

Obstacles of Developing Critical Thinking Skills for Early-Stage Children from the Female Teachers' Point of View in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current research was to identify the obstacles of the development of critical thinking skills for the early stage child from the point of view of female teachers in Saudi Arabia. The sample of the research consisted of (120) teachers of early childhood, randomly selected in the cities of Dammam and Riyadh. The descriptive/qualitative method was used, and the questionnaire was used as a tool for collecting search data after verifying its suitability for application and consisted of (44) individuals in its final form for four basic domains. The research reached several results: The research sample approved the third domain: the obstacles of kindergarten management by a percentage of (75.40%), the sample of the research approved the second domain: the obstacles of the classroom environment and the curriculum, by a percentage of (73.60%), as well as the research sample approved the fourth domain: the obstacles of the kindergarten teacher by a percentage of (70.60%), and also approved the first domain: disabilities related to the characteristics and mental needs of the child by a percentage of (66.40%). The results also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) in the domains of the questionnaire about the obstacles of developing critical thinking skills for an early stage child from the point of view of the this stage teachers due to the change of the city (Dammam and Riyadh). The research recommended the need to put the child in a new educational experience in accordance with the characteristics of his/her development and needs, enrich the educational staff with innovative means and activities that address the higher thinking skills, appreciate the outstanding professional competencies, and increase the rewards and incentives for the teachers of the stage.

Keywords:

Obstacles - Critical Thinking - Early Childhood Teacher.

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Introduction:

The early-stages teacher is the main factor of the educational process, and a leader for her children, to improve their thinking skills and various skills. What the teacher has to offer within the activity time influences the child behavior, and personality. the child acquires freedom of thought, and does less mistakes and his words become clear. On the other hand, (Hamid et al., 2019) confirms that teaching thinking skills may be the

most important activity that a teacher can do for: developing children's level of thinking, improving their achievement, and self-confidence while carrying out school and life activities. Children's thinking at this stage is characterized by abstraction, many questions, and they need to be given the opportunity to make decisions (Sami Mohammed Melhim, 2014).

Children's critical thinking skills can be developed through an attractive survey environment,

allowing children to link concepts and ideas while creating a new scheme to increase opportunities for participation and challenge in authentic ways (Klefstad, 2015). The study of (Polat, 2015) suggests that critical thinking is one of the most interesting forms of thinking for researchers, and educators who have studies in this field, and that is why educational institutions seek to include thinking skills in general, and critical thinking skills in particular inside kindergarten curricula.

The study of (Athreya, & Mouza, 2017) also suggests that critical thinking skills do not develop automatically, though it needs training and practice beside many cognitive skills that promote critical thinking. Other study (Lin, 2018) emphasizes that if we want to develop critical thinking and raise awareness of thinking, it must be presented early, as a reference to the importance of this critical thinking in early childhood, especially when the child is naturally curious, and ask many questions of *what kind*, and *why?*. For instance, the current study aimed at identifying the obstacles of critical thinking of the child at early-stages to contribute to the knowledge of those obstacles, and overcome them, leading to the development of children critical thinking at a young age.

Theoretical framework:

Critical thinking and its importance to early-stage children:

A. The concept of critical thinking:

Many scholars and educators assert that critical thinking is a vague concept that needs to be explained. (Lin, 2018).

(Bodmea, 2019) defines critical thinking as a kind of systematic thinking that is intended to distinguish between the good and the bad, the strong and the weak, the good and the ugly, the right and the wrong. Also, (Al-Khazala, 2015) and (Yaghoubi, 2017) indicate that critical thinking includes three basic components: the cognitive component, the behavioral component, and the interaction between these components through attitudes.

