EXPLORING THE INSTRUCTIONAL EMERGENT WRITING STRATEGIES OF THE EMIRATI KINDERGARTENERS: A MIXED METHOD STUDY

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Declaration of Original Work

I, Warda Suliman Saeed Al Azri, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*Exploring the Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies of the Emirati Kindergarteners: A Mixed Method Study*" hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

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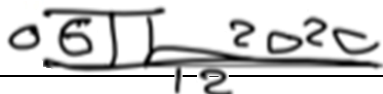
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Abstract

This mixed-method study aimed at exploring the nature and the types of instructional emergent writing strategies applied by UAE kindergarten teachers in their classrooms. The study also fathomed the teachers' views toward the practicality of the instructional emergent writing strategies and the challenges they encountered when teaching emergent writing using these strategies. The study used an exploratory sequential mixed method design. In the first phase of the study, a qualitative mean was used by carrying out semi-structured interviews with a purposive-selected sampling of kindergarten English teachers (n=5). The second phase of the study featured a collection of quantitative data using a self-report questionnaire answered by a randomly selected sample of teachers (n=206). The results gleaned from the interviews, which showed that teachers used nurture writing as an emergent literacy skill by creating a meaningful environment. Kindergarteners can practice writing in an authentic, mundane, and communicative way. Teachers also believe in the use of gradual release instruction, whether when selecting instructional strategies or materials. The quantitative results revealed that the use of modeling strategy is the most common and frequent when teaching emergent writing along with other strategies (e.g., guided writing, shared writing, interactive writing, and freewriting), which also confirmed by the qualitative results as the use of these strategies contribute immensely to promoting emergent writing literacy in which different skills were knitted and woven meaningfully. Furthermore, both the qualitative and the quantitative results signified that teachers confirmed that the limited time provided for children and teachers poses a real challenge. The study also found there are some difficulties in changing parents' attitudes to fulfill their required expectations. Some recommendations and implications for future research related to EFL/ESL contexts (e.g., UAE context) are provided.

Keywords: Emergent Literacy, Emergent Writing, Instructional Strategies, EFL/ESL Kindergarten Learners.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

استكشاف آراء المعلمين في الإستراتيجيات المستخدمة لتعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة باللغة الإنجليزية لرياض الأطفال

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف آراء المعلمين في الإستراتيجيات المستخدمة لتعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة باللغة الإنجليزية لرياض الأطفال. كما هدفت الدراسة إلى معرفة التحديات والصعوبات التي قد يواجهها معلمين رياض الأطفال عند استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات في تعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على استخدام المنهج الاستكشافي المختلط للحصول على نتائج واضحة. وقد اشتملت الدراسة على مرحلتين حيث كانت المرحلة الأولى من الدراسة تتمثل في الجانب الكيفي للدراسة والذي يتعلق بإجراء مقابلات مع خمس معلمين من رياض الأطفال. أما المرحلة الثانية من الدراسة تشتمل على النتائج الكمية للدراسة وتتضمن توزيع استبانة حول آراء المعلمين في الإستراتيجيات المستخدمة لتعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة، ويبلغ عدد المعلمين المشاركين في الاستبانة (206) معلمة. وقد اسهمت النتائج الكمية في تعميم النتائج الكيفية المستخرجة من المقابلات. وقد اسفرت النتائج الكيفية على مدى أهمية تعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة بطريقة طبيعية واجتماعية من خلال التدرج في استخدام استراتيجيات التعلم والمواد المتاحة. كما أكد المعلمون على أهمية البيئة المحيطة من خلال خلق بيئة داعمة لرياض الأطفال لتعلم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة بطريقة ذات معنى. أما بالنسبة للجانب الكمي من الدراسة، فقد اسفرت النتائج على أن استراتيجية النموذجة تعد أكثر الاستراتيجيات استخداما من قبل المعلمين بالإضافة إلى الاستراتيجيات الأخرى كالكتابة المشتركة والموجهة والتفاعلية. وهذا ما تم تأكيده من قبل المعلمين في المقابلة أيضا. كما اسفرت النتائج الكيفية والكمية على أن عامل الوقت وتغير اتجاهات وتوقعات الاباء نحو مهارة الكتابة تعد من اهم التحديات التي يواجها المعلمين عند تطبيق الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة لتعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة. فنرى أن الدراسة قد تناولت قضايا متعلقة بالاستراتيجيات المستخدمة لتعليم مهارة الكتابة الناشئة لرياض الأطفال والتي انبثقت منها بعض التوصيات الموجهة للمعلمين ومصممي المناهج المختصين في تعليم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية لرياض الأطفال بدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة والتركيز عليها مستقبلا عند إجراء ابحاث اخرى.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: التعلم الناشئ، الكتابة الناشئة، الاستراتيجيات التعلمية، طلاب رياض الأطفال.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

To my beloved husband and family

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List of Abbreviations

CVR	Content Validity Ratio
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
MOE	Ministry of Education
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TEWL	Test of Early Written Language
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study aimed at exploring the nature of the instructional emergent writing strategies of the UAE Kindergarteners from the teachers' perspectives. The study strives to show detailed data that serves in understanding what kinds of instructional strategies that kindergarten teachers use in their real classrooms. This introductory chapter provides a brief description of the research topic's background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of terms, and the study's limitations and delimitations.

1.2 The Importance of Writing Skill for Emergent Learners

Writing is considered as an essential productive and output skill for English language learners. Writing is a communicative skill that visually represents the spoken language through using symbols. For Crystal (2006) defined "Writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression" (p. 257). Writing as a skill is classified by Ong'ondo (2001) into two categories: 1) functional which includes the basic skills of writing such as pronunciation, spelling and handwriting abilities; 2) creative which contains the more advanced skills like grammar, organization and originality of the writing itself. For emergent learners, it is important to start building up handwriting abilities followed by pronunciation and spelling as the main skills in this stage (Ong'ondo, 2001).

In fact, building and improving the writing skills is deemed difficult in the process of second language learning and teaching because it requires a robust

background knowledge of the target language's components, functions, and instructional practicalities, particularly when teaching emergent learners. In addition to that, building up writing skills relies on the effective constructive repertoire of other skills including listening, speaking, and reading (Haley & Austin, 2004; Kroll, 2003; Richards & Renandya, 2002). For example, it is very important in emergent writing skills to build up the skill of graphic representation through using symbols, i.e., letters. In the process of writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), emergent learners should get mastery over the graphic system of the English language as an initial stage for learning writing followed by the grammatical system and the selection of appropriate vocabulary in relation to a particular context (Rao, 2019). Indeed, development in writing skills cannot take place without an effective integration with the other skills (Gabas, Marante, & Cabell, 2019). The developmental process of writing integrated with listening, speaking, and reading, begins through everyday interaction with individuals such as parents, teachers, and peers within their learning environment. In this sense, it is crucial to conceive emergent literacy to "denote the idea that the acquisition of literacy is best conceptualized as a developmental continuum, with its origins early in the life of a child" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 848). According to Swan (2008) "children learn to read and write in the context of their everyday lives" (p. 107). Everyday interaction with others and the environment significantly affects the development of emergent writing literacy concepts during children's preschool years. Moreover, routine home activities with an adult such as conversation, stories, and drawing activities can give opportunities for children to develop their emergent writing literacy skills. Therefore, a high-quality home literacy environment increases new literacy growth which reflects on how writing is a very complex skill that needs a lot of effort from both home literacy and

school literacy in order to be nurtured based on the development of the other skills (Swan, 2008).

Many researchers (e.g., Gabas, Marante, & Cabell, 2019; Rao 2019; McGee, 1997) alluded the importance of the emergent writing stage for children, and how important it is for tracing the growth of writing developmental stages that children undergo as emergent writers. For example, McGee (1997) found that the importance of emergent writing includes: 1) It is the initial trial of young ones towards the process of knowing how to write; 2) It can sharpen their skills of imitation of literacy through forms of creation of both symbols and drawings; and 3) It also can act as a catapult of developing basics of literacy which are, conceptual, procedural and generative knowledge that contributes to children's future success. Moreover, writing is instructionally significant because it helps teachers to better understand their learners' level of knowledge and how they think, and thus they can plan and select appropriate materials and instructional strategies that serve in causing development (Reeves, 1994).

1.3 The Importance of Emergent Writing Instruction

Writing is a critical skill in which kindergartens need teacher's instructional support to improve their writing. In fact, the quality of writing instruction in kindergarten has a significant impact on the students' future writing ability during the elementary years. To become active writers during the first years and beyond, children need a strong literacy foundation over their early childhood experience (Kissel, 2008; Routman, 2005). As writing requires more practices and commitments, English teachers should apply several strategies that serve in developing their students' writing skills enormously (Rao, 2019). In fact, emergent writing abilities are demonstrated in

different stages as they are defined as the following: drawing, scribbling, mock letters, letters and letter strings, invented spelling, phonetic spelling, and conventional spellings. Therefore, emergent writing is related to the concrete marks that children produce, the significance children assign to them and the comprehension of the way written language operates (Cabell, Tortorelli, & Gerde, 2013).

Emergent writing instruction is often a combination of varying degrees of four components, which are: mechanisms of writing, concepts of writing, conventions of writing, and composing. These components are essential in developing children's emergent literacy skills and reflecting developmental perspectives in writing instruction (Sulzby, Teale, & Kamberelis, 1989). Mechanisms of writing refers to the strategies that young children use in the writing process, such as the manipulation of the instrument of writing using their motor skills, hand-eye coordination, visual sensation associated with letter sounds, etc. Concepts of writing describe children's basic knowledge of how written language works. They include children's awareness of language directions (e.g., top to bottom and left to right), knowing the function of spacing and the full stop, grasping punctuation marks, and understanding of how alphabet letters blend together to represent sounds in words (Clay, 1996). Conventions of writing refer to children's abilities to recognize the rules of writing because children view writing as a primary communication tool. As Sulzby (1996) described, children's writing takes different forms, such as drawing pictures, scribbling, making letters, marks, and invented spelling, etc. Thus, children need to develop an understanding that others could read their writing, and so they need teachers to provide them with many writing opportunities to build their conventions of writing. As Kozulin (2003) indicated that "Children also need teachers' assistance in mastering the conventions of writing and in making the transition from peculiar symbols to phonetically consistent

representation" (p. 107) until they reach to the level of composing and reflecting their ideas in a meaningful way. Early childhood teachers' role in the emergent literacy stage is crucial since children in the preschool stage will not write conventionally or will their written work approach the adult level. For that reason, early childhood teacher education programs should encourage teachers to develop knowledge and understanding about writing and view it as an essential literacy construct beyond writing, journaling, and their own past experiences. In this context, Morrow (2001) proposed that teachers need to accept and encourage their children's writing attempts, regardless of whether these attempts consist of drawings, scribbles, creating random letters, or using invented spelling. Therefore, when children are engaged in their written efforts, kindergarten teachers need to observe, accept their works, provide appropriate responses, and create a supportive environment. As Assel (2007) indicated that literacy development begins with young children through exposing to different learning experiences found in their contextual milieu. Therefore, teachers need to be competent enough and experts in the way of delivering instructional experiences for the sake of nurturing writing skill of EFL or ESL kindergarteners depending on the context. To establish a strong foundation in writing, kindergartners must have teachers who can select, design, and deliver high-quality of instructional writing strategies (Lienemann, Graham, Leader-Janssen & Reid, 2006).

In fact, emergent writing literacy skill of preschool children could be developed constructively, if kindergarteners exposed to different writing materials and strategies, and if literacy is perceived as a valuable skill whether at home culture or at school culture. Because literacy development starts so early in life, it depends upon the amount of exposure to different learning experiences. However, many children, unfortunately, miss essential language opportunities through this critical phase of

development by the time when they enter the kindergarten stage (Clements, 2010), which might be due to deficiencies found in the instructional strategies applied by teachers in the classroom or the conflict between the home culture and the school culture, which might have a hard time catching up to children's peers in their reading and writing development. The lack of exposure to different writing texts at their home along with the use of inappropriate instructional strategies at their school environment might hamper the development of writing as an emergent literacy skill.

Generally, acquiring writing skills makes emergent learners more conscious of where and how they encounter literacy in their daily life, and thus they will understand the resources of literacy like what is called real reading and writing since literacy is strongly connected with reading and writing through creating and deriving new meanings (Street & Lefstein, 2007). Therefore, the role of the teacher is to make their emergent learners more recognized about their development of literacy stages through applying different teaching strategies and techniques. However, it is not only about applying strategies rather than it is about well-selecting of instructional strategies that serve in developing writing in an experiential and meaningful way. For this to happen, more research is needed around what kinds of instructional strategies that teachers find effective in developing writing skill at the early childhood level.

1.4 Writing as a Neglected "R"

Writing is culturally, socially, and communicatively an important skill for language learners. It is an instrumental and functional tool that enables them to communicate, acquire knowledge, and represent what they have already learned or acquired (Bergh, Janssen, Rijlaarsdam, Rietdijk & Weijen, 2018; Street & Lefstein,

2007). Yet, many children face difficulty to learn how to write and some of them do not enjoy writing (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2015).

Since the development of writing needs pre-development in other skills like reading, the focus was more on ways of enhancing reading in the emergent stage. As Toaimah (2000) indicated that children could not write until they had learned to read and had developed their fine motor skills or muscle control, which are considered as indicators to the children's readiness to write. Therefore, for many years, researchers have paid much attention to rapid reading development, while little room was given to early writing development (Schaars, Segers & Verhoeven, 2019). For example, different standardized tests such as, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are used across countries usually focus on reading, science, and mathematics instead of writing (Kirsch, 2002); nevertheless, different assessment studies (e.g., Al-Maadadi & Ihmeideh 2016; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Graham, 2013; Klieme, 2006; Neumann, 2014; Ofsted, 2005) indicated that writing proficiency problems are common in many EFL/ESL countries, particularly for elementary stage. Therefore, the ability to write during the first early childhood years can be a difficult and challenging task for both EFL and ESL learners because writing is a skill that needs time in order to be developed (Haley & Austin, 2004) and Arab learners are no exception. In addition to that, early writing as a skill is commonly neglected in the area of research and practicality, in which it was described by the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003) as ''the neglected 'R'' (p. 9). In terms of pedagogy, teachers also find difficulty in teaching writing as an emergent writing skill (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2015) because most of early childhood teachers are still not familiar with the nature of the writing skills that children need to acquire in this stage,

and what kinds of instructional strategies the teacher should apply to serve in acquiring these skills (Storch & Whitehurst 2002). Therefore, exploring the nature of the instructional strategies from the perspectives of teachers' experiences in their real classroom is needed, which might assist in understanding the full picture of how teachers approach the process of teaching writing in early childhood as a acritical stage.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Like any language, learning English requires students to acquire listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, each of which involves a set of interrelated sub-skills. Learning English in contexts where children do not speak the language at home adds further complexities to the learning process that need to be taken into consideration, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) context is no exception. Therefore, Ministry of Education (MOE) has set specific learning outcomes for the productive skills expected from emergent learners in kindergarten stage, which are: 1) to independently write letters in the form of uppercase and lowercase; 2) to use letter knowledge to spell independently; 3) to write (unconventionally) to express own meaning through illustration; 4) to build a range of some conventionally spelled words; 5) to show awareness of distinction between kids writing and conventional orthography; 6) to write own name (first and last) and the first names of some friends or classmates and to write most letters and some words when they are dictated (MOE, 2019, p. 17). However, the current curricula are still outmoded in the UAE, in which a traditional belief about literacy learning and the heritage of reading as the main literacy skill that serves in developing writing, is possibly still noticeable in the teaching of literacy in the UAE (Gallagher, 2019). Despite the overwhelming efforts

stressed on developing reading with the belief that it is a main and basic literacy skill for nurturing writing in the UAE, still difficulties in writing as emergent literacy skills are continuously existed, which are reflected on the teachers' views in a pre-interview study carried out by the researcher. It was conducted with three teachers who have over 5 years of experience in teaching grade 1, 2, 3 and 4 at one of the governmental cycle 1 schools in the UAE. The aim of this interview is to probe and glean some data about what kinds of issues that students still encounter in their writing when they move from kindergarten stage to grade level. For instance, Entwisle and Alexander (1998) indicated that the grade level stage is deemed to be a transitional and developmental period for imprinting and shaping the students' identities within the learning system. Based on the pre-interview results, general overarching issues emanated. For example, the three teachers indicated that "most students in grade 1 and 2 still write from right to left in English". Teachers also indicated that "Generally, capitalization, letter formation, spelling and main basics of grammar are the most common issues encountered by grade level students when they write". As one of the teachers said: "many primary school students scored below the expected level for writing based on the baseline assessment used by our schools". Based on that, to have a comprehensive picture, policy makers, curriculum designers, assessment designers and teachers must start from the origin of the problem through focusing on kindergarteners' ways of learning writing as an emergent literacy skill, and what kinds of instructional strategies that teachers apply in this stage. Therefore, this study aims at exploring what kinds of instructional writing strategies do teachers use for kindergarten learners as a critical stage for building language foundation, which might reveal the reasons behind existing much of these issues mentioned by grade level teachers in the pre-interview study.

1.6 The Purpose of the Study

This study aims at exploring what kinds of instructional emergent writing strategies applied by teachers in their kindergarten classrooms. Moreover, the study captures the teachers' perspectives toward the practicality of these instructional writing strategies in promoting writing as an emergent literacy skill for kindergarteners. Furthermore, the study seeks for understanding what kinds of obstacles that might be encountered by kindergarten teachers when teaching emergent writing. In addition to that, the study reports if these instructional strategies could be generalized to all kindergarten teachers in the UAE context or not.

1.7 Research Questions

This study is guided by four research questions:

1. How do kindergarten teachers view the role of using instructional emergent writing strategies on promoting kindergarteners' writing skill?
2. What types of instructional emergent writing strategies do kindergarten teachers report when teaching kindergarten students?
3. What types of challenges or obstacles do kindergarten teachers report when teaching emergent writing?
4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teachers' actual use of writing strategies and the reported ones?

