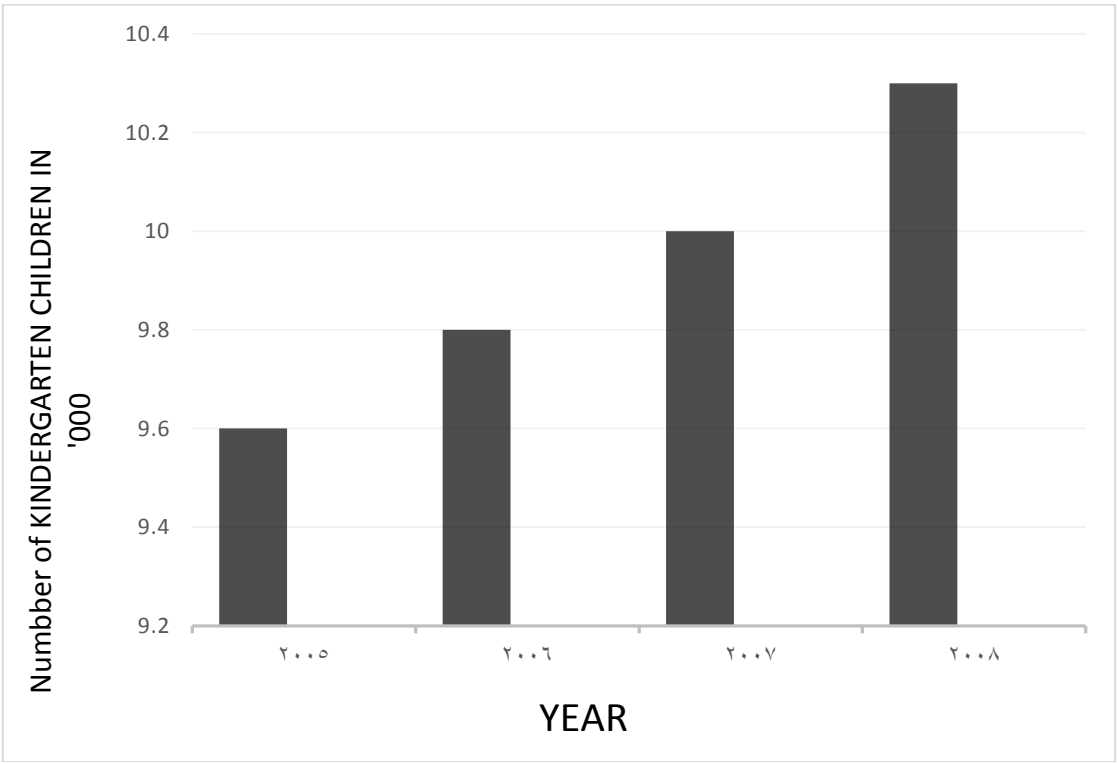

Figure (4.2) The evolution of nursery population 2005–2008

Referring to Figure 4.2 above, the number of kindergarten going children increased at a considerably slow rate in Saudi Arabia from 2005 to 2008.It is vital to comprehend that the data above represents the most recent data in the Saudi Arabian context of nursery education. The number of children being enrolled in nursery school in 2005 represented 96, 073 while after the four years that the research has concentrated on, the number of children in 2008 represented 103, 125. Reasonably, this served an average transition rate of 7052 over the span of four years covered.

The percentage rate of development of children attending and being enrolled in nursery school in the four years represents an annual increase rate of 1.8%. As compared to other developing countries of the world, the population growth rate in Saudi Arabia is so negligible such that the small increase in the population of children available for nursery education cannot attract private investors seeking profit to aid in the development of the school system within this structure. Due to the business perspective that investors can only venture in an activity if they are assured of profit returns, the school structure at the nursery level in Saudi Arabia has not attracted likely investors. To counter this challenge, the Ministry of Education through the development of the educational policy in 2013 aimed at filling the void left by the lack of willing private players in nursery school investment. For instance, the government has involved charitable investors who are not driven by profit motives. Although not prevalent in Saudi Arabia, charitable schools have been proved useful in other countries such as Canada, the UK, and Australia. In return, these charitable schools are granted a tax relief by the government but are required to fund delivery of the national curriculum in exchange.

