

Coaching in Preschool Context: The Roles of Teachers in Developing Saudi Children's Emergent Literacy Learning

Allehyani, Sabha Hakim

Department of Kindergarten, Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Background: Educators play significant role in assisting children to acquire the main literacy skills in preschool. Coaching has great impact on influencing educators' professional development through take advantage of ongoing training that support children literacy learning. The purpose of the current study was to enhance the role of literacy coaching in developing Saudi children's emergent literacy learning in preschool stage. As a new idea were added to the body of research in reading instruction, a new role, known as literacy coaching, emerged that focused on working with teachers, the study shows the importance of defining the roles and responsibilities of the coach and determining their relationship with teachers. **Results:** There were clear differences found in children emergent literacy skills pre and after literacy coaching program. Teachers in intervention group showed significant changes in teaching pedagogies they applied in the classroom, which in turn improved children emergent literacy learning. The findings of this study supported the idea that in coaching literacy process teachers not only learn what to do, however it influences their teaching behaviors and practices positively which assist them using alternative teaching strategies that enhance children's literacy learning in early childhood period.

Keywords: literacy coaching, intervention, emergent literacy learning

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Introduction

Indeed, the formal journey of children education begin in kindergarten stage where children start to inquire the basic skills which effects their future learning practices and attitudes toward schools. The funds of knowledge and skills that children gained from homes added to what they learn in school and build up new knowledge. Disadvantage children may have few learning difficulties occur in early age which influence them negatively and hinder their learning progress to catch up compared to their peers (National Institute for Literacy [NIL], 2008). Without doubt, early childhood is a fundamental period of literacy learning, however emergent literacy learning develops and continue throughout children life span (De Alba-Johnson, Rodriguez, Arias, Johnson, McConnell, McEvoy, Horst, & Passe, 2004).

Previous studies found that there was a positive association between the improvement of children

early literacy skills and language acquisition in their preschool years and the quality of the preschools environment standards that they attend (Hamre & Pianta, 2007). Following research contacted indicated that high quality early childhood setting found to more likely to reinforce better child learning outcomes for young children (Burchinal, 2017). A new research in Saudi Arabia found that early childhood teachers' role was mostly guiding and facilitating, such as assisting in decision-making and encouraging children to engage in shared activities and building positive relationships between children by encouraging the use of discussion, speaking, and listening skills (Allehyani, 2016).

In the preschool environment, educators have an effect on children's literacy development and skills through the use of varied literacy practices and attitudes such as vocabulary knowledge, books and print concept, phonological awareness, letter knowledge and writing (Dickinson, 2002;

Tabors, 2002; Cusumano, Armstrong, Cohen & Todd, 2007). However, many early childhood educators in particular new teachers are not familiar with or trained well in applying instructional strategies that support this phase of literacy development (Snow et al., 1998). Consequently, literacy coaching approach has acknowledged as a significant mechanism for refining preschool classroom instruction which in turn found to have a significant positive impact on children learning outcomes (Assel, Landry, Swank, & Gunnewig, 2007; Bean, 2011; Kraft et al., 2018). Literacy rich environments where the literacy materials and resources are visible and accessible children such as printed and e-books, writing utensils, magnetic alphabet letters found to be effectively influenced children amount as well as the type of literacy attitudes toward enriching learning outcomes (De Alba-Johnson et al., 2004).

Teachers play important role in stimulating and scaffolding children's desire and effort to acquire literacy skills. Teachers instructional attitudes and practices in the classroom such as using new vocabularies, reading books, engaging in conversation with children were varied based on teachers' educational experiences (Konots & Wilcox-Herzog, 2002). Active listening task in the classroom routine were reported by coaches and teachers which played an important role in helping children to achieve optimal literacy learning in particular in language exchanges activities (Wasil, 2010). Indeed, professional development for teachers such as coaching is a unique approach which is relationship based where coaches can work one on one with educators in a focus group in order to improve and develop their teaching knowledge, practices, skills, and dispositions (Aikens & Akers, 2011). However, Gupta and Daniels (2012) argued that there are a few evidences in regard to what actually happens through the coaching process. Previous research findings indicated that only about 10% of preschool teachers actually applied what they had learned without being in coaching program, while above 90% of the teachers will apply the information, they gained from a continuous coaching program into classroom daily practices (Showers, Joyce 1996; Bush, 1984).

Literacy coaching approach support professional learning development for educators to obtain better teaching strategies in early childhood education

programs (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). Nonetheless, not all literacy coaching approach have the similar influence among children as it depends on the quality of teaching environment and teachers' abilities to strengthen their weakness and bring together theory to practice with modeling and feedback (Peterson, Harris, & Watanabe, 1991; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007). Additionally, descriptive and intervention studies found that there was a positive association between teachers' language instructional pedagogies such as (open-ended questions and language expansions) and children literacy learning (Justice, Meier, & Walpole, 2005; Hamre & Pianta, 2008; Wasik, Bond & Hindman, 2006; Wasik, 2010). The area of reading practices was found to be challenging element to address throughout literacy coaching sessions in particular teaching behavior such as how the books is read which was related to issues of control in the classroom (Powell, Steed, & Diamond, 2010). Of further interest finding is the fact that the assessed of K-3 students gains of readings after their teachers attended literacy coaching sessions confirmed that the more time teachers spend working directly with coaches the more it positively associated to students gains in readings (Elish-Piper, L'Allier, 2011). This may relate to child-ratio policy in the classroom or teachers' educational experiences.

Several studies reported that web-mediated consultation and mentoring strategy with preschool teachers who were participated in a state-funded preschool program were more effective in providing teachers with access to a web site of video exemplars which in turn improved teacher-child social (Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre, & Justice, 2008; Landry, Anthony, Swank, & Monseque-Bailey, 2009). Coaching literacy intervention program found that there was greater extent in instructional improvement in particular in children's inquiring new words and knowledge of letters than any other literacy component (Powell, Steed, & Diamond, 2010). To that end, literacy areas were included in coaching intervention program had diverse responds by teachers who were had different teaching experiences as well as the quality of rich literacy environment influence children's learning outcomes.

