Kindergarteners' Social and Emotional Skills in Qatar: Caregivers' Qualification or Caregivers' Parenting Beliefs That Make a Difference?

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify if kindergarten caregivers' qualifications or their parental beliefs make a difference in promoting 4 - 6 years old children's social and emotional skills. The main focus of this research is the lack of caregivers' qualifications and their beliefs about childrearing that affect children's social and emotional skills. The study used a descriptive correlational design, the study purposefully recruited the sample that consisted of 59 kindergarten children (55.9% female and 44.1% male) aged between 4 and 6 years and their teachers to participate in the study, in two age groups (KG1 and KG2). Tow questionnaires were designed (Parenting Style Perception Tool PSPT) to assess caregivers' parental beliefs by evaluating their authoritative and authoritarian beliefs and (Children's Social and Emotional Competencies Scale SECS) to assess children's social and emotional skills. The results revealed no significant relationship between caregivers' qualifications and parenting beliefs. The results also indicated that caregivers held an authoritarian parenting belief. However, it showed a significant relationship between the caregiver's authoritarian beliefs and children's social subscales of self-awareness, social awareness, interpersonal, and social skills, but no significant relationship between the caregiver's authoritarian beliefs and the subscale of self-control. Recommendations and implications are presented.

Keywords

1. Introduction

Qatar is a small country located on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula

in the Middle East. Based on World Meter elaboration of the United Nations (2023), The current population of Qatar is 3,026,074. The K-12 education system in Qatar starts with preschool followed by 6 years primary education, and then preparatory and secondary education of 3 years each (Qatar Education Info, 2023). According to UNICEF (2013), Qatar made significant advances in improving children's health and survival and their access to education. Thus, early childhood teachers and caregivers vary in terms of their formal education, experiences, specialized early childhood, training, and caregivers' parenting beliefs. Yet, regardless of the level of education, training, parenting beliefs, and belief systems, teachers' influence on children's growth, development, and well-being is significant. In short, teachers' qualifications and parenting beliefs can influence children's development across all domains.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector in Qatar is like any other Arab countries in the region. The sector is 100% female caregivers and teachers hence only females enrol in (ECCE) programs in Higher Education. The culture of gender segregation in Qatar is the norm in all sectors. According to Issan, (2013) "Despite the general higher education improvements, the culture of certain gender segregation is still evident in Qatar" (Issan, 2013: p. 7). As reported by UNICEF (2013) Qatar made significant advances in improving children's health and survival and also in (ECCE) sector such as children's access to education by achieving the Millennium Development Goals and is on track to meet others (UNICEF, 2013). Qatar also has committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and has started to translate this commitment into national legislation and frameworks (UNICEF, 2018). Despite the improvement that Qatar made, based on the UNICEF (2013) report, investment in education cannot stop at granting youngsters access to state-of-the-art education facilities, frameworks, or systems. However, "all children must have teachers who are trained, motivated and enjoy teaching, who can identify and support weak learners, and who are backed by well-managed education systems." (UNESCO, 2015) systems that also support caregivers' self-development especially in social and emotional domain that most teachers in the Middle East schools lack. Social and emotional skills that caregivers should possess to support young learners' social development. Therefore, the Ministry of Higher Education in Qatar should implement strategies that prove to be beneficial not only for children also for caregivers, such as attracting the best teachers, providing training, and the right incentive to keep them.

As mentioned before caregivers in early childhood centres in Qatar are 100% female, which supports the notion that women's roles linking motherhood and teaching form the bedrock of early childhood education ECE in the past (Pivnick, 2019). Therefore, ECE embodies the dynamic duality of nurture and education. This duality provides a distinction for the field of early childhood education and, at the same time, currently, necessitates a fierce defence as a worthy professional undertaking (Bredekamp, 2017; Bredekamp et al., 1992). For this reason, the

researchers used the term "caregiver' because it gives a more comprehensive description than "teacher' at the early childhood stage. As Lamb (1998) proposes in his research, researchers believe that the "quality of childcare settings is less important to children's development and outcomes than the quality of care". Meanwhile, the term "teacher' is associated with what the child should learn at any stage.