The government intervention is to fill the gap that is created by the lack of private partnership by offering enough resources to both domestic and business partners. The strategy has proved to be fruitful in other countries. For instance, in some areas of the UK, planning permission for a superstore such as a Sainsbury's is granted subject to a donation towards building a new school or medical center in the locality. That has also been offered in Malaysia and the Philippines where organizations such as Unilever offer to fund school buildings or medical facilities. This has been described as a "turnkey" operation enabling a business to enter a country that would increase investment in the country. The economic policy makers discourage population growth which is not supported by an increase in the per capita income or gross domestic product (GDP) of a state. Nevertheless, the government of Saudi Arabia is called to provide initiatives that lead to the increase in the level of people's income who in turn have more children because they have enough disposable income. As pointed out by the UNESCO reports, the number of children per head is determined by available resources.

4.3.3 Social demographic limitations

Comparing the Arabian Gulf countries with other countries of the world reveals a situation where the Arabian Gulf world's disparity index in the per capita income ratio to be the largest in the entire world. Taking into consideration that Saudi Arabia is a country that is richly endowed with natural resources such as oil and other petroleum products, the rate of poverty among the majority of the population is enormous, and the population is small. In a general perspective, all the people in Saudi Arabia value education though the immediate action to take children to school which is informed by the availability of resources as pointed in the prior discussion on per capita income and population.

The UNESCO report of 2013 further points out that the gross domestic product in Saudi Arabia in 2012 ranged to as low as US$603. In the Arab states, for instance, poverty continues to prevail widely. Of the total percentage of people living in extreme poverty according to the index, about 8.7% of the whole population live in poverty in Saudi Arabia as compared to only 0.5% of the people who live in poverty in Qatar and Bahrain. The government of Saudi Arabia's direct initiative in the policy document of 2013 highlights education as a key pillar to attain the 2030 development goal. Therefore, in the light of the Saudi government's action, education is seen as an avenue to eradicate poverty.

In the 2009 ESCWA on the demographic composition profile of the Arab countries, the fertility rate was depicted on average reduced radically from 4.3% to 3.3% from 1995 to 2010.This reduction in the number of children that an average aged Arab woman gave birth to is strongly attributed to the widening poverty index gap between the wealthy and poor in these nations. This data presented above was seen to cut longitudinally across all the Arab states without any bias. A good visual representation of the fact above can be represented in Figure 4.3 below.