From the above, critical thinking is: the result of an interaction between a mental and an emotional component, which means that it does not grow automatically, but needs situations in which the individual uses a set of mental processes such as analysis, interpretation and emotional processes such as approval or rejection based on logical evidence and to avoid common mistakes of judgment. In the current research, the concept of critical thinking has been defined as: the child ability to interpret, analyze, conclude and evaluate while dealing with the problems that arise in the educational situation, through a variety of daily activities, to reach an opinion or judgment characterized by mental flexibility, and the logical interpretation of life phenomena.

B. The importance of critical thinking for an early-stage child:

All literature and recent scientific studies confirm that education and training in critical thinking skills are primary objectives of education, especially in early childhood, where it provides the child with skills that enable him or her to analyze information, make sure that it is true, make right decisions, have self-confidence and flexibility, accept criticism, and logically interpret life phenomena (Abdul Rauf et al., 2017). The (Galinsky, & Gardner, 2017) study points to the importance of encouraging critical thinking for children and developing their life skills through daily program activities. In addition, the study of (Imam and Abdul Rauf, 2010) emphasizes that critical thinking helps children acquire an authentic methodology of investigating facts and conducting substantive trials. This adds to the importance of developing critical thinking skills for an early-stage child.

Second: Critical thinking skills for an early-stage child:

There are many critical thinking skills that must be developed in children, including:

Skills to learn and acquire problem solving, knowledge of assumptions, interpretation, evaluation of discussions, Inference, conclusion,

reasoning, analysis, evaluation, observation, ordering, finding out the causes, similarity and difference. (Dewi, et al, 2020), (Abu Ajamia, 2019), (Zulmaulida, 2018), (Al-Mutairi and Bahathiq, 2016), (Al-Ferian, Rawan Youssef, 2013), (Abdul Al, 2012), (Al-Zaghloul, 2012), (Al-Hadabi et al., 2010), and (Al-Salamat, 2010).

Third: Methods of developing critical thinking skills:

(Abdul Rauf, et al., 2017) refers to two methods of teaching critical thinking: teaching it as an independent subject while focusing on skill, and teaching critical thinking through the curriculum. A third method combines: both methods where it is taught in a separate subject through the objectives of the study content. (Salman, 2007), indicates the importance of classroom characteristics that promote learning and teaching critical thinking skills such as: creating opportunities to deal with realistic situations, self-learning, stimulating collaboration and interaction between learners and teachers, encouraging discovery, investigation and love of knowledge. The environment has a role in encouraging critical thinking where children are influenced by the environment in which they grow up, as it can help children and motivates them to think or it could be frustrating, as the classroom plays an active role in children thinking in the early stage, whether by motivating, provoking or hindering it (Jamal, 2008). The study of (Lechelt, & Marquardt, 2020) also emphasizes the skill of meditative dialogue and fun interaction to develop critical thinking skills in children and found that the management and organization of the classroom environment with its potential enhances the process of thinking and its various skills through artificial intelligence.

Fourth: Teacher role in developing critical thinking skills:

The study of (Khazala, 2015) refers to a set of teacher roles that facilitate the learning process for critical thinking such as: planning and organizing

the learning process and providing the right environment that encourages and supports learning. (Al-Anzi, Dalal et al., 2015) also shows that the most important obstacles facing the teacher when developing critical thinking is the lack of a neat plan to develop critical thinking components. (Nasrallah, 2010) confirms that the teacher must follow up educational developments and innovations in the field of methodology, encourage active learning, observation, comparison, classification and problem solving, encourage children to express their views freely, ask open questions, allow children to participate in decision-making, and diversify educational strategies.

Statement of the problem:

The results of several previous studies, including (Lynch, 2019), confirm that critical thinking skills in kindergarten have not been fully developed; There are deficiencies limiting the development of critical thinking skills in early-stages children. Through observation during the supervision of practical education students in the kindergarten in Dammam city, it is found that there is low level of children thinking in situations that require solving problems, and not giving the children enough time to solve the problem they face, and expressing opinion towards their colleagues. This is what made the researchers advance the current study, to identify the obstacles in developing children critical thinking skills in early childhood from the point of view of the teachers of this stage in Dammam and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The problem of the current research was identified in the following main question: What are the obstacles to developing critical thinking skills for an early stage child from the point of view of female teachers in Saudi Arabia?