New research indicates that infant development during the first years of life depends on caregivers' environmental experiences and attitudes. Therefore, the patterns of child behaviour and emotional response in the early years are difficult to make up for in other ways. Research concerning caregivers' parenting beliefs shows their implicit components, including interaction, behaviour, authoritative parental beliefs, and family influence (Pivnick, 2019). Caregivers' behaviours and beliefs about children's development are, according to Helm and Katz (2016), beyond the regulated features of quality. Similarly, Manning et al. (2019) conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that teachers' and caregivers' qualifications and early childhood educational care environments are significantly correlated.

Research on child development and social skills such as Maleki et al. (2019) who conducted a comparative analysis of social skills found that they were higher among girls. As per the perspectives of teachers, children had moderate social skills. However, several factors were found to be associated with the children's social skills such as the education of teachers as well as their experiences.

About social competence (SC), Tuerk et al. (2021) found that internal, external, and cognitive factors were important predictors of social competence (SC) in preschool children. The study recommended that understanding early social development could help identify intervention targets and enhance SC in children at risk of maladaptive social functioning. Moreover, despite the overwhelming research evidence that caregivers can significantly contribute to enhancing children's social competencies, their impact on kindergarten children in Qatar is limited, especially concerning their parental beliefs. This requires a study of caregivers' parental beliefs toward children's social development and competencies. However, no study has analysed the influence of Caregivers' qualifications, parenting beliefs, and children's social skills. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between caregivers' qualifications, their parenting beliefs and Qatari kindergarten children's social and emotional development at one Qatari Laboratory Early Childhood Centre.

1.1. Caregivers' Qualifications

The findings of previous research into the qualifications of caregivers show that caregivers' professional training and teaching experiences vary significantly. Therefore, caregivers lack adequate qualifications and training (Saracho & Spodek, 2007), Such problems are evident in Middle Eastern countries such as Qatar. Qatar may face many challenges in the future to attain a positive change in caregiver education especially in caregivers' knowledge about child development and the

expectation of children in this early stage. According to UNESCO (2015), there are no caregiver or teacher licensing or certification programs which insure their knowledge about child development.

Caregivers are hired based on having a bachelor's degree and have insufficient training before and little training after being assigned as a teacher. As a result, Qatar has revised the qualification requirements for newly appointed teachers to a minimum of a BA or BSc degree to ensure qualified caregivers to children in the sector of ECCE. This revision of caregivers' qualification ignores the core issue of quality of caregivers which is understanding children's development and characteristics of children as well as the child development milestone of this age. Confirming to a study undertaken by Al Thani and Romanowski (2013) investigates the implementation of the Supreme Education Council's (SEC) Early Years Education Good Practice Guide (GPG) in Qatari kindergartens. The guide is a policy document that provides the early childhood sector in Qatar with evidence-based, needs-based, culturally responsive, and appropriate early childhood teaching methods and materials. The study concludes that teachers find it challenging to implement the strategies because they are unfamiliar with many of the concepts introduced, indicating that teachers in Qatari schools are not qualified. The guide gives no flexibility to the teachers. As Al Thani and Romanowski (2013) concluded that there is a lack of qualified teachers in Qatari kindergarten. There is a poor implementation of the GPG and a reliance on the SEC to provide them with what needs to be taught and how it should be taught.

The study points to other challenges in implementing the GPG in Qatari kindergartens, such as the teacher-to-child ratio, class sizes, high curriculum standards, and heavy workloads. It concludes that more than 30% of teachers are not qualified to be so and lack an understanding of the curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice. Moreover, the study concluded that "many teachers seem to lack this understanding and at times the knowledge, skills, and background to utilize both standards and the GPG in an effective integrative manner" (Al Thani & Romanowski, 2013: p. 18).