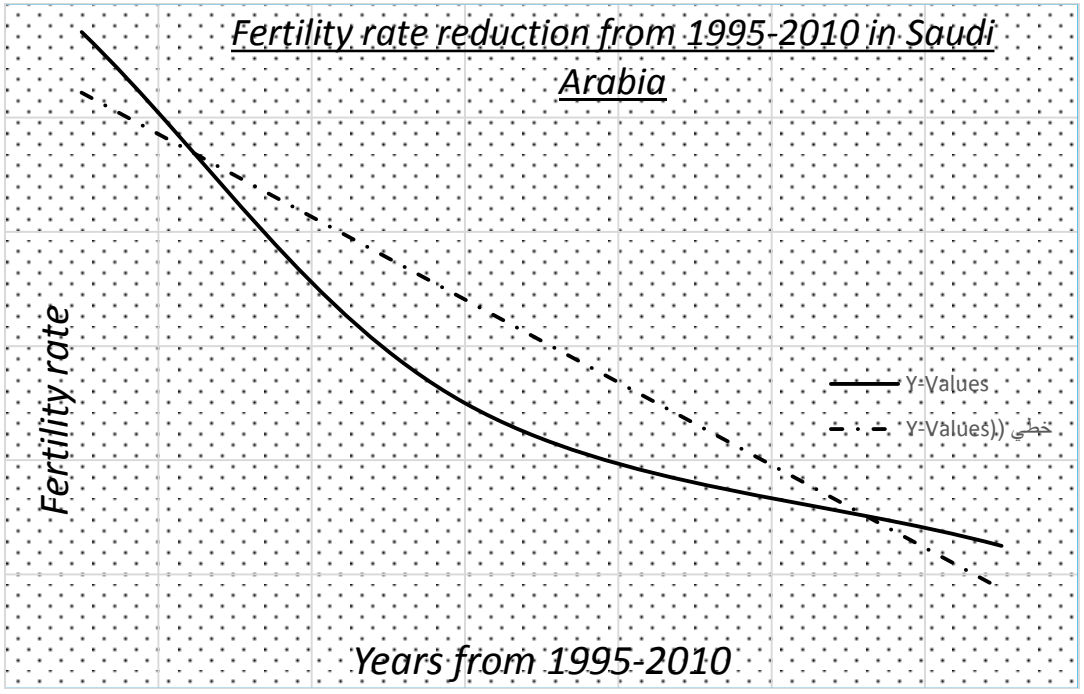

Figure (4.3) Fertility rate index in Saudi Arabia 1995–2010

Depicted in Figure 4.3 above is the reduction in the fertility rate in Saudi Arabia. As stated in the introductory remarks on this research paper, there are some vital components of a society which are not economic, but they have a negative implication on the rate of investment that is available in a given state. Taking a demographic factor in a population like, for instance, the fertility rate, the rate of investment in the nursery schools (Raha wa Marah) shows a greater correlation with the fertility rate of the majority of the population.

Low fertility rate, as epitomized in Figure 4.3 informs the investment decision that the government and the private investors consider before setting aside funds to build more schools, which

would support the education system in this structural state. As indicated by the statistical data available with the UNESCO report of 2010, and fertility rate for the average Saudi woman dropped significantly from 1995 to 2010 from 4.3% to 3.3%. This reduction in the fertility rate of the women in this country will inform the private sector developer as well as the state to minimize the amount of funds that is made available to enhance nursery education. Any local or international investor who shows some interest in investing in the nursery school system is frightened by the data trends available from the government ministry. In this regard, he or she considers the cost/benefit analysis of putting an investment in a project that would not yield returns. In most cases, the drive by private investors is linked to profits. Arab News (2015) indicated that the reduction in Saudi Arabian fertility could be associated with severe economic conditions. Also, the average ages of couples marrying were reported to be about forty years old suggesting marriage occurred at an advanced age. Undeniably, the above was due to individuals being committed to factors such as commitment to studies or work or harsh economic conditions.

4.3.4 Urbanization and decrease of extended family support of family values

In the Arab world for instance, in the next decade, the rate of urbanization is speculated to hit the 50% mark (UNESCO, 2013). With the increase in education levels among the youth and the working class who to large extent bear children from the age of fertility, this is having an adverse influence on the number of children which the majority of women consider adequate to have per given family structure. Migration to urban areas to seek employment opportunity is in this regard breaking up the family values that were found to be influential in encouraging the fertile components in the population to bear many children.

The average number of years that young people are spending in the learning system is also hampering the fertility rate of the entire population. As depicted by the state education ministry, the average number of years that the majority of school going children take to study up to college or university level stands for approximately two decades. Upon graduation from the institutions of higher learning, the young people first consider working as a priority before getting married and having children. Although this perspective is a global phenomenon, in developing country like Saudi Arabia, it has more prevalence than how it would be perceived in advanced developed countries like the USA, Germany, and the UK. Nevertheless, all of these are affected as much by the age at which a citizen starts contributing to the economy if delayed and when the number of years an individual is supported is increased. It is accepted because it has been in place for many years.

