

# Comparing the Performance and Problems of Pre-School Centers and Kindergartens in Varamin city in Iran

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## Abstract

The necessity to examine the performance and problems of pre-school course is due to the significant effect of this course in the child's growth. In this descriptive study, we used systematic perspective to survey and the statistical community is all the managers, coaches and parents of pre-school centers of Varamin in academic year of 2012-13 (2772 people). The sample size is 598 people, according to Morgan table collecting information has been done through observation, interviews, questionnaires and in library and validity of tool research was approved by the teachers and the coefficient of  $941/0 = \alpha$  was calculated, which is an indicative of appropriate stability. To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The results indicated that there is a significant difference in performance and problems in preschool centers under the protection of education and welfare centers in the size of input, process and environment.

**Keywords:** performance comparison, the problem, pre-school centers, education, welfare

## Introduction

The purpose of the pre-school is all-round development of children. This course is a bridge that connects the child with the school. Preschool course learn social communication to child. This age period is the beginning of basic training for children and positive attitude of children about these activities had positive learning and economic impact on children's education in the next few years.

Today, preschool centers provide fertile ground for growing faster of children and fortunately highlight the role of preschool centers, so parents have

come to believe that entering a child to preschool is not only beneficial but essential and provides appropriate state for the faster development of children (Osare, 2003). B. Bokova, General Director of the Educational, Scientific and cultural organization of UNESCO on the occasion of Global Action Week on Education for All (3 to 9 May 2012) state that Pre-school Education is strong motive engine for the sustainable development of communities in the long term. Matsuura, one of the UNESCO consultants also says about the importance of education of children preschool. Early childhood education is very important because the education of children starts in the lower age, as much as it, the educational and developmental problems of the group will be reduced (Kabyta, 2011). But we should not also neglect the needs of children. Children need environments that are able to enhance and enrich their social and emotional capabilities and strengthen them. The physical design of preschool centers must be joyful for the child and has the minimum necessary facilities. Tools and equipment which are appropriate to age and their ability should be provided. Education that the children receive in preschool centers, indirectly provide field development, learning mathematical concepts, reasoning, reading, writing and language skills. The main basis of this training is game. Game is Art and work of a child. So it must be valuable, positive and valuable for the child. kindergartens that commonly referred to as nursery school in the community, legally are under the General Welfare states and adopt children, ranging in age from 2 to 5 years and preschool centers are places for keeping children between age 5 to 7 years that in terms of monitoring, they are under the Ministry of Education and unlike kindergartens that in physical space are independent, most schools have attached to preschool centers.

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The important point, however, is the effectiveness and performance of these units on children and whether these centers will be successful to get the goals, or not? In other words, did money spend on this case is worthwhile or not? If no, Why? And how can you counteract the barriers to success? Achievements of this research will provide useful information for planners, managers and those involved in pre-school education programs, and will show us the positive or negative points of the performance of these units. The main basis and question in this research is to study the performance and problems, and identify the status quo of Kindergartens covered by welfare compared to Kindergarten covered by education and suggesting appropriate guidance to improve preschool education.

### Research hypotheses

1) There is a significant difference between pre-school centers covered by education and kindergartens (pre-school) in welfare.

2) There is a significant difference between the problems of pre-school centers covered by education and kindergartens (pre-school) in welfare.

### Preschool centers performance

Performance means clarified quality of the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures (Rahnavard, 2008). But in education in addition to the result, the quality of work is also included, and most important features of it are the ability to measure the problems in preschool centers. Any factor in the achievement of the objectives, the organization has suffered damage and eventually reduce the quality and efficiency of preschool education, defined as the problem (Rahnavard, 2008).

### Literature review

Kakavand (2012), in a research named patterns of children's educational environment show that the impact of learning environments and educational paradigms are mutual, so that the educational component influence the spatial structure, and despite the studies in the fields of psychology and learning about pre-school educations, still, there is not learning environments appropriate for the education of children and concluded that pre-school educational environments needs complete revision in Iran.

Dadash Lou (2011) in his thesis suggests that factors such as human relations control the class, schedule, and etc. which is included in teacher

training courses and make changes in the method of holding classes and provided opportunities to continuing education for teachers.