Further study by Powell et al. (2010) showed that the area of phonological awareness in literacy coaching plans which had lower level of attention related to classroom resources. This finding did not match previous findings by Cusumano et al. (2007), who found that literacy coaching didn't predicate any growth in the area of phonological awareness in particular naming and rhyming. This could be justified that this aspect of children early reading is mostly responsive to the transition and the growth at this early age of participants who were aged between 3 to 5 years. Other researchers studied in depth teachers' practice of references to writing activities within participating in coaching with a speech-language pathologist in order to enable teachers and children to involve in phonological awareness talk and practices during the classroom activity (Miburn, Hipfner-Boucher, Weitzman, Greenberg, Pelletier & Girolametto, 2015). They found that gradual improvement in teachers who received coaching as they had higher quantity of phonological awareness conferences that were in line with strategies instructed during the emergent literacy workshops than other teachers (Miburn et al., 2015). These findings gave a clear insight that the amount of time teachers spend in coaching and training, the more they achieve the optimal goals of their professional development.

Literacy Coaching Approach

The term *Coaching* defined by Toll (2005) as a social interactive process between teachers and coaches aim to support educators in identifying teachers strengthen and abilities in order to make more effective use of what they know and do and put them into practice. Literacy coaches work effectively with teachers in all schooling stages include high, middle, and elementary schools (Toll, 2014). Coaching in the context of educational settings and organizations have different types and terms, and this consist of content coaching, cognitive coaching and instructional coaching (Wise & Hammack, 2011). In the field of education, coaches offer job-embedded professional development to teachers by connecting with them in order to resolve teaching problems and develop new knowledge and practices (Wise & Hammack, 2011). However, policymakers were found to had salient choice toward the use of

instructional coaching for enhancing reading and literacy pedagogy during site-based, individualized, and constant professional development (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010).

Literacy coaching approach promote educator's literacy professional development as they apply the coaching model inside the classroom context which in turn can increase educator-child social interactions that play significant role in promoting children's literacy (Hsieh, Hemmeter, McCollum, & Ostrosky, 2009). The pedagogical emphasis on designing and attending ongoing professional development coaching sessions is needed to make sure that all teachers in particular new teachers obtain foundational knowledge and experiences in early literacy learning and development (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000; Neuman & Kamil, 2010). Mentoring new teachers in coaching sessions assist them to facilitate their professional development.

In the same context, coaching was an effective tool to promote constant improvement of professional teaching skills to shared language and common understandings with others which is needed for the attainment of new knowledge, and to facilitate professional development and foster teacher change (Peterson, 1991; Moran, 2007). The complexity of literacy coaching occurs as set of responsibilities as they work intensively with teachers to in order to improve practice and increase student learning (Moran, 2007).

In addition, coaches need to be carefully chosen training approach, and identified their roles. In the coaching partnership, both coaches and teachers should be clear about their roles (Heineke 2013). Fullan and Knight (2011) argued that there is evidence that where there is ambiguity or absence of the defined roles, coaches progressively take on administrative roles, such as share out resources as well as collecting information. This complexity of literacy coaching process can reduce the influence of the coach on classroom practice and children learning. Certainly, establishing conceptual framework that can support educators to organize the range of coaching tasks in order to make real changes and development in teachers' behaviors and attitudes toward achieving better teaching outcomes is needed (Antony, 2009). Another characteristic of valuable

literacy coach approach is effort to sustain positive change through providing constructive feedback on implementation which influence eventually the quality of a teacher's instruction (Powell et al., 2010).

Providing a reflective feedback to teachers on their use of new strategies and practices in general such as statements in relation to some aspects of targeted instructional approach that the coaches supposed to be appropriately implemented, involving sharing improvements feedback in targeted practices (Landry, Swank, Smith, Assel, & Gunnewig, 2006; Wasik, 2010). Coaches who observed teachers through a conversation station with children, found that those teachers were took the coaches feedback into account when they implemented new way of engaging children in interactive conversation through their positive responses to children when they talk and respond back to teachers (Wasik, 2010). According to *Learning theories*, individuals can learn best when they provided with opportunities to convey and reflect thoughts and perspectives with others, obtain reflective feedback from an expert, and to observe modeling that help them in build up new ideas and knowledge (Vaughan, 1996).

Additionally, coaching conversation with teachers in coaching process is very effective for professional development as they can learn about one another's work, give the attention to obstacles that children may experiences in classroom context, and monitor carefully changes though using the generated data (Toll, 2014). Teachers and coaches need to be in synchronize with each other and looking forward achieving diversity learning processes and outcomes aligned with organizational objectives to move effectively through the coaching cycle (Toll, 2014). Therefore, coach-teacher partnerships based on sharing trust and teaching experiences and practices is the most significant element in coaching progress (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). In light of this, Cusumano et al. (2007) recommended policymakers need to make more effort seeking to assist educators to be more equipped with new research-based teaching pedagogies for instruction enhance in merit.

Purpose and Research Questions

The primary purpose of the current research was to investigate the influence of literacy coaching

approach on teachers' and children's emergent literacy practices in preschool context in *Saudi Arabia*. The subsequent purposes of this study encompass the following a) recognizing of literacy coaching process and how to implement it; b) defining the roles of teachers through the coaching process; c) reflecting the social interaction between teacher and children and how it impacts on developing children oral language; and d) recognizing the difference between the coaching process in pre- and post-intervention program. It also intended to study the problem of weak educational strategies in pre-school context and the poor teacher roles in developing children education. The investigating of the importance of coaching process in developing the educational process target in pre-school stage, and learns about the advantages of the coaching process and explains its advantages and the development it leads to children's education. Two primary research questions will be examined:

-The first question: Does literacy coaching intervention approach result in modify teachers' attitudes toward use of targeted emergent literacy skills?

-The second question: How literacy coaching on specific emergent literacy skills results in developing children emergent literacy learning?

