



Mapping Quality Gaps of Islamic and Non-Islamic Kindergarten: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT: Quality of Islamic and Non-Islamic kindergarten is a serious problem to solve immediately. But no research is done on mapping quality gaps of kindergarten in the world. This research mapped quality gaps of kindergarten in the whole world. Research method is systematic literature review. Results of the research reveals that quality gaps of kindergarten were mapped into seven categories. They are (1) learning opportunity, (2) accreditation instrument, (3) graduate competence, (4) learning process, (5) teacher and education personnel, (6) facilities, (7) parent involvement. There is no different categories among Islamic and non-Islamic kindergartens. These gaps spread around the world in America, Asia and Europe continents. No article presents the gaps in Africa and Australia continents and it bears little big questions.

KEYWORDS: quality gap, education quality, Islamic kindergarten, systematic literature review

A. INTRODUCTION

Quality of kindergarten around the world is still problematic. Insufficient opportunities of children to enroll at kindergarten¹ is the worst problem because children are right to get education but some of them do not get it. Low quality of kindergarten children life² and children behavior are problems concerning with children.³ Kindergarten teachers and staff

¹ Maria Petrova Trifonova and Lyuboslava Dimitrova Peneva, “Exploring the Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care Environment in Bulgarian Kindergartens,” *International Journal of Early Years Education* 31, no. 4 (2023): 941–955.

² Michael Glüer and Athanasios Gregoriadis, “Quality of Teacher–Child Relationship and Preschoolers’ pro-Social Behaviour in German Kindergartens,” *Education 3-13* 45, no. 5 (2017): 558–571.

³ Trifonova and Peneva, “Exploring the Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care Environment in Bulgarian Kindergartens.”

also lack of formal training on early child education (ECE)^{4, 5}. Conceptualizing education quality in Zambia is a comparative analysis across the local, national and global discourses.⁶ These are some problems of kindergarten quality in the world.

Many researches discuss problems of kindergarten quality in many countries, but lack of research on mapping problems of kindergarten quality in the world. Cerezci did research in United States of America⁷, Al Khatib investigated it in Jordan⁸, and Hoang researched it in Vietnam.⁹ There is no research on summarizing problems or gaps of kindergarten quality in the whole world.

Therefore, the research questions are (1) What kinds of quality gap of kindergarten in the world? (2) What kinds of quality gap of kindergarten in time? (3) What kinds of quality gap of kindergarten in terms of continents?

Quality of education has many definitions. Quality is seen as exception, as perfection, as fitness for purpose, as value for money and as transformative.¹⁰ Exception means education that is different from others. Perfection is top condition of education. Fitness for purposes means that education is the best when it fits for certain purposes. Education also makes money and transforms children to be educated.

⁴ Robert Pianta et al., "Features of Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Classrooms, and Teachers: Do They Predict Observed Classroom Quality and Child-Teacher Interactions?," *Applied Developmental Science* 9, no. 3 (2005): 144–159.

⁵ Loreta Simanavičienė and Dalia Survutaitė, "Activities of Kindergartens – Schools of Lithuania: External Assessment 2007 to 2011," *Pedagogika* 115, no. 3 (2014): 179–189.

⁶ Jeongmin Lee and Simmons Stephanie Zuilkowski, "Conceptualising Education Quality in Zambia: A Comparative Analysis across the Local, National and Global Discourses," *Comparative Education*, 53, no. 4 (2017).

⁷ Bilge Cerezci, "Mining the Gap: Analysis of Early Mathematics Instructional Quality in Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms," *Early Education and Development* 32, no. 5 (2021): 653–676.

⁸ Amal J. Al Khatib, "The Level of Involvement of Jordanian Parents of Kindergarten Children and Its Relationship to Parents' Gender and Educational Qualification," *Child Care in Practice* 28, no. 4 (2020): 708–720.

⁹ Nhi Hoang, Leena Holopainen, and Martti Siekkinen, "Quality of Teacher–Child Interactions and Its Relations to Children's Classroom Engagement and Disaffection in Vietnamese Kindergartens," *International Journal of Early Years Education* 28, no. 4 (2018): 387–402.

¹⁰ Lee Harvey and Diana Green, "Defining Quality," *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 18, no. 1 (1993): 9–34.