The following questions are derived from the main question:

1. What are the obstacles of developing critical thinking about the mental characteristics and needs of the child from the point of view of early childhood teachers?

2. What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking about the classroom environment and the curriculum from the point of view of early childhood teachers?

3- What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking in kindergarten management from the point of view of early childhood teachers?

4- What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking for the kindergarten teacher from the point of view of early childhood teachers?

1- Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) in the domains of the questionnaire about the obstacles of the development of critical thinking skills for an early stage child from the point of view of the teachers at this stage depending on the change of the city (Dammam and Riyadh)?

Research purpose:

1- Identifying the obstacles of the development of critical thinking about the mental characteristics and needs of the child from the point of view of the teachers of early childhood.

2- Identifying the obstacles of the development of critical thinking regarding the classroom environment and the curriculum from the point of view of the teachers of early childhood.

3- Identifying the obstacles of the development of critical thinking in the management of kindergarten from the point of view of early childhood teachers.

4- Identifying the obstacles of the development of critical thinking for the kindergarten teacher from the point of view of the teachers of childhood

5- Detecting differences in the members' responses of the sample about the obstacles of developing the thinking skills of the child of early childhood due to the change of the city (Dammam and Riyadh).

Research importance:

The importance of the current research stems from

several considerations, the most important of which are:

A. The importance of the topic, literature and recent studies confirm that education and training in critical thinking skills are the primary objectives of education at all different levels of education, especially kindergarten, where it provides the child with skills that enable him/her to analyze information, make sure that s/he is honest, make sound decisions, have self-confidence, mental flexibility, accept the opinions of others, and have logical interpretation of life phenomena (Abdul Rauf et al., 2017, p. 30).

B. The importance of the stage, educational theories emphasize the importance of education at the kindergarten stage and that it is a critical and extremely influential stage in shaping the child's personality and developing the child's abilities and skills, in which s/he needs support and assistance to achieve comprehensive and integrated growth, in order to achieve success in the future. (Abdul Khaleq Fouad Mohamed Abdul Khaleq et al., 2017, p. 25) and building generations capable of interacting and dealing with the technology and challenges.

C. To help kindergarten teachers to be aware of the obstacles of developing critical thinking skills in children at this stage.

Method and procedures:

Methodology: Descriptive survey methodology based on the collection, organization and statistical analysis of information and data, because of its appropriateness to the core idea of the current study and the achievement of its objectives.

Study Population: Early childhood teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Study sample: Consisted of (120) early childhood teachers in Dammam and Riyadh, selected in a random appointment.

Study instrument: The current study instrument is formed according to the following steps:

- a. Identifying the main domains of the questionnaire. Four basic domains of the resolution have been identified.
- b. Drafting the questionnaire domains as each paragraph is according to its domain.
- c. Preparing the questionnaire in its initial form and presenting it to a group of jury members to ensure its validity and reliability.
- d. The instrument was conducted in its final form and consisted of (44) domains in four basic domains.

The validity and reliability of the study instrument:

A- Validity of the instrument:

To know the validity of the study instrument, it was presented to a number of specialized faculty jury members and has been modified in the light of their recommendations in its final form.

The internal validity of the instrument:

After confirming the apparent validity of the study instrument, it was applied in the field. After that, Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to know the internal validity of the questionnaire through calculating correlation coefficient between the score of each domain in the questionnaire regarding the total questionnaire score. Results are shown in table (1)

Table (1)

Correlation Matrix between the Domains of the Questionnaire and the Total

Domains	Correlation coefficient.
Obstacles in the child's mental characteristics and needs	**0.67
Obstacles of the classroom environment and curriculum	**0.86
Obstacles of kindergarten management	**0.77
Obstacles of Kindergarten teacher's disabilities	**0.88

From the previous table (1) the domains of the

questionnaire are associated with each other at a level of significance (0.01). This confirms that the questionnaire has a high degree of validity.