Method

Instrumentation

Literacy coaching approach was adopted in this study through using *Emergent Literacy Coaching Observation Checklist Tool (ELCOT)*. This tool was based on a *Likert* rating scale, which contains a range of responses from 1 to 3 (observed=1, not observed=2, partially observed=3). The investigation of the focus teachers' emergent literacy practices through the checklist included five main indicators such as literacy attitudes, language use, making meaning, and concepts about print symbols and writing. The first emergent literacy indicator was *Language* which focused on teachers' attitudes toward teaching children through using *oral language*. This included the following activities: participates in interactions with others; initiates interactions with others; hears and responds to others in small groups; follows verbal directions; uses

language for a range of functions, such as labelling, describing, explaining, predicting, imagining, analysing, and synthesising; and explores with writing materials e.g. pens, pencils, crayons, paint. *Literacy attitudes* was the second indicator investigated through the literacy coaching intervention program. This encompasses the following initiates looking at or reading images and texts e.g. magazines, toy catalogues, software in Arabic or other languages; integrates literacy within play experiences, asks to be read to in Arabic or other languages; explores the illustrations whilst being read to; responds with questions and comments to texts read to him or her; and draws, reads, writes for own purposes.

The third emergent literacy indicator examined was *Making meaning*. This consist of retells, reads or writes stories from familiar narrative images and texts e.g. interactive books; responds to narrative or factual text after reading, listening or viewing with literal comments or questions; and understands that texts have a range of purposes (selling products, attracting attention, promoting a world view). *Concepts about print and symbols* practices were also investigated as significant indicator. These include recognizes symbols in the environment e.g. traffic lights; reads environmental print; knows that oral language can be written down and then read; knows Arabic print is read from right to left; names and identifies rhyming words; and differentiate between the text and illustrations. The fifth indicator was *Writing* which consist of explores with writing materials e.g. pens, pencils, crayons, chalk, textas, brushes, paints, mouse, computers); writes form right to lift in Arabic (may be different for different language group); and uses computer for word processing, searching. These indicators have been assessed consistently using the (ELCOT) in pre- and post-intervention program.

Participants

Preschool teachers and children were recruited from three public early childhood centres located in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The total sampling size were ($n= 50$) participant include number of ($n=25$) children and ($n=65$) teachers who agreed to participant voluntarily literacy coaching intervention program. Teacher who participated in this study had different

teaching experiences. Among the participants, 68% held a Bachelor degree, 20% had completed high school and Diploma, and 12% possessed a Master degree (see table 4). Furthermore, as presented in table 3, 25 preschool teachers reported their teaching experience, which varied from less than 5 years (28%). Half of teacher (56%) had five years to 10 years of teaching experience. Few numbers of teachers had more than 10 years teaching experiences in preschool. Those teachers were attended literacy coaching program per weeks due to their teaching working load.

Literacy coaching program was offered for 6 weeks training workshops and almost half of preschool teachers ($n=11$, 44%) completed the full training requirement (see table 6). Two full time coaches worked with all teachers during literacy classroom activities and retinues. As shown in table 2, the focused group of children aged from 4 to 6 years who contributed in the literacy coaching intervention program were a total of 65 include (38 girls) and (27 boys). As shown in table 3, around half of those children speak one language (*Arabic*) which is the mother-tongue language, while the rest of them (23%) were bilingual children who speak two languages (*Arabic and English*).

Literacy coaching intervention program

Pre-and post-literacy coaching observations were conducted using (*ELCOT*). The primary purpose of the first training session was to share and discuss with preschool teachers the evidence-based practices in developing emergent literacy and language learning and improving classroom practices. The subsequent training sessions were planned by coaches to addressed: a) letters and words knowledge; b) shared book reading; c) phonological awareness; d) writing development activities. In the post intervention literacy coaches' program, coaches observed teacher's half-day through the literacy activities and routine during 4 weeks and then discussed consistently their feedback on teachers' instructional practices.

Participants Description

The following is a comprehensive overview shown in tables and graphs in terms of:

Gender

As displayed from table (1) and figure (1) the distribution of the preschool children in the research according to the gender variable. The total children

whom agreed to participate in this study were 65 included girls ($n=38$, 58.5%), and boys ($n=27$, 41.5%).

Table 1.

The distribution of preschool children relating to the gender variable

Gender	Number	Percentage
Girl	38	58.5%
Boy	27	41.5%
Sum	65	100%

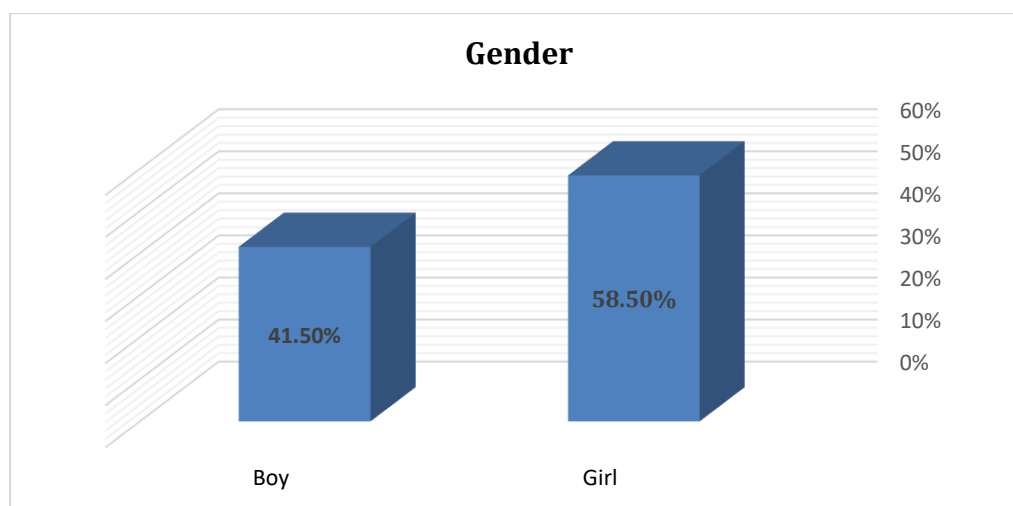


Figure 1. The distribution of the preschool children relating to the gender variable

Children Age

As demonstrated from Table (2) and graph (2) show the distribution of the individuals in the research sample according to the age variable. The children were divided into a number of age groups, of whom

the majority belonged to age group of 5 years ($n = 26$, 40%), followed by ($n = 21$, 32.3%) of preschoolers whom were 4 years old, and children whom the belonged to age group of 6 years old by ($n = 18$, 27.7%).

Table 2.