1.8 Significance of the Study

Considering the expectations placed upon students in the UAE for the elementary grades to create good emergent literacy learners, a crucial need exists to provide developmentally appropriate effective instructions at the early childhood level

for the sake of nurturing writing as an emergent literacy skill (MOE, 2019). Early childhood educators are aware of the lack of providing developmentally appropriate and practical guidance. They are continually in search of instructional strategies to put into practice and to help in lessening the language literacy developmental gap. Thus, teachers need to understand the goals and the importance of writing instruction, the stages of development that emergent writers pass through, the learning strategies that should be used by emergent writers, and the knowledge and skills require to become effective writers (Ontario, 2005). Therefore, this study contributes to the research base and to the pedagogical base. In terms of the research base, the study tries to close a gap in the literature of exploring instructional writing strategies that fit EFL kindergarteners in the UAE context, which might serve in providing a rich understanding of the nature of teaching early writing in early childhood as a critical age. In terms of the practical and pedagogical base, this study contributes to understand what kinds of effective instructional writing strategies used for EFL kindergarteners to develop their writing as emergent writers based on teachers' real teaching experiences. These strategies are extracted from authentic practices experienced by kindergarten teachers in their real classrooms to show how practicality of these instructional strategies is, and how writing can be nurtured for emergent learners. This might serve in building up effective professional development programs that assist in preparing teachers to be more pedagogically knowledgeable when teaching writing for emergent learners.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

Due to the nature of the study, some delimitations were specified. They include the following: 1) The participants were selected according to particular criteria

wherein they are all kindergarten teachers for English language, their teaching experience in kindergarten stage are five years and more, particularly in the qualitative phase, and they were heterogenous group in which the sampling includes both Arabs and expatriates. Additionally, this study targeted only the writing as an emergent literacy skill. So, it was directed by carrying out an interview with teachers in the qualitative phase then followed by developing and distributing a self-report questionnaire in the quantitative phase. Moreover, this study targeted only the teachers' views towards their real instructional writing strategies applied in their classrooms, while the students' reactions and views are not taken into account.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Every study has its limitations, and this one was no different. Perhaps the main limitation in the qualitative phase was that only five kindergarten teachers in one of public schools in the UAE were interviewed in the study in the qualitative phase, which could be considered a very small sample. Due to this small sample, the results extracted from the qualitative phase may not be generalizable to all kindergarten teachers in the UAE context, and also may not be enough to deeply understand the nature of the instructional emergent writing strategies used by kindergarten teachers. In addition, carrying out interviews with the participants might lead to some bias as expected in the qualitative research; however, it can be perceived as a limitation. In terms of the quantitative phase, due to the time constraints, the researcher used only results extracted from one qualitative tool, the interview, to design the self-report questionnaire, which might not be enough to tackle all aspects related to the research topic in this study.

1.11 Definitions of Terms

Emergent Literacy: Emergent literacy was defined by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that children develop associated with reading and writing, which starts at birth until school entry when the onset of conventional reading and writing instruction is initiated. It includes mastering different aspects in language learning such as oral language, recognizing the meaning of the prints, as well as foundation of alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness.

Emergent Writing Skill: Emergent writing skill is defined by Dennis and Votteler (2013) as the first attempts of young children at the writing process. It is the ability to start imitating the act of writing by creating drawings and symbolic marks that reflect and demonstrate children's thoughts and ideas.

Emergent Writing Instruction: Emergent writing instruction is defined by Hall and Williams (2002) as the process of teaching writing through three different sequential phases starting with writing for children, then writing with children and finally children write by themselves, in which each phase has its appropriate instructional strategies.

1.12 Organization of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research topic, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter two contains the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework and the relevant studies related to the research topic. Chapter Three identifies the research design as an exploratory mixed method design, describes the sampling size, shows the instruments, and finally addresses the data collection and

data analysis procedures. Chapter Four demonstrates the main results in relation to the addressed research questions in this study. This includes both the qualitative results, represented in meaningful themes and the quantitative results, illustrated in tables and graphs. Chapter Five discusses the major findings of the study in corroboration with relevant studies. Finally, recommendations and implications for future research are provided.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses main concepts, theories, and published research pertinent to the purpose of this study, by which to explore the instructional emergent writing strategies used for the UAE kindergarteners. This literature review contains the conceptual framework including writing as an emergent literacy skill and the emergent writing instruction. Also, it attempts to represent the theoretical framework utilized for this study, by focusing on sociocultural theory introduced by Vygotsky (1978). In addition to that, the chapter delves into previous relevant studies related to the practicality of using different instructional emergent writing strategies in real classrooms, and the teachers' views toward these strategies.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Emergent Literacy and Writing Skill

Emergent literacy learning occurs by experience as children are exposed to oral and written forms of language. It is a social process, in which communication and interaction are crucial factors. Therefore, emergent literacy development is an ongoing process that occurs throughout everyday life and actions experienced at home or in the whole community (Howe, 2016). According to Gee (2012), "literacy is mastered through acquisition, not learning, that is, it requires exposure to models in natural meaningful, and functional settings" (p. 23). Before children can acquire literacy skills, they must first acquire the language as a mediated tool for developing literacy skills. Children begin to learn language as soon as they are born and begin to hear and see what is going on around them. They eventually learn basic language and literacy

concepts by engaging in conversations with adults and peers, and once they get older and enter school, they start to build on these basic skills in order to become more knowledgeable participants in their society (Street & Lefstein, 2007). The notion of emergent literacy was introduced by Clay (1966), which focuses on the observed behaviors of young children who cannot yet read and write. Still, they mimic the actions of reading and writing as a kind of interaction with the exposed printed materials (e.g., stories and picture books). These imitations are considered as the beginning stage of literacy development and can occur long before schooling (Pillips, 2012). Emergent literacy has been described by Koenig (1992) as a phase in which children begin to understand that the printed symbols carry meaning and that people communicate ideas by using signs. Therefore, children's literacy development in the early years can be nurtured through social interaction with adults and through the exposure to written texts and instructional strategies (Kissel, 2011). For this reason, early-childhood educators are always in search of instructional strategies that can help decrease the language development issues and can assist emergent learners to be successful in reading and writing as emergent literacy skills (Brock & Rankin, 2008).

Children in their early ages show their interest in writing literacy skill and in its resources such as crayons, markers, or pencils, in which the development of this interest goes through different stages (Whitehead, 2010). At the beginning, children who are two years old, are aware of such of writing tools (e.g., pencils and crayons) and use them whether to make marks or scribble on papers, walls, boards, and other surfaces. When children reach the age of four years old, most of them can distinguish between drawing and scribbling, in which it is an indicator of the children's development of their motor control and cognitive abilities (Riley, 2007). By the time most children, particularly in age five years old, start to recognize that these written

marks whether scribbling or drawing on paper mean something (Mayer, 2007). By the kindergarten stage, children start to understand letters and sounds and thus the connection of sounds to spoken and written words through adults' interaction and instruction (Kissel, 2011). In this stage most children recognize that writing is a mean of communication and that written forms carry meanings. They are now at the point where they realize verbalized words and signs written on paper, meaningfully illustrate the spoken words. That is why writing development has been identified as a difficult and challenging process, in which it is a symbolic illustration that needs to be developed through integrations of talking, drawing, playing and other skills (Brindley, 2002). In this case, children begin to explore meaning with writing by testing the writing process through conversations, drawing pictures to describe an event or a story and role-playing of writing actions (Hanser, 2006). Students then start to produce real written forms like scribbling or making letter-like forms. Ultimately, they progress, and their scribbles and letter-like shapes gradually take the form of ordinary letters and then into random-letter strings. In addition to that, children are trying to communicate with others in order to create meaning from their emergent writing. Accordingly, a crucial element in the quality of early childhood language leaning is providing instructional activities that involve writing, because emergent literacy involves the years from birth to kindergarten as children learn about the world around them through literacy experiences such as having communications, being read to different texts, observing logos, noticing prints, and listening to others. To the same extent, Brock and Rankin (2008); Palmer and Bayley (2010) explained how promoting children's writing skill is important through involving them into different writing activities ,which enable children to develop different skills while experiencing learning.

2.2.2 Emergent Writing Instructions in the Kindergarten Stage

Writing is a complex skill composed of many different sub-skills, including alphabetic-sound relationship knowledge, spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation (Berninger, 2003). Children begin their writing journey through scribbles, reflecting the process of imitating or copying which is a powerfull tool in activating modeled writing instruction (Hutchin, 2013). Then students move on to make a letter-like form, write letter strings, and eventually write words and simple sentences. Writing is about copying and thinking and creating a meaning, which needs different instructional strategies to be promoted, such as scaffolding, interactive, and shared writing (Hutchin, 2013). Therefore, when children show that they are ready to form letters by themselves, they start to make meaning from these letters by forming words (e.g., their names). These scribbles and series of letters represent the children's attempts to express themselves and communicate their ideas through writing (Hutchin, 2013; Roy, 2010). However, they require intensive guidance and instructional support to progress through the writing process's developmental stages. Therefore, teachers must guide students by nurturing, encouraging, and supporting their interests and individual growth in written language. For example, Gerde and Wasik (2012) discussed the instructions delivered to developing familiarity with the letters in children's own names would enable them to recognize the meaningful function of these letters in a real print. Therefore, understanding and environmental print's role in an authentic setting shows another developmental stage in young learners' literacy achievement. In other words, it might reach the level of reformingthe environmental print by themselves without any kind of help fromtheir teachers (Hall, Simpson, Guo & Bai, 2015).

Instructional emergent writing means providing instructions that serve in scaffolding the writing skill in a very constructive way. It is a kind of daily intervention incorporatedinto kindergartners 'abilities to cause developmentin their writing. Writing in kindergarten can include instructional components related to handwriting, letter writing accuracy and fluency, and spelling (Edwards, 2003). According to Hall and Austin (2004), emergent writing instruction goes through three phases: writing for children, writing with children, and finally, children write by themselves. Writing for children represents the idea of modeling, which is considered the most common instructional strategy used for teaching emergent writing skills (Behymer, 2003). Writing with children demonstrates the concept of observing students while they are writing, in which teachers can support and scaffold students. Both modeling and observing are essential strategies for developing a supportive writing environment (Behymer, 2003). To construct and promote a supportive writing environment, kindergarten teachers should deliver daily writing instructions and regular chances for students to write. Students who participate in daily instructional writing sessions will develop their writing quality more rapidly than those who only write when they want to write (Routman, 2005). Thus, they can reach the level of independent writing (Hall, Simpson, Guo & Bai, 2015).

Effective emergent writing instruction includes a variety of teaching strategies, such as modeled writing, shared writing, guided writing, interactive writing, and independent writing in which different levels of support can be provided based on the students' needs. In addition, instructional writing has a lot of benefits. In fact, instructional writing can help students to develop the communicative aspect of the writing skill along with assisting teachers to apply more communicative effective techniques that serve in being aligned with the international learning standards. In

addition to that, it can help teachers to increase understanding of their students' personal traits including, ideas, voice, and word choice and sentence fluency. For example, guided writing is defined as a small-group instructional structure demonstrated to students who share similar needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Guided writing as an instructional writing strategy provides an important context for teachers' in-the-moment of assessment and immediate instructional scaffolding for the students through producing their own individual texts collaboratively. In a very important sense, writing should be collaborative in which effective writing teachers should collaborate with their students through providing guided practices for their writing (Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006). In addition to that, effective writing instruction should make the elements of good writing and the strategies of good writers more clear, visible, and practical to the naive writers. Therefore, the guiding in guided writing lessons shows the essential nature of the support provided by expert teachers while teaching writing (Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000). Another example of effective instructional writing strategy is the interactive writing. An exceptional teaching strategy supports and build a strong foundation for both reading and writing skills. Interactive writing is a process that involves the teacher and students as co-constructors of written texts. This kind of interaction is called sharing the pen through interactive writing, students learn about the process of writing as they plan and write together with the support scaffolded by teacher.

Generally, teachers need to be eclectic when selecting such of these instructional writing strategies. They must consider their students' actual level, needs and interests. They need to be more professional in the way of implementing these strategies to cause development and progress in writing. Therefore, it is not only about

the instructional strategy itself, but also the way of putting this strategy in a very productive and developmental style.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory has left real and meaningful implications on the learning process. It concentrated on the development of language through being exposed to social and cultural practices. Accordingly, the learning process takes place when learners are being part of a conversational and dialogical context where the language is used as a communicative tool in a real milieu. In that way, learners can construct their practical use of the acquired knowledge and skills of the language (Ormord, 2011).

Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and motivated learning environment for learners in an accordance with their levels, needs, and interests tocause development. The core point here is identifying the kinds of experiences, materials and instructions should be based upon the learners' actual levels. These supportive sources must be dialogical, challenging but achievable at the same time to cause progress. Therefore, Vygotsky 1978 stresses on the importance to distinguish between the actual level and the potential level of the learners' development, which is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It was defined by Vygotsky (1978) as:

> It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 33).

Based on the ZPD concept, Vygotsky (1978) confirms that what learners can achieve with external support or guidance today (e.g., materials, instructions and activities) will assist them to be more independant learners in the future. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) advocates how importance is to determine the actual development level to design new experinces that leaners need to learn and thus development is taken place. Inaddition tothat , Shayer (2003) asserted that the ZPD make a crucial addition in the learning process in which the learners' abilities and skills move from the interpersonal interaction to the intrapersonal functioning. This process is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as the "internalization process" in which the interaction with different external sources is "reconstructed and begins to occur internally" (p. 57), and thus they become independent learners which refers on how the selection of instrctions, activities and materials as types of external sources serve in developing learners' interactions in a meaningful way. Also, Shayer (2003) confirmed that the kind of instructions that precedes the development should be challenging in which it provides an opportunity for learners to construct their learning in a functional way.

The materials, activities and instructions provided to learners based on their ZPDs are called scaffolding. Both ZPD and Scaffolding revolve around the kind of help or support that is provided to the learners to assist them in moving towards the development of new levels (Ormrod, 2016). The Scaffolding concept was first evolved by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), who defined it as a kind of control over the targeted task or activity by an instructor, wherein students focus on completing the elements of the task or activity, which are within their levels, through their teacher's support. Therefore, Scaffolding represented any kind of support that the learners gain on the purpose of expanding their knowledge and skills. Vygotsky (1978) introduced particular features for any kind of Scaffolding supplied for learners including: the

dialogical nature in which it must take place in a social context. Moreover, the provided scaffolding must be challengeable but at the same time achievable. McKenzie (1999) indicated that there are many advantages for scaffolding which are: providing clear guidance for learners, clarifying the instructions' purposes, motivating learners to be on tasks and providing learners with supportive sources. Hence, the internalization process is activated when scaffolding is given at which point learners start to be more responsible while practicing the tasks or activiteis after getting benefits from the external supportive resources.

Generally, Vygotsky's perspectives have left many implications on second language learning ;particularly, in writing as an emergent skill. For example, Ellis (1994) emphasized on the sociocultural theory serves in making language learners become more meaning makers through interaction .In addition to that, Vygotsky's views lead to a notable shift from the product approach to the process approach in language learning in which language is cognitively constructed within a social context (Turuk, 2008). The well-selected of instructions, materials and designed activities provided to learners will support the construction process of the knowledge and skills in language through interaction. As Hammond and Gibbons (2001) indicated that when providing language learners with support like materials, activities, or instructions according to their actual levels, these willl boost students to perform and achieve great improvements in language learning. When teachers give support besides their instructions, they make it possible for children to achieve more challenging skills than they can produce independently (Bruner, 1966). This support can be in the form of conversations, modeling, and feedback related to the delivered instruction. For example, the most critical way to support children in how to write requires modeling as a main instructional strategy in early writing stage (Bodrove, 2006). In writing skill,

teachers need to help their students to reach to the level that they can write by themselves. In a very important sense, they might reach to the level of independency when they recognize that writing is a means of communication, and it has meaning. Therefore, connecting language usage with reality is essential, because language must first be viewed as a way of communication rather than being limited to a particular kind of knowledge or subject matter as one of the sociocultural theory's beliefs (Oliva, 2009). Therefore, their language skills will be functionalized and operationalized to serve different communicative purposes in different social situations.

2.4 The Use of Instructional Writing Strategies in Emergent Literacy Stage

To make growth in emergent writing, emergent learners must be provided many writing opportunities (Mayer, 1979). These opportunities could be activities, tasks, materials, instructions, and guidance to serve in developing writing as an emergent literacy skill. Therefore, emergent learners will be able to develop the critical foundational skills necessary for future writing development (Kissel, 2008). Growth in writing is the goal in kindergarten, so providing various opportunities along with instructional strategies will assist in developing writing in a very constructive way. There are different studies (e.g., Copp, Cabell & Invernizzi, 2019; Farrow, 2019; Puranik, Al Otaiba, Sidler & Greulich, 2014; Rietdijk, Weijen, Janssen, Bergh & Rijlaarsdam, 2018; Schrodt, Elleman, FitzPatrick, Hasty, Kim, Tharp & Rector, 2019; Suarmi & Fatimah, 2019; Zhang & Bingham, 2019) addressed the idea of using different instructional strategies that serve in developing and progressing writing as an emergent literacy skill. For example, a study was carried out by Rietdijk, Weijen, Janssen, Bergh and Rijlaarsdam (2018) which aimed at investigating the use of three specific approaches, which are: communicative writing, process writing, and writing

strategy instruction. These instructional approaches were implemented in writing lessons for upper grades of primary schools. The researchers also investigated the appropriate learning time for writing, teachers' views on writing and writing instruction. The participants were 61 teachers of 45 primary schools in the Netherlands in Holland. Data were collected through questionnaires, stimulated recall interviews and lesson observations. The results indicated that the three specific approaches for writing instruction were insufficiently implemented in Dutch classrooms. The assigned learning time was also inadequate, but the recognized learning time and the degree of teachers' ways to promote active learning were satisfactory. In addition to that a connection was found between teachers' real classroom practices, the allocated learning time, and teachers' attitudes towards their writing instructions. This connection existed from teachers' views in which they showed that writing received less focus than other language skills in the curriculum. For example, in Grades 4 to 6 teachers spent 18% of the available language curriculum time on writing, whereas 26% of the time was spent on reading, and 28% on spelling. Most teachers indicated that they used to give the same writing instruction to all students but modified the assigned task in accordance with their students' level of proficiency and their learning speed. However, less than 10% of the teachers confirmed that they differentiated both the students' level and speed in terms of the provided instructions and exercises.