Instrument reliability: Cronbach's alpha equation has been used to confirm the internal consistency of the domains of the instrument. Thus, reliability coefficient was extracted on the full instrument level and the domains level. The following table shows the reliability coefficient and domains of the study instrument

Table (2)

Reliability Coefficients for Domains and for the Instrument as a Whole

Domains	Alpha-Cronbach
Obstacles in the child's mental characteristics and needs	0.90
Obstacles of the classroom environment and curriculum	0.91
Obstacles of kindergarten management	0.93
Obstacles of kindergarten teacher	0.92
Questionnaire as a whole	0.92

Results in the previous table (2) show that the reliability coefficient for the questionnaire domain and the total is high. Based on this finding, the level of reliability of the instrument's content is appropriate.

Statistical methods used in data analysis for current study:

- (1) Frequencies and percentages.
- (2) Mean.
- (3) Variance
- (4) Standard Deviation.
- (5) Pearson Correlation Coefficient.
- (6) Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient: it has been used to check the tool reliability.

Results:

First: regarding to the first question: What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking about the characteristics and mental needs of the child from the point of view of the teachers of early childhood?

To answer this question, means, standard deviation, percentages, and Chi-square were used, as shown in the following table:

Table (3): Frequencies, Means, Percentages and Chi-square
For the First Domain (Obstacles Related to the Child Mental Characteristics and Needs)

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Agreement Level	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
1	Lack of a child's ability to conclude in different situations	22	18.33	22	18.33	55	45.83	20	16.67	1	0.83	3.37	1.00	67.33	Neutral	63.08	0.01	3
2	Use previous experience to learn new things	38	31.67	40	33.33	34	28.33	8	6.67	0	0.00	3.90	0.93	78.00	Agree	22.13	0.01	1
3	Lack of understanding of causal relationships between things	13	10.83	28	23.33	56	46.67	19	15.83	4	3.33	3.23	0.96	64.50	Neutral	66.08	0.01	6
4	Child's lack of ability to make comparisons between things	14	11.67	25	20.83	54	45.00	20	16.67	7	5.83	3.16	1.03	63.17	Neutral	54.42	0.01	9
5	Difficulty understanding the elements of the problem	20	16.67	33	27.50	57	47.50	8	6.67	2	1.67	3.51	0.91	70.17	Agree	80.25	0.01	2
6	Poor ability to judge a particular situation	11	9.17	28	23.33	55	45.83	23	19.17	3	2.50	3.18	0.93	63.50	Neutral	66.17	0.01	8
7	It's hard to remember the missing parts of the picture in front of the child.	11	9.17	27	22.50	47	39.17	33	27.50	2	1.67	3.10	0.96	62.00	Neutral	53.00	0.01	10
8	Poor ability to solve problems related to understanding temporal relationships	12	10.00	35	29.17	57	47.50	16	13.33	0	0.00	3.36	0.84	67.17	Neutral	42.47	0.01	4
9	Difficulty in finding new knowledge based on logical introductions	13	10.83	32	26.67	47	39.17	28	23.33	0	0.00	3.25	0.94	65.00	Neutral	19.53	0.01	5
10	Disapproval of views contrary to the child opinion	17	14.17	22	18.33	50	41.67	28	23.33	3	2.50	3.18	1.03	63.67	Neutral	49.42	0.01	7

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Agreement Level	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
11	lack of self-esteem.	12	10.00	31	25.83	51	42.50	24	20.00	2	1.67	3.23	0.94	64.50	Neutral	58.58	0.01	6
	Total	183	13.86	323	24.47	563	42.65	227	17.20	24	1.82	3.32	0.95	66.27	Neutral	52.28	0.01	

* The value of the tabulated Chi-square at the level of (0.01) is (13.277), and at the level of (0.05) is (9.488) with (4) degrees of freedom.