The distribution of the preschool children according to the age variable

Age	Number	Percentage
4 years	21	32.3%
5 years	26	40%
6 years	18	27.7%
Sum	65	100%

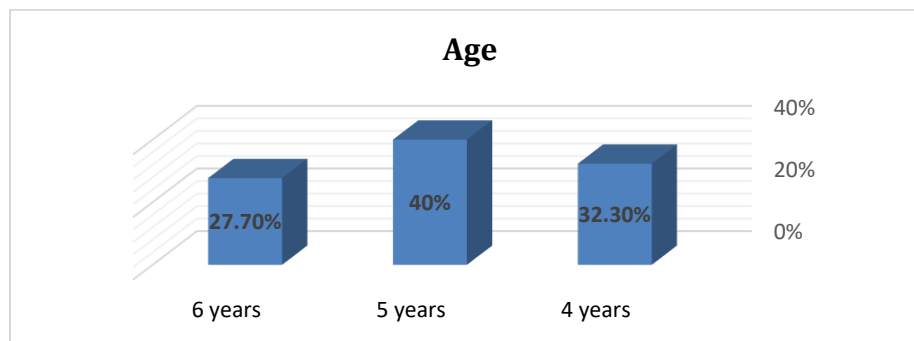


Figure 2. The distribution of the preschool children in relation to the age variable

Children's language Background

As shown from table (3) and figure (3) the distribution of the children's language background. The result reported that almost half of children who were participated in this study ($n=42$, 64.6%) speaks

one language (Arabia) as the official language of Saudi Arabia and mother tongue for most Saudi children. According to the data, there were bilingual children ($n=23$, 35.4%) of the sample speaks two languages include Arabic as a main language and English as second language.

Table 3.

The distribution of the preschool children relating to the language background

Children's language background	Number	Percentage
Speaks one language	42	64.6%
Speaks two languages	23	35.4%
Sum	65	100%

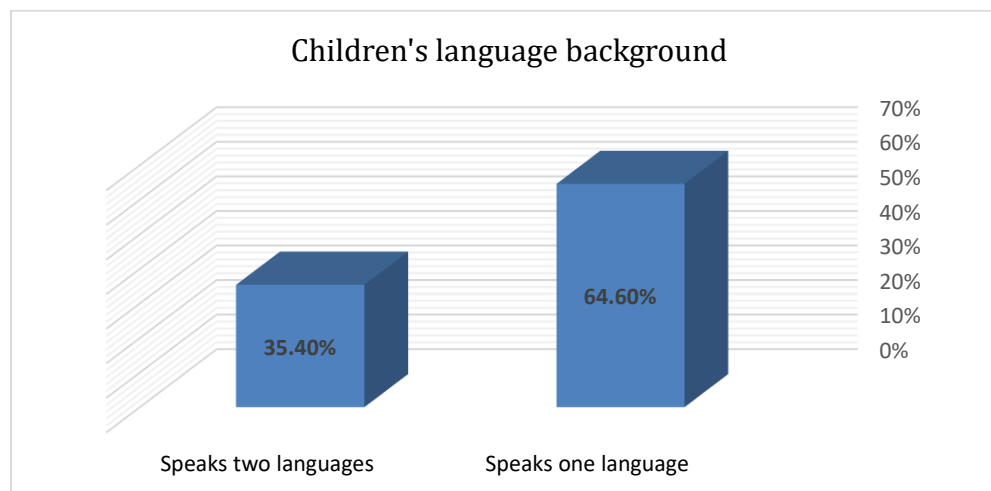


Figure 3. The distribution of the children's language background

The distribution of the preschool teachers in the research sample according to the level of education variable as shown in table (4) and figure (4) below.

Table 4.

The distribution of the preschool teachers according to the level of education variable

Level of education	Number	Percentage
Completed High school / Diploma	5	20%
Bachelor degree	17	68%
Higher education (Master)	3	12%
Sum	25	100%

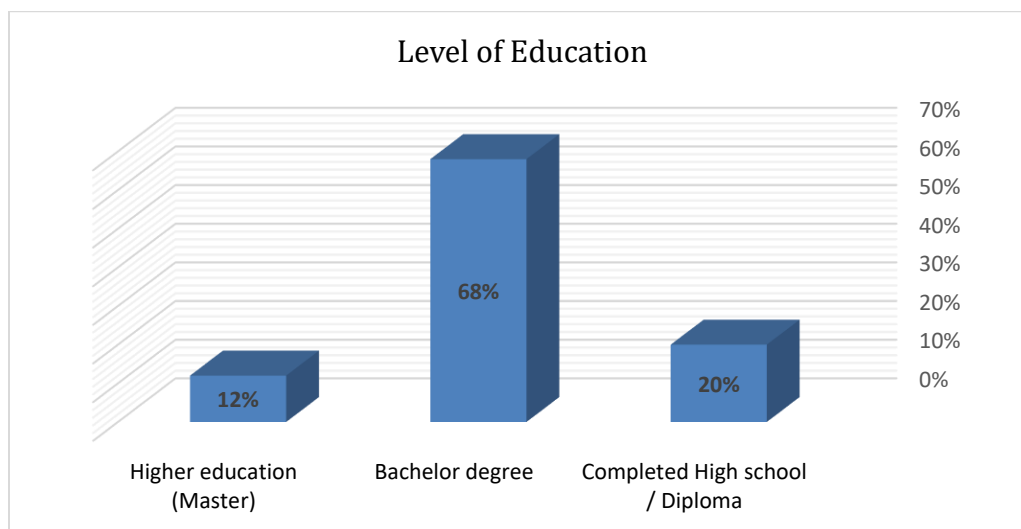


Figure 4. The distribution of the preschool teachers' level education variable

Preschool teachers were different in relation to their level of education. The majority of teachers had a Bachelor degree in teaching early childhood ($n=17$, 68%) followed by ($n=5$, 20%) with a teacher who completed High School / Diploma in education. Only a small number of preschool teachers ($n=3$, 12%) held a Master degree in teaching Early Childhood (see table 4 & figure 4 above).