Abbasi (2010) came to the following conclusions to improve this period which should be established the substrates necessary hardware, software and support services, creation of the necessary communication infrastructure, appropriate culture for enjoying the facilities of information technology development, equipment development of financing and equipment of training centers, reviewing the content of courses, reviewing the learning process, reviewing the evaluation process and in-service training to teachers.

Ghsemzade (1999), Pourali (2008) and Fanaei (1997) in their studies have achieved the following results:

- Interaction with children and parents, in pre-school centers do not have the required quality.
- The ratio of the number of students to class and the number of teachers had the necessary proportion.
- Centers Preschool teaching staffs has moderate skills required for training.

Haji Zadeh (2004), in his research concluded that trainers in the fields of program planning, psychology, training tools, job skills, health and children's literature, need for training.

Maydanipor (2001), in his/her study found that in most centers do not consider the characteristics of child development and rely on learning methods by speech. In most centers, managers and coaches are low levels of education and work experience.

Mirzade (1986) and Reynolds *et al* (2001) in their research showed that students who had gone to kindergarten in comparison to students who had not experienced kindergarten, have better social relationships, more successful in private practice, better to accept rules of school and when entering the school, had less anxiety and their educational achievement was more.

Tashakori *et al* (1985) did another study entitled "The effect of preschool education on children's educational achievement and intelligence". They concluded that preschool education is managed through an enriched environment to enable children to achieve new perceptual and cognitive experiences that probably cannot be achieved in a typical environment of families.

Rasoli (2010) investigated the impact of the course on language learning level in bilingual province assess positively.

Temple (2007) also found that there is a relationship between the age entering to school and reduce future delinquency rates in children.

Dyakvna (2004) and Kakajuybary and his/her colleagues (2010) pointed out that pre-school has a significant effect on the progress of students in reading and writing.

Shell Haas(2006), discovered that children mostly interested in centers where learn through playing than learning performed in other ways than playing.

Ordan(2010) in his study mention the problems in seven categories that including physical facilities, evaluation, programs and activities, education and learning, social environment, objectives and content. According to previous studies these courses are undeniable positive but there are many problems that need to detect and compensate to maximize its effectiveness.

### Research theoretical framework

Based on systematic theory, a range of elements that affecting the output of the system are given below:

#### Factors affecting the quality of output

- Quality of inputs
- The quality of the process of activity
- The quality of interaction with the environment (internal and external) and its feedback

**Table 1: Variables affecting outputs**

Aspects	The areas: variable affecting the performance of pre-school centers
Some elements of inputs	1. Characteristics of Children 2. Teachers 3. Fee 4. educational content 5. service facilities 6. sanitary facilities 7. safety facilities
Some elements of operation process	1. educational processes and programs 2. Maintenance and care Process and Programs 3. Process of using the service facilities 4. Process of using the sanitary facilities 5. Process of using the safety facilities
Some elements of environment	Internal environment: 1. co-ordination and coherence and empathy of staff 2. appropriate working facilities to improve the work performance of staff External environment: 1. The amount and way of parent participation 2. Quality of information exchange and communication with out of unit 3. Culture and Society

Due to the influence of above factors on the performance of pre-school centers, these factors have an impact on the outcome of this study so, the questionnaire is designed based on the above table to find

the performance of preschool centers with identification of the value of the effect of these variables, then found their problems and at the end suggest some solution for these problems.

## Materials and Methods

This study sought to compare the performance and problems of Kindergartens governed by Education to kindergartens covered by Welfare. The purpose of this study is an applied research.

### Statistical population and sample size

The population of the study consisted of all the founders, managers, coaches and parents of Varamin pre-school centers Toddlers in the 2012-13 school year.

**Table2: The statistical population of the research**

Name of population	Preschools under supervision of welfare (preschool)	Preschools under supervision of education office
Number of unit	18	65
Principals or founder	25	65
Teacher	60	122
Parents	1050	1450
sum	1135	1637

The sample size was based on Morgan's table and the Cochran formula; in the preschools covered by education are 311, and 287 people in preschools covered by welfare.