It is clear from the table (3) that the members of the sample agree on the first domains which is the obstacles on the characteristics and mental needs of the child, by a percentage (66.40%), and the most major obstacles to the child critical thinking in the early stage in this axis are: the use of previous experience to learn new things, difficulty to understand the elements of the problem, the lack of the child ability to conclude in different situations, the weakness of the ability to solve problems related to the understanding of temporal relationships, the lack of acceptance of views

contrary to the child opinion, the weakness of the ability to judge a particular situation, the difficulty of understanding the missing parts in the picture in front of the child.

Second: regarding to the second question: What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking about the classroom environment and the curriculum from the point of view of early childhood teachers?

To answer this question, means, standard deviation, percentages, and Chi-square were used, as shown in the following table:

Table (4): Frequencies, Means, Percentages and Chi-square for the Second Domain (Obstacles of the Classroom Environment and Curriculum)

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Domain direction	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
1	Lack of elements of the classroom environment supporting the growth of the child in terms of (space - furniture - beauty of the exterior and interior shape)	36	30.00	33	27.50	31	25.83	20	16.67	0	0.00	3.71	1.07	74.17	Agree	4.87	Not Sig	5
2	Deficiencies in the physical environment within the row in terms of (ventilation - lighting - murals)	25	20.83	55	45.83	22	18.33	16	13.33	2	1.67	3.71	1.00	74.17	Agree	63.08	0.01	5

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Domain direction	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
3	The increasing number of children in the activity room	76	63.33	16	13.33	18	15.00	8	6.67	2	1.67	4.30	1.06	86.00	Strongly Agree	147.67	0.01	1
4	Failure to organize educational staff in a fun way for the child	32	26.67	33	27.50	29	24.17	22	18.33	4	3.33	3.56	1.17	71.17	Agree	23.92	0.01	8
5	Routinely restricting children's sitting during the daily program	41	34.17	36	30.00	26	21.67	15	12.50	2	1.67	3.83	1.09	76.50	Agree	41.75	0.01	2
6	Neglecting the child's role in selecting the content of the activity during the daily program	33	27.50	32	26.67	35	29.17	14	11.67	6	5.00	3.60	1.16	72.00	Agree	28.75	0.01	7
7	Focusing on cognitive goals that measure understanding and remembering	41	34.17	30	25.00	32	26.67	17	14.17	0	0.00	3.79	1.07	75.83	Agree	9.80	0.01	4
8	Using traditional teaching strategies to deliver activities to children	32	26.67	30	25.00	29	24.17	25	20.83	4	3.33	3.51	1.19	70.17	Agree	21.92	0.01	9
9	Failure to provide classroom activities that stimulate the child's thinking	27	22.50	36	30.00	25	20.83	26	21.67	6	5.00	3.43	1.20	68.67	Agree	20.08	0.01	10
10	Lack of educational staff for innovative methods	43	35.83	28	23.33	33	27.50	16	13.33	0	0.00	3.82	1.07	76.33	Agree	12.60	0.01	3
11	Content provided to the child is not consistent with the reality of current events in the community	23	19.17	24	20.00	42	35.00	18	15.00	13	10.83	3.22	1.23	64.33	Neutral	20.08	0.01	11

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Domain direction	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
12	Using traditional evaluation methods	36	30.00	31	25.83	33	27.50	16	13.33	4	3.33	3.66	1.14	73.17	Agree	30.75	0.01	6
	Total	445	30.90	384	26.67	355	24.65	213	14.79	43	2.99	3.68	1.12	73.54	Agree	35.44	0.01	

* The value of the tabulated Chi-square at the level of (0.01) = 13.277, and at the level of (0.05) = 9.488 with degrees of freedom (4)