Years of Teaching Experiences

In relation to teaching experiences, the distribution of the preschool teachers according to the years of teaching experiences presented in table (5) and figure (5) below. The analyses reported that ($n=14$, 56%) of teachers had ranged from 5 to 10 years of teaching experience, followed by ($n=7$, 28%) of the teachers, who reported to have less than 5 years of teaching experiences (see table 5 & figure 5). Only a small number of teachers who agreed to participate in this study ($n=4$, 16%) indicated to have over 10 years of experience.

Table 5.

The distribution of the preschool teachers according to the years of teaching experiences

Years of Teaching Experiences	Number	Percentage
Less than 5 years	7	28%
From 5 to 10 Years	14	56%
Over 10 years	4	16%
Sum	25	100%

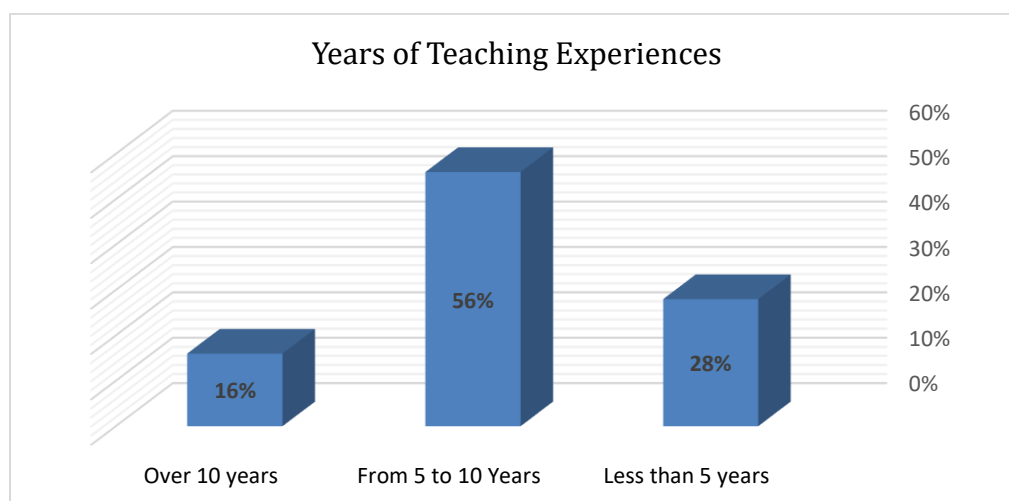


Figure 5. The distribution teachers relating to the years of teaching experiences

Literacy Coaching Experiences

In regard to literacy coaching experiences, table (6) and figure (6) displayed the distribution of the preschool teachers relating to their literacy coaching intervention experiences per weeks in which outlined the sessions they were attended. It is clear that the majority of teachers ($n=11, 44\%$) were completed the full days of the 6 weeks of literacy coaching intervention program (see table 6 & figure 6). Only

($n=8, 32\%$) of preschool teachers were completed 4 to 5 weeks of training sessions.

Few teachers ($n= 6, 24\%$) whom had completed only 2 to 3 weeks of training sessions. This was justified by that those teachers were had overload teaching as well as the teacher-child ratio of 13:1 (13 preschool children per one teacher). This number should be maintained according to staff-to-child ratios policy is it very significant element of a high-quality classroom environment.

Table 6.

The distribution of teachers' literacy coaching intervention program

Literacy coaching intervention program (per weeks)	Number	Percentage
From 2 to 3 weeks	6	24%
From 4 to 5 weeks	8	32%
6 weeks (completed the literacy coaching intervention program)	11	44%
Sum	25	100%

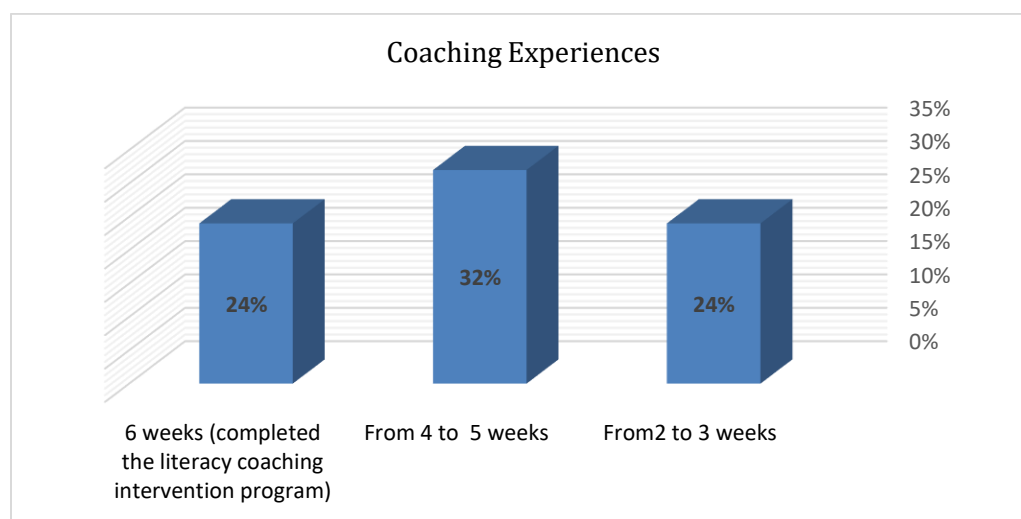


Figure 6. The distribution of teachers' literacy coaching intervention experiences

Reliability and Validity of Instrument

Validity

Means the ability of the questionnaire to measure what they were supposed to measure.

Internal consistency validity

1 - Calculate the correlation coefficients between the degree of each statement, and the total degree of the axis of the observation checklist.

2- Calculating correlation coefficients between the total score for each axis of the observation checklist and the total score of it.

The first axis: Language

Validity was calculated using internal validity by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the score of each statement and language axis score. The following table illustrates this:

Table 7.

Correlation coefficients values between the degree of each statement and the degree of language axis

No	Correlations	Sig
1-	0.886	0.01
2-	0.914	0.01
3-	0.608	0.05
4-	0.735	0.01
5-	0.634	0.05
6-	0.862	0.01
7-	0.776	0.01
8-	0.809	0.01
9-	0.923	0.01
10-	0.837	0.01
11-	0.714	0.01
12-	0.619	0.05
13-	0.895	0.01
14-	0.952	0.01

As illustrated in table 7 above that all correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01 - 0.05) for their proximity to number one, which indicates the validity and homogeneity of the statements of the (ELCOT).