Table (4.1) Increase in the working-age (24–64) bracket 2007–2009

Year / % Working age	2007	2008	2009
24–35 years	35.5%	39.9%	42.6%

Year / % Working age	2007	2008	2009
35–45 years	33.9%	40.1%	46.6%
45–64years	30.1%	29.8%	35.7%

As represented in Table 4.1 above, there is a sharp proportion of the entire population of productive age that is now concentrated in the development of the country in the form of gaining job opportunities to counteract the hardships that are taking root in the Arab world. Reasonably, this is as a result of the widening gap between the wealthy and the have-nots.

Investing in nursery education is also affected by the increase in the number of people within the population that represent the elderly and the dependent persons. ESCWA reports of 2008 present a phenomenon whereby individuals nearing or exceeding 65 years is gradually on the rise from 2005 to 2010. The dependence rate in Saudi Arabia is therefore only indirectly affecting investment into nursery schools because the productive age group is also dedicating its resources to support the elderly, dependent age part of the population. As pointed out, these problems are mainly being felt by developing world countries. In essence, the above is a broad area of study that scholars may find useful to explore.

4.3.5 Increasing adult illiteracy levels in Saudi Arabia 1990–2007

Johnson and Christensen (2008) found out that on average, illiteracy levels would affect investment in whichever sector of the economy is considered. The illiterate population will have limited resources that they can make available for investment. Taking a close focus on the Saudi Arabian population demographics for the last five years, the same scenario is evident.

The adult illiteracy level that is presented by UNESCO reports on education in 2007 presented vital information that is core in this analysis. In the Arab world, the population of illiterate people increased steadily from 55 million in 1990 to 57 million in 2007. This has seen a direct initiative by the United Nations to increase literacy, in an attempt to foster development. The growth of the entire population's illiteracy level has therefore affected direct investment, especially in the education sector, for instance, in nursery school the funds available for development. This relevant statistical data is informative for the reduced enrollment of children in nursery schools. Two-thirds of the entire two million illiterate Arab adult population is comprised of women who mainly live in the rural areas.

In a bid to promote the level of literacy among the population of women in Saudi Arabia, UNESCO with the government of Saudi Arabia have been in partnership to enhance the level of education especially at nursery levels of the school system. Tracy (2012) also supports this approach in his quest to advance the excellence of tutoring in Saudi Arabia that promotes literacy education, in particular among women.

4.3.6 Strict legal formalities involved in the registration of kindergarten in Saudi Arabia

In discussing this finding, we employ the information that was recorded from the owner/principal of the nursery school (Raha wa Marah). In his discussion, he stated that investment in kindergarten has become increasingly difficult because of the strict guideline that is laid in place by the municipality and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

In his recording, he stated that currently the legal formalities that are involved in registration are complicated and take a long time to be approved by the municipal administration as well as by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The municipality provides that the size of the land required as a prerequisite for starting a kindergarten should be around 400 m2 or above. In the Ministry of Social Affairs, this provision is unavailable. The Ministry of Social Affairs is inconsistent in defining the area of land to establish nursery education and this is left to the municipal council's discretion. The disparities in these conditions showed discontinuities and differences that will limit the time taken to register a kindergarten facility. The compatibility factor between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the municipality made it difficult to record a nursery school. As pointed out earlier, to make it faster for registration, the owner of the nursery suggests that the sole responsibility of managing the school registry be guided by one authority, either the municipal council or the Ministry of Social Affairs

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Investment challenges

As pointed out by the nursery school proprietor, registering a new kindergarten institution took an unreasonably long time in the owner's opinion. It was increasingly difficult to acquire approval of the community surrounding the kindergarten because many of the neighbors who surround the schools fear that the noise originating from the school may be a nuisance to their lives, and it is essential to comprehend that without agreement of a neighbors the permission will not be issued.

From the critical perspective, some of the legal provisions limit the investment into nursery schooling in Saudi Arabia. Some of the employers will strictly require the companies to employ only citizens of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, a number of teachers who teach in the nursery school may even seek employment in other countries. As shown by the existing ministry report on the population of teachers seeking overseas opportunities, this may hamper the development of schools.