It is clear from the table (4) that the members of the sample agree on the second domain: the obstacles related to the classroom environment and the curriculum, with a percentage of (73.60%). The findings show that the most important phrases in the second domain that the study sample agreed on are (the increasing number of children in the activity room, routinely restricting children's sitting during the daily program, focusing on cognitive goals that measure understanding and remembering, lack of educational staff for new methods, use of traditional teaching strategies in providing activities to children, lack of elements of the

classroom environment supporting the child's development, lack of stimulating classroom activities to promote child thinking, neglecting the role of the child in choosing the content of the activity during the application of the daily program).

Third: regarding to the third question: What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking regarding the management of kindergarten from the point of view of early childhood teachers?

To answer this question, means, standard deviation, percentages, and Chi-square were used, as shown in the following table:

Table (5): Frequencies, Means, Percentages and Chi-square for the Third Domain (Obstacles of the kindergarten Management)

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Agreement Level	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
1	Lack of recognition of outstanding professional competencies	39	32.50	44	36.67	23	19.17	14	11.67	0	0.00	3.90	0.99	78.00	Agree	19.40	0.01	2
2	Using rigid bureaucracy	41	34.17	38	31.67	29	24.17	12	10.00	0	0.00	3.90	0.99	78.00	Agree	17.00	0.01	2
3	Distance from human feelings in dealing with teachers	42	35.00	22	18.33	33	27.50	20	16.67	3	2.50	3.67	1.19	73.33	Agree	36.08	0.01	5

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Agreement Level	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
4	opposing everything that is new in the organization of work	24	20.00	34	28.33	37	30.83	23	19.17	2	1.67	3.46	1.07	69.17	Agree	31.42	0.01	8
5	Use the authoritarian method in teaching	41	34.17	36	30.00	24	20.00	13	10.83	6	5.00	3.78	1.18	75.50	Agree	36.58	0.01	4
6	Failure to support activities that contribute to the development of higher thinking skills	28	23.33	42	35.00	29	24.17	19	15.83	2	1.67	3.63	1.06	72.50	Agree	36.42	0.01	6
7	Unequal opportunities in attending training courses	46	38.33	32	26.67	19	15.83	16	13.33	7	5.83	3.78	1.25	75.67	Agree	38.58	0.01	3
8	Reluctance to make decisions in favor of work	23	19.17	34	28.33	48	40.00	15	12.50	0	0.00	3.54	0.94	70.83	Agree	20.47	0.01	7
9	Lack of collective participation in decision-making	38	31.67	35	29.17	34	28.33	9	7.50	4	3.33	3.78	1.08	75.67	Agree	43.42	0.01	3
10	Lack of rewards and incentives	54	45.00	33	27.50	27	22.50	3	2.50	3	2.50	4.10	1.00	82.00	Agree	78.00	0.01	1
11	Failure to develop an alternative time plan to address emergency problems	41	34.17	39	32.50	29	24.17	9	7.50	2	1.67	3.90	1.02	78.00	Agree	52.00	0.01	2
	Total	417	31.59	389	29.47	332	25.15	153	11.59	29	2.20	3.77	1.07	75.33	Agree	37.22	0.01	

* The value of the tabulated Chi-square at the level of (0.01) = 13.277, and at the level of (0.05) = 9.488 with degrees of freedom (4)

It is clear from the table (5) that the members of the study sample agree on the third domain: (obstacles to the kindergarten management, with a percentage of (75.40%). The findings show that the most important phrases in the third domain that the study sample agreed on are (the lack of

rewards and incentives, the use of rigid bureaucracy, the lack of an alternative time plan to deal with emergency problems, and the opposition to all that is new in the organization of work).

Fourth: regarding to the fourth question: What are the obstacles of the development of critical thinking for the kindergarten teacher from the point of view of the teachers of early childhood?