Another theory differentiates two approaches of education quality. These are humanist/progressive approach and economist approach.¹¹ Humanist/progressive approach emphasizes on process of learning while economist approach focuses on measurable quantitative output of education. Additionally, three approaches of education quality are also used in the field: human capital approach, human rights approach, and social justice approach.¹²

Education quality then is made sure by quality assurance. Quality assurance in education focuses on mechanism to assure education quality, on quality and on models of quality assurance.¹³ There are seven models of quality in education: (1) the goals and specifications model; (2) the resources input model; (3) the process model; (4) the satisfaction model; (5) the legitimacy model; (6) the absence of problems model; and (7) the organizational learning model. These models is a comprehensive framework for understanding and conceptualizing quality in education from different perspectives to achieving education quality.¹⁴ Quality assurance includes internal and external one; external quality assurance is in the form of accreditation.¹⁵

Kindergarten is a little bit different from other levels of education. Kindergarten is categorized as preschool education.¹⁶ Children in kindergarten have distinguished characteristics from those of basic and high school. Kindergarten teachers need special competence to care young

¹¹ Angeline M. Barrett et al., *The Concept of Quality in Education: A Review of the 'International' Literature on the Concept of Quality in Education*, EdQual (Bristol, 2006), https://www.edqual.org/publications/workingpaper/edqualwp3.pdf/at_download/file.pdf.

¹² Yusuf Sayed and Rashid Ahmed, "Education Quality in Post-apartheid South African Policy: Balancing Equity, Diversity, Rights and Participation," *Comparative Education* 47, no. 1 (2011): 103–118.

¹³ Khaled Alzafari and Jani Ursin, "Implementation of Quality Assurance Standards in European Higher Education: Does Context Matter?," *Quality in Higher Education* 25, no. 1 (2019).

¹⁴ Yin Cheong Cheng and Wai Ming Tam, "Multi-Models of Quality in Education," *Quality Assurance in Education* 5, no. 1 (1997): 22–31.

¹⁵ Huong Thi Pham, "Impacts of Higher Education Quality Accreditation: A Case Study in Vietnam," *Quality in Higher Education* 24, no. 2 (2018).

¹⁶ Glüer and Gregoriadis, "Quality of Teacher–Child Relationship and Preschoolers' pro-Social Behaviour in German Kindergartens."

students other than basic and high school teachers. Teaching methods for kindergarten children are full of happy games whereas for basic and high school students are full of projects.

Parents' hopes and involvement of kindergarten is special. Parents want their children grow and develop in home and also in kindergarten.¹⁷ Parents want to get involved in activities in kindergarten. Meanwhile parents of basic and high school students want them to be mature to live in real life. Parents also get involve in minimum line in activities of basic and high schools because of some reasons.

B. METHODS

To answer the research questions, systematic literature review was used. It has ten steps namely (1) finding critical questions, (2) asking critical questions, (3) determining criteria of literature to research, (4) determining criteria of quality literature to research, (5) collecting main data, (6) collecting supporting data, (7) making categories of data, (8) identifying meaningful data, (9) identifying patterns or trends, and (10) publishing results of research.¹⁸

The steps are applied. Three critical research questions have been proposed. Criteria of literature to research are research articles in Taylor and Francis publisher from 1956 up to 2023. Articles were searched with keywords "quality kindergarten" and there are 51 articles. But, only 41 articles are analyzed because they are able to answer the research questions, that is the criteria of quality literature to research. Main data was collected by reading the selected articles based on the research questions and supporting data was collected by reading other articles. Meaningful data and patterns or trends were identified based on the research questions. The last step is to publish the result of the research.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

¹⁷ Kristin Danielsen Wolf, "Stakeholders' Opinions of Quality in Norwegian Kindergartens," *Early Years* 41, no. 1 (2018): 336–352.

¹⁸ Patricia A. Alexander, "Methodological Guidance Paper: The Art and Science of Quality Systematic Reviews," *Review of Educational Research* 99, no. 1 (2020): 6– 23.

The collected data was classified into seven categories. They are (1) learning opportunity, (2) accreditation instrument, (3) graduate competence, (4) learning process, (5) teacher and education personnel, (6) facilities, (7) parent involvement. Gaps of learning opportunity covers insufficient learning opportunity, children from low-income family or from homes below poverty line. There is no different categories among Islamic and non-Islamic kindergartens.

Gaps of accreditation instrument deal with debate on definitions of quality of early care and learning program, low quality of rating scale on educational system and environment and on mathematical instruction, and transition from external to internal quality assurance orientation.

Problems of graduate competence include low quality life of children, children problematic behavior, conflict, low reading achievement, low pre-academic skill and motivation, and low quality of inclusion kindergarten. Children are not happy in kindergarten. They do bad things and conflicts. They are not able to read and have low pre-academic skill and motivation. Few kindergartens have low quality of inclusion life among children with disabilities.

Gaps of learning process include poor instructional approach; poor quality of math instruction; low quality of learning; bad transition of children sleep to kindergarten; bad personal care routines, poor quality of activities, interaction and program in rural and urban, low academic achievement in mathematics; poor teacher-child interaction; big class size; low quality of indoor air; and low school safety.