From another perspective, a case study was conducted by Copp, Cabell and Invernizzi (2019), which explored the ways in which kindergarten teachers use scaffolding while providing writing instruction to support children's development of writing skill. The participants were four kindergarten teachers who were selected purposefully from one school district in the United States. Data were collected through observations, surveys, and semi-structured interviews to explore how kindergarten

teachers use scaffolding strategies while they are delivering their writing instructions. The results revealed that all four teachers in the study increasingly used modeling as one of the scaffolding strategies that they depended on their instructional writing. Modeling was used for the sake of tracking and matching speech to print as the children read. The primary focus of modeling was on providing the formation of a letter, spelling of a word, or a sentence for the child to copy until reach to the level of independent writing. Similarly, a case study was conducted by Puranik, Al Otaiba, Sidler and Greulich (2014) in the United States. It aimed at exploring the nature of writing instruction in real kindergarten classrooms and to depict student writing outcomes. There were 21 teachers and 238 kindergarten children from nine schools participated in the study. The classrooms were videotaped to examine time allocation and the types of writing instructional practices applied in the kindergarten classrooms. A survey was designed to collect data as well. The results gleaned from the study indicated that large variability was observed in the amount of writing instructions implementing in the classroom, where the teachers used high support of scaffolding and low support of scaffolding strategies. As for high support scaffolding the researcher used high support instruction modeling where the teacher exposes the child to a model (e.g., write words for the child to copy, name letters, rereading the words for the child, taking dictation). While, low support was through providing feedback, which is considered as another example of scaffolding. In this kind of support, the teacher acknowledges the child's writing attempts or statements by making appropriate comments or describing the child's action. By the same token, Farrow (2019) implemented a study that aimed at exploring teachers' language and literacy supports during early writing instruction in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms in the US. There were fifteen teachers participated to examine writing instructions during

two interactional and instructional contexts: the first one was morning messages and the second one was small group carried out over the whole year. Data were collected through videotaping and observation, in which teachers were randomly divided into two groups, first group received online training and workshops about ways of implementing instructional strategies such as defining words, asking questions, and enhancing children to talk about vocabulary they read during their reading time. The other group of teachers were randomly assigned to teach within a controlled condition and did not received any kind of training. Teachers were observed in these two different contexts. In the morning message as an instructional activity, teachers used to write to communicate messages for the sake of initial development of early emergent writing skills. As an example, given by the researcher, morning messages can provide extra insight into how teachers support early writing development for kindergartens through giving a chance for children to engage and understand the processes of writing. Whereas, in the small group context, teachers focused on a group who was chosen intentionally to provide them with writing instructions that can illuminate their wiring progress while they were completing certain tasks and levels. The idea of grouping fewer children, let the teacher spend more time with individual children working to scaffold activities at a slightly more intense level than children would be able to do on their own. The results gleaned from the study indicated that when teachers used morning message to reinforce emergent literacy skills related to the alphabetic principle and concepts of print, the teachers' support during writing was sparse. However, during small group writing activities, teachers supported child language related to pragmatics/discourse at higher rates, specifically, when guiding children's attention to the target topic. The results suggested that sharing writing with

young children may be an ideal supportive context for a child language growth through engaging in different meaningful handwriting activities.

From another angle, Schrodt, Elleman, FitzPatrick, Hasty, Kim, Tharp and Rector (2019) conducted a study, which investigated the role of mindset and self-regulation as instructional strategies in developing kindergartners' basic writing and conventional writing skills. The researchers adopted convergent parallel mixed method in which both quantitative and qualitative tools were used. Twenty-seven kindergartners from private elementary school in the mid-South in the US were selected and assigned randomly whether to "a control condition of Writer's Workshop or an experimental condition that featured collaboration, student choice, structured self-regulated strategy instruction, and mindset training embedded in the Writer's Workshop framework" (p. 427). Kindergartens' writing was assessed by the Test of Early Written Language (TEWL) developed by Hresko, Herron, Peak and Hicks (2012) as well as the use of a writing rubric included seven measurement criteria: "(a) drawing, (b) word form, (c) organization, (d) voice/word choice, (e) sentences, (f) conventions, and (g) quantity of letters, words, and sentences" (p. 432). Results revealed that there is a noticeable growth in kindergarteners' basic and conventional writing when applying mindset and self-regulation as instructional strategies along with the Writer's Workshop framework. Moreover, the kindergarteners' motivation and independence were raised.

In the same stream, but in a different context, Suarmi and Fatimah (2019) from Indonesia discussed a position paper, which aimed at explaining how to teach writing to young learners by implementing interactive writing strategy, which is considered as a kind of collaborative writing experience where the teacher and the student work

together to create a piece of writing. The study addressed different techniques related to the interactive writing strategies such as, pen sharing, pre-teaching, planning, pre-writing which shows the teachers' guidance to students when fixing a sentence directly. Furthermore, they discussed that interactive writing could be an explicit strategy for the sake of supporting reading and writing connections. For example, it serves in analyzing new words by saying them slowly, and thus students will learn how to connect sounds with letters, and when they come to write these words, the teacher will scaffold them by spelling out these words letter by letter and adding the appropriate capitalization, which are the basics in emergent writing development. The researchers concluded their paper with the benefits that students can gain when using interactive writing strategy in which they can easily organize their ideas and feel more confident when they write and thus, they will be more interested in writing. Another study showed the practicality of the interactive writing strategy along with modeling strategy, was implemented by Zhang and Bingham (2019) in the US, which targeted the investigation of a professional development intervention model as a chance for enhancing preschool teachers' ways of delivering writing instruction. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design, in which 14 teachers and 112 children were selected to participate in this study. Experimental group teachers received a workshop for four hours and an in-classroom training session through focusing on applying interactive, repeated and modeling writing strategies (e.g., teachers' explanation of the process of writing by think aloud, self-talk and questioning that direct children's attention to what teachers are doing). Results revealed that the intervention group of teachers showed highly significant improvement in their implementation of their instructional writing strategies, and it is reflected on their children's improvement in name writing, letter writing, and letter naming skills. Findings suggested how

importance is the use of embedding explicit modelled writing strategies along with interactive teaching and writing opportunities for young children. This assisted children to understand the writing as a product and as a process at the same time.

The processes of administering instructional learning strategies should be shaped by EFL teachers' views and experiences toward the degree of effectiveness found in these strategies in their real classrooms, and Arabs are not exceptional. There are some studies that addressed the notion of the nature of instructional writing strategies used by teachers for Arab native emergent learners. For example, a study was conducted by Ihmeideh, Al-Basheer and Al-Momani (2008) which aimed at identifying which philosophy Jordanian university student teachers embraced when teaching writing for kindergarteners. Moreover, the study aimed at exploring what kinds of influence that might cooperating teachers have on the student teachers regarding the real teaching practices. Fifty teachers were participated to answer a survey. The results revealed that student teachers were more preferred to apply emergent literacy philosophy than the reading readiness philosophy when teaching writing for kindergarteners, in which teachers should create a rich print-environment that serve in scaffolding children to learn and practice writing in a meaningful way.

In terms of the teachers' views toward the actual practice of their instructional emergent writing strategies, a case study carried out by Alhosani (2008) aimed at understanding how the use of writing process approach serves in enhancing fifth graders' English writing abilities in Saudi Arabian. The participants were selected purposively in which four teachers and five Saudi students were selected purposively in one of American schools in Kansas. In the writing process approach, the teachers used effective modeling strategies. Therefore, data were collected by carrying out

classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, students' think-aloud protocols, and samples from students' writing as part of document analysis. The results indicated that modelling as an effective strategy of writing process approach enhanced students' engagement in selecting their topics of interest, collaborating, and sharing thoughts through applying think aloud techniques as part of modeling along with shared writing. Teachers effectively employed the writing process approach through showing the cyclical nature of writing process approach through prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing. Another study carried out by Al-Qaryoutia, Ihmeidehb, Al bustamid and Homidie (2016) through including different Arabic contexts from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to examine teachers' self-report on their utilization of evidence-based strategies including demonstrating children's writing, displaying children's written attempts, illustrating models of printed texts and playing games on the purpose of supporting Arabic children's emergent literacy skills. Therefore, the participants were 644 kindergarten teachers from four Gulf countries, allocated as follows: 154 teachers from Saudi Arabia, 105 teachers from Qatar, 190 teachers from the UAE, and 195 teachers from Oman. Data were collected through distributing a questionnaire consisting of five dimensions: "phonological awareness, knowledge of understandings of written texts, print awareness, letters and words knowledge, and early writing" (p. 450). The results revealed that teachers highly recommended the use of evidence-based strategies, which serve in delivering knowledge of letters and words along with print awareness. However, teachers still scarcely use evidence-based strategies when teaching emergent learners. In terms of the rank among GCC countries regarding the use of evidence-based strategies; the UAE is reported as the highest country where teachers apply

evidence-based strategies followed by Qatar and Oman, whereas Saudi Arabia is ranked as the lowest country in terms of its users for evidence-based strategies.

Based on the previous studies, scarcity is found in research especially in the idea of understanding EFL teachers' views toward the nature and the kind of instructional emergent writing strategies used in kindergarten stage as a critical and transitional stage. More specifically, little investigation was found in the Arabic context generally and in the Emirati context specifically about the nature of the applied and adopted instructional emergent writing strategies. Such as Curtis (2017) indicated that for preschool teachers, understanding teachers' beliefs and views about their writing instructions and about their children's interest and enjoyment of writing are essential as it may influence their instructional practices.

2.5 Teachers' Views toward the Nature of Emergent Instructional Writing Strategies

Addressing the idea of instructional writing strategies from the teachers' perspectives is also a very important point to show how practical, effective, and functional are the use of instructional writing strategies for kindergartners' writing skill. Therefore, understanding teachers' beliefs about their young learners' interest and enjoyment of writing is important as it may influence their actual practices and pedagogies based on their own school experiences (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). Moreover, understanding teachers' attitudes toward their writing instructions plays an imperative role in their teaching performances. Teachers' beliefs affect their ways of delivering writing instructions to their students, and thus affect their students' behavior and responses to these instructional strategies (Curtis, 2017).

Different studies showed different teachers' views towards the use of instructional writing strategies in their real classrooms based on their experiences. For instance, a case study was carried out by Wheater (2011), which investigated the kinds of instructional strategies that students' and a teacher's view as an assistance in developing emergent learners' writing literacy skills including alphabetic knowledge, print awareness and phonological awareness. Data were collected by carrying out interviews and informal observations. Therefore, seven pre-kindergarten students in a suburban town in New York were selected purposively. Based on teachers' views, the results revealed that students showed high interest and interaction reflected on their positive attitudes towards the use of modeling strategy along with hands-on activities such as, using a dough to model the letter form, which lead to a noticeable development in their alphabetic knowledge and phonological awareness by the end of the academic year. Another study conducted by Curtis (2017), which aimed at investigating kindergarten teachers' views toward the use of some instructional strategies (e.g., modeling of specific writing strategies), and how it affects their ways of delivering their writing instruction. The participants were selected purposively from one of public kindergarten schools located in south Mississippi. Data were collected by distributing a survey that addresses four main dimensions: teachers' beliefs about teaching writing, teachers' beliefs about group writing and frequency of writing, and teachers' expectations. The results revealed that teachers' attitudes toward writing after the intervention of modeling effective writing strategies showed a noticeable positive improvement in which they showed how importance is teaching writing in a meaningful and supportive way. In the same context, Elliott (2014) examined teachers' views toward the use of instructional writing strategies; namely, scaffolding, modelling, and observation. The study applied a collective case study approach.

Therefore, five kindergarten teachers from a public school in South Texas were selected purposively. Data were collected by using classroom observations and interviews. The results revealed that it is important to create a supportive environment through applying effective instructional strategies (e.g., Modelling, scaffolding and observation), which left a noticeable progress in children's independent writing. This result gleaned from the students' samples provided by teachers, in which by the end of the year they were able to write sentences with correct letter formation, words, and punctuation skills. Similarly, White, Hall and Barrett-Tatum (2016) investigated the most effective instructional writing strategies from the perspective of teachers who have experienced teaching writing for kindergarten stage to grade five level. In addition to that, the study aimed to investigate the how often they use these strategies in their real classrooms and what kinds of barriers that they might encounter. Therefore, teachers (*n*=100) across the state of South Carolina were selected randomly to answer a survey. The results revealed that teachers commonly preferred to use modeling, mini lessons, and the writing centers as the most effective instructional strategies. Moreover, teachers valued conferencing with students, shared writing, and invented spelling in which interaction between teachers and students and between students among themselves would be achieved. However, teacher viewed having a little time to teach writing as a main barrier beside the lack of resources and training professional development sessions in teaching writing as an emergent literacy skill.

In a different context, Håland, Home and McTigue (2018) carried out a study which investigated how instructional writing strategies are enacted in Norwegian 1st grade classrooms as EFL learners, and how teachers make decisions based on these instructional writing practices. Teachers (*n*=299) were selected to participate in this study, who were asked to report on their students' writing opportunities; namely, spent

time, the nature of the genre related to texts writing as well as the instructional and pedagogical practices. The results showed that instructional writing practices were various including both skill-based strategies and communication-focused strategies. Moreover, most of the teachers stressed on the idea that they have limited time to teach writing. In addition to that, 19% of them are not granting their students opportunities to independently write their own texts during the whole semester, in which the reason behind that is the prioritization of reading beside the lack of pedagogical knowledge of how to implement appropriate instructional emergent writing strategies.

To sum up, little attention was given to the notion of EFL teachers' beliefs and views toward their application of the instructional emergent writing strategies implanted in their real classroom. As Curtis (2017) stated that it is still unclear how kindergarten teachers conceptualize the importance of emergent writing instruction. Studying teachers' beliefs is critical because teachers are more likely to use recommended practices when they align with teachers' existing ideas about best practices. In this study, addressing views, which include teachers' thoughts and assumptions about the area of pedagogy, particularly in the UAE context, is the aim.

2.6 Summary

In today's world, writing is a critical skill (Graham, 2008). Success in later years is depending upon a strong foundation being built during the early childhood years (Love et al., 2007). Therefore, this chapter demoed the theoretical and conceptual framework, as well as the relevant studies pertinent to the importance of emergent writing literacy and its instruction. The chapter highlighted the main concepts addressed in this study, which are: emergent literacy and emergent writing instruction. Then the chapter discussed the idea of emergent writing literacy along with the main

principles of sociocultural theory considering it as the main framework, which the study was built on. In addition to that, relevant studies were tackled from different angles including: the instructional strategies applied by teachers for their emergent learners and the teachers' views toward the nature of these instructional strategies based on their real experiences as a significant point in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the methods and the procedural stages, which were followed to explore the kinds of instructional emergent writing strategies that teachers apply in their kindergarten classrooms, and how these strategies are perceived. It consists of a clear depiction of the research design, the participants with the technique of sampling selection and the instruments. In addition to that, it describes the data collection procedures, data analysis stages, validity and reliability of the research instruments, and the ethical considerations. The methodology in this study is guided by four research questions as follows:

1. How do kindergarten teachers view the role of using instructional emergent writing strategies on promoting kindergarteners' writing skill?

2. What types of instructional emergent writing strategies do kindergarten teachers report when teaching kindergarten students?

3. What types of challenges or obstacles do kindergarten teachers report when teaching emergent writing?

4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teachers' actual use of writing strategies and the reported ones?

3.2 Research Design

In this study, an exploratory sequential mixed method design was applied in two sequential phases (qual→QUAN). The rationale behind using this mixed method design is to build up a quantitative instrument based on the qualitative results and thus to generalize, assess and test the exploratory results that come from the qualitative

phase (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Therefore, the study started with the qualitative phase to understand what kinds of instructional writing strategies that teachers use in kindergarten stage through carrying out interviews with kindergarten teachers, and based on the results extracted from the interviews, a self-report questionnaire was structured for the quantitative phase for the generalizability of the data.

3.3 Participants

In the participants' selection process, the study went into two consecutive phases. In the qualitative phase, the participants were selected purposively and conveniently based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study as a main feature in the convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, five female kindergarten teachers were interviewed in this study. All of them have had a teaching experience in kindergarten with five years and more. All of them have had experiences in teaching English as a foreign or second language, so they could provide the study with more detailed information about how English writing is taught for EFL kindergarteners. Three of them were Arabs, and three were English native speakers.

In the quantitative phase, the participants were selected through applying simple random sampling technique. To the same extent Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) indicated that simple random sampling is the process of giving an equal and independent chance for everyone defined in the target population to participate in the study. Table 1 displays the demographic information for the 5 participants:

Table 1**:** Participants' Demographic Information for the Qualitative Phase

Participant	Nikisha	Hayley	Kari	Laila	Aisha
Age	44 years	33 years	43 years	35 years	37 years
Nationality	American	New Zealander	American	Emirati	Emirati
Years of teaching experience	10 years	16 years	10 years	7 years	10 years
Grade Level	KG	KG	KG	KG	KG
Courses' taught	English, Math and Science	English, Math & Science	English, Math & Science	English, Math & Science	English, Math & Science
Highest Degree	Bachelor	PhD	Bachelor	Bachelor	Bachelor

The target population were 2,404 kindergarten teachers (English language teachers) from the whole school district in the UAE. Therefore, the selected random sample, who responded to the questionnaire included teachers (n=206), in which (n=147) were Arabs and (n=59) were English native speakers. Table 2 shows the demographic information of the participants:

Table 2: Participants Demographic Information for the Quantitative Phase

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	younger than 25	6	2.9%
	25-30	32	15.5%
	31-35	62	30.1%
	36-40	48	23.3%
	41-45	37	18%
	older than 45	21	10.2%
Years of Experience	1-5	29	14.1%
	6-10	58	28.2%
	11-15	68	33%
	16-20	29	14.1%
	more than 20	22	10.7%
Nationality	Arabic Native Speaker	147	71.4%
	English Native Speaker	59	28.6%
Qualification	Bachelor	151	73.3%
	Master	46	22.3%
	PhD	6	2.9%
	Others (e.g., Diploma)	3	1.5%

3.4 Instrumentation

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher used two instruments in this study to serve in collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Therefore, the instruments were sequenced to represent the exploratory mixed method design as follows: a) Semi-structured interview and b) Self-report questionnaire.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interview

In the first qualitative phase, the researcher applied a semi-structured interview to glean clear understanding about what kinds of instructional strategies that kindergarten teachers use in their real KG2 classrooms, how these strategies are perceived, and what types of challenges they encounter when applying these strategies in their real classroom. From Kvale (2007) perspective he alluded that interview serves in gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon wanted to be studied based on real reflective experiences. The rationale behind starting with semi-structured interview is to give a unique outlook for each participant's experience (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In this study, the interview consisted of nine main questions, in which different sub-questions were branched and elaborated while conducting the interview (See Appendix A).

3.4.2 Self-Report Questionnaire

In the second quantitative phase of the study, a self-report questionnaire was structured and used in accordance with the qualitative results. The main purpose of using a self-report questionnaire is to measure teachers' views and beliefs toward their instructional emergent writing strategies applied in their real practices. In this self-report questionnaire, teachers were required to reflect on their teaching experiences and consciously select a response that best represents their inner views for the purpose of generalizability (Lucas, 2018). Since teachers reflected on their real lived teaching experiences, their responses in the questionnaire tended to be accurate and valid (Demetriou, Ozer & Essau, 2015). In this study, the self-report questionnaire used a 5-point Likert rating scale (1=Never, 2=rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4= usually, 5=Always). The content of the questionnaire was structured based on the results of thematic

analysis generated from the semi-structured interview. Therefore, the questionnaire composed of six categories, which are: 1) Instructional Practice Strategies with ten items; 2) Creative and Supportive Strategies with eleven items; 3) Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing with seven items; 4) Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies with twelve items; 5) Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment for Emergent writers with ten items; and 6) Challenges and Obstacles of Emergent Writing with eight items. The sixth category has different 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). (See Appendix B).