To answer this question, means, standard deviation, percentages, and Chi-square were used, as shown in the following table:

Table (6): Frequencies, Means, Percentages and Chi-square for the Fourth Domain (Early Childhood Teacher Disabilities)

No.	Domains	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD	Percentage (%)	Agreement Level	Chi-square	Sig.	Rank
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%							
1	Many teacher responsibilities inside the activity room	79	65.83	34	28.33	5	4.17	2	1.67	0	0.00	4.58	0.66	91.67	Strongly Agree	127.53	0.01	1
2	Lack of professional skills for kindergarten teacher	27	22.50	21	17.50	38	31.67	24	20.00	10	8.33	3.26	1.25	65.17	Neutral	17.08	0.01	7
3	Poor job satisfaction for kindergarten teacher	42	35.00	30	25.00	28	23.33	16	13.33	4	3.33	3.75	1.17	75.00	Agree	35.00	0.01	3
4	The use of the stereotypical method of thinking	28	23.33	25	20.83	36	30.00	25	20.83	6	5.00	3.37	1.19	67.33	Neutral	20.25	0.01	5
5	Use of authoritarian method in managing the system within the activity room	38	31.67	18	15.00	34	28.33	21	17.50	9	7.50	3.46	1.30	69.17	Agree	23.58	0.01	4
6	The lack of the teacher awareness with critical thinking skills	25	20.83	25	20.83	31	25.83	31	25.83	8	6.67	3.23	1.23	64.67	Neutral	14.83	0.01	8
7	Lack of material resources inside the kindergarten	65	54.17	31	25.83	13	10.83	10	8.33	1	0.83	4.24	1.00	84.83	Strongly Agree	107.33	0.01	2
8	Disability in managing time effectively	18	15.00	41	34.17	35	29.17	14	11.67	12	10.00	3.33	1.17	66.50	Neutral	28.75	0.01	6
9	The teacher's low capacity to achieve the goals	16	13.33	30	25.00	34	28.33	26	21.67	14	11.67	3.07	1.21	61.33	Neutral	12.67	0.01	9
10	The teacher's poor ability to use different learning sources	21	17.50	21	17.50	31	25.83	30	25.00	17	14.17	2.99	1.31	59.83	Neutral	6.33	Not sig.	10
	Total	359	29.92	276	23.00	285	23.75	199	16.58	81	6.75	3.53	1.15	70.60	Agree	39.34	0.01	

* The value of the tabulated Chi-square at the level of (0.01) = 13.277, and at the level of (0.05) = 9.488 with degrees of freedom (4)

It is clear from the table (6) that the members of the research sample agree on the fourth domain: the obstacles of the kindergarten teacher, with a percentage of (70.60%). The findings show that the most important phrases in the fourth domain that the study sample agreed on are relating to the role of the teacher. These phrases are (the many responsibilities of the teacher within the activity room, the lack of material resources within the kindergarten, the poor job satisfaction of the kindergarten teacher, Use of authoritarian method in managing the system within the activity room, the use of the stereotypical method of thinking, the lack of professional skills of the kindergarten

teacher, The lack of the teacher awareness of critical thinking skills.

Fifth: regarding to the fifth question: Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) in the domains of the questionnaire about the obstacles of the development of critical thinking skills for an early stage child from the point of view of the teachers at this stage depending on the change of the city (Dammam and Riyadh)?