### Research tools

Library methods: is for theoretical study and survey of the subject of study and to obtain initial information we used from books, articles, theses and publications as well as domestic and international Internet net works.

Observation: In this method, the researcher with presence in location of training unit, relative to the observation of the activity in this unit, act and collect written information.

Interview: in this way the researcher with presence in the area of education, took action to targeted interview with the founder or manager or coach and some parents. Questionnaire: the researcher in coordination with technical study, experts and supervisors designed a questionnaire, based on the comparison of the performance of pre-school centers covered by welfare and education.

### Validity of the instruments

The questionnaire was read and was approved by supervisor and consultant.

### Reliability of the instruments

At the first phase, 30 series of questionnaire delivered to respondents. And then reliability of study was measured by Cronbach's alpha in SPSS environment, so there liability of study is  $\alpha = 0.912$ .

## Results

For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistical methods and software (SPSS) was used. For the description of the average statistics, frequency, standard deviation and inferential statistics were used and to prove meaningful scrolling Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used.

To investigate hypothesis of survey for comparison of two educational organizations, independent T-test has been used. For this purpose, at first, the assumptions of the test are studied by applying of the test requires compliance with the following assumptions:

A) The scale used to measure the variables under study should be distance or relative. Thus, in the present study to obtain interval scale, the numerical value of response options are added together and divided by the number of questions in each category.

B) The distribution of scores for the variables under study must be in the normal manner.

C) Variances of the numbers in target population are equal.

The following table examines assumptions b and c.

**Table 3: A description of items of questionnaire**

Name of area	Number of question	question related to the educational unit
Children	1	Do children eagerly come to the training center every day?
	2	Do children learn new things in classrooms each day?
	3	Is the levels of physical activity of children within the educational centers high?
Tuition	4	Are monthly fees designed for children incongruent with the amount of activity and the size of the services of training center?
	5	Is monthly fees in accordance with the expectations of the parents?
	6	Do units that receive additional fees proportionally deliver higher quality and better service?
Teachers	7	Trainers of these centers are active and energetic at work.
	8	trainer of the center, are interested in their work
	9	Trainers are patient during accountable and provide a lot of information for parents. educational content
	10	The center uses separate trainers for every single lesson
	11	Do the centers teach painting to children?
Educational content	12	Do the centers teach crafts to children?
	13	Do the centers teach children to use play dough?
	14	Do the centers teach pottery to children?
	15	The centers teach math to children
	16	The centers teach life science to children
	17	The centers teach the poems and stories to children
	18	The centers make children familiar to prayer
	19	The center makes children familiar to hejab and the Islamic dress
Service facilities	20	To view videos and cartoons and educational courses, each class has a separate monitor.
	21	The center has swings and slides and play equipment appropriate to age of children
	22	At least one the employees of the Centre has expertise and higher education courses associated with caring for children
Health facilities	23	Balconies and stairs have protective fence.
	24	Stone size and height of the toilet, water fountains is small and appropriate to height and physique of children.
	25	There is super protective plastic under the toys to prevent incidents during playing of children



Educational process	26	The center reports to the parents of children ,educational activities, weekly or monthly
	27	Increasing the child's knowledge is clearly evident
	28	Growth and development of children's attitudes are quite sensible
	29	Enhancing the skills of the child is perfectly sensible
Care process	30	Enhancing social skills of children is clearly evident
	31	Game programs, sports or physical activity during the week will be executed at least once
	32	Poetry and storytelling program is executed at least once during the week.
	33	Ritual and traditional programs are performed at least once during the week
Health processes	34	Demo programs are performed at least once during the week (eg, theater, puppetry and puppet etc).
	35	Trainers support children while they are using the restroom
	36	The center performs control of hygiene and health program of children at least once every 3 months
	37	This center has audiometer hearing of Child and reports it to the patents (at least once a year).
Intimacy and consistency of staff	38	This center has optometry eyesight of children and reports it to parents(at least once a year)
	39	is there friendly relations between employees?
	40	In case of absence of the employee, other employees answer his clients
Facilities	41	As soon as a problem occurs , the staff will act quickly to resolve it
	42	Trainers record information about children in work folders and deliver to management and parents of students.
	43	Have on- the- job training to increase the ability of employees and coaches been held at least once per season?
Participation	44	Trainers, and staff are involved in the training center affairs by monthly meetings
	45	At the beginning and end of the school year, parents are asked about the training center and its performance
	46	Training center has counseling unit for children and parents
Information exchange	47	In each month, trainers specialize times for a public meeting with a parents
	48	Are the parents informed about duties of staff and trainers at the first session?
	49	Education center offers telephone counseling with parents
Culture and society	50	In case of any problem, parents will be notified immediately as soon as possible
	51	Parents of children and society look at this center as a training unit
	52	Parents of children and society look at this center as a child care center
Supervisory institutions	53	Parents of children and society will think that this center is a place to make money
	54	Regulatory bodies by focusing on the performance of the center will increase the quality of work
	55	Regulatory bodies identify tuition of centers based on the quality and volume of services performed per center
	56	Do regulatory bodies support and encourage centers that conduct rules well