3.5 Data Collection

In this study, data collection procedures went through two sequential phases. In the first phase, qualitative data were collected through carrying out a semi-structured interview. In the data collection procedures, the researchers followed the first four stages of Kvale's (2007) seven stages for processing interview. The first stage was thematizing, which referred to the theoretical and purposive clarification behind this interview study, which the researcher identified at the beginning of the study. The second stage was designing, which involved planning procedures and techniques of how the interview study was conducted including structuring the interview questions and identifying the sample selection, the time, and the place where interviews were conducted. The third stage was conducting, which represented the process of the interviewing. In the conducting process, the nature of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee was essential in collecting data from interview as well as making the participants familiar with the purpose of the study. For instance, Kvale (2007) stressed that the participants must be encouraged by the interviewer while carrying out the interview through showing enthusiastic listening to them, giving

chances for the interviewees to speak freely and to provide clear in-depth responses for the questions, verifying the interviewees' responses by stressing on the main ideas to ensure the validity of the information that generated from the interviewees. Accordingly, the five participants were separately interviewed online through using a Microsoft Team application, in which each interview took forty-five minutes. The fourth stage was transcribing, which included the process of transforming the audio-recorded interview to a written form beside the notes taken by the researcher while conducting the interview.

In the second quantitative phase of the study, the self- report questionnaire was designed though creating an electronic link by the MOE after getting the ethical approval, in which it was distributed among most kindergarten English teachers in the whole school district in the UAE. The purpose of the study and the instructions, which teachers should follow, were clearly stated for the participants at the beginning of the self-report questionnaire to avoid any kind of confusion. The participants' responses were automatically inserted in the EXCEL in form of numbers in tables through giving numerical values for each choice selected by the participants in the Likert scale. Then the final numerical results were transported to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program.

3.6 Data Analysis

In the qualitative phase the researcher followed the last three stages of Kvale's (2007) seven stages of interview process. Therefore, the researchers started to analyze the interview transcripts of the participants' responses through adopting meaning coding and meaning condensation as modes of analysis. According to Kvale (2007) a "meaning coding" is used to code, de-contextualize and categorize participants'

responses (p. 105). While in the "meaning condensation", the researcher tried to compress the meanings expressed by the participants into meaningful themes through rejoining and connecting codes and categories generated from the process of meaning coding, and then tied these themes together (Kvale, 2007, p. 106). Then the researcher verified the interviewees' responses, which refers to the assertion of validity and accuracy of the knowledge extracted from the interview through re-interviewing some of the teachers for more clarification in some points where relevant, and finally reporting the final results of the interview through meaningful extracted themes, which were nine as follows: 1) Structuring the Instructional Practices; 2) Emergent Writing Boosts Creativity; 3) Mundane Practices for Improvement in emergent Writing; 4) Nurturing the Natural Process of Writing; 5) Constant Assessment for Momentous Improvement; 6) Steeping in English Writing; 7) Borderlines Expectations from Emergent Writers; 8) Learning Environment smooths the way for Emergent writers; and 9) Incongruities in Emergent Writing.

In the quantitative data, numerical data demonstrated in the EXCEL sheet were analyzed through transferring it to the SPSS program with version 22. Therefore, descriptive analysis was applied through extracting the means and standard deviations to compare items of the questionnaire in terms of which is more highly frequent items than others. To make the quantitative data more synthesized, total mean scores and standard deviations for each category in the questionnaire were calculated to show the degree of differences among the six main categories from the teachers' perspectives. In addition to that, to check whether there is a significant difference among the first five categories (types of strategies) or not, a paired sample t-test was carried out though using SPSS, in which the final results were represented in tables following American Psychological Association (APA) style.

3.7 Validity

Due to the nature of the study, which was a mixed method, different kinds of validity were established. In the qualitative phase, the content validity of the interview questions was checked by a panel of judge composed of three faculty members from College of Education in UAEU. Some modifications were happened especially in the number of the questions in which they became 9 instead of 12 and the language of the questions was revised to be more understandable when conducting the interview. It is important to mention that the interview questions were structured based on ideas and notions found in the literature, which served in enhancing the content validity of the questions (Taherdoost, 2016). In terms of the validity of the knowledge and information extracted from the interview itself, the researcher tried to elaborate and stress on the ideas generated by the interviewees through verifying and giving more interpretations to make sure that this is exactly what the interviewees meant, which is so-called in research interpretive validity (Gay, Geoffrey & Airasian, 2011). As Kvale (2007) alluded that validation in the interview study means to keep checking and questioning with the interviewee, which is also called "communicative validity" (p. 124). In communicative validity, the "interviewee becomes the relevant partner for a conversation about correct interpretation, involving what has been termed 'member validation" (Kvale, 2007, p. 125).

In the quantitative phase, the content validity of self-report questionnaire was established though revising the content and the structure of it. Therefore, to ensure that all the included items are essential and representative to the targeted construct domain (emergent writing instructional strategies) (Boudreau, Gefen & Straub, 2001), a panel of judge consisted of three faculty members from College of Education in the UAEU

checked the content of the questionnaire. As Taherdoost (2016) indicated that "The judgmental approach to establish content validity involves literature reviews and then follow-ups with the evaluation by expert judges or panels" (p. 30). Therefore, some modifications were made especially on the language of the questionnaire, and the number of the items. Moreover, Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated using EXCEL for each item based on the three experts' rating when they assessed each item through using assessing rate scale: "not necessary=1, useful but not essential =2 and essential =3" (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 30), and the value was (0.897), which indicated that the content of the questionnaire was valid (See Appendix C). According to Gilbert and Prion (2016) "When the number of panelists rating an item ''essential'' is more than half, but less than all, the CVR is somewhere between 0 and 0.99. If none of the raters marks the item as ''essential,'' the CVR would be 0." (p. 531). In addition to that, because the self-report questionnaire was structured based on valid results extracted from the interview, this served in enhancing the validity of the questionnaire content as one of the purposes behind using the exploratory mixed method design (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

3.8 Reliability

In the qualitative phase, reliability in the interview study means objectivity of the data produced by interviewees (Kvale, 2007, p. 120). Objectivity is established in this study through verifying the thoughts uttered by the interviewees in a meaningful way. Verification was happened through elaborating more on the interviewees' responses while conducting the interview for the sake of gaining clear understanding and interpretations of what the interviewees meant. Therefore, in some points, the researcher re-interviewed some interviewees for more clarification and understanding

of what they exactly meant in some particular views. In addition to that, objectivity was achieved from the commonality found in most interviewees' responses, which is so-called "intersubjective agreement" (Kvale, 2007, p. 121). Another source that served in enhancing objectivity was through having two more researchers who participated in the process of transcription and analysis of the interviews. For instance, Kvale (2007) alluded that when transcribers and analyzers have similar transcriptions and analysis, this signifies the reliability of the data extracted from the interview.

In terms of establishing reliability in the quantitative phase, internal consistency reliability was checked through carrying out Cronbach Alpha Coefficient analysis by SPSS. As Popham (2014) indicated that internal consistency reliability showed how the items of the tool [self-report questionnaire] are functioning in a consistent manner. Based on the results extracted from Cronbach Alpha Coefficient analysis, the value was (0.954), which referred that the self-report questionnaire was a reliable tool. To the same extent Gliem and Gliem (2003) indicated that "The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale" (p. 87).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In this study, ethical considerations were taken into account from different angles. In terms of the qualitative phase, the researcher ethically considered the participants' willingness to participate in this study as a main criterion for participants' selection. Accordingly, the purpose of the study was introduced to the participants before conducting the interview study as well as a form of consent was provided to them describing all aspects related to the study, and how the results of the interviews would be used in a very confidential way (See Appendix D). In addition to that, to

keep privacy and confidentiality, the participants' real names were not used; instead, pseudonyms were used. Furthermore, confidentiality of the data was deemed through keeping the Audio tapes from any external use; once the study finished, all tapes would be damaged (Creswell, 2012). In the quantitative phase, a consent form was introduced at the beginning of the self-report questionnaire, in which the purpose of the questionnaire, its instructions, and the ways of using its results were stated clearly (See Appendix B), and thus the participant had the freedom to continue answering the questionnaire or not.

3.10 Summary

This study aimed at exploring the nature of instructional emergent writing strategies from the kindergarten teachers' perspectives. Therefore, the researcher applied an exploratory sequential mixed method design through using both qualitative and quantitative tools in a consecutive manner. In the qualitative phase five kindergarten teachers were selected purposively to participate in the interview. Based on the results generated from the first phase, a quantitative tool (self-report questionnaire) was structured, in which participants were selected randomly through giving a chance to all kindergarten English teachers to answer the questionnaire for the sake of generalizability. In addition to that different kinds of validity and reliability for both qualitative and quantitative tools were established due to the nature of the study as well as ethical considerations were taken into account.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This study is aimed at exploring what kinds of instructional emergent writing strategies do teachers apply in their kindergarten classrooms. Moreover, the study captures the teachers' views toward the practicality of these instructional writing strategies in developing writing as an emergent literacy skill for kindergarteners. The study employed a mixed method design in which both qualitative and quantitative instruments were used in a sequential fashion. This chapter apprizes the main results extracted from the qualitative phase followed by reporting the quantitative results. The study tried to answer the following guided research questions:

1. How do kindergarten teachers view the role of using instructional emergent writing strategies on promoting kindergarteners' writing skill?

2. What types of instructional emergent writing strategies do kindergarten teachers report when teaching kindergarten students?

3. What types of challenges or obstacles do kindergarten teachers report when teaching emergent writing?

4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teachers' actual use of writing strategies and the reported ones?

4.2 Results

Q1. How do kindergarten teachers view the role of using instructional emergent writing strategies on promoting kindergarteners' writing skill?

To answer this question an interview was carried out with five kindergarten teachers to capture their views toward the nature of the instructional strategies that

they applied when teaching writing for emergent learners. Based on the interview analysis, ten themes were generated from the informants' responses. The nine themes were: 1) Structuring the Instructional Practices; 2) Emergent Writing Boosts Creativity; 3) Mundane Practices for Improvement in Emergent Writing; 4) Nurturing the Natural Process of Writing; 5) Constant Assessment for Momentous Improvement; 6) Steeping in English Writing; 7) Borderlines Expectations from Emergent Writers; 8) Learning Environment smooths the way for Emergent writers; and 9) Incongruities in Emergent Writing.

Theme #1: Structuring the Instructional Practices

Providing well-structured instructional strategies when teaching writing as an emergent literacy skill, serves in scaffolding emergent writers in a very constructive way. Most of the teachers stressed on using the instructional strategies in a gradual release form based on the emergent writing stages which start form scribbling and end with forming correct letters and words. The most common used strategies mentioned by the participants were modeling, think aloud, shard writing, guided writing, interactive writing, free writing, and the graphic organizers. Most of them stressed on how importance is using modeling as an essential teaching strategy. Moreover, it is very crucial to think aloud while the teacher is modeling and processing the written message or the drawing as the participants stated in their responses. In addition to that, most of the participants indicated that they applied shared writing strategy as a kind of scaffolding in which kindergarteners with teacher can work and share their experiences in groups through drawing and forming letters along with using different materials. Another instructional strategy that commonly used by teachers is the guided writing as a kind of scaffolding also. Some of the teachers use to use this strategy with low

performance students through individually guiding them step by step until developing the target skill, while others use it as a mini lesson through dividing the class into groups based on the students' levels and start to guide them while practicing a particular writing skill, especially when teaching the directionality in both English and Arabic language. Furthermore, teachers showed in their views how crucial the use of interactive and free writing through integrating writing with different content areas, learning centers and hands-on activities, as well as using interactive morning message, sharing the pen, activating peer talking, participating in fun outdoor activities, reading stories, modelling stories, creating story map, and labeling pictures by using word dictionary posted on the wall. Some teachers use graphic organizers (e.g., charts, Venn diagrams, graphing, story maps and KWL charts) to teach children how to organize their thoughts and at the same time it is a kind of drawing that let learners to communicate their ideas in a meaningful and representative way. In addition to that most teachers indicated that children got confused in the writing directionality when they start to learn English writing, in which they are still influenced by their Arabic and write from right to left instead of left to right. Teachers found that children need instructions related to the way English is written as opposed to Arabic, how to write sounds that we hear in words, how to add details to writing, and for the higher-level students how to write a sentence to talk about something. Some of the teachers use sign language as a strategy to teach and raise children's awareness of directionality in English writing. For example, one of the teachers said that she uses to use colors as signs in which green color indicates the left direction and red color represents the right direction. So, everything in the classroom from their name plates, the door, and all writing sheets have little green and red hands on them, which will help them to remember the direction whenever they have the chance to write.

Here are some responses taken form the participants when they were asked what kinds of effective instructional teaching strategies that they apply in their real classrooms:

Laila: As a teacher, students' needs modeling strategies on how to form letters and write words. It is very important to show them first how it is done. Another strategy I use with low students to support them is guided writing through guiding them individually step by step and let them copy names, words they like, letters and from there I start to give them more independent activities for them to work on writing center. Moreover, I use shared writing with small groups of students each day and show them how to form letters, writing from left to right, teach them sounding letters and drawing picture to connect it to their writing in which they practice and share their writing among each other. Also, it is very important that I think aloud before writing while processing my message or the drawing, explain how to plan what to write and teach them how words and letters are created and formed.

Aisha: I love shared writing through using roll paper for free writing where the students are free to write and they look at each other and have a nice communication in groups I noticed they just learn from each other…. Also, during the guided writing lesson, usually it is a mini lesson, I have about 4 groups of students with the same needs, so I use different materials to support and guide them.... Also, I love to do free writing, where the students have a free choice to draw and write and use any material they love. During the free time, I ask them to label their picture by writing words or sentence and I tell them they can refer to the wall word dictionary where they can copy the words.

Hayley: During class time I do lots of model writing with the children. We rewrite stories that we have read, we make or own. We learn how to use a different graphic organizer as an example bubble map, bridge map, circle map (GOs) every 2 weeks and they really help the children learn how to express, plan and show. T-charts, Venn diagrams, graphing, story maps, KWL charts… etc. – by the end of the year my children are capable of sing different graphic organizers to show different things.

Kari: I try to model and then allow students to participate or try it out for themselves. Students independently practice writing daily either at centers or in the focus group. I have modelling, think aloud, interactive writing, shared writing through sharing the pen, learning centers, writing across the curriculum, interactive morning message, fun outdoor writing activities with sidewalk chalk…etc.

Hayley: Normally around the end of term 2 the children start writing from right to left instead of left to right – it is a completely normal developmental stage for second language learners however it is sometimes difficult to fix straight away. At the start of the children learn left and right using the colors green and red on their corresponding hands. Everything in the room from their name plates, the door, and all writing sheets have little green and red hands on them and this help them to remember which is which.

Theme #2: Emergent Writing Boosts Creativity

The authentic and real practices of emergent writing boosts creativity. Most teachers try to design and employ different effective activities through integrating them to different real themes, events, and content areas. For example, some teachers in the interview said that they use reading respond activity through giving the chance for children to create their end for any story they read whether by drawing or writing,

or they can draw their favorite character. Others try to integrate writing with other content areas such as, science and math, which gives children the opportunity of practicing writing consistently. Some of the teachers as they indicated in the interview, use a role play center or a block center and integrate writing within these centers. For example, students can play a role of a doctor, and they can use pencils, papers, and flashcard to write something showing the role of the doctor. To scaffold their writing, some teachers posted wall dictionary as a source to support their children's writing. Some teachers try to connect writing within a context of daily life experience to make writing more interesting and creative. For instance, some teachers use photos of real things and people, which are selected based on children's interest and they give the chance for children to draw, write or create a story map about these photos. Most of the participants stressed on the idea of how importance is integrating arts and creativity. This integration helps in inspiring the children to build a strong foundation for emerging writing skills. Here are some reflective responses uttered by teachers when they talked about how emergent writing could boost creativity for children:

Aisha: After reading, I do read respond, either by draw my favorite part of the story, choose a new cover, or draw different ending. Of course, I am using other activities to support such as art and craft, roleplay area and blocks... In the roleplay center, the students are acting as a doctor. So, I put some pencils and paper with picture word flashcards, so the students have a chance to write. It is also the same in block center after they build a tower or a hospital, they use the paper and crayons to draw what they build and label their drawing using wall dictionary.

Laila: I focus on letter formation in context and connect it to their daily live to make it more meaningful for them. Practice writing consistently every day so they can learn how to write even if it is a large string of letters or even scribbling.

Nikisha: It is very important to have a writing center in your classroom as it helps students to discover their love of writing. I believe it is an effective tool to help them achieve this if we set a writing center. When creating a writing center, you want to designate a space that will allow you to make accessible the tools needed for the craft.

Hayley: I integrate writing opportunities into every aspect of your lessons and classrooms. Use arts and creativity to help inspire the children to build a strong foundation for emerging writing skills.

Kari: A lot can be taught just by using an interactive morning message. I also try to teach minilessons that focus on different writing skills such as sounds that we hear in words, how we can add details to our writing, how we can use pictures to support our writing…etc. I also try to incorporate basic writing into different areas of the curriculum such as labeling things in science or math and writing opportunities in all the centers. I also try to make the writing as authentic as possible.

Theme #3: Mundane Practices for Improvement in Emergent Writing

Practicing writing mundanely and consistently was one of the most common and effective ways mentioned by the teachers in the interview. They focused on the idea of letting children to practice writing everyday even if it is scribbling. This mundane practice will make children more familiar with writing as a meaningful and communicative system where children can express about their thoughts through it. In addition to that giving opportunities for children to practice will enhance their fine

motor skills through using different manipulatives such as dough, sand, pencils, and papers…etc., and thus their writing skills (e.g., letter formation, sight words, directionality, writing names) will be developed and promoted. Teachers indicated that it is important to let children keep practicing through interactive writing, invented spelling and integrating meaningful topics where children can express their ideas whether by drawing or writing as explicitly elaborated in their following responses:

Laila: I focus on letting my students to write every day even if their writings are scribbling. Writing must be consistently. Students must write every day until they become familiar with their writing.

Hayley: I plan writing activities in every center every day, to ensure that all children are constantly exposed to writing… Children learn through play, through practicing writing within a context and applying interactive writing through using meaningful topics and having opportunity to write across MOE curriculum.

Kari: I Give them many opportunities to write. I Give them a lot of opportunities to see me write in English and model things like directionality and forming letters…. Practice, practice, practice…. The more children have opportunities to write, the better they will develop their skills.

Nikisha: I spend a great deal of time giving students continuous opportunities to improve their fine motor skills. This is accomplished by allowing students to work with various manipulatives during center time. There is a writing center that is setup in my classroom, so students can practice.