The second axis: Literacy attitudes

Validity was calculated using internal validity by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the score of each statement and literacy attitudes axis score. The following table illustrates this:

Table 8.

Correlation coefficients values between the degree of each statement and the degree of literacy attitudes axis

No	Correlations	Sig
1-	0.748	0.01
2-	0.873	0.01
3-	0.642	0.05
4-	0.756	0.01
5-	0.908	0.01
6-	0.814	0.01
7-	0.729	0.01
8-	0.846	0.01
9-	0.629	0.05
10-	0.935	0.01

It is clear from the table above that all correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01 - 0.05) for their proximity to number one, which indicates the validity and homogeneity of the statements of the (ELCOT).

Validity was calculated using internal validity by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the score of each statement and making meaning axis score. The following table illustrates this:

The third axis: Making meaning

Table 9.

Correlation coefficients values between the degree of each statement and the degree of making meaning axis

No	Correlations	Sig
1-	0.605	0.05
2-	0.787	0.01
3-	0.856	0.01
4-	0.942	0.01
5-	0.768	0.01
6-	0.705	0.01
7-	0.829	0.01
8-	0.637	0.05
9-	0.613	0.05
10-	0.793	0.01

All correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01 - 0.05) for their proximity to number one, which indicates the validity and homogeneity of the statements of the (ELCOT) (see Table 9).

The fourth axis: Concepts about print and symbols

Validity was calculated using internal validity by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson

correlation coefficient) between the score of each statement and concepts about print and symbols axis score. The following table illustrates this:

Table 10.

Correlation coefficients values between the degree of each statement and the degree of concepts about print and symbols axis

No	Correlations	Sig
1-	0.917	0.01
2-	0.738	0.01
3-	0.885	0.01
4-	0.834	0.01
5-	0.771	0.01
6-	0.644	0.05
7-	0.896	0.01
8-	0.952	0.01
9-	0.745	0.01
10-	0.926	0.01
11-	0.717	0.01
12-	0.625	0.05
13-	0.865	0.01
14-	0.961	0.01
15-	0.804	0.01
16-	0.783	0.01
17-	0.601	0.05
18-	0.638	0.05
19-	0.845	0.01

As shown from table 10 above that all correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01 - 0.05) for their proximity to number one, which indicates the validity and homogeneity of the statements of the (ELCOT).

Validity was calculated using internal validity by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the score of each statement and writing axis score. The following table illustrates this:

The fifth axis: Writing

Table 11.

Correlation coefficients values between the degree of each statement and the degree of writing axis

No	Correlations	Sig
1-	0.726	0.01
2-	0.617	0.05
3-	0.907	0.01
4-	0.751	0.01
5-	0.818	0.01
6-	0.932	0.01
7-	0.875	0.01
8-	0.791	0.01

9-	0.857	0.01
10-	0.643	0.05
11-	0.734	0.01
12-	0.916	0.01
13-	0.823	0.01
14-	0.626	0.05
15-	0.707	0.01
16-	0.887	0.01
17-	0.941	0.01
18-	0.604	0.05
19-	0.639	0.05
20-	0.769	0.01
21-	0.807	0.01

Table 11 showed that all correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01 - 0.05) for their proximity to number one, which indicates the validity and homogeneity of the statements of the (ELCOT).

Validity using internal consistency between the total score of each axis and the total score of the (ELCOT).

Correlation coefficients values between the degree of each axis and the total degree of the (ELCOT)

	Correlations	Sig
Language	0.765	0.01
Literacy attitudes	0.853	0.01
Making meaning	0.798	0.01
Concepts about print and symbols	0.709	0.01
Writing	0.824	0.01

The table above showed that all correlation coefficients are significant at the level of (0.01 - 0.05) for their proximity to number one, which indicates the validity and homogeneity of the statements of the (ELCOT).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the accuracy of the test in the measurement and observation, its inconsistency with

The validity was calculated using internal consistency by calculating the correlation coefficients (Pearson correlation coefficient) between the total score of each axis and the total score of the questionnaire. The following table illustrates that: Table 12.

itself, its consistency and frequency in the information it provides about the behavior of the examinee, and it's the ratio between the degree variation on the scale indicating the actual performance of the examinees, and reliability is calculated by:

- 1-Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
- 2-Split-half method

Table 13.

The Reliability coefficient of the axis of the (ELCOT)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-half
Language	0.909	0.863 – 0.941
Literacy attitudes	0.741	0.705 – 0.789

Making meaning	0.808	0.762 – 0.845
Concepts about print and symbols	0.923	0.881 – 0.960
Writing	0.772	0.732 – 0.811
Reliability of the questionnaire	0.859	0.817 – 0.890

As displayed from the previous table that all the values of reliability coefficients: Alpha Coefficient, Split-half are significant at the level of (0.01), which indicates the consistency of the (ELCOT).

Results

Pre and post intervention program

Descriptive statistics gave us a clear insight of the initial and final literacy coaching observations and assessment data. Comparisons between the teachers' literacy practices and its impact on children literacy

learning development between pre- and post-intervention groups were explored. Clearly, there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of coaching in preschool context to develop education for Saudi children in emerging literacy in favor of post-test implementation (see table 14). These results outlined the role of literacy coaching intervention sessions in improving teaching instructional strategies in the literacy practices within the daily activities and routines. To verify this hypothesis, T-Test was applied and the following table illustrates that:

Table 14.