According to the two theories previously depicted in the literature review by Cascio (2013), there exist managerial problems that affect investment into the school system at this level of the education curriculum. He states that meeting the third level needs in the administration which include the standard of hygiene of the nursery schools does not contribute to the motivation of the teachers, but only limits and disappoints the teachers. Using this theory, the satisfaction of the teachers in this level of education is

therefore restricted by the strict guidelines that only discourage the motivation of the teachers. This factor has, therefore, limited investment opportunities in the country. In ProQuest (2007) Herzberg's two theory perception of hygiene, he contemplates hygiene to include the general practices that regulate teachers' careers at the nursery level. In essence, this includes remuneration, policy provisions in Saudi Arabia that discourage foreign teachers from working in Saudi Arabia nursery schools.

On the other hand, Dalcher and Brodie (2007) state that other needs enhance the productivity of the teachers. In essence, this may represent skills development and enhancement of the teachers of the nursery school. The provision for intrinsic and extrinsic needs of the teachers will go a long way to enhance skill development. In Kane (2010), analysis of the extrinsic needs revealed that they only increase the level of satisfaction of the babysitting professional in the working environment. The absence of this extrinsic need will bring about the dissatisfaction of the babysitters who work in these institutions. Additionally, there may be dissatisfaction of the teachers required to undertake both babysitting activities and teaching as they may feel that they are taking double roles. Some of the workers may prefer only one role that is either teaching or babysitting as they may feel the pay is low. Essentially, there will be a need to have extrinsic requirements in the above functions undertaken by nursery teachers.

4.4.2 Effectiveness of preschool education

Investments are hampered by the effectiveness of the preschool education in the nursery (Raha wa Marah). During the early discussion in the previous subsections, it was clearly revealed that the level of economic wellbeing of the society in the long-run depends on various factors. As shown by Barnett (2010), the rate of investment and the quality of education at the nursery school level revealed similarities. As discussed in the previous findings, there was a relationship paradigm that could be drawn to compare the level of investment into nursery education. In years that the government showed efforts to increase the quality of education and access to affordable quality education at this level.

Shared investment in education by the government and private partners/developers mainly determines the gross domestic product of a country. In a situation where the government invests heavily in the promotion of affordable education, the future of the country will, therefore, be assured. The findings evaluated in the previous section proves the arguments of those such as Cascio and Schanzenbach (2013) who have argued that nursery school forms the necessary developmental stages that give forth responsible and productive people to the nation.

Research conducted by Barnett (2011) supports the finding that education is core to the development of a stable economy within a country. In a study carried out in underdeveloped African nations, the results revealed that the chain of poverty was increasingly gaining roots in many African societies because children were not offered a decent nursery education in the beginning. The follow-up in the same strata of the population upon maturity revealed that those who received good primary school

did not exercise social vices like crime. The values that the individuals who went through nursery teaching in this research received were evident in their 40s.Therefore the importance of preschool education cannot be underestimated.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The development of investment in nursery schooling (Raha wa Marah) in Saudi Arabia is impeded by an amalgam of factors that make it difficult for this section of the education structure to realize its growth as seen in the intermediate and higher levels of learning. Although deliberate and informed steps have been taken to realize full implementation of the policy document of 2013 on government funding, there is still a need to address fundamental challenges that have been identified to reap the fruits of the policy document.

Analysis of challenges affecting investment in nursery schools in Saudi Arabia can be seen from economic, social and political perspectives. From the findings, economic challenges that affect the development of nursery schools in Saudi Arabia can be associated directly with the government's insufficient budgetary allocations in recent fiscal years. Although insufficient funding set aside to promote nursery schools in Saudi Arabia cannot be interpreted solely as government laxity or deliberate ignorance of the significance of nursery schools, there is a need to address the stated observations that hamper education at this level of the learning structure. It may be understood clearly from an economic angle that public spending in various sectors of the economy is informed by the importance the government places upon a certain sector of the economy, but in the case of Saudi Arabia budgetary disparities between similar equally important sectors of the economy, i.e. infrastructure, health and education, are enormous.