The findings of the above table show that calculated significance level is less than 01/0. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected based on abnormality of distribution of numbers and there is no evidence about normal distribution of total scores of the questionnaire and its component. But according to the Delaware (2003), t test is much stronger than the same non-parametric tests. Therefore, the test execution is not rendered. About the third assumption, the above table shows that the significance level calculated in the component of processes of care, medical procedures and facilities are larger than 05/0. There are conditions of uniformity of variances and in the remaining cases, in the application of t test from specific measures, the non-uniformity of variation to be used.

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between the performance of the two groups in the components of processes of care, medical procedures, facilities and regulatory bodies (Welfare & Education). And in the components of children, teachers, educational processes, empathy and integrity of personnel, facilities, participation, culture and social, education have better performance than welfare. But in the components of the tuition, educational concept, service facilities, health facilities, communication and information exchange; Welfare has better performance than education.

In the table below, we compare the means for each area.

**Table 4: Profile of normal distribution of scores and the amount of Levene's test**

Areas	Scales	statistics		Amount of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		amount of Levene's test	
		Mean	Standard deviation	Amount of K.S	Level of significance	Amount of F	Level of significance
Total	Total operation	2.076296	.51741	2.310	.000	34.701	.000
	Children	1.6436	.63242	4.813	.000	17.817	.000
Input	Tuition	2.2549	.67983	2.572	.000	13.175	.000
	Teachers	1.5289	.62608	6.359	.000	138.168	.000
Operation process	Educational content	2.2399	.64903	3.213	.000	51.281	.000
	Service facilities	3.0028	1.14685	2.403	.000	46.045	.000
	Health facilities	2.4975	.68544	2.387	.000	14.661	.000
	Educational process	1.7623	.57435	3.868	.000	28.430	.000
	Care process	1.9890	.64080	2.730	.000	.118	.731
	Health process	2.0297	.81655	3.847	.000	.126	.722
	Intimacy and consistency of staff	1.5853	.67696	5.689	.000	81.298	.000
Environment and feedback	Facilities	1.8689	.67367	4.483	.000	3.214	.074
	Participation	2.2650	.92671	3.521	.000	11.093	.001
	Relationship and information exchange	2.0652	.87368	3.789	.000	9.542	.002
	Culture and society	2.5780	.71569	3.635	.000	10.583	.001
	Supervisory institutions	2.6059	1.11181	2.757	.000	4.631	.032

**Table 5: T-test statistics**

Areas	Scales	t	df	Level of significance	Mean difference	Group with better performance
Total	Total operation	1.146	497.080	.252	.0493	Equal
	Children	-3.643	528.964	.000**	-.1887	education
Input	Tuition	3.147	566.275	.002**	.1748	welfare
	Teachers	-6.598	414.510	.000**	-.3341	education
Operation process	Educational content	2.533	499.217	.012*	.1359	Welfare
	Service facilities	10.134	544.377	.000**	.8678	Welfare
	Health facilities	2.657	561.654	.008**	.1493	Welfare
	Educational process	-4.963	473.826	.000**	-.2327	
	Care process	-.876	596	.381*	-.0460	equal
	Health process	.824	596	.410	.0551	Equal
	Intimacy and consistency of staff	-5.456	512.137	.000**	-.2991	Education
Environment and feedback	Facilities	-1.820	596	.069	-.1002	Education
	Participation	-2.710	536.013	.007**	-.2066	Education
	Relationship and information exchange	2.094	550.323	.037*	.1506	welfare
	Culture and society	-7.242	573.730	.000**	-.4088	education
	Supervisory institutions	-.272	595.470	.786	-.0246	equal

As can be seen about input, the pre-schools covered by welfare act better; while in other are as the relative superiority is for preschools under education.