1.2. Caregivers' Parenting Beliefs

Early childhood caregivers vary regarding their formal education, experience, early childhood specialization, and parental beliefs. However, regardless of their education and training, caregivers' values and belief systems may influence children's growth, development, and well-being (Abry et al., 2015; Erdiller, 2013; Goble et al., 2015) A caregiver's educational level, early childhood education specialization, and parenting beliefs are reflected in their interaction with children and teaching strategy. They can reveal their parental beliefs (authoritative or authoritarian) about child development, especially social development. This is because caregivers' parenting beliefs constitute a fundamental component of their value belief systems and are significant to their cognition about how to help children develop (Zena & Heeralal, 2021).

Caregivers' parental beliefs and practices present a challenge to early childhood education in Qatar's schools because their beliefs are affected by Arabic culture, and the views of Arabic culture on child-rearing are authoritarian. Arab individuals accept this view and put it into practice at home and school; it is considered the norm (Dwairy et al., 2006). The collective authoritarian belief system that is accepted by the Arabic society from an early age as in early childhood tell college is evident and confirmed with Walton et al. (2020) cross-sectional study between Qatar as an example of Middle Eastern culture and the USA as an example of Western culture to examine the relationship between parenting beliefs, personality traits, culture, and perfectionism. It describes "Middle Eastern culture as patriarchal society, with deference given to the male role in general, and to fathers specifically however, men are not expected to participate in the direct caretaking of children, reflecting a traditional role" (Walton et al., 2020: p. 12). The study concludes that Middle Eastern parents are not only authoritarian but neglectful, according to the students' perceptions of their parents' rearing styles.

Little is known about the impact Arabic culture has on caregivers' parental beliefs (authoritarian or authoritative) on child development. However, most people acknowledge that an authoritative parenting style is prevalent in Western cultures (Pivnick, 2019; Niez & Alico, 2015). It is unclear whether the same beliefs are prevalent in Middle Eastern societies such as Qatar. Considering the potential impact on the development of these beliefs, limited research has, to date, explored caregivers' beliefs in Qatar. Consequently, there is an interest in caregivers' and teachers' qualifications and parental beliefs and their association with young children's social and emotional development.

1.3. Children's Social and Emotional Competencies

Child development is traditionally viewed as a core component of designing activities and evaluating the curriculum in early childhood education. Lately, this view has changed to include other developmental domains, primarily social and emotional development. Research indicates that promoting young children's social and emotional skills is not an add-on, but an integral part of early childhood education associated with learning outcomes (Fuller et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2000). As claimed by Stern (2000) "It is recognized that children who receive an extensive academic education may be ill-equipped for future challenges both as individuals and as members of society—it is just not enough to feed only minds" (Stern, 2000: p. 1). Therefore, social and emotional development is as crucial to school readiness and later academic success as cognitive and intellectual development (Fuller et al., 2004). Social and emotional skills can be learned and enhanced at any age. Infants, children, and adults alike can develop their social and emotional understanding; however, the earlier a person being the SEL process, the greater the advantages" (Stern, 2000: p. 3). Caregivers' understanding and their social intelligent should reflect what children know and need (Lynch & Simpson, 2010; Stern, 2000). A study by Zena & Heeralal (2021) examined parenting beliefs and children's social growth and found that children in private preschools have

greater social-emotional abilities like controlling emotions, playing well, communicating well, and managing emotions correctly.

2. Significance of the Study and Research Questions

A key aspect of outcome two of Qatar's National Development Strategy (QNDS) 2024 - 2030 for preschool education is to "develop children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical capacities in early years to improve readiness to move from home to compulsory education". Outcome four is to "Improve the quality and performance of early childhood education staff" (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2018: p. 182). This study is in line with the Qatar National Development Strategies 2018 - 2030, which addressed several essential core training issues, one of which "School principals, teachers and staff of private nurseries and kindergartens, often non-professionals, need vocational training opportunities to acquire the needed knowledge and pedagogical skills" (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2018: p. 182). This study corresponds with Qatar's vision for 2030, for formal and non-formal educational programs that equip Qatari children and youth with 21st-century skills and motivation to contribute to society. The current study is significant since it introduces new variables not addressed by previous research studies in the Arab region generally or Qatar regarding early childhood caregivers and teachers to develop and improve their skills to enhance children's social competencies. Therefore, the study addresses some of the gaps in this area, examining the relationship between caregivers' qualifications, their parental beliefs, and Qatari kindergarten children's social and emotional development at one laboratory Early Childhood Centre. The study of kindergarten caregivers' beliefs about enhancing young children's social competencies is used as an introduction to evaluate them and change them if necessary. The study presented here aims to investigate the relationship between caregivers' qualifications, parenting beliefs and young children's social and emotional skills. More specifically, the study's research questions are as follows:

1) What are the characteristics of kindergarten caregivers according to their qualifications?