To answer this question, means, standard deviation, percentages, and Chi-square were used, as shown in the following table :(7)

Table (7): Results of analyzing the (T) test value to indicate the differences in the domains of the questionnaire about the obstacles of the development of critical thinking skills for early-stage children from the teacher's point of view in Dammam and Riyadh, depending on the city

No.	Domains	City	N	Mean	SD	T Value	Sig.
1	Obstacles in the child's mental characteristics and needs	Dammam	64	36.52	7.61	0.10	Not Sig.
		Riyadh	56	36.38	7.42		
2	Obstacles of the classroom environment and curriculum	Dammam	64	44.13	9.56	0.00	Not Sig.
		Riyadh	56	44.13	9.46		
3	Obstacles of kindergarten management	Dammam	64	41.09	9.32	0.45	Not Sig.
		Riyadh	56	41.82	8.46		
4	Obstacles of kindergarten teacher	Dammam	64	35.30	8.82	0.03	Not Sig.
		Riyadh	56	35.25	8.77		
	Total	Dammam	64	157.03	28.43	0.11	Not Sig.
		Riyadh	56	157.57	27.22		

It is clear from table (7) that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) in the domains of the questionnaire about the obstacles of the development of critical thinking skills for early-

stage children from the teacher's point of view in Dammam and Riyadh, depending on the city.

Discussion of results:

1. The first domain (the obstacles of the characteristics and mental needs of the child)

received an agreement rate of (66.40%). This result is consistent with the theoretical framework and previous studies that emphasize the importance of critical thinking for a child in early childhood regarding to the characteristics and mental needs of the child, such as (Athreya, & Mouza, 2017), which confirms that critical thinking skills do not develop automatically, on contrary it is a skilled work that needs training and practice; for the child to become a thinker and a critic from a young age.

2. The second domain (the obstacles of the classroom environment and curriculum) received an agreement rate of (73.60%). This result is consistent with the study of (Salman, 2007), which emphasizes a set of characteristics and classroom environment that promote the teaching of critical thinking skills, encourages discovery, inquiry and love of knowledge, and promotes the learners' responsibility for what they learn. In addition, (Lechelt, Rogers, & Marquardt, 2020) emphasizes that the management and organization of the classroom with its potential enhances the thinking process and skills of the child from a young age.

3. The third domain (the obstacles of the management of kindergarten) received an agreement rate of (75.40%). This result is consistent with the study of (Al-Anzi, Dalal et al., 2015) and the study of (Khazala, 2015) on the importance of having plans, organization and guidance of the educational process to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills for the kindergarten child. The results of this domain received the highest percentage of opinions of the members of the sample on the obstacles that limit the development of the thinking skills of the early-stage child. For instance, work must be done to improve and develop the management of the kindergarten to reduce the obstacles regarding critical thinking.

4. The fourth domain (the obstacles of the kindergarten teacher) received an agreement rate of (70.60%). This result is consistent with the

study of (Lynch, 2019) as critical thinking skills in kindergartens have not been fully developed; the study explained this with a lack of teachers ability to integrate critical thinking skills into the curriculum, and that they are not prepared to do so effectively. (Al-Anzi, Dalal et al., 2015) also showed that the most important obstacles facing the teacher when developing critical thinking is the lack of elaborate plans for the development of critical thinking components. This emphasizes the importance of the role of the early stage teacher in overcoming the obstacles of the child critical thinking.

5. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) in the domains of the questionnaire about the obstacles of the development of critical thinking skills for early-stage children from the teacher's point of view in Dammam and Riyadh, depending on the city. The most obstacles that limit the development of critical thinking in children at this stage are: the surrounding environment and the possibilities available and the lack of opportunity for the child to be creative and innovative through the application of classroom and non-class activities, and ways to ask questions to the teacher and the dialogue provided to children, the inability of some teachers to update their knowledge, and the large number of children in the class, the lack of acceptance of some teachers for opinions, stereotypes, and lack of diversity in the level of activities provided, the lack of teachers' critical thinking skills.

Recommendations:

- Exposing the child to a new educational experience in accordance with the characteristics of his or her development and needs.
- Determining the capacity of children within the activity room.
- Enriching educational staff with innovative methods and activities that address higher thinking skills.

- Using new evaluation methods in line with the technology.
- Assessing outstanding professional competencies and increasing rewards and incentives for early-stage teachers.
- Reducing the number of tasks performed by the teacher to provide opportunities to attend training courses.

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