Significance of the differences between the averages scores of children in the pre and post-test of intervention program

Effect	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	df	t	Sig
Before	86.145	7.369	65	64	61.125	After Significant at 0.01
After	214.408	11.182				

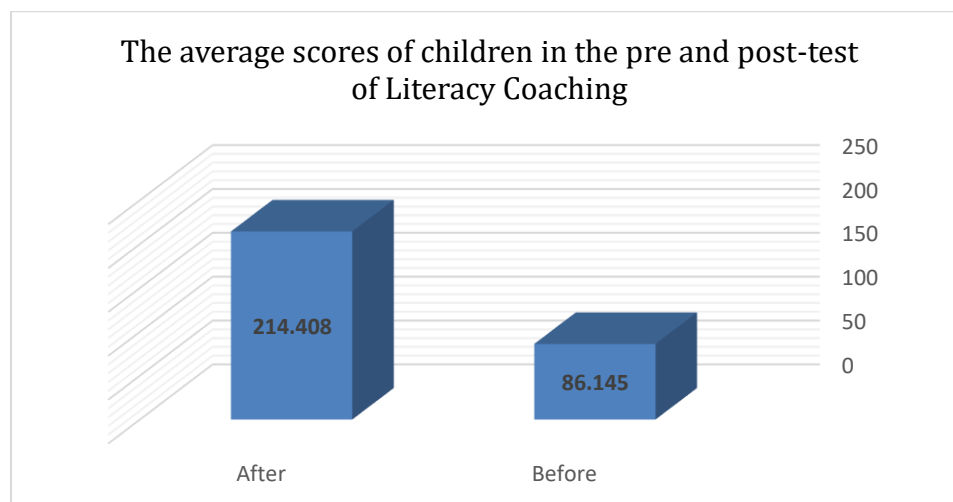


Figure 7. Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of intervention program

To examine the pre- and post-intervention program influence on teachers' literacy practices, the value of

"T" is equals 61.125 measured for developing the education of Saudi children emerging literacy, which

is statistically significance at the level of 0.01 (see table 14 & figure 7).

The average score for children in post-test was 214.408, while it was the average score for children in the pre-test is 86.145, which indicates that there are real differences between the two applications in favor of post-test. This reveals the positive effect of the literacy coaching intervention program in developing Saudi children emerging literacy learning outcomes. These analyses drew the attention to the vital roles of coaches' professional feedbacks on teachers' teaching process pre- and post-the intervention program. To determine the magnitude of the effect, the ETA equation was applied:

$t = \text{value } (t) = 61.125$, $df = \text{degrees of freedom} = 64$

$$n^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df} = 0.983$$

By calculating the effect size, it was found that $n^2 = 0.983$

$$d = \frac{2 \sqrt{n^2}}{\sqrt{1-n^2}} = 15.23$$

The size of the effect is determined whether it is large, medium or small, as follows:
 0.2 = small effect size
 0.5 = average effect size
 0.8 = large effect size, so achieve the first hypothesis.

First Indicator: Language

Preschool teachers' use of language and literacy practices were observed and assessed in the classroom before and after the literacy coaching intervention program during three months. The analysis indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of the first indicator "language" for the favor of post-test. To verify this hypothesis, T-Test was applied and the following table illustrates that.

Table 15.

Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the first indicator "Language"

Language	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	df	t	Sig
Before	15.111	1.196	65	64	21.883	After Significant at 0.01
After	39.628	3.241				

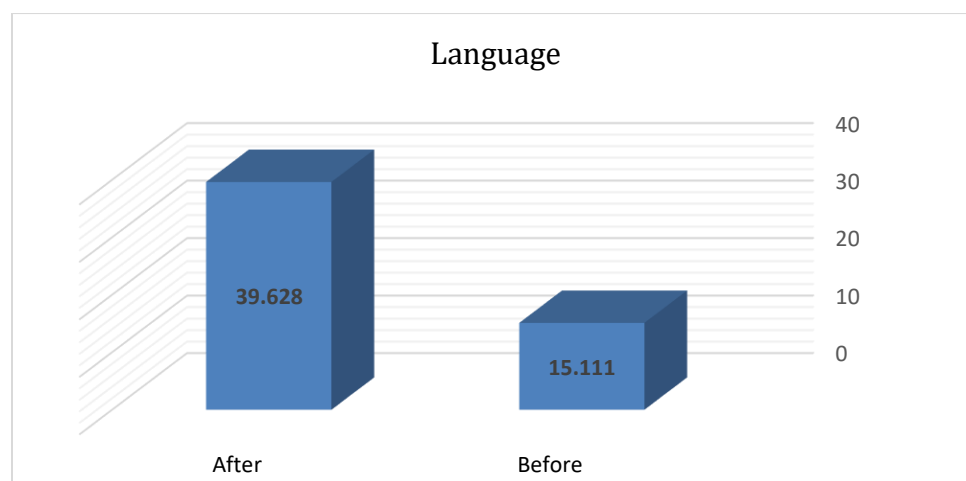


Figure 8. Significance of the differences between the average scores of students in the pre and post-test to the first indicator "Language"

As presented from table (15) and figure (8) showed that the value of "T" is equal to "21,883" for the first indicator "*Language*", which is statistically significant at 0.01. The average of children in the post-test was 39,628, where the average scores children in the pre-test was "15.111". These results shown that there were real differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test which confirmed that teachers' literacy attitudes improvement after attending the intervention program were reflected positively on children's literacy learning outcomes.

Second indicators: Literacy attitudes

An exploratory analysis showed that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of the second indicator "*Literacy attitudes*" for the favor of post-test. To verify this result, T-Test was applied and the following table (16) demonstrates that.

Table 16.

Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the second indicator "Literacy attitudes"

Literacy attitudes	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	df	t	Sig
Before	12.498	1.333	65	64	15.582	After Significant at 0.01
After	28.001	2.648				

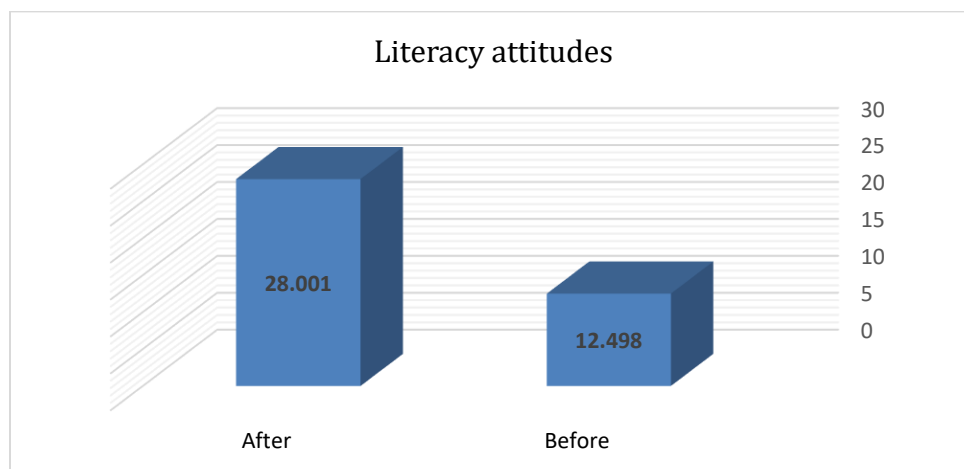


Figure 9. Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the second indicator "*Literacy attitudes*"

Table (16) and figure (9) illustrated that the value of "T" is equal to "15.582" for the second indicator "*Literacy attitudes*", which is statistically significant at 0.01. The average of children in the post-test was 28.001, where the average scores of children in the pre-test was "12.498", which indicating that there are real differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test, thus confirmed this finding.