2) What are the dominant parenting beliefs of caregivers at the laboratory Early Childhood Centre?

3) Is there a significant relationship between kindergarten caregivers' qualifications and their parenting beliefs?

4) Is there a significant relationship between caregivers' parenting beliefs and children's social skills?

5) Is there a significant relationship between caregivers' qualifications and children's social skills?

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Population and Sampling

The population of the study is all kindergarten children (73) who attended the

Early childhood Laboratory Centre at one Qatari University. The study purposefully recruited the sample that consisted of 59 kindergarten children (55.9% female and 44.1% male) aged between 4 and 6 years and their teachers to participate in the study, in two age groups (KG1 and KG2), with 15 students in each of the three KG1 classrooms and 14 students in each of the two KG2 classrooms. Kindergarten caregivers completed the questionnaire, while one caregiver (in the KG2 group and 14 pupils) withdrew from the study for unknown reasons. 76.3% of the participants were in the KG1 group and 23.7% in KG2. Of these, 42.4% were Qatari, 42.4% were from other Arabic countries, and 15.2% were of foreign origin, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage for categorical demographic variables for children.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Child's age group		
KG1	45	76.3%
KG2	14	23.7%
Child's Nationality		
Qatari	25	42.4%
Arabic countries	25	42.4%
Foreign	9	15.2%
Child's Gender		
Male	26	44.1%
Female	33	55.9%

3.2. Study Instruments

The study used two instruments the Parenting Style Perception Tool PSPT (Betawi, 2013b), and Children's Social and Emotional Competencies Scale SECS questionnaires (Betawi, 2013a) to investigate the relationship between caregivers' qualifications, parental beliefs, and children's social skills.

The first instrument is Parenting Style Perception Tool (PSPT) consists of 30 items scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree"). The questionnaire consists of two domains, caregivers' authoritative parental style (items 6, 11, 13, 15, 20, 23, 27 and 29) and authoritarian parental style (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28 and 30). The Parenting Style Perception Tool PSPT questionnaire is designed to assess caregivers' parental beliefs by evaluating their authoritative parental beliefs on the positive side of the scale (strongly agree and agree) and their authoritarian parental beliefs on the negative side of the scale (strongly disagree and disagree). According to Betawi (2013b), the reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.80 through Cronbach's alpha.

The Second Instrument is Children's Social and Emotional Competencies Scale SECS, the questionnaire is designed to assess children's social and emotional

development. The questionnaire consists of 42 items based on five core dimensions of young children's social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-control and management, relationship skills, and social skills. The 42 items are scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 "not important at all" to 5 "extremely important"). According to Betawi (2013a), the reliability coefficients are 0.71 for self-awareness, 0.56 for social awareness, 0.79 for self-control, 0.81 for relationship skills, 0.80 for social skills, and 0.91 for the total scale.

3.3. Data Collection and Study Procedures

After obtaining Ethical Institutional Review Board approval from the intended institution and the Early Childhood Centre approval, the lead researcher conducted an introductory session for all Early Childhood Centre caregivers via a Microsoft Teams meeting. The researcher debriefed caregivers, explaining the purpose of the study, its benefits, risks, and how the participants' privacy would be protected. A clear description of the procedures was given to the caregivers. The researcher sent consent forms and the PSPT questionnaire via email to the caregivers at the Early Childhood Centre. After one week, the researcher received the PSPT questionnaire from caregivers who agreed to participate in the study. The researcher sent the second questionnaire, the SECS, to caregivers via email to be filled in for each child. After three weeks, the caregivers returned the filled questionnaire, with one caregiver withdrawing from the study for unknown reasons.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences, version 23.0 (SPSS). Descriptive statistics are computed using Frequency tables, percentages, mean and ±SD. The Pearson correlation is also used to identify the relationship between kindergarten caregivers' qualifications and their parental beliefs. Also to identify the relationship between caregivers' qualifications, parental beliefs and children's social and emotional competences.