Theme #4: Nurturing the Natural Process of Writing

Teachers viewed how importance of nurturing the belief that writing is a meaningful, social, and emotional skill. Connecting writing through authentic themes serves in developing social and emotional skills when communicating ideas in written forms. For example, one of the teachers said that children like to practice letter formation through writing their names. Giving this opportunity for children will let them to recognize letter formation as a meaningful skill instead of dealing with it as a discrete skill. Therefore, practicing writing through themes or real events will allow children to see how their social and emotional skills are evolving and where on the egocentrism scale they are. This will raise the children's recognition that they can write and express about their thoughts in this stage, and thus they will believe themselves as writers through realizing that drawing, writing letters and even simple words are acceptable forms of a meaningful writing as reflected in the following views:

Laila: Practice name writing as it has meaning to the children. My children are interested in learning to write the letters in their name specially the first letter…. They practice and practice writing every day and they become familiar with writing as a meaningful skill.

Hayley: Practicing writing through authentic themes allows me to see how their social and emotion skills are developing and where on the egocentrism scale they are.

Kari: A lot of students start out thinking that they can't write so one of the first needs is just to let them come to think of themselves as writers and realize that even drawing and writing some letters is an acceptable form of writing.

Theme #5: Constant Assessment for Momentous Improvement

The assessment process in emergent writing takes the form of continuity for the sake of momentous improvement. Teachers in the interview indicated that it is important to diagnose children's writing level at the beginning of the academic year, and the easiest test for that is to ask them to write their names. Through the test, teachers try to measure the children's abilities based on specific criteria including the directionality, letter formation, the pencil grip, and the capitalization. Based on the diagnostic test, teachers start to structure instructional strategies and activities based on the children's level. During the exposure to these instructional strategies and activities, teachers use to observe and monitor children's writing development through focusing on their abilities to write their names, dates, directionality from left to write, capitalization at the beginning of the sentence, full stop, letter formation and spaces between words. Different assessment strategies were mentioned by the participants. For example, some of them use a constant feedback positively in which they keep constantly developing the children. In addition to that, teachers use a booklet as a kind of portfolio that include all the children's work from the beginning of the academic year until the end, and thus it will help both teachers and parents to see how the progress goes in their children's writing and drawing abilities. Some of them use independent writing self-assessment chart to let children to self-assess their writing during the writing center time, and some of them use peer assessment as a kind of shared writing where experiences, ideas and thoughts are exchanged in a very constructive and supportive way. For example, for each writing sample children know how to self-assess their writing performance by using the rubric and drawing amount of orange dots to show what level they think they are at, and thus it will help them to be more independent and realize their abilities in writing. In addition to that teachers

give opportunity for children to choose their 'best' or favorite piece of work and they peer-assess it with a partner. This allows the children to feel comfortable when judging their own and others work and expressing their opinions; it also allows for children to become used to getting feedback and learning different ways to cope with it. Here are some responses extracted from teachers' views when they were asked about their assessment strategies used when teaching emergent writing.

Aisha: I look at the students' abilities by doing diagnostic test to find out their level of writing… So, the easiest test is writing their names! … and I use the basic writing criteria which are holding pencil, writing from left to the right, letter formation and capital letter. Then later during the activities, I use specific criteria to measure their development including writing name, date, write from left to the right, the capital letter at the beginning of the sentence, full stop, spaces. In addition, in the free writing sessions, I use to focus on their drawing picture draw in details, and color beside the other mentioned criteria.

Hayley: I start with observing a child and seeing how comfortable they are in a writing environment. From there we set goals together… I created a writing rubric at my school which has different stages. The children know the stages and what is expected at each stage. For each writing sample they do they know to self-assess it by using the rubric and drawing 'x' amount of orange dots to show what level they think they are at. Once week the children choose their 'best' or favorite piece of work and the peer-assess it with a partner. Once a month with their theme writing sample, we class assess 5 samples a day. This allows the children to feel comfortable judging their own and others work and expressing their opinions. Every month the theme sample gets put into

their portfolio and once a term we look back at their theme writing and they have a chance to re-assess their writing.

Laila: In my classroom, I always provide students with writing feedback, so they can improve their writing. I also made a writing booklet which includes letter writing, sentence writing and drawing to report their progress. I use independent writing self-assessment chart for my students to assess their writing during the writing center time. The assessment includes the emergent writing skills like name writing, directionality, letter formation, writing stages (drawing, scribbling, letter-like formation, letters strings, invented spelling) The assessment provide me with the data I need for each group of students and let me follow their progress in their writing process, which group need more guidance and teacher's support. I used my data to know what kind of supportive strategies I will use for my next lesson. Also, I know what the next step is for each student to develop on their writing.

Theme #6: Steeping in English Writing

Learners' attitudes have a great impact on the way of selecting and delivering the instructional strategies for emergent writing. Teachers in the interview indicated that children are not patient, and they do not like to write when they feel writing as a structured practice with a lot of directions. They have the believe that they cannot write in this stage, and thus lose their motivation ang joy when learning writing. However, when they have free writing, they enjoy writing in which a room is given for their creativity especially when they use manipulatives to form letters in a meaningful way. Children showed their eagerness when teachers give them freedom in writing opposed to using structured directions to write. The following responses reflect teachers' views

how as educators should change the attitude of feeling not being able to write as emergent learners:

Kari: I have noticed that they enjoy writing more when they have some freedom to write as the choose and I wish that we didn't have to give them so much specific writing direction in the learning centers. I wish we could give them more room for creativity… Many of them think they cannot write. They have to be convinced that they can and to let them see themselves as writers.

Aisha: Regarding to the students, I notice lack of motivation towards writing activities when writing is delivered with structured instructions.

Laila: I think they are not patient they want to play with blocks all the time and they do not want to write, and this is normal!

Nikisha: Children see the manipulatives as toys and are more eager to take their time and try to make the letters opposed to using pencils to write.

Theme #7: Borderlines Expectations from Emergent Writers

There should be specific outcomes and expectations that teachers must achieve during the stage of teaching emergent writing for kindergarteners. Considering the children's needs and interests along with the assigned outcomes is an important step to cause development in writing as an emergent literacy skill. Children in kindergarten stage are expected to develop drawing, letter formation, directionality, writing their names, writing sounds that they hear in some words, some basic punctuations, writing simple sentences and composing sentence when labeling pictures for exceptional students. Teachers stressed on raising children's awareness as second language

learners to differentiate between Arabic and English writing system. These expectations sometimes are achieved differently based on the child's level and ability, which sometimes are not satisfying parents or administration as mentioned by the teachers in their following views:

Aisha: I must look at the writing outcomes that provides by MOE (Ministry of Education), So, I plan depend on students' needs to be able to achieve the outcomes. The outcomes such as write simple sentences, directionality, letter formation, writing words, some basic punctuation such as full stop and capital letter, writing sentences ...etc.

Hayley: By the end of KG 2 I ensure that each child has been successful in some type of writing and they can all recognize and write their name somehow – may it be in pictures or letters.

Kari: I look at areas such as their letter formation ability, picture drawing ability and the number of details they put, their ability to describe what they drew and assign meaning to it, and their ability to write sounds that they hear in words.

Theme #8: Learning Environment Smooths the Way for Emergent Writers

Creating an effective learning environment to pave the way for emergent learners is one of the most important components in teaching English writing. Teachers in their views showed the creativity in selecting materials and activities that support and scaffold children while they are learning English writing. For example, some teachers create centers to support the writing such as playdough, water, sands, blocks where they have to shape letters, words and sight words, and where they have to use alphabet magnate to build the words or sentences. While some of them supply children

with resources that serve in developing their ability to compose and create their own sentences. For instance, using a dictionary wall where every new word the children learn either the letter word or theme words, is inserted in the dictionary wall in front of the students to keep them using these words whenever it's possible in their writing. In addition to that some teachers use picture-word flashcards and post it on the wall, so the students can refer to it when they do write and thus it serves in activating their vocabulary repertoire especially when they do free writing. Other teachers use the writing centers where different materials are used such as, papers, crayons, pencils, flashcards about letter or theme, books about letter or theme, blackboard, whiteboard, markers…etc. Also, they let the students to use technologies such as writing on the smart board and HP touch screen using paint application and other educational software. Furthermore, some teachers ask parents to donate iPad and download some application where the students can practice writing (e.g., abcya.com) because children love to have fun when they practice writing. Using technology helps these children who are digital natives feel more comfortable and willing to be innovative during writing. Teachers indicated how importance to practice writing consistently through employing writing activities in each center like reading center, art center, science center, outdoor center…etc. This integration of writing in each center will create a learning environment that gives them more opportunities to be familiar more with writing. Therefore, children can develop at different times and if they remain positive about the stage; they will continue to blossom. It is not only about providing effective learning environment physically, but also emotionally and socially through building up a good relationship between teachers and children, which serves in creating a scaffolded learning environment where children feel comfortable and motivated when

they write. Here are some answers from the teachers when they asked about how they create an effective learning environment for teaching emergent writing:

Aisha: I always make sure that students are confident in writing, so I use word wall, or I called a dictionary wall, which includes every new word we learn… I use picture-word flashcards and post it on the wall so the students can use it when they do write activities especially when they do free writing… teachers need to educate themselves and look for new knowledge and information about teaching skills in and teaching kindergarten. Building a good relationship with students and parents is a key word to better education, better teaching, and learning.

Laila: It is very important to give them time to practice and provide them with tools like flashcards, word sights, paper and martials that can help them progress in their writing. I include writing in each center, so they will find writing activities in each center like reading center, art center, science center…etc.

Laila: The writing skill must include in each center in any classroom, the learners become more engage and interest in writing. For example, I have outdoor center to teach writing in which children can write by using sands, paly dough, shaving cream, or chalk to write in the floor.

Hayley: I integrate technology into all my lessons such as, computers, MP4 players, tablets, Labeeb, sound boards… etc. This helps these children who are digital natives feel more comfortable and willing to be innovative during writing. It is important that the children can record it, speak it, talk to their peers about it.

Nikisha: Be a role model, learn through play with your children, get involved as observer not a teacher, let the children's interests guide their writing experiences.

Theme #9: Incongruities in Emergent Writing

There are some incongruities or challenges encountered by teachers in their emergent writing teaching practices. All of them indicated that one of the most incongruities while teaching emergent writing is the limited time provided for teachers whether time for children to develop the writing skill or time for teachers to build up their professionality in their ways of teaching emergent writing. In fact, teachers suffered from parents who always expect that their children should be able to write full sentence; however, they don't know such of the skill, writing, needs a lot of time and efforts from both teacher and children in order to be developed. Parents don't believe that there are still some children face difficulties in gripping pencils when tracing letters or words; it's not a magic like what parents believe that children must be able to write in a very short period of time within this critical and sensitive stage. Children need a lot of skills to develop before composing such as pencil grip, penmanship, recognition of letter formation, and recognition of the English writing system as a second language. Unfortunately, teachers found difficulty in changing parents' attitudes towards the ways of learning and teaching writing to their children. Parents still believe in the traditional ways through copying and tracing as teachers indicated in the interview, which makes their mission very difficult. These ways do not serve in making children recognize the meaningfulness of writing as a communicative skill. In addition to that, teachers stressed on the lack of professional development programs related to the targeted goals accomplished for teaching writing as a skill, the considered levels, the teaching materials, the resources, the assessment and teaching strategies that support and help teachers to be updated with new emergent writing teaching practices. Moreover, most of the EMTs teachers faced difficulty in dealing with learners who learn English as a second language and who get confused when they are

dealing with two different writing systems. In fact, there are many students who are still learn how to speak English language and it's normal to find difficulty in composing because writing in its nature need a lot of time in order to be developed in a meaningful way. As one of the teachers said that children are literally learning English, so sometimes it takes more time to see as much progress as it might with a child who is only speaking English. Here are some incongruities reflected by teachers based on their experiences:

Aisha: Time is one of the most difficulties or problem that I face in teaching writing. Moreover, the school is not taking any action. Action I mean, there is no PD sessions for teachers to develop their teaching skill in writing specifically, or even a program to help teachers, students and parents to improve their writing… Program I mean, the goal, the participants, like who is targeting, the materials and resources, the assessments, and evaluation tools…. Parents! Most of the parents are not aware of their children academic level. They still believe in traditional way of teaching writing. They love homework and it should be tracing and copying.

Kari: most of my students still have difficulty even speaking a whole sentence in English so it is difficult for them to compose one, so sometimes it takes more time to see as much progress as I might with a child who is only speaking English.… It is also a challenge because they are learning 2 different writing systems at the same time so sometimes, they get confused between the two languages.

Q2. What types of instructional emergent writing strategies do kindergarten teachers report when teaching kindergarten students?

To answer this question descriptive statistics were used to extract means and standard deviations for each main category and for each item under each category. In

addition to that, to statistically compare means among the five categories, a paired sample t-test was carried out for the sake of giving more meaningful interpretations of the data.

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, results signified that Nurturing Emergent Writing Strategies were reported as the most frequent strategies used by teacher by scoring the highest mean with (M= 4.55; SD= 0.464) followed by Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment with a mean score of (M= 4.53; SD= 0.485). Then Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies was rated as the third frequent strategies used in the classroom with a mean score of (M= 4.38; SD= 0.526). Whereas Instructional Practice Strategies and Creative and Supportive Strategies were reported as the least frequent strategies applied in the classroom by scoring (M=4.35; SD= 0.518) and (M=4.34; SD= 0.509) respectively.

Table 3: Teachers' Self Report on Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies

Category	M	SD
Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing	4.55	0.464
Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment	4.53	0.485
Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies	4.38	0.526
Instructional Practice Strategies	4.35	0.518
Creative and Supportive Strategies	4.34	0.509
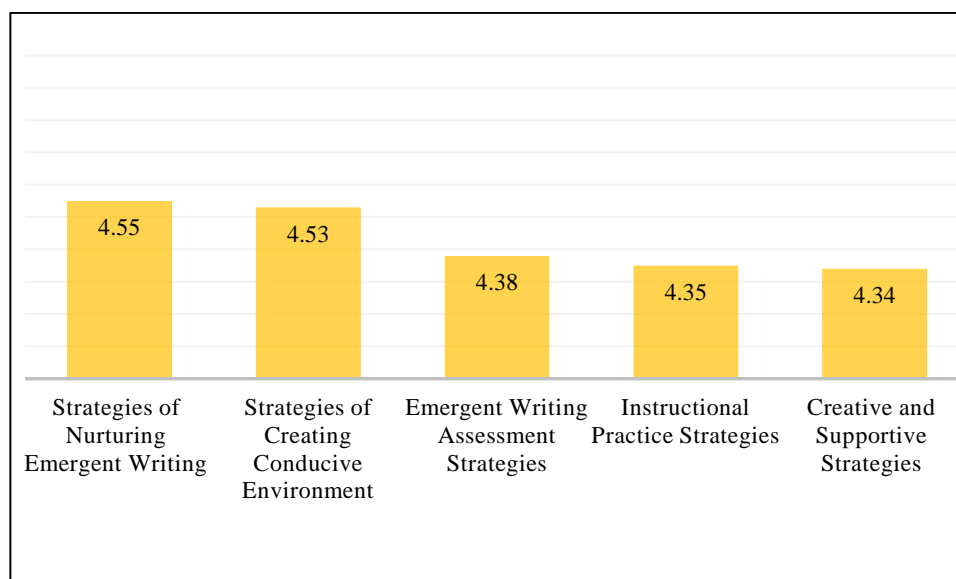
Figure 1: Teachers' Self Report on Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies

For more explanation, each category is explained in detail. For example, Table 4 displays teachers' self-report on the frequent Nurturing Emergent Writing Strategies employed by them. Results indicated that teachers always give kindergarteners opportunities to watch them while modeling English writing in a natural way with a mean score of (M= 4.65; SD= 0.775) followed by treating emergent writing as a meaningful communicative skill by scoring a mean of (M= 4.63; SD= 0.648). In addition to that teachers report that they used to use natural sources (e.g., dough, sand, clay, etc.) to make kindergarteners practice writing (M= 4.56; SD= 0.722).

The fourth frequent strategy reported by teachers is supporting every attempt in emergent writing with a mean score of (M= 4.55; SD= 0.659). Using emergent writing as a tool for refining the kindergarteners' fine motor skill and giving them opportunities to practice writing among themselves and to learn from each other, were rated similarly wit mean scores of (M= 4.52; SD= 0.638) and (M= 4.52; SD= 0.710) respectively. While, incorporating writing activities in every learning center in the

classroom, was reported as the least frequent applied strategy with a mean score of (*M*= 4.43; *SD*= 0.672).

Table 4: Teachers' Self Report on Nurturing Emergent Writing Strategies

Item	M	SD
A1. I give kindergarteners opportunities to watch me (as I) //how I // model English writing directionality and letter formation.	4.65	0.775
A2. I treat emergent writing as a meaningful communicative skill.	4.63	0.648
A3. I use natural sources (e.g., dough, sand, clay, etc.) to make kindergarteners practice writing.	4.56	0.722
A4. I support every attempt in emergent writing.	4.55	0.659
A5. I use emergent writing as a tool for refining the kindergarteners' fine motor skill.	4.52	0.638
A6. I give kindergarteners opportunities to practice writing among themselves and to learn from each other.	4.52	0.710
A7. I incorporate writing activities in every learning center in my classroom.	4.43	0.672

Table 5 demonstrates teachers' self-report on Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment. Results showed that teachers always use different materials in their writing centers (e.g., papers, crayons, pencils, flashcards, books) to enrich the writing experience (*M*= 4.72; *SD*= 0.530).

Table 5: Teachers' Self Report on Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment

Item	M	SD
S1. I use different materials in my writing centers (e.g., papers, crayons, pencils, flashcards, books) to enrich the writing experience	4.72	0.530
S2. I try to build a strong social and emotional bond with kindergarteners so that they feel comfortable in their writing.	4.71	0.523
S3. I use classroom resources (e.g., dictionary wall, flashcards) which serve in developing independent writing.	4.70	0.573
S4. I have to make nonthreatening environments in writing to reassure the kindergartener's confidence.	4.61	0.613
S5. I try to equip and update myself with new knowledge, information, strategies to be used in emergent writing.	4.53	0.590
S6. I give kindergarteners opportunities to practice writing naturally in writing and reading centers, art, and science centers, etc.	4.52	0.660
S7. I select materials and activities carefully to support and scaffold kindergarteners' writing.	4.50	0.738
S8. I use manipulatives (e.g., playdough, water, sands, blocks) to support writing.	4.43	0.810
S9. I use technology (e.g., computers, MP4 players, tablets, Labeeb, sound boards), which entice kindergarteners to work on writing.	4.40	0.813
S10. I use outdoor activities to let kindergarteners practice writing.	4.21	0.896

Trying to build a strong social and emotional bond with kindergarteners to make them feel comfortable in their writing, and using classroom resources (e.g., dictionary wall, flashcards) which serve in developing independent writing, were reported as the second frequent strategies used to create a conducive environment with mean scores of (*M*= 4.71; *SD*= 0.523) and (*M*= 4.70; *SD*= 0.573). Creating nonthreatening environments in writing to reassure the kindergarteners confidence,

was rated as the third frequent strategy with a mean score of (*M*= 4.61; *SD*= 0.613) followed by equipping and updating themselves as teachers with new knowledge, information, strategies to be used in emergent writing with a mean score of (*M*= 4.53; *SD*= 0.590) and then giving kindergarteners opportunities to practice writing naturally in writing and reading centers, art, and science centers, etc. (*M*= 4.52; *SD*= 0.660). In addition to that selecting materials and activities carefully to support and scaffold kindergarteners' writing was ranked as the fifth frequent strategy with a mean score of (*M*= 4.50; *SD*= 0.738). Then using manipulatives (e.g., playdough, water, sands, blocks) to support writing, and using technology (e.g., computers, MP4 players, tablets, Labeeb, sound boards), which entice kindergarteners to work on writing, were approximately rated by teachers as seventh and eighth frequent strategies used by them with mean scores of (*M*= 4.43; *SD*= 0.810) and (*M*= 4.40; *SD*= 0.813). Whereas, using outdoor activities to let kindergarteners practice writing was reported as the least repeated strategy to create a conducive environment with a mean score of (*M*= 4.21; *SD*= 0.896).