Gaps of teacher and education personnel cover low principals' qualifications in special education (disabilities); low competence of prekindergarten teachers; teachers lacked of formal training (degree) of ECE; high burnout amongst teachers and staff with permanent and open-ended work contracts, widows, the eldest, the more experienced and educated and those suffering from health problems; low levels of quality of classroom organization and instructional support; low professional qualification.

Problems of facilities is only narrow space and bad furnishing. Meanwhile, gaps of parent involvement cover barriers' parents to involvement in kindergarten (no time, stressful parental responsibilities); low math skills of mothers; and working status of mother.

There is no article discussing quality gaps of learning content, management, financing and educational assessment. There is also no article resulted of research in Africa and Australia continents.

Kinds of quality gap of kindergarten in time range from 1956 up to 2023 in the whole world. In 1956, a problem of kindergarten is big class size that is not effective to have learning activities. Problems move to mothers' role to teach their children in home, poverty family of children, poor formal training of teachers, low quality of classroom in 2000s and 2010s and debate on definition of quality in 2020s.

There are many kinds of quality gap of kindergarten in terms of continents. In America, the gaps are big class size, poor formal training of teachers, low quality of classroom, low quality of teaching methods, and debate on definition of quality. In Europe, problems are insufficient learning opportunities, mothers' role to teach their children in home, and low quality of classroom. Asia has problems of teacher-child interaction, space and furnishing, learning program, and rating scale.

Some results of the research tend to be viewed in the humanist/progressive approach and some others in the economist approach.¹⁹ Learning process, teacher and education personnel, facilities, and parent involvement are close to the humanist/progressive approach that emphasizes on learning process. Learning process play the most important role in kindergarten²⁰ because children's life is full of process to

¹⁹ Barrett et al., *The Concept of Quality in Education: A Review of the International Literature on the Concept of Quality in Education*.

²⁰ Aaron D. Isabelle, Lindsey Russo, and Amalia Velazquez-Rojas, "Using the Engineering Design Process (EDP) to Guide Block Play in the Kindergarten Classroom: Exploring Effects on Learning Outcomes," *International Journal of Play* 10, no. 1 (2021): 43–62.

grow and develop.²¹ Child periode is to grow physically and develop psychologically.

Teacher and education personnels are important persons for children in kindergarten. Male teachers are viewed as someone male children want to have relationship with and also as role model.²² Male teachers also become partners in sports and physical activities.

Facilities are not as important as learning activities and teachers, but support learning activities. Facilities facilitate learning activities to stimulate children.²³ Without facilities, children in kindergarten have no opportunity to play games, grow and develop.

Parents get involved in children's learning activities in kindergarten and also in home. In kindergarten, parents support teachers while in home, parents help their children learn.²⁴

Learning opportunity, accreditation instrument, and graduate competence are close to the economist approach. Learning opportunities related especially to low income of children's family. Accreditation instruments deal with governmental and private agents of accrediting. Graduate competence of children is connected with children readiness to continue studying in basic schools.²⁵

D. CONCLUSIONS

Quality gaps of kindergarten were mapped into seven categories. They are (1) learning opportunity, (2) accreditation instrument, (3) graduate competence, (4) learning process, (5) teacher and education

²¹ Samuel S. Urlacher, "Child Growth and Development: New Insights from Evolutionary Energetics," *Annals of Human Biology* 48, no. 5 (2021): 371–373.

²² Kylie Harris and Sally Barnes, "Male Teacher, Female Teacher: Exploring Children's Perspectives of Teachers' Roles in Kindergartens," *Early Child Development and Care* 179, no. 2 (2009): 167–181.

²³ Christian Winterbottom and Shayne B. Piasta, "Does Accreditation Matter? School Readiness Rates for Accredited Versus Nonaccredited Child Care Facilities in Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program," *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 29, no. 1 (2015): 60–72.

²⁴ Jin Kim and Hae Min Yu, "Home-Based Parent Involvement, Parental Warmth, and Kindergarten Outcomes Among Children of Immigrant Parents," *Early Education and Development* (2022).

²⁵ Winterbottom and Piasta, "Does Accreditation Matter? School Readiness Rates for Accredited Versus Nonaccredited Child Care Facilities in Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program."

personnel, (6) facilities, (7) parent involvement. There is no distinguished categories among Islamic and non-Islamic kindergartens. These gaps spread around the world in America, Asia and Europe continents. No article presents the gaps in Africa and Australia continents and it bears little big questions. These gaps are serious to solve immediately because preschool education is foundation of next education.

The research is limited to search articles in one publisher. It needs next systematic literature review of much more articles in some other publishers. It also needs empirical research around the worlds to portrait all quality gaps of kindergarten.

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