However, not all the deterrents that affect the development of nursery schools in Saudi Arabia can be entirely linked to the government's failure to address problems that are facing nursery schools. Cooper and Costa (2012) note that socially, the individual's role is also palpable in undermining its growth. Going as per the demographics that affect population reduction within the nursery schooling level, it is noticeably apparent that such factors like fertility rates and urbanization are also undermining its growth.

Politically, bureaucratic procedures that a private investor undergoes before acquiring proper documentation to start up a nursery school in Saudi Arabia are also disheartening. Though this observation does not discredit the importance of laid down procedures in Saudi Arabia to start up nursery schools, lack of decentralized functions resting with either the central government or the municipal council is also an impediment that daunts private investors.

5.1.1 Validity and reliability

From the findings spawned by the research on the challenges that affect the development of nursery schools in Saudi Arabia, the information gathered meets scientific standards. Verifiable data collected from UNESCO is reliable to form a foundation for making an informed decision on the way forward to uplift the state of investment facing elementary schools in Saudi Arabia.

5.2 Conclusion

Given the findings on challenges that nursery schools in Saudi Arabia face, it can be deduced that promotion of an elaborate education at whichever level of the education structure appeals to all stakeholders. The stakeholders include government and private sectors to work harmoniously in combining the importance of each player in promoting investment in education within the stated level (Amirshokoohi, 2010).

This fact is correspondingly true in any country from whichever continent of the world. Government and private partnership is essential in addressing problems that are collectively shared by education systems in their respective countries. In the Saudi Arabian case study above, we can conclude the following.

5.2.1 Adequate government and private financing is critical in promoting nursery investment in Saudi Arabia

As observed by McKenzie and Kahan (2008) in the Saudi Arabian case of resource deprivation specifically to the nursery school, it is patent to outline that investment must be informed by the laid down infrastructure in the education system at this level. Infrastructural development, in this case, encompasses building of new classrooms, employment of adequate and skilled teachers and promotion of teachers to feel honored in their working environment.

It is important to highlight that education provision in Saudi Arabia cannot be left only to these two key stakeholders but to the local and international organizations as well. In situations where these players have not adequately filled the gap that exists in the provision of quality education in the nursery school, people within the community can join and build community-based schools in an attempt to make them responsive to every person in promoting education.

Akkari (2010) argues that one of the core drivers that hinders improvements in the quality of education offered is the challenges preschool investment faces when taking monetary approaches such as allocation of resources when budgeting.

Privatization of education as seen in the research finding remains one of the best alternatives that the government can exploit to assist in rendering education within the elementary schools. From the onset, it is conceptualized that private sector involvement in any sector of the economy is done for profit motives only but in certain cases, though few, private sectors are motivated by the humanitarian desire to

provide an essential service to the public. It seems probable that it is done for profit motives but that further research into altruistic motives would need to be undertaken before that could be firmly established.

5.2.2 Nursery schooling is as fundamental as the rest of the education structure in Saudi Arabia

The brief analysis of the importance of nursery schooling for school going children within this section provides us with a deep understanding that nursery schools are as important as the intermediate and higher learning structures in the education curriculum. As exemplified by Weiland and Morrison (2013), elementary education prepares a child well for challenges in the school environment. As these scholars noted, basically the aim of nursery education is not centered on knowledge based on books but on the overall wellbeing of a child. As noted in the Perry Project, certain activities done in the nursery school heighten the IQ of the children. Therefore, it may be concluded that children who attended nursery schools were intelligent enough to cope with the challenges that were presented in the later years of their learning.

In understanding the importance of kindergarten, Savery (2015) demonstrated that nursery education shapes the attitude that children develop in the later years of their development. In his study among the children who had attended kindergarten education, he observed that children who go through kindergarten were more economically empowered as compared to the children who did not go through it. In his study, he also stated that basic literacy is provided in nursery education is essentially important in that it prepares children for education achievements in the following structures' years of the education system. However, the quality of literacy education taught at this developmental stage of the children is also important in addressing children's readiness to join intermediate schools.