In terms of Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies, results in Table 6 revealed that most teachers always use some assessment indicators (e.g., writing names, directionality, capitalization, letter formation, spacing) to monitor writing (M= 4.62; SD= 0.612) followed by using a constant positive feedback with a mean score of (M= 4.61; SD= 0.564).

Table 6: Teachers' Self Report on Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies

Item	M	SD
N1. I used some assessment indicators (e.g., writing names, directionality, capitalization, letter formation, and spacing) to monitor writing.	4.62	0.612
N2. I use a constant positive feedback.	4.61	0.564
N3. I frequently assess my kindergarteners' abilities in their emergent writing.	4.55	0.659
N4. I highlight general writing areas of concerns and work on them with the kindergarteners.	4.49	0.653
N5. I start observing a child's progress by using a checklist and instructor forms.	4.49	0.717
N6. I based my instructional strategies according to kindergarteners' writing level.	4.46	0.638
N7. I use diagnostic tests to understand the kindergarteners' writing level.	4.39	0.788
N8. I use kindergarteners' portfolio (e.g., booklet) to assess their writing.	4.39	0.817
N9. I let kindergarteners use self-assessment checklist to assess their writing.	4.36	0.837
N10. I ask kindergarteners to express positive opinions when they evaluate their peers.	4.20	0.985
N11. I use standardized tests to assess writing.	4.09	1.046
N12. I use peer-evaluation as part of shared-writing experiences.	3.88	1.048

In addition to that, teachers frequently assess kindergarteners' abilities in their emergent writing with a mean score of (M= 4.55; SD= 0.659). Teachers also reported they used to highlight general writing areas of concerns and working on them with the kindergarteners, in addition to observe a child's progress by using a checklist and instructor forms, were reported with mean scores of (M= 4.49; SD= 0.653) and (M=

4.49; SD= 0.717) respectively. Moreover, teachers reported that they build their instructional strategies based on kindergarteners' writing level with a mean score of (M= 4.46; SD= 0.638). They also use diagnostic tests to understand the kindergarteners' writing level and kindergarteners' portfolio (e.g., booklet) to assess their writing, which were rated as the seventh for the former and eighth for the later, frequent assessment strategies with mean scores of (M= 4.39; SD= 0.788) and (M= 4.39; SD= 0.817) respectively. Using self-assessment checklist to assess their writing, expressing positive opinions when kindergarteners evaluate their peers and using standardized tests were reported also as common strategies to assess emergent writing with mean scores of (M= 4.36; SD= 0.837), (M= 4.20; SD= 0.985) and (M= 4.09; SD= 1.046) respectively. Finally, using peer-evaluation as part of shared-writing experiences was rated as the least frequent assessment strategy with a mean score of (M= 3.88; SD= 1.048).

In terms of Instructional Practice Strategies, results indicated in Table 7 that Modeling strategies to scaffold kindergarteners' emergent writing and Interactive writing strategies (e.g., morning message), were rated as the most common instructional strategies adopted by kindergarten teachers by scoring the highest mean scores (*M*= 4.54; *SD*= 0.689) and ((M= 4.54; SD= 0.709) respectively. Applying instructional strategies based on the students' levels, was reported as the second common pedagogical strategies used by teachers with a mean score of (M= 4.47; SD= 0.756) followed by the application of guided writing to scaffold for slow kindergarten writers, which was rated with a mean score of (M= 4.46; SD= 0.660).

Table 7: Teachers' Self-Report on Instructional Practice Strategies

Item	M	SD
K1. I use Modeling strategies to scaffold kindergarteners' emergent writing.	4.54	0.689
K2. I use interactive writing strategies (e.g., morning message) to create interactive writing atmosphere.	4.54	0.709
K3. I use the instructional strategies based on kindergarteners' levels.	4.47	0.756
K4. I use guided writing to scaffold for slow kindergarten writers.	4.46	0.660
K5. I use a mini lesson strategy to teach kindergarteners the process of writing.	4.39	0.756
K6. I use think-aloud as a modeling writing strategy to be emulated by kindergarteners.	4.33	0.807
K7. I apply shared writing strategies (y) to scaffold writing for kindergarteners.	4.27	0.840
K8. I engage kindergarteners in a free writing process (e.g., write anything).	4.20	0.898
K9. I use graphic organizers to enable kindergarteners in the writing process.	4.16	0.936
K10. I use strategies (e.g., signs) to habituate Arabic native speakers for English language writing direction.	4.09	1.146

In addition to that using a mini lesson strategy to teach kindergarteners the process of writing, was ranked as the fifth frequent strategy based on teachers' responses with a mean score of (M= 4.39; SD= 756). Think-aloud, as one type of modeling writing strategies, was reported as the sixth common strategy with a mean score of (M= 4.33; SD= 0.807). Shared writing strategy and free writing strategy had approximately similar mean scores based on teachers' self-report with mean scores of (M= 4.27; SD= 0.840) and (M= 4.20; SD= 0.898) respectively. Whereas, using graphic

organizers and signs strategies were rated as the least frequent strategies with mean scores of (M= 4.16; SD= 0.936) and (M= 4.09; SD= 1.146).

With regard to the teachers' self-report on Creative and Supportive Strategies, results in Table 8 demonstrates that teachers always use dictionary word wall or pictures to support kindergarten in labeling pictures, with a mean score of (M= 4.63; SD= 0.594) followed by the use of drawing and painting as a base for creative emergent writing with a mean score of (M= 4.52; SD= 0.675). Teachers also reported that they use the writing center to support creative writing for kindergarteners by constituting a mean score of (M= 4.47; SD= 0.756). They use hands-on activities to support the process of emergent writing and let kindergarteners to practice their own words and sight words in creative ways, which were rated with mean scores of (M= 4.43; SD= 0.754) and (M= 4.41; SD= 0.725) respectively.

In addition to that using authentic and real topics to enhance creativity, using integrated writing to integrate writing in content areas and using daily occurrences to enable kindergarteners to write about creative ideas, were reported as usual applied strategies employed by teachers to enhance and support creativity in emergent writing with mean scores of (M= 4.36; SD= 0.750), (M= 4.29; SD= 0.838) and (M= 4.28; SD= 0.730) respectively.

Table 8: Teachers' Self Report on Creative and Supportive Strategies

Item	M	SD
C1. I use dictionary word wall or pictures to support kindergarten in labeling pictures.	4.63	0.594
C2. I use drawing and painting as a base for creative emergent writing.	4.52	0.675
C3. I use the writing center to support creative writing for kindergarteners.	4.47	0.756
C4. I use hands-on activities to support the process of emergent writing.	4.43	0.754
C5. I let kindergarteners to practice their own words and sight words in creative ways.	4.41	0.725
C6. I use authentic and real topics to enhance creativity.	4.36	0.750
C7. I use integrated writing to integrate writing in content areas (e.g., Science, math, reading …etc.).	4.29	0.838
C8. I use daily occurrences to enable kindergarteners to write about creative ideas.	4.28	0.730
C9. I use role play and block centers for creative writing practice.	4.18	0.835
C10. I use outdoors activities as a means to support writing.	4.11	0.928
C11. I use the reader response strategy to give students a chance to come up with creative ideas.	4.06	0.821

Moreover, teachers reported that they use role play and block centers for creative writing practice (M= 4.18; SD= 0.835), outdoors activities as a means to support writing (M= 4.11; SD= 0.928), and the reader response strategy to give students a chance to come up with creative ideas (M= 4.06; SD= 0.821). These last three strategies were ranked as the least frequent creative and supportive strategies based on teachers' responses.

Additionally, paired sample t-tests were carried out on to look for statistically significant differences between the categories. The t-test results are shown in Table 9. Examining the means, it can be seen that there is a significant difference between the Instructional Practice Strategies (*M*=4.35; *SD*=0.518), Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing (*M*= 4.55; *SD*=0.464); (t=-5.898, df=205, p≤0.05), and Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment (*M*= 4.53; *SD*= 0.485); (t=-5.478, df=205, p≤0.05).

Table 9: Results of T-Test Analysis Examining Differences among the Five Categories

Scale Comparison		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	IP Strategies – CS Strategies	0.233	205	0.816
Pair 2	IP Strategies – NEW Strategies	-5.898	205	0.000
Pair 3	IP Strategies – EWA Strategies	-0.843	205	0.400
Pair 4	IP Strategies – Strategies of CCE	-5.478	205	0.000
Pair 5	CS Strategies – NEW Strategies	-8.544	205	0.000
Pair 6	CS Strategies – EWA Strategies	-1.260	205	0.209
Pair 7	CS Strategies – Strategies of CCE	-7.689	205	0.000
Pair 8	NEW Strategies – EWA Strategies	6.354	205	0.000
Pair 9	NEW Strategies – Strategies of CCE	0.752	205	0.453
Pair 10	EWA Strategies – Strategies of CCE	-5.655	205	0.000

Then again, there are no significant differences between the Instructional Practice Strategies (M=4.35; SD=0.518), Creative and Supportive Strategies (M=4.34; SD=0.509), (t=0.233, df=205, p≥0.05), and Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies (M= 4.38; SD= 0.526); (t=-0.843, df=205, p≥0.05). Along through the same line,

significant differences are found between Creative and Supportive Strategies (M= 4.34; SD=0.509), Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing (M= 4.55; SD= 0.464); (t=-8.544, df=205, p≤0.05), and Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment (M= 4.53; SD=0.485), (t=-7.689, df=205, p≤0.05). Nevertheless, there is not a significant difference between Creative and Supportive Strategies (M= 4.34; SD=0.509) and Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies (M=4.38; SD=0.526), (t=-1.260, DF=205, p≥0.05).

Finally, significant difference is found between Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing (M= 4.55; SD=0.464) and Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies (M= 4.38; SD=0.526), (t=-6.354, DF=205, p≤0.05), and also between Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies (M= 4.38; SD=0.526) and Strategies of Creating Conducive environment (M= 4.53; SD= 0.485); (t=-5.655, DF=205, p≤0.05). Whereas statistically significant difference is not found between Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing (M= 4.55; SD=0.464) and Strategies of Creating Conducive environment (M= 4.53; SD= 0.485); (t=0.752, DF=205, p≥0.05).

Q3. What types of challenges or obstacles do kindergarten teachers report when teaching emergent writing?

To answer this question descriptive statistics were used in which means and standard deviations were extracted. As demonstrated in Table 10, it can be indicated that most of the teachers' responses confirmed that time, parents' attitudes, the lack of professional program, the shift between two different language systems, the time exerted in instruction and assessment and the nature of emergent writing learning, were all considered as common challenges and obstacles encountered by them with a total mean score (*M*=4,09; *SD*=0.562).

Table 10. Teachers' Self Report on Challenges and Obstacles of Emergent Writing

Challenges and Obstacles of Emergent Writing	M	SD
1. Time for developing	4.42	0.720
2. Following a meticulously writing learning process instead of copying sentences	4.28	0.919
3. Changing parents' attitudes	4.19	0.744
4. Time and efforts in instruction, assessment and learning progress.	4.19	0.882
5. Parents expect quick progress	4.00	0.942
6. Difficulty in changing from Arabic writing system to English writing system	4.00	0.910
7. Difficult selection of professional programs and strategies	3.79	0.921
8. Difficulties of nonnative speakers of Arabic in understanding the source of difficulties of Arabic native speakers	3.79	0.932
Total	4.09	0.562

For more elaboration, results shows that the teacher reported higher in believing that developing kindergarteners' writing skills needs a lot of time (M=4.42; SD=0.720), in which they found difficulty in conveying this belief to the school administration and parents. Trying to follow a meticulously writing learning process instead of copying sentences, was ranked as the second-high challenges experienced by teachers with a mean score of (M=4.28; SD= 0.919). Changing parents' attitudes in their traditional ways of thinking about emergent writing and exerting a lot of time and efforts in instruction, assessment and learning progress were rated as the third high-ranking challenges with a mean score of (M= 4.19; SD=744) and (M=5.19; SD=0.882), respectively. Teachers also face difficulty with parents, who usually expect quick

progress such as expecting children to write full sentences (M= 4; SD=0.942), and in changing from Arabic writing system to English (e.g., writing direction) with a mean score of (M=4; SD=0.910). The lack of guidance in selecting professional programs and strategies when teaching emergent writing was reported as the least item which scored (M=3.79; SD= 0.921). In addition to that difficulties of nonnative speakers of Arabic in understanding the source of difficulties of Arabic native speakers, was also rated as the least item with a mean score of (M=3.79; SD= 0.932).

Q4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teachers' actual use of writing strategies and the reported ones?

To answer this question consistencies and variations between the qualitative results and the quantitative results were extracted for each category and illustrated in Figure 2. Generally, consistencies are found in the idea of ranking Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing (M= 4.55) and Strategies of Creating Conducive Learning Environment (M= 4.53) as the highest common strategies used by teachers in the questionnaire. These results are confirmed by the qualitative results when teachers viewed that it is important to use the gradual release as a main pedagogical strategy when applying different instructional strategies and materials because writing should be nurtured naturally in a meaningful context.

qualitative phase

qual data collection procedures
*Purposive sampling (*n*=5)
*Semi-structured interview

qual data analysis
* Meaning coding and condensation
* Thematic analysis

Developing a tool

Interpretation

Quantitative phase

QUAN data collection procedures
*Random sampling (*n*=206)
*Self-report questionnaire

qual data analysis
* Descriptive analysis
* paired sample t-test

Consistencies
* It is important to use the gradual release as a main pedagogical strategy when applying different instructional strategies and materials because writing should be nurtured naturally in a meaningful context.
* The importance of creativity in selecting materials and activities that support and scaffold children while learning English writing.
* The importance of modeling in front of kindergartens and giving them the chance to watch and practice, and to mundanely practicing writing in different learning centers.
* One of the most incongruities while teaching emergent writing is the limited time provided for children to develop the writing skill.

Variations
* Although teachers in the interview asserted on employing outdoor activities, teachers in the questionnaire rated these activities as the least frequent strategy of creating conducive environment.
*Although guided and shared writing strategies were frequently mentioned in the interviews, they were ranked as the least frequent instructional strategies.
* Although teachers stressed on the lack of professional development programs, in the questionnaire they reported it as the least challenges.
* It is important to diagnose children's writing level at the beginning of the academic year; however, teachers rated the use of diagnostic tests as lower frequent assessment strategy in the questionnaire.
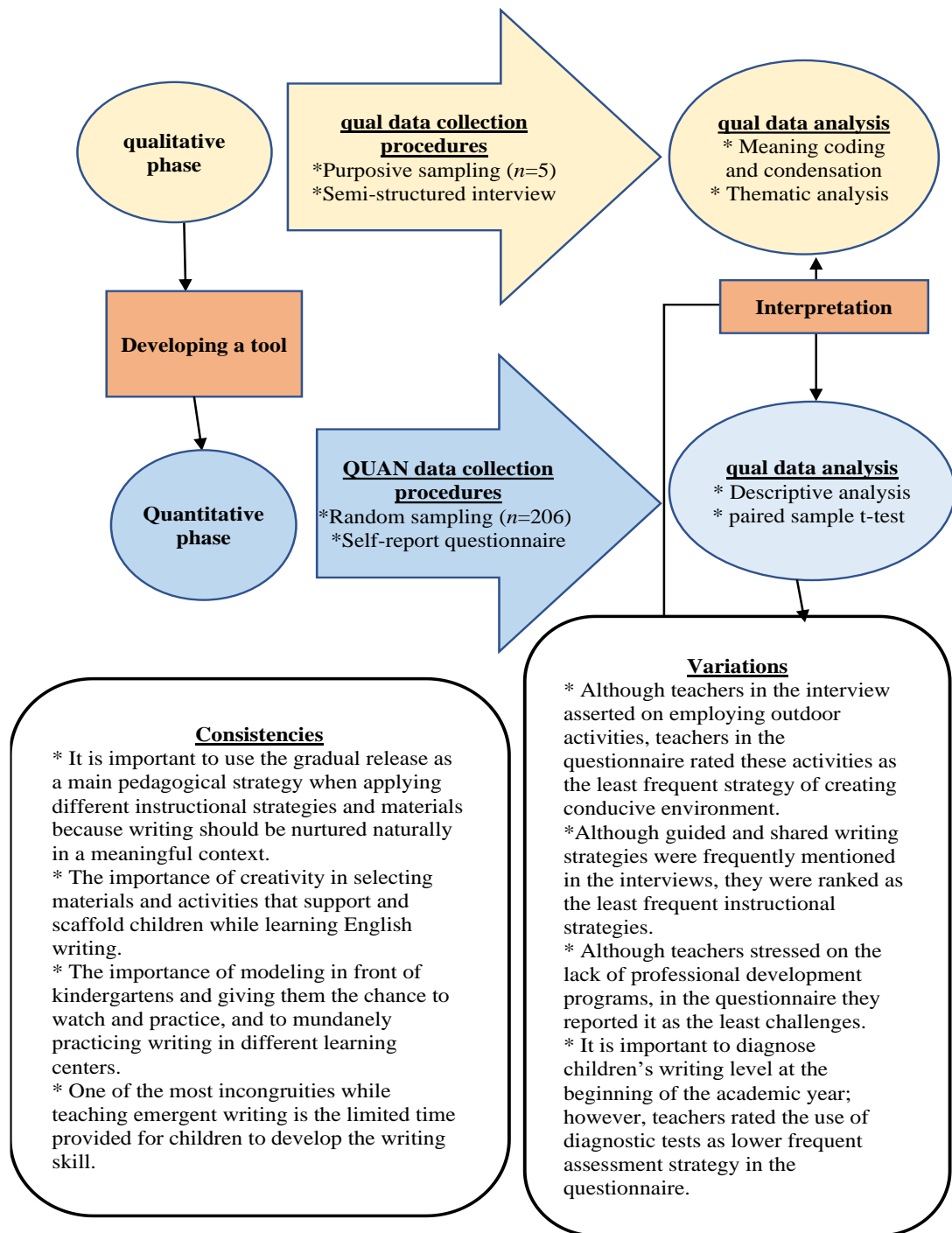
Figure 2: A Mixed Method Conceptual Model

With regard to the Strategies of Nurturing Emergent Writing, teachers viewed how importance of nurturing the belief that writing is a meaningful, social, and emotional skill. Connecting writing through authentic themes serves in developing social and emotional skills when communicating ideas in written forms. These

qualitative findings are supported by the quantitative results in which teachers reported that they treat emergent writing as a meaningful skill (*M*= 4.63). Moreover, teachers in the interview focused on providing opportunities for children to practice writing every day, even if it is scribbling. This mundane practice will make children more familiar with writing as a meaningful and communicative system and will give opportunities for children to practice and enhance their fine motor skills through using different natural manipulatives such as dough, sand, and clay. These findings are consistent with the quantitative results in which teachers reported that they use natural resources to make children practice writing (*M*= 4.56), to refine their motor skills (*M*= 4.52), and to provide opportunities to practice writing (*M*= 4.52). Teacher also stressed on how importance is to model in front of kindergartens and give them the chance to watch and practice, and to mundanely practice writing in different learning centers. These qualitative findings are in line with the quantitative results in which teachers highly rated that they give kindergarteners opportunities to watch when practicing directionality and letter formation (*M*= 4.65). Also, they reported that they use to incorporate writing activities in every learning center in their classrooms (*M*= 4.43). In terms of variation between the qualitative and the quantitative results, no variations are found in this category.