Now, we start reviewing the mean that received from all the questions for each dimension.

Thus, the performance of preschool education centers covered by education is superior in the process of operation and environmental and performance of pre-school centers covered by welfare is better in input dimension.

**Table 6: Comparison of areas based on the mean performance**

Preschool under supervision of welfare		Distance under 0.050 of standard	Preschool under supervision of education office	
Significant superiority	Relative superiority	Very little difference	Relative superiority	Significant superiority
Service facilities Health facilities	Tuition Educational content Information content	Care process Health process Supervisory institutions	Educational process- teachers- children- facilities Intimacy and consistency of staff- participation Culture and society	-----

**Table 7: Analysis of mean for the questionnaire**

Preschool under supervision of welfare		Distance under 0.050 of standard	Preschool under supervision of education office	
Significant superiority	Relative superiority	Very little difference	Relative superiority	Significant superiority
	Input		Operation process- environment (internal and external)	

***The comparison of problems***

To identify problems in pre-school centers and comparison of the gender and type of the problems in two groups, we compared the means, and identified any flaws and weaknesses.

Thus, the relative weaknesses in preschool centers covered by welfare is more. However, significant weaknesses as poor performance or problem has reached to education centers.

**Table 8: Study of the problems of pre-school centers as comparison to separated group**

Preschool under supervision of welfare		Distance under 0.050 of standard	Preschool under supervision of education office	
Significant weakness	Relative weakness	without difference	Relative weakness	Significant weakness
-----	1,2,7,8,9,11,12,13,17,19,20,27,28,29,30,31,32,38,39,40,41,43,45,47,48,51,52,53,54	6,18,33,46	3,4,5,14,15,16,22,24,26,34,35,36,37,42,44,49,50,55,56	10,21,23,25

***Identifying the problems of two groups in these areas***

We compared the mean areas to identify problems in preschool centers.

Thus, preschool centers covered by education are weaker than centers covered by welfare in areas of tuition, learning content, health processes, information exchange and communication and have some problems. And the areas of healthcare facilities is weaker than the welfare too and pre-schools centers covered by welfare are weaker in the areas

of service facilities, educational processes, training, processes of care, empathy and integrity of personnel, facilities, partnerships, culture and community, regulatory bodies, children and educators than centers covered by education and have some problems.

***Comparison of problems of two groups in different dimensions***

To compare the dimensions of problems of two groups, in the following table the mean dimensions of the two groups is extracted.

**Table 9: Identifying the problems and shortcomings in two groups based on the mean areas**

Preschool under supervision of welfare		Distance under 0.050 of standard without difference	Preschool under supervision of education office	
Significant weakness	Relative weakness		Relative weakness	Significant weakness
-----	Service facilities- Intimacy and consistency of staff- Care and educational process- Culture and society- Supervisory institutions- teachers- children- participation	-----	Tuition Educational content Health process Information exchange	Health facilities

**Table 10: Analysis of mean variables to identify problems**

Number of question	Name of variable	Name of group	Number of sample	Average	interpretation
25	Input	Welfare education	287	1.976864	Preschool centers under supervision of education are weaker
13	Operation process	Welfare education	287	1.953632	Preschool centers under supervision of welfare are weaker
18	Environment (internal and external)	Welfare education	287	2.233643	Preschool centers under supervision of welfare are weaker
			311	2.084137	

Therefore, the preschool centers covered by education are weaker than centers covered by welfare in the dimension of input, while pre-school centers covered by welfare are weaker than centers covered by education in this process.