4. Results and Discussion

To answer the first research, question "What are the characteristics of kindergarten caregivers according to their qualifications?" that addresses caregivers' demographics of the kindergarten caregivers according to their qualifications, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide information about their credentials. Frequency and percentage were computed as shown in Table 2. The descriptive statistics show that 50% of the participant caregivers were between 36 and 40 years old, and 50% were more than 41. All caregivers (100%) were married, 50% had a bachelor's degree, and 50% had a graduate degree. 50% of the participant caregivers had between 3 and 6 years of experience, 25% had more than ten years of experience, and 25% had Less than three years of experience. The specializations of the participants were 50% English language, 25% early childhood education, and 25% elementary education.

Table 2. Frequency, and percentage for categorical demographic variables for caregivers.

Variable	Frequency	N (%)
Age		
36 - 40	2	50%
Above 41	2	50%
Marital status		
Married	4	100%
Educational Level		
Bachelors	2	50%
Graduate degree	2	50%
Years of Experience		
Less than 3	1	25%
3 - 6	2	50%
Above 10	1	25%
Specialization		
Early Childhood Ed	1	25%
Elementary Ed	1	25%
English Lang	2	50%

To answer the second research question "What are the dominant parenting beliefs of Early Childhood Centre caregivers? that addresses caregivers' parenting beliefs (authoritarian vs authoritative), descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide information about their parental beliefs. Means, standard deviations, and ranks were computed, as shown in Table 3. Means, standard deviations, and ranks of the Parenting Style Perception Tool (PSPT) for authoritarian parenting style showed that caregivers' parental beliefs are authoritarian. The overall mean for authoritarian parenting style is 4.71, with a standard deviation of 0.49, which indicates a very high rank. Caregivers answered this instrument domain with "strongly disagree". The highest means score (5.00) and standard deviation (0.00) are for items 2 and 4, respectively: "teachers should consider the differences among children when dealing with them" and "preparing children for the future should be fun and enjoyable". On the other hand, the lowest ranked, with the lowest mean (1.75) and standard deviation (0.96), is item 9: "fairness means treating all children alike". The reason for this result is that caregivers' beliefs in Qatar are affected by Arabic culture, which views child-rearing as authoritarian, so caregivers, teachers, and children all consider this parenting style to be the norm (Dwairy et al., 2006; Walton et al., 2020). These findings of the study support the results of other research such as (Walton et al., 2020; Dwairy et al., 2006), that was conducted in Qatar and other Arab States concluded, the Middle East culture as authoritarian and patriarchal (Walton et al., 2020). As for Dwairy et al. (2006). they found that an authoritarian socialization style is adopted by children in most Arab countries, along with a collective-authoritarian social system.

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation, and ranks for caregiver's parenting style perception tool (authoritarian parenting style).

N	PSPT Authoritarian style	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Parents have the right to question teachers' teaching Method.	4.00	0.00	High
2	Teachers should consider the differences among children when dealing with them.	5.00	0.00	very high
3	Teachers should not demand obedience from children.	2.50	0.58	Moderate
4	Preparing children for the future should be fun and enjoyable by the child.	5.00	0.00	very high
5	Children can do the right things if we let them explore.	4.75	0.50	very high
7	Children should be busy with schoolwork at school not at home.	3.25	1.71	Moderate
8	Children's education should consider not only their minds but also their feeling.	3.75	1.89	High
9	Fairness means treating all children alike.	1.75	0.96	Very low
10	Teachers must not teach children to obey whomever in authority.	3.50	1.00	High
12	Children should be trained to help them manage their impulsive behaviors.	4.00	0.82	High
14	Children learn basic information by repetition.	3.50	1.00	High
16	Absolute obedience to parents is not the most important thing to teach children.	3.25	0.50	Moderate
17	School and home have equal responsibilities for a child's education.	4.25	0.95	very high
18	Children generally do what they asked to do without adults follow p.	2.25	0.50	Low
19	Parents should teach their children to do something not useful sometimes.	3.25	0.50	Moderate
21	Children should not always obey their parents.	3.50	0.58	High
22	Teacher should be concerned with what goes on in child's home.	4.25	0.96	very high
24	Children should be allowed to question their loyalty to parents.	3.00	1.63	Moderate
25	Teachers should not discipline all the children the same.	4.25	0.96	very high
26	Children should be allowed to question the authority of their parents.	3.25	0.50	Moderate
28	Teaching children what is right does not mean they are bad.	4.75	0.50	very high
30	Teachers have the right to get information about a child's home and background.	4.75	0.50	very high
	Total	4.71	0.49	Very high