In terms of Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment, teachers in their views showed the importance of selecting materials and activities that support and scaffold children while learning English writing. Some teachers create centers to support the writing such as playdough, water, sands, and other manipulatives. Also, they supply children with resources that serve in developing their ability to compose and create their own sentences namely, dictionary wall and picture-word flashcards especially when they do free writing. In addition to that teachers mentioned that they

use the writing centers where different materials are used such as, papers, crayons, pencils, flashcards etc. Also, they let the students to use technologies such as writing on the smart board, iPad and HP touch screen using paint application and other educational software. All these qualitative findings were supported by what teachers reported in the questionnaire in which they frequently use different materials in the writing centers ($M=4.72$); they also create classroom resources like the dictionary wall ($M=4.70$), and they use different manipulatives ($M=4.43$) and technology ($M=4.40$) to enhance writing as an emergent literacy skill. Furthermore, teachers in the interview highlighted the importance of creating an emotionally and socially effective learning environment through building up a good relationship between teachers and children, and thus children feel comfortable and motivated when they write. These qualitative findings resonate with the quantitative results when teachers reported that they always try to build a strong social and emotional bond with kindergarteners, so that they feel comfortable in their writing ($M=4.71$), and to make nonthreatening environments in writing to reassure the kindergarteners confidence ($M=4.61$). Although teachers in the interview asserted on the idea of employing outdoor activities to practice authentic writing, teachers in the questionnaire rated the use of outdoor activities as the least frequent strategy in creating a conducive learning environment ($M=4.21$), which is considered the only variation found between the qualitative and the quantitative results in Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment category.

In the matter of Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies, teachers mentioned in the interview that they use to observe and monitor children's writing development through focusing on their abilities to write their names, dates, directionality from left to write, capitalization at the beginning of the sentence, full stop, letter formation and spaces between words. These qualitative findings are in tandem with the quantitative

results when teachers reported that they used some assessment indicators (e.g., writing names, directionality, capitalization, letter formation, spacing) to monitor writing (*M*= 4.62). Different assessment strategies were mentioned by teachers in the interview. For example, some of them use a constant feedback positively in which they keep constantly developing the children. In addition to that, teachers use a booklet as a kind of portfolio to track the children's progress. Some teachers let children to use self-assessment chart to self-assess their writing. All these qualitative findings are compatible with the results generated from the quantitative phase. Teachers rated that they always use a constant positive feedback (*M*= 4.61) and frequently assess their kindergarteners' abilities in emergent writing (*M*= 4.55). They also reported that they use kindergarteners' portfolio (e.g., booklet) to assess their writing (*M*= 4.39) and let kindergarteners use self-assessment checklist to assess their writing (*M*= 4.36). However, variation is exited in using diagnostic test. All teachers in the interview indicated that it is important to diagnose children's writing level at the beginning of the academic year, and based on the diagnostic test, teachers start to structure instructional strategies and activities based on the children's level. Whereas in the quantitative results teachers rated the use of diagnostic tests as lower frequent assessment strategy in comparison to other strategies (*M*= 4.39).

In terms of Instructional Practice strategies, a consistency is found between the qualitative and quantitative results in teachers' views toward modeling strategy. The five teachers confirmed in the interview that modeling is the most common instructional strategy used when teaching emergent writing, in which it was mentioned (45) times by the interviewees. This qualitative result was also confirmed by the quantitative results in which the highest mean score went for modeling (*M*= 4.54). On the other hand, variations between the qualitative and quantitative results are also

existed. While interactive writing was ranked as the second frequent instructional strategy used by teachers in the quantitative results (M= 4.54), guided writing was ranked as the second common instructional strategy in accordance with the teachers' responses in the interview, in which it was frequently mentioned around (22) times by the interviewees; nonetheless, it was reported with lower mean score in the quantitative results (M= 4.47) as compared to the other strategies. Another variation is that although shared writing strategy was frequently cited (17) times from the interviewees' quotes, which was approximate to the interactive writing strategy with (18) times, it was ranked as the least frequent instructional strategy (M= 4.27; SD= 0.840) along with free writing (M= 4.20), using graphic organizer (M= 4.16) and signs (M= 4.09). Variation between the qualitative results and quantitative results also existed in mini lesson strategy in which it was cited (3) times by the interviewees; however, it scored a satisfied mean score (M= 4.39) in the quantitative results. By the same token, think aloud strategy was mentioned (6) times by the interviewees, but it showed a good mean score (M= 4.34) in comparison to the other instructional strategies.

In respect of Creative and Supportive Strategies, most of the teachers stressed on the idea of how importance is integrating arts and creativity. This integration helps in inspiring the children to build a strong foundation for emerging writing skills. This qualitative finding is consistent with different qualitative results when teachers reported that they use drawing and painting as a base for creative emergent writing (M= 4.52), use hands-on activities to support the process of emergent writing (M= 4.43). Also, teachers mentioned that they scaffold their writing through posting wall dictionary as a source to support their children's writing, or through connecting writing within a context of daily life experience to make writing more interesting and creative. These qualitative findings corroborate some quantitative results when teachers

reported that use dictionary word wall or pictures to support kindergarten in labeling pictures (M= 4.63) and use authentic and real topics to enhance creativity (M= 4.36). Some of the teachers as they indicated in the interview, use a role play center or a block center and integrate writing within these centers, and others try to integrate writing with other content areas such as, science and math, which gives children the opportunity of practicing writing consistently. These qualitative findings are compatible with the quantitative results in which teachers reported that they use role play and block centers for creative writing practice with a mean score (M= 4.18) and integrate writing with other content areas (e.g., Science, math, reading …etc.) with a mean score (M= 4.29). However, variations are not found in this category.

In terms of the Challenges and Obstacles of Emergent Writing, all teachers indicated in the interview that one of the most incongruities while teaching emergent writing is the limited time provided for children to develop the writing skill. This qualitative finding is strongly agreed by teachers in the questionnaire in which time needed for children to develop their writing skills was rated as the highest encountered challenge (M= 4.42). Moreover, teachers highly considered the time spent by teachers to build up their professionality in their ways of teaching emergent writing, as one of the challenges, which is reported also as one of the highest challenges encountered by teachers in the questionnaire (M= 4. 19). Based on the interview analysis, teachers also suffered from parents who always expect that their children should be able to write full sentence. Teachers found difficulty in changing parents' attitudes towards the ways of learning and teaching writing to their children, in which they still believe in the traditional way of teaching. These findings are also supported by the quantitative results in which they reported that parents always expect quick progress (M= 4.00), and teachers encounter difficulty in changing parents' attitudes (M= 4.19); Thy also

attempt to follow a meticulously writing learning process instead of copying sentences (*M*= 4.28). Although teachers stressed on the lack of professional development programs related to the teaching materials, the resources, the assessment and teaching strategies, teachers in the questionnaire reported it as the least challenges encountered by them (*M*= 3.79).

4.3 Summary

Chapter four demonstrated the major findings of the study. Through employing the exploratory mixed method, the researcher used the quantitative data to generalize the qualitative data. Semi-structured interview and self-report questionnaire were used in this study in which major rich findings were interpreted.

The first major finding is that teachers use to naturally nurture writing as an emergent literacy skill through creating meaningful environment, where kindergarteners can practice writing in an authentic, mundane and communicative way the second major finding is that teachers believe on the use of gradual release instruction whether when selecting instructional strategies or materials, which give the chance for kindergartners to build and develop their fine motor skills gradually. The third major finding is the use of modeling strategy is common and frequent when teaching emergent writing, in addition to that teachers use guided writing, shared writing and interactive writing as other strategies to support children's development in writing. The fourth major finding is that teachers always use observation and constant feedback as main assessment strategies when they assess writing. The fifth major finding is that teachers confirmed that the limited time provided for children and for teachers is considered as the main challenge. In addition to that they find difficulties in changing parents' attitudes and dealing with the required expectations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This study explores the nature and the kinds of emergent writing instructional strategies and how they are viewed by teachers' experiences. The study adopted the exploratory sequential mixed method design in which both qualitative and quantitative means were used including a semi-structured interview followed by a self-report questionnaire. This chapter discusses the major findings considering relevant studies addressed in the literature review. In addition to that the recommendations and the implications of the study are provided.

5.2 Discussion

Q1. How do kindergarten teachers view the role of using instructional emergent writing strategies on promoting kindergarteners' writing skill?

The first major finding related to this question is providing well-structured instructional strategies in emergent writing, serves in scaffolding emergent writers in a very constructive way. Most of the teachers stressed on using the instructional strategies in a gradual release form based on the emergent writing stages which start form scribbling and end with forming correct letters and words. This finding corroborated other findings generated by Brock and Rankin (2008); Palmer and Bayley (2010) who stressed on the quality of the instructional strategies provided for early childhood language learning as a crucial element for smooth acquisition of literacy skills. They explained how fostering children's writing skill is essential through involving them into different writing activities ,which enable children to experience learning and develop different writing skills. Gerde and Wasik (2012) also alluded that the effective selection of the instructions enables them to recognize the meaningful

function of the learnt prints, and thus they can reach to the level of independency in their writing. Therefore, emergent writing instructions should go through into three gradual phases, which are: writing for children, writing with children and finally children write by themselves (Hall & Austin, 2004), which reflect the gradual release instruction practice. The second major finding is that modeling, think aloud, shard writing, guided writing, interactive writing, free writing, and the graphic organizers, are considered as the most common used strategies mentioned by the participants. However, teachers stressed that modeling is the most essential teaching strategy among all. This finding supports other results revealed by (Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000) who addressed the effectiveness of instructional writing strategies (e.g., modelling, guided writing, shared writing and interactive writing), which serve in co-constructing the writing skill as an emergent literacy skill. Although Children begin their journey of writing with the process of imitating or copying which is a powerful tool in activating modeled writing instruction, writing should be expanded to include thinking and creating a meaning, and thus contribute to activating other instructional strategies such as scaffolding, interactive, and shared writing (Hutchin, 2013). For example, Behymer (2003) found that writing for children represents the idea of modeling, which is considered as the most common instructional strategy used for teaching emergent writing skill. However, modeling is not enough as revealed by this study and other relevant studies. The third major finding is that the authentic and real practices of emergent writing boosts creativity. Most teachers try to design and employ different effective strategies through integrating them into different real themes, events, and content areas. For example, the use of reading responds strategy, role play center, or a block center are all creative strategies that lead to a mundane use or practice of writing in different

contexts. This finding resonates with (Hall, Simpson, Guo & Bai, 2015; Hanser, 2006; Routman, 2005), who revealed that it is important to create a supportive environment when teaching writing for kindergartners; an environment where children begin to explore with writing by testing the writing process through conversations, drawing pictures to describe an event or a story and role-playing of writing actions (Hanser, 2006). In addition to that this environment should instructionally well-structured because children who participate in daily instructional writing sessions, their quality of writing will be developed rapidly more than those who only write when they want to write (Routman, 2005), and thus they can reach to the level of writing independently by themselves (Hall, Simpson, Guo & Bai ,2015). This discussion aligned with what Vygotsky (1978) theorizes. Vygotsky (1987) believes that providing a scaffolded leaning environment where learners can learn and interact based on their real level, will give them the chance later to be more independent learners without any kind of scaffolding. This could be happened through mundane practices, in which teachers should create different contingencies where learners can practice writing authentically and constantly.

The fourth major finding is that teachers viewed how importance of nurturing the belief that writing is a meaningful, social, and emotional skill. Connecting writing through authentic themes serves in developing social and emotional skills when communicating ideas in written forms. For an example, Gee (2012), "literacy is mastered through acquisition, not learning, that is, it requires exposure to models in natural meaningful, and functional settings" (p. 23). Therefore, children's literacy development can be nurtured through social interaction and through the exposure to written texts and instructional strategies (Kissel, 2011). For example, when children show that they are ready to form letters bythemselves , they start to make a meaning

from these letters by forming words (e.g., names). These scribbles and series of letters represent the children's attempts to express themselves and communicate their ideas through writing (Hutchin, 2013; Roy, 2010). This will serve in understanding the role of the exposed prints in real settings and thus gradually with frequent practice, children might reach to the level of reforming the print by themselves (Hall, Simpson, Guo & Bai, 2015).

The fifth major finding is that teachers in the interview indicated that it is important to diagnose children's writing level at the beginning of the academic year and based on that they can built, design and select the instructional strategies that fit the kindergartens' needs and levels. Also, teachers believed how importance is the constant assessment and the frequent observations for kindergartens' writing performance. This finding is supported by Behymer (2003) who indicated that both modeling and observing are essential strategies for developing a supportive writing environment. In addition to that Vygotsky (1978) stresses on the idea of ZPD through identifying the actual level of the students in which based on this identification, scaffolding by using different instructional strategies and materials, is provided until reaching to the level of being more independent and real meaning makers.

Q2. What types of instructional emergent writing strategies do kindergarten teachers report when teaching kindergarten students?

The first major result related to this research question is that Nurturing Emergent Writing Strategies were reported as the most frequent strategies used by teacher followed by Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment. Then Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies was rated as the third frequent strategies used in the classroom. Whereas Instructional Practice Strategies and Creative and Supportive

Strategies were reported as the least frequent strategies applied in the classroom. This result corroborated other findings revealed by Koenig (1992) who describes Emergent literacy as a phase in which children begin to understand that symbols carry meaning and that people communicate ideas by using signs. Therefore, children's literacy development in the early years can be nurtured through social interaction with adults and through the exposure to written texts, materials, and instructional strategies (Kissel, 2011; Mayer, 2007; Riley, 2007; Whitehead, 2010). The teachers' role is to create an advantageous atmosphere with valuable resources that serve in nurturing and constructing writing as an emergent literacy skill in an interactive, meaningful, and social way.

The second major result is specifically linked to Nurturing Emergent Writing Strategies. Generally, teachers always treat emergent writing as a meaningful communicative skill through incorporating writing activities in every learning center in the classroom, and through using natural sources (e.g., dough, sand, clay, etc.) to make kindergarteners mundanely practice writing, to support every attempt in emergent writing and to refine kindergarteners' fine motor skill. As Brock and Rankin (2008); Palmer and Bayley (2010) explained how promoting children's writing skill is important through involving them into different writing activities ,which enable childrento develop different skills while experiencing learning. To make growth in writing, emergent learners must be granted many writing opportunities (Mayer, 1979).

The third major result is related to Strategies of Creating Conducive Environment. Results showed that teachers are always trying to build a strong social and emotional bond with kindergarteners to make them feel comfortable in their writing and using different classroom resources and manipulatives. Teachers also try

to create nonthreatening environments in writing to reassure the kindergartener's confidence and try to update themselves, as teachers, with new knowledge, information, and strategies when teaching emergent writing. These results are supported by Vygotsky's (1978) views on how importance is to create a dialogical learning environment that full of scaffolded materials and mediated tools, where learners can construct their practical use of the acquired knowledge and skills of the language. To the same extent Ihmeideh, Al-Basheer and Al-Momani (2008) revealed in their study that teachers were more preferred to apply emergent literacy philosophy than the reading readiness philosophy when teaching writing for kindergarteners, in which teachers should create a rich print-environment that serve in scaffolding children to learn and practice writing in a meaningful way.

The fourth major result is associated with Emergent Writing Assessment Strategies. The result showed teachers use observations, constant positive feedback, portfolio, self-assessment, and peer evaluation as main assessment tools. They build their instructional strategies based on kindergarteners' writing level. As for Behymer (2003) pointed out that writing with children demonstrate the idea of observing students while they are writing, in which teachers can support them through providing constant feedback. This result is also supported by Al-Qaryoutia et al. (2016) in which teachers in GCC highly recommended the use of evidence-based strategies that serve in tracking the students' growth while learning writing. Although providing constant feedback was rated as one of the major assessment tools, this result contradicts Puranik's et al. (2014) who concluded that providing feedback was viewed as a low support strategy. In this study, teachers also reported the use of diagnostic tests as an assessment strategy to understand the kindergarteners' writing level. The core point here is identifying the kinds of experiences, materials and instructions should be based

upon the learners' actual levels. These supportive sources must be dialogical, challenging but achievable at the same time to cause progress (Vygotsky, 1978). Although teachers in this study mentioned different common assessment strategies, using standardized tests was rated as the least frequent assessment strategy as compared to the other strategies. This result is supported by Schaars, Segers and Verhoeven (2019) who indicated that researchers have paid much attention to rapid reading development, while little room was given to early writing particularly in the area of developing international standardized assessment.