5.2.3 The benefits of nursery education outweigh the costs

From an economic point of view, it may perhaps appear that provision of basic social amenities like universal education is obviously an expensive state venture that consumes a considerably high proportion of a country's budget. Apple (2013) examines the benefits of having a country with a generation of well-educated and trained citizens with the need to invest in education in whichever level. In certain rare cases, education provision in nursery school is not done at a cost but through community-based programs that offer education for free to all children. Although this fact nullifies the fact that universal education strains a country's resources, free community sponsored education in the kindergarten cannot cut across the entire country because it is extremely expensive for this stakeholder. It can only be done from a micro perspective.

5.2.4 Social demographics informs state and private investments

Having epitomized the cost-benefit analysis of investing in the nursery education in Saudi Arabia, Darling-Hammond (2012) exemplifies that it is important to note that there are other key factors that the government and private investor would consider. These are important while investing in kindergarten education in Saudi Arabia. In the government's context, provision of nursery education is not justified by a profit gaining mindset rather it is justified by the long-term goals as found in the 2013 policy document. It is the government's obligation to provide essential amenities like education to citizens. In the private sector's context, the majority of the private sector engage in investments in education for profit motives. However, that does not mean that all private investors are attracted by profit gains because there are some whose main idea is to provide universal education. In addressing social demographics, Algarfi (2010) illustrates that the government is at this moment called to check on population reduction as this would chase away likely investors.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Addressing budgetary disparities among equally important sectors

In the analysis of the findings, the main challenge that hampers investment in kindergarten education in Saudi Arabia is a lack of sufficient funds. Jacobson et al. (2015) suggested that increasing financial aids designated for nursery school is one way to address this challenge. Although this will mean that the government's resources will be strained to provide substantial fund deficits required to meet the elementary schools' financial needs, the benefits that will be realized in provision of quality and accessible education outweigh the cost and hence it is viable government spending. Therefore, there is a need to keep increasing financing from the government in order to realise the proposed short term goal enshrined in the 2013 policy document. If the government funding is inadequate to facilitate the financing designated for nursery schools, this offers an entrance point for the private sector partnership to aid in educational development.

5.3.2 Eliminating bureaucratic procedures involved to acquire kindergarten registry

As noted in the findings, Elyas and Picard (2010) suggests that one of the problems that is presented to private investors who venture in the provision of education at the nursery education level is a long and tedious procedure that arises when registering an elementary school in Saudi Arabia. Because this does not come at any cost, the government of Saudi ought to consider decentralizing education. The provision is likely to encourage more investors. However, decentralizing education will mean that the sensitive sector will be in the hands of private individuals who might be driven by a profit motive as opposed to providing quality education. Further research needs to be conducted on the impacts that decentralizing schools will have on the sector. Decentralizing education might lead to increased cost in

funding the sector. The additional cost can be sought from sponsors and other non-governmental organizations.

The timelines that it takes for such a change in decentralizing state operations would take a short period of approximately one month. A one-month timeline might be enough to decentralize some of the activities to the private sector since they are involved both directly and indirectly in running the education sector.

5.3.3 Provision of better remunerations to the caretakers in kindergartens

In the civil service as well as in the private sector, better remunerations motivate teachers who work in kindergartens. Even if different people may provide a service to the community education sector, even for free, the majority of teachers could be highly motivated if the kind of salary they get is commensurate to their efforts and equal to other civil servants of equal training.

Ensuring better remuneration for teachers would ensure that they are motivated and the salary allocated can meet their needs. Increasing the remuneration standards of the teachers will imply that the government will have to find yet further funding. However, in instances where the cost of providing education becomes more, the government will have to look for additional sources in order to fund the education sector. It can be achieved by transferring the additional cost to individuals and enterprises in the private sector (Lewis, 2012). Further research can be recommended on the sources of financing that the government can obtain to fund the education sector.

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