Question three, "Is there a significant relationship between kindergarten caregivers' qualifications and their parenting beliefs?" to answer this question, Pearson

correlation is used to determine the relationship between kindergarten caregivers' qualifications and their parental beliefs, as shown in Table 4. The analysis showed no significant correlation between kindergarten caregivers' qualifications (education, experience, or specialization) and parental beliefs. This is because caregivers in Qatari schools and day-care centres lack qualifications. According to the demographic analysis, only 25% of caregivers have an early childhood education or elementary education specialization with a bachelor's degree, while 50% have an English specialization with a master's degree. Caregivers have a wide range of experience, with 25% having less than three years, 50% having 3 - 6 years, and 25% having more than ten years. Given these numbers, it shows that although Qatar has revised the qualification requirements for newly appointed teachers to a minimum of a BA or BSc degree; having a higher degree does not necessarily mean higher competencies without suitable training. Also, study of Al Thani and Romanowski (2013) investigated kindergarten teachers' implementation of the Supreme Education Council's Early Years Education Good Practice Guide (GPG). They conclude that more than 30% of caregivers and teachers in Qatari schools are not qualified and lack an understanding of the curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice. It seems that since 2013 according to results of Al Thani and Romanowski (2013) and this study's results that Qatar failed to improve caregivers' training programs to positively affect children's development especially social and emotional development. Therefore, Qatar should reconsider its strategic agenda and plans for ECCE including teachers' and caregivers' training programs.

Table 4. Pearson correlation between caregivers' qualifications and their parental beliefs.

		Education	Experience	Specialization	Believes
Education	Pearson Correlation	1	0.000	0.905	−0.446
	Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000	0.095	0.554
	N	4	4	4	4
Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.000	1	−0.426	0.578
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000		0.574	0.422
	N	4	4	4	4
Specialization	Pearson Correlation	0.905	−0.426	1	−0.650
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.095	0.574		0.350
	N	4	4	4	4
Believes	Pearson Correlation	−0.446	0.578	−0.650	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.554	0.422	0.350	
	N	4	4	4	4

To answer question four, "Is there a significant relationship between caregivers' parenting beliefs and children's social skills?". Firstly, descriptive statistical

analysis was conducted with means, standard deviations, and ranks to determine children's social and emotional competencies, as shown in Table 5. The results of this study indicated that the overall scale has a high rank of 3.80 mean and 0.74 standard deviations. The results also indicated high rank for the subscales. The highest rank of the subscales is for relationship skills, with a 3.94 mean and 0.76 standard deviations, while the lowest rank is for self-awareness, with a 3.71 mean and 0.80 standard deviation.

Table 5. Mean, SD and Ranks for children's social and emotional competencies scale.