## Conclusion

### *Results for the first hypothesis*

1) After approving the statistical meaningful difference of the first hypothesis of the study, it can be concluded that there are differences between the performances of preschools covered by education to preschools covered by welfare. We observed this difference based on systems theory in three groups: input, process and environment, and based on the results of the interview was proven that department of Education is better in operational process and environment:

- The bureaucratic structure of the education
- Ruling monitor and organizational communications
- Greater emphasis on education, training and teaching
- learning process
- more experience and more interest in the work of the Executive.

But the preschool centers covered by welfare are better than preschools covered by education in input dimension that based on the results of the interview can be the following reasons:

-The positive background of this center in the parents and society vision (from pre-school centers established in education for few years)

- The kind of space that has a great impact on the mind of parents and the quality of work. preschool spaces covered by welfare are independent. And are not included in any other area that is causing the quality of child care (most focuses of mothers in these centers are on nutrition and playing of their child than basic leanings)

While the environment of preschools covered by education attached to schools and Children's classes are often one of the classes or classroom that has low-value or unused space, that its capabilities in comparison to the weakest nurseries is not well-regulated.

- Expertise of managers and teachers in preschools covered by welfare, because most of these centers are autonomous and their survival is dependent on income from tuition fees. Therefore, they must use the latest experimental or scientific discoveries to satisfy parents, otherwise request for enrollment in this center will be decreased. So they try to employ the trained staffs to increase their chances of survival and competitive.



### **Results for the second hypothesis**

2) After the approving statistical significant difference of the second hypothesis, there is difference between problems of preschools covered by welfare and problems of centers covered by education.

These problems are as follows:

- Generally preschools in the areas of service facilities, culture and community and regulatory bodies are weaker than expected and actually have trouble in these areas.

- preschools covered by education are weaker than preschools covered by welfare in the areas of fees, training content, health processes, information exchange and communication and have some problems. And in the areas of healthcare facilities is weaker than the welfare too.

- Pre-school centers covered by welfare are weaker than centers covered by education in the areas of service facilities, training processes, processes of care, empathy and integrity of personnel, facilities, partnerships, culture and community, regulatory bodies, children and educator's education and it has some problems.

- preschool centers covered by education are weaker than centers covered by welfare in input dimension, While pre-school centers covered by welfare are weaker than centers covered by education in the process dimension and the environment.

Common problems of preschools covered by education and welfare are under the terms of the interviewees:

- Disproportionate quality to fees receives for services provided.

- Lack of individual teachers to teach various business units.

- Lack of training or learning the art of pottery or fine arts.

- Recreational facilities, games and media are not acceptable.

- Attitudinal and intellectual development of children during the period has not been evaluated.

- Lack of pre-service training for staff.

- Parent involvement and communication with parents is not satisfactory.

- Absolutely no incentive to comply with the law and regulations of regulatory bodies.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

The results of this research show that service facility level in preschool centers is not satisfactory, then suggest that supervisory bodies design a guide-

line for state minimum requirements need for setting up pre-school centers and set standards for such possibilities.

- Since results of this study showed that popular culture and community viewpoint about these centers are not desirable, because of the lack of expression of these center's functioning in the minds of the public is suggested tools such as databases or develop annual performance report information, activities undertaken in these centers to be announced to the public.

- This study indicates that the impact of regulatory agencies on these centers is not satisfactory. Therefore, it suggested that regulatory bodies design the executive and financial rules of procedure and irregularities to control and monitor the activities of these centers carefully.

- Because the results of this study showed that Received fees inappropriate to the quality of service, therefore recommended that fees determine based on the type and quality of services that provided.

- The results of this study showed that arts education-related course sat these centers is too bad, And considering these lessons are the most fundamental principles of identification of intelligence and talents aspects of children then suggested to deliver an educational framework for determination standards for the educational content set by the relevant institutions.

- The results of this study showed that workers of these centers need specialized training (new training methods, new educational content, curricula). It is recommended that this work along with support and efforts of financial institutions will be more successful.

- Because the results of this study showed that Parent participation and interactive communication between the center and parents is not sufficient; therefore, school with use of the parents and teachers association increased participation rates, with the same structure they can increase the degree of the parent's participations in preschool centers.

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