The fifth major result is related to the Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies. Teachers reported that they use different instructional strategies including modeling strategies (e.g., think aloud), interactive writing strategies (e.g., morning message), guided writing, mini lesson strategy, shared writing, free writing and graphic organizers to scaffold kindergarteners' emergent writing. These strategies are applied based on the students' levels. This result is supported by Clay (1991) who initiated the notion of emergent literacy which starts with children's mimicking of the actions of reading and writing as a kind of interaction with the exposed printed materials (e.g., stories and picture books). These imitations are considered as the starting point of literacy development and can occur long before schooling (Phillips, 2008). That's why teachers in this study stressed on the use of modeling along with the interactive strategies as main major instructional strategies used by majority of teachers, which is also confirmed by (Alhosani, 2008; Copp, Cabell & Invernizzi, 2019; Zhang & Bingham, 2019). Also, Brock and Rankin (2008) indicated that the use of different instructional strategies can contribute to decrease the language development issues and can assist emergent learners to be successful in reading and writing. Therefore, writing is not only about copying, but also about thinking and

creating a meaning, which pushes teachers to use other instructional strategies such as interactive, guided and shared writing in a way that might lead children to be more independent writers (Bodrova, 2006; Gerde, 2012; Hall, Simpson, Guo & Bai ,2015; Hutchin, 2013; Roy, 2010; Suarmi & Fatimah, 2019). In addition to that effective use of writing instruction (e.g., guided writing, interactive writing, and shared writing) make the elements of good writing and the strategies of good writers more clear, visible, and practical to the novice writers (Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Vaughn, Gersten & Chard, 2000).

The sixth major result is in terms of Creative and Supportive Strategies. Teachers always use dictionary word wall or pictures to support kindergarten in labeling pictures. They also use drawing and painting as a base for creative emergent writing. For example, they use hands-on activities to support the process of emergent writing and let kindergarteners to practice their own words and sight words in creative ways. In addition to that using authentic and real topics to enhance creativity, using integrated writing to integrate writing in content areas and using daily occurrences to enable kindergarteners to write about creative ideas, were reported as usual applied strategies employed by teachers to enhance and support creativity in emergent writing. Moreover, teachers reported that they use role play and block centers for creative writing practice, outdoors activities, and the reader response strategy to give students a chance to come up with creative ideas. These results validated different research studies. For example, Brindley (2002) indicated writing development has been identified as a difficult, challenging and creative process, in which it is a symbolic illustration that needs to be developed through integrations of talking, drawing, playing and other skills. Therefore, children begin to explore things with writing by testing the

writing process through conversations, drawing pictures to describe an event or a story and role-playing of writing actions (Hanser, 2006).

Q3 What types of challenges or obstacles do kindergarten teachers report when teaching emergent writing?

The major result related to this question is that most of the teachers' responses indicated that time, parents' attitudes, the lack of professional program, the shift between two different language systems, the time exerted in instruction and assessment and the nature of emergent writing learning, were all considered as common challenges and obstacles encountered by them in their real practices. These results corroborated Rietdijk's et al. (2018) study who revealed that the learning time assigned to writing is inadequate, and teachers viewed that writing received less focus than other language skills in the curriculum. Also, teachers in White, Hall and Barrett-Tatum study (2016) viewed having a little time to teach writing as a main barrier beside the lack of resources and training professional development sessions in teaching writing as an emergent literacy skill. In addition to that, Håland, Home and McTigue (2018) reported in their study that 19% of them are not granting their students opportunities to independently write their own texts because of the prioritization of reading beside the lack of pedagogical knowledge of how to implement appropriate instructional emergent writing strategies. What this study added to the previous studies is that parents' conventional attitudes toward writing, their expectations, and the shifting between both language systems (Arabic and English) are also considered challenges encountered by teachers particularly in EFL context.

Q4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teachers' actual use of writing
strategies and the reported ones?

Both qualitative and quantitative results confirmed how importance is nurturing the emergent writing as a social, communicative, and emotional practice. This could happen through using effective instructional strategies like modeling, natural resources, materials, mediated tools, manipulative; and creating supportive learning environment where writing is practiced mundanely. For instance, Shayer (2003) refers on how the selection of instrctions, activities and materials as types of external sources serve in developing learners' interactions in a meaningful way. Therefore, during the learning process, the learners' abilities and skills move from the interpersonal interaction to the intrapersonal functioning. This process is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as the "internalization process" in which the interaction with different external sources is "reconstructed and begins to occur internally" (p. 57), and thus they become independent learners.

Consistency between the qualitative and quantitative results is also existed in the commonality of modeling strategy as the most frequent strategy applied by kindergarten teachers. This result is confirmed by Puranik et al. (2014); Elliott (2014) who revealed that teachers rated modeling as the highest scaffolding strategy when teaching emergent writing, which is the preferred strategy used by teachers in the stage of kindergarten. It is not only the preferred strategy from the teachers' perspectives, but also from the students' perspectives. As for Wheater (2011) he found out in his study that students showed high interest and interaction reflected on their positive attitudes towards the use of modeling strategy along with hands-on activities.

On the other hand, one of the variations between the qualitative and quantitative is noticed in their views toward the instructional strategies. Although teachers stressed on the importance of guided writing and shared writing strategies, both strategies were ranked as the least frequent strategies in the questionnaire. This result contradicts Farrow's (2019) study, which revealed that sharing writing with young children may be an ideal supportive context for a child language growth through engaging in different meaningful handwriting activities. As Englert, Mariage and Dunsmore (2006); Vaughn, Gersten and Chard (2000) alluded that guided writing as an instructional writing strategy provides an important context for teachers in-the-moment of assessment and immediate instructional scaffolding for the students through producing their own individual texts collaboratively.

Another variation is that all teachers in the interview indicated that it is important to diagnose children's writing level at the beginning of the academic year, and based on the diagnostic test, teachers start to structure instructional strategies and activities based on the children's level. Whereas in the quantitative results teachers rated the use of diagnostic tests as lower frequent assessment strategy in comparison to other strategies. Identifying the actual level of kindergartners plays a significant role in planning, designing, and implementing the instructional and assessment strategies in the classroom. As Vygotsky (1978) stresses on the importance to distinguish between the actual level and the potential level of the learners' development is called ZPD. Based on the ZPD concept, Vygotsky (1978) confirms that what learners can achieve with external support or guidance today (e.g., materials, activities, and instructions) will assist them to be more independent learners in the future. The justification for rating the use of diagnostic tests as the least frequent assessment strategies might be due to the lack of the pedagogical knowledge needed to teach this

sensitive stage, which is considered as one of the challenges reported by the participants in this study.

One more variation related to the mixed method question is existed. Although teachers stressed on the lack of professional development programs related to the teaching materials, the resources, the assessment and the teaching strategies, teachers in the questionnaire reported it as the least challenges encountered by them. This result contradicts even what teachers reported in other categories in the questionnaire. More specifically when they rated the use of diagnostic test as the least frequent assessment strategy used by them. This signified that the lack of pedagogical knowledge and professional development sessions is one of the main challenges faced by kindergarten teachers. As Håland, Home and McTigue (2018) stated that the lack of pedagogical knowledge of how to implement appropriate instructional emergent writing strategies hamper the development of writing as an emergent literacy skill.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has recommendations for EFL/ESL teachers, curriculum planners and assessment designers as follows:

1. EFL/ESL teachers should consider the use of other instructional strategies (e.g., guided writing, shared writing, and free writing) along with modeling strategy to develop the sense of being meaning makers instead of copiers.
2. EFL/ESL should consider the use of diagnostic tests as a base ground for building, selecting, and designing their instructional strategies and their materials based on their learners' actual levels.

3. Curriculum planners should give an adequate room to the writing skill to be practiced and developed in the same level done with reading.

4. Curriculum planners should provide frequent professional programs for teachers to keep them updated with any new pedagogical knowledge related to the teaching practices of emergent writing.

5. Assessment designers should put into their consideration how to structure international standardized tests that serve in measuring emergent learners' writing progress from time to time as they did in the reading assessment.

5.4 Implications for Future Research

Emergent literacy is one of the most important topics that is recently addressed, in which more research is needed especially in EFL/ESL contexts. Therefore, a longitudinal research may be conducted with EFL/ESL context through observing the natural occurrences of the practicality of emergent writing instructional strategies. Researchers can include a greater number of teachers and even observe emergent learners' reactions toward these strategies. Furthermore, other studies can be geared to draw a comparison between the UAE context and other EFL/ ESL contexts from different countries. In addition to that more research should be carried out in the area of assessment through designing a standardized test for measuring the progress of emergent writing skill, structuring its specifications and piloting it to analyze the results. Moreover, challenges encountered by teachers could be investigated deeply through addressing both teachers' and parents' perspectives.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Profile questions:

what is your name?

What is your Age?

How long do you teach kindergarten?

Nationality:

1. How do you plan for teaching basic writing skills for your kindergarten students?
2. How would you describe the writing habits of your students and their writing instruction needs?
3. Describe the range of writing abilities of your students at the current time, describe the various levels of the students in your classroom?
4. Can you tell us about how do you teach your kindergarten basic writing skills?
5. Can you give us typical strategies that you use in teaching them those basic writing skills?
6. What types of difficulties or problems do you face in teaching them those basic writing skills?
7. How do you manage to overcome those difficulties or problems?
8. What are the basic writing skills that they can do better? Why?
9. From your experience, what are the best instructional writing strategies that you find more effective, practical and functional to develop kindergarteners' basic writing skills?
10. If you can give advice to your colleagues, what will you tell them to do to develop kindergarteners' basic writing skills?
11. How do you assess your students' writing skills?
12. Do they really show practical gain in the assessment?
13. How do you evaluate your strategic teaching experience in teaching kindergarteners basic writing skills? Is it rewarding or frustrating?
14. How would you describe your writing instruction methods?

Which teaching strategies do you use in your classroom to instruct your students in writing?

Appendix B: Self-Report Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to **explore the instructional emergent writing strategies of the UAE kindergarteners**. Answering this questionnaire will take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete, as all questions do not require more than one answer.

After reading each statement, *circle the number* (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) which applies to you. Note that there are **no right or wrong responses** to any of the items on this questionnaire.

'1' means that 'the teacher **never** does this'.
'2' means that 'the teacher does this **rarely.**
'3' means that 'the teacher **sometimes** does this'. (About **50%** of the time.)
'4' means that 'the teacher **usually** does this'.
'5' means that 'the teacher **always or almost always** does this"

Demographic Information:

1. Age:
    a) younger than 25
    b) 25-30
    c) 31-35
    d) 36-40
    e) 41-45
    f) older than 45

2. Years of experience:
    a) 1-5
    b) 6-10
    c) 11-15
    d) 16-20
    e) more than 20

3. Nationality:
    a) Arabic native speaker
    b) English native speaker

4. Qualification:
    a) Bachelor
    b) Master
    d) PhD
    c) other (……….)

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1.	**Instructional Practice Strategies**					
K1	use the instructional strategies based on kindergarteners' levels	1	2	3	4	5
K2	use Modeling strategies to scaffold kindergarteners' emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
K3	use think-aloud as a modeling writing strategy to be emulated by kindergarteners	1	2	3	4	5
K4	apply shared writing strategies (y) to scaffold writing for kindergarteners	1	2	3	4	5
K5	use guided writing to scaffold for slow kindergarten writers	1	2	3	4	5
K6	use a mini lesson strategy to teach kindergarteners the process of writing	1	2	3	4	5
K7	use strategies (e.g. signs) to habituate Arabic native speakers for English language writing direction	1	2	3	4	5

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
K8	use interactive writing strategies (e.g. morning message) to create interactive writing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
K9	use graphic organizers to enable kindergarteners in the writing process	1	2	3	4	5
K10	engage kindergarteners in a free writing process (e.g. write anything)	1	2	3	4	5
2.	**Creative and Supportive Strategies**					
C1	use authentic and real topics to enhance creativity	1	2	3	4	5
C2	use the reader response strategy to give students a chance to come up with creative ideas	1	2	3	4	5
C3	use integrated writing to integrate writing in content areas (e.g. Science, math, reading …etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
C4	use hands-on activities to support the process of emergent writing	1	2	3	4	5
C5	use outdoors activities as a means to support writing	1	2	3	4	5
C6	use role play and block centers for creative writing practice	1	2	3	4	5
C7	use dictionary word wall or pictures to support kindergarten in labeling pictures	1	2	3	4	5
C8	use daily occurrences to enable kindergarteners to write about creative ideas	1	2	3	4	5
C9	use drawing and painting as a base for creative emergent writing	1	2	3	4	5
C10	let kindergarteners to practice their own words and sight words in creative ways	1	2	3	4	5
C11	use the writing center to support creative writing for kindergarteners	1	2	3	4	5
3.	**Nurturing Emergent Writing**					
A1	support every attempt in emergent writing	1	2	3	4	5
A2	treat emergent writing as a meaningful communicative skill	1	2	3	4	5
A3	use emergent writing as a tool for refining the kindergarteners' fine motor skill	1	2	3	4	5
A4	use natural sources (e.g. dough, sand, clay, etc.) to make kindergarteners practice writing	1	2	3	4	5
A5	incorporate writing activities in every learning center in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
A6	give kindergarteners opportunities to watch me (as I) //how I // model English writing directionality and letter formation	1	2	3	4	5
A7	give kindergarteners opportunities to practice writing among themselves and to learn from each other	1	2	3	4	5
4.	**Emergent Writing Assessment**					
N1	assess my kindergarteners' abilities in their emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
N2	start observing a child's progress by using a checklist and instructor forms	1	2	3	4	5
N3	use diagnostic tests to understand the kindergarteners' writing level	1	2	3	4	5

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
N4	based my instructional strategies according to kindergarteners' writing level.	1	2	3	4	5
N5	used some assessment indicators (e.g. writing names, directionality, capitalization, letter formation, spacing) to monitor writing	1	2	3	4	5
N6	use a constant positive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
N7	use kindergarteners' portfolio (e.g. booklet) to assess their writing	1	2	3	4	5
N8	let kindergarteners use self-assessment checklist to assess their writing	1	2	3	4	5
N9	use peer-evaluation as part of shared-writing experiences	1	2	3	4	5
N10	ask kindergarteners to express positive opinions when they evaluate their peers	1	2	3	4	5
N11	highlight general writing areas of concerns and work on them with the kindergarteners	1	2	3	4	5
N12	use standardized tests to assess writing.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Creating Conducive Environment for Emergent writers

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
S1	select materials and activities carefully to support and scaffold kindergarteners' writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S2	use manipulatives (e.g. playdough, water, sands, blocks) to support writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S3	use different materials in my writing centers (e.g. papers, crayons, pencils, flashcards, books) to enrich the writing experience	1	2	3	4	5
S4	use classroom resources (e.g. dictionary wall, flashcards) which serve in developing independent writing	1	2	3	4	5
S5	use technology (e.g. computers, MP4 players, tablets, Labeeb, sound boards), which entice kindergarteners to work on writing	1	2	3	4	5
S6	give kindergarteners opportunities to practice writing naturally in writing and reading centers, art, and science centers, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
S7	use outdoor activities to let kindergarteners practice writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S8	have to make nonthreatening environments in writing to reassure the kindergarteners confidence	1	2	3	4	5
S9	try to build a strong social and emotional bond with kindergarteners so that they feel comfortable in their writing	1	2	3	4	5
S10	try to equip and update myself with new knowledge, information, strategies to be used in emergent writing	1	2	3	4	5

Category	Question type	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
6.	**Challenges and Obstacles of Emergent Writing**					
E1	understand that developing kindergarteners' writing skills needs a lot of time	1	2	3	4	5
E2	Parents usually expect quick progress such as expecting children to write full sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
E3	need to (try to) change parents' attitudes in their traditional ways of thinking about emergent writing	1	2	3	4	5
E4	The choice is difficult among different professional programs and strategies for teaching emergent writing	1	2	3	4	5
E5	Arabic native speaking kindergarteners face difficulty in changing from Arabic writing system to English (e.g. writing direction)	1	2	3	4	5
E6	Teachers who are nonnative speakers of Arabic could face difficulties in understanding the source of difficulties of Arabic native speakers	1	2	3	4	5
E7	Emergent writing needs a lot of time and efforts in instruction, assessment and learning progress	1	2	3	4	5
E8	need to (try to) follow a meticulously writing learning process (e.g. drawing, forming letter, writing names and some words) instead of copying sentences.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: CVR Analysis

		Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	CVR	Expert Comments
K1		x	x	x	1	
K2		x	x	x	1	
K3		x	x	x	1	
K4		x	x	x	1	
K5		x	x	x	1	
K6		x	x	x	1	
K7		x	x	x	1	
K8		x	x	x	1	
K9		x	x	x	1	
K10		x	x	x	1	
C1		x	x	x	1	
C2		x	x	x	1	
C3		x			-0.333	
C4		x	x	x	1	
C5		x	x	x	1	
C6		x	x	x	1	
C7		x	x	x	1	
C8		x	x	x	1	
C9		x	x	x	1	
C10		x	x		0.333	
C11		x	x	x	1	
A1		x	x	x	1	
A2		x	x	x	1	
A3		x	x	x	1	
A4		x		x	0.333	
A5		x	x	x	1	

Cell E60: =ROUND(AVERAGE(E2:E59);3)

1. Instructional Practice Strategies									
Item	**Essential (3)**			**Useful but not essential (2)**			**Not Necessary (1)**		
	R1	**R2**	**R3**	**R1**	**R2**	**R3**	**R1**	**R2**	**R3**
I use the instructional strategies based on kindergarteners' levels	3	3	3						
I use Modeling strategies to scaffold kindergarteners' emergent writing.	3	3	3						
I use think-aloud as a modeling writing strategy to be emulated by kindergarteners	3	3	3						
I apply shared writing strategies (y) to scaffold writing for kindergarteners	3	3	3						
I use guided writing to scaffold for slow kindergarten writers	3	3	3						
I use a mini lesson strategy to teach kindergarteners the process of writing	3	3	3						
I use strategies (e.g. signs) to habituate Arabic native speakers for English language writing direction	3	3	3						
I use interactive writing strategies (e.g. morning message) to create interactive writing atmosphere	3	3	3						
I use graphic organizers to enable kindergarteners in the writing process	3	3	3						
I engage kindergarteners in a free writing process (e.g. write anything)	3	3	3						
2. Creative and Supportive Strategies									
Item	**Essential (3)**			**Useful but not essential (2)**			**Not Necessary (1)**		
	R1	**R2**	**R3**	**R1**	**R2**	**R3**	**R1**	**R2**	**R3**
I use authentic and real topics to enhance creativity	3	3	3						
I use the reader response strategy to give students a chance to come up with creative ideas	3	3	3						

Appendix D: Consent Form

Title of the study: Exploring the Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies of the
UAE Kindergarteners: A Mixed Method Study

This form will provide you with the information about the study to take your decision related to your participation in the study. You have the free choice whether to participate or not in this study. The purpose of the study is to explore the nature and the types of instructional emergent writing strategies used by teachers in their real kindergarten classrooms. You are going to be interviewed through reflecting on your experiences as kindergarten teachers. Interviews will be recorded and saved from any external used for the sake of confidentiality and privacy. The researcher only has the right to listen to the records for analyzing data. Do not hesitate to ask any question related to the study whether before or while conducting it. Moreover, pseudonyms will be used instead of your real. Please sign this consent form considering that you are signing it with fully aware of the study, in which a copy from this consent will be given to you.

Signatur:------------------------------------   date: ----------------------------