N	(SECS)	Mean	SD	Rank
1	The ability to recognize different feelings	3.83	0.87	High
2	To name many different feelings and to know when to use it	3.74	0.92	High
3	To say positive things about him/her-self	3.96	0.80	High
4	To identify their feelings and talk about it	3.77	0.94	High
5	To learn the acceptance of the feelings of sadness, anger and to express them in appropriate ways	3.64	0.99	High
6	The ability to predict the actual results	3.44	1.02	High
7	The ability to name his/her self-feelings accurately	3.61	1.08	High
	Self-awareness	**3.71**	**0.80**	**High**
8	To develop thought concentration habits (such as specificity and calmness)	3.64	0.94	High
9	To use words expressing the feelings of (madness, sadness, and worries)	3.59	1.08	High
10	The ability to calm self when provoked by adults or by self	3.72	0.86	High
11	To express positive feelings about self, family, school and peers	4.00	0.78	High
12	To show self-control such as waiting for his/her turn, or when working alone or with a group	3.91	0.93	High
13	To find alternatives and take responsibilities of his/her actions	3.81	0.91	High
14	To play in a corporative way with other children on regular basis	3.81	0.99	High
	Social Awareness	**3.78**	**0.79**	**High**
15	To show long attention span	3.57	1.00	High
16	To remember and use the feedback when working on a task	3.67	1.02	High
17	To be persistent when working on a task for a reasonable time	3.62	1.08	High
18	To feel enthusiastic to participate and help others in the class	3.94	0.87	High
19	To have a positive attitude and mood	4.01	0.90	High
20	To make the best efforts most of the time	3.79	0.99	High
21	To be interested in social values such as health, appearance, safety, and other things	3.89	0.86	High
22	The ability to resolve conflicts with other children on his own without the intervention of adults	3.45	1.00	High

Continued

	Self-Control		3.75	0.83	High
23	To pay attention to non-verbal cues from adults and peers		3.67	0.89	High
24	To show sympathy to other children sadness and grief		4.10	0.80	High
25	To share the joy of others in a positive way		4.11	0.81	High
26	To listen to others attentively		4.16	0.79	High
27	To follow instruction properly		3.89	0.97	High
28	To answer in a good way when exposed to other people feelings and views		3.94	0.85	High
29	To show empathy with other children when they are harmed		4.03	0.82	High
30	To understand others' point of view		3.77	0.89	High
31	To maintain good communication skills (eye contact when communicating, tone of voice)		3.76	1.10	High
32	To feel good about self and others		4.00	0.83	High
	Relationship Skills		3.94	0.76	High
33	To reconcile difficulties among peers in an appropriate manner		3.54	0.87	High
34	To work well with the team		3.88	0.94	High
35	To use decision making and problem-solving social skills that is appropriate for his/her age		3.69	0.91	High
36	To respond in inference problem solving way about barriers among people		3.67	0.97	High
37	To engage with the group (e.g., participating in various activities when invited)		4.06	0.82	High
38	To say the reasons behind their love to the things that they do		3.84	0.96	High
39	To allow other children share their toys regularly		3.91	0.93	High
40	To ask permission before borrowing things from others		3.66	1.13	High
41	To help adults without waiting to be asked for help		3.79	1.14	High
42	To get along with others (e.g., parents, teachers, and peers)		4.08	0.91	High
	Total		3.80	0.74	High

Secondly, to determine the relationship between caregivers' parental beliefs (authoritative or authoritarian) and children's social and emotional competency subscales, Pearson correlation is computed, as shown in Table 6. The results indicated no correlation between caregivers' authoritative beliefs about their parental style and children's social and emotional competency subscales. On the contrary, the results show a significant correlation between authoritarian beliefs about caregivers' parenting style and children's social and emotional competency subscales of self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and social skills. At the same time, there is no statistically significant relationship for the subscale of self-control. Surprisingly, the findings of this study indicated that the authoritarian parental style of caregivers is statistically significantly related to children's social and emotional competencies, which meant that the authoritarian style did not

negatively affect Qatari children. These findings were not congruent with the study of Wang et al. (2022) that investigated a significant positive relation of authoritative style with the cognitive development of pre-school aged children and a significant negative relationship of authoritarian style with cognitive development of pre-school children. The results also contradicted those of Niez and Alic (2015), which revealed that authoritative parenting was the dominant parenting style, and children demonstrated positive socio-emotional competence. Still, parenting styles are not significantly related to socio-emotional competence. The reason for this study's findings is that caregivers' parenting styles in the Arab world use an authoritarian parenting style that did not seem to bother children or adolescents because Arabic society believes in a collective authoritarian social system. Therefore, Arab individuals, including adolescents and children, possess a collective identity. They imply that "Arab children and youth are satisfied with this style and do not complain of the aggressive behaviour of teachers" (Dwairy et al., 2006: p. 14).

Table 6. Pearson's Correlation Between Children's Social and Emotional Competences and Caregivers' Parenting Beliefs

Children's social and Emotional Competencies Scale (SECS)	Teachers Beliefs about parting style	
	Democratic	Authoritarian
Self-Awareness	0.214 (0.104)	0.239** (0.039)
Social Awareness	0.165 (0.211)	0.302** (0.020)
Self-Control	0.039 (0.768)	0.236 (0.072)
Relationship Skills	0.008 (0.953)	0.264** (0.043)
Social Skills	0.127 (0.338)	0.342** (0.008)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For the fifth research question "Is there a significant relationship between caregivers' qualifications and children's social skills?". Pearson correlation is computed to determine the correlation between caregivers' qualifications and children's social and emotional competencies as shown in Table 7. The results indicated no statistically significant relationship between kindergarten caregivers' qualifications (education, experience, or specialization) and children's social and emotional competencies either on the overall scale nor on the subscales of self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, social skills, and self-control. This means that the ill-equipped caregivers don't have the ability to support a positive social and emotional development of children. Again, this result emphasized caregivers' lack of qualifications in Qatar, despite the educational level of the caregivers, which means that caregiver preparation programs in Qatari universities are inadequate or that caregivers do not get adequate training during the preparation program or after they join the force work. These results indicated that despite of the improvement that Qatar made in the ECCE, Unfortunately, Qatar still faces

challenges concerning caregivers' education, there are no caregivers' licensing certification programs, teachers hired based on having a bachelor's degree and have insufficient training prior or little training even after being assigned as a caregiver or a teacher. Lack of appropriate pedagogical preparation and professional development opportunities, many issues were evident around working conditions, wages, effective policies for recruitment of competent teachers, clarity of career path and overall efficient teachers' policy frameworks.

Table 7. Pearson's correlation between children's social and emotional competences and caregivers' qualifications.

Children's social and emotional competences sub-scale		Teachers' qualifications		
		Educational	Experience	Specialization
Self-Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.118	−0.108	0.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.375	0.417	0.245
	N	59	59	59
Social Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.122	−0.037	0.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.357	0.778	0.335
	N	59	59	59
Self-Control	Pearson Correlation	0.071	0.087	0.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.591	0.511	0.833
	N	59	59	59
Relationship Skills	Pearson Correlation	0.050	0.165	−0.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.704	0.212	0.855
	N	59	59	59
Social Skills	Pearson Correlation	0.156	0.067	0.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.239	0.616	0.390
	N	59	59	59
Total	Pearson Correlation	0.111	0.036	0.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.401	0.784	0.516
	N	59	59	59

5. Conclusion and Implication

The overall results of this study are essential to understanding the status of caregivers and teachers in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector in Qatar. It is well established that caregivers and teachers are hired based on having a bachelor's degree. Therefore, universities must ensure the provision of high-quality and efficient training programs starting from the first year of the early childhood specialization, not in the last semester of the final year. Licensing programs for teachers involve a certified proficiency examination that enables caregivers and teachers to practice teaching. This teaching profession must be implemented

to enhance the qualifications of teachers and caregivers, including graduation projects and proficiency test with certification in the final year.

6. Limitations and Further Research

One limitation of the present study is that the sample selection was limited to the enrolled kindergarten children (KG1 and KG2) and their caregivers at one laboratory Early Childhood Centre in Doha; limiting the study sample to (59) kindergartens and their caregivers. Therefore, the result should be interpreted carefully so it would not be generalized. It would be worth including other laboratory early childhood centres in different universities in Doha Qatar. Therefore, future research can be conducted with a larger sample size to examine the impact of caregivers' qualifications, and parenting beliefs on the social and emotional competence of children in public kindergarten in Qatar. Also, Future studies can be carried out in other regions and in different contexts, as well as for other scholars to conduct comparative studies to identify the differences between kindergarten caregivers' parenting beliefs (authoritarian or authoritative) in different contexts.

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Conflicts of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were reported by the authors.

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