Third indicator: Making Meaning

Coaching literacy intervention program found to have a positive influence on preschool literacy behavior and practices in relation to children's process of *making meaning* during literacy activities. These activities included reading interactive books; responds to narrative or factual text after reading, and listening or viewing with literal comments or questions. The analysis showed that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of this indicator for the favor of post-test. To verify this

analysis, T-Test was applied and the following table demonstrates that.

Table 17.

Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the third indicator "Making Meaning process"

Making meaning	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	df	t	Sig
Before	14.683	1.789	65	64	13.338	After Significant at 0.01
After	29.101	2.451				

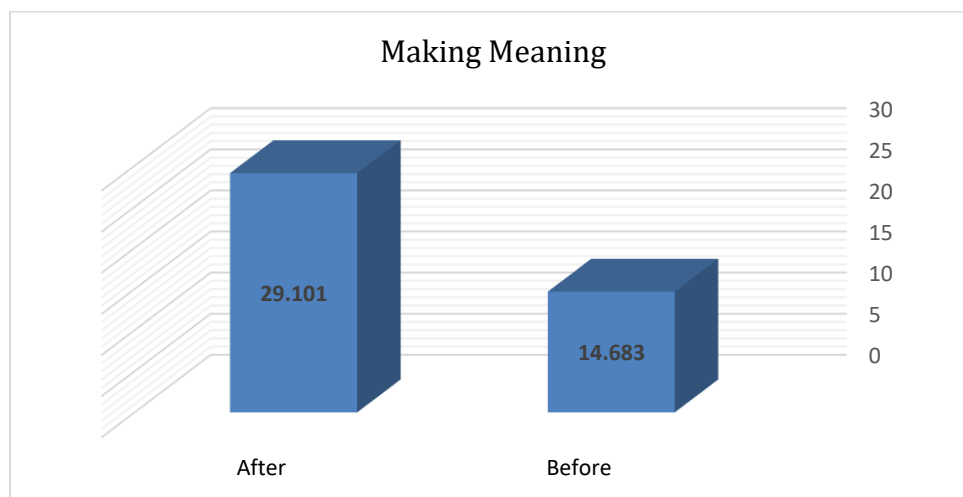


Figure 10. Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the third indicator "Making Meaning process"

Table (10) and figure (17) showed that the value of "T" is equal to "13.338" for the third indicator "Making Meaning process", which is statistically significant at 0.01. The average of children in the post-test was 29.101. The average scores of children in the pre-test was "14.683", which demonstrating that there were real differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test. Therefore, these analyses conforming that teaching behaviors were improved in nearly twice more than before attending the coaching intervention program in relation to making meaning process indicator.

Table 18.

Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test relate to "concepts about print and symbols"

Concepts about print and symbols	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Df	T	Sig
Before	20.334	2.158	65	64	28.769	After Significant at 0.01
After	56.071	4.067				

Fourth indicator: Concept about print and symbols

The constant observations of teachers' literacy practices evident that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of the fourth indicator "concept about print and symbols" for the favor of post-test. To verify this analysis, T-Test was applied and the following table showed that.

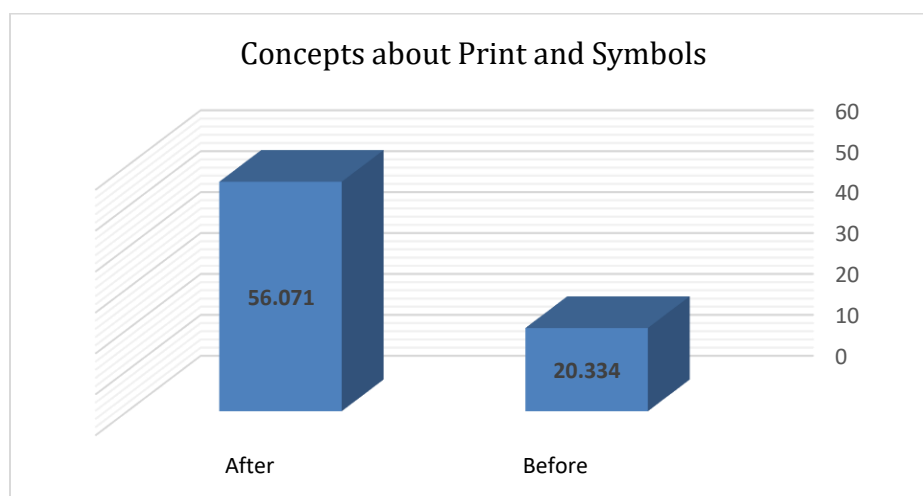


Figure 11. Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the fourth indicator "Concepts about Print and Symbols"

The value of "T" is equal to "28.769" for the fourth indicator "Concepts about print and symbols", which is statistically significant at 0.01, where the average of children in the post-test was 56.071 (see table 18 & figure 11). The average score of children in the pre-test was "20.334", which representing that there were real differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test, and this approve the analysis.

Fifth indicator: Writing

In relation to writing skills, the analysis of the data showed that there were statistically significant differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test of the fifth indicator "Writing" for the favor of post-test. To verify this hypothesis, T-Test was applied and the following table illustrates that (see table 19). The value of "T" is equal to "34.159" for preschoolers' writing progress, which is statistically significant at 0.01, where the average of children in the post-test was 61.607 (table 19 & figure 12).

Table 19.

Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the fifth indicator "Writing"

Writing	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	df	T	Sig
Before	23.519	2.247	65	64	34.159	After Significant at 0.01
After	61.607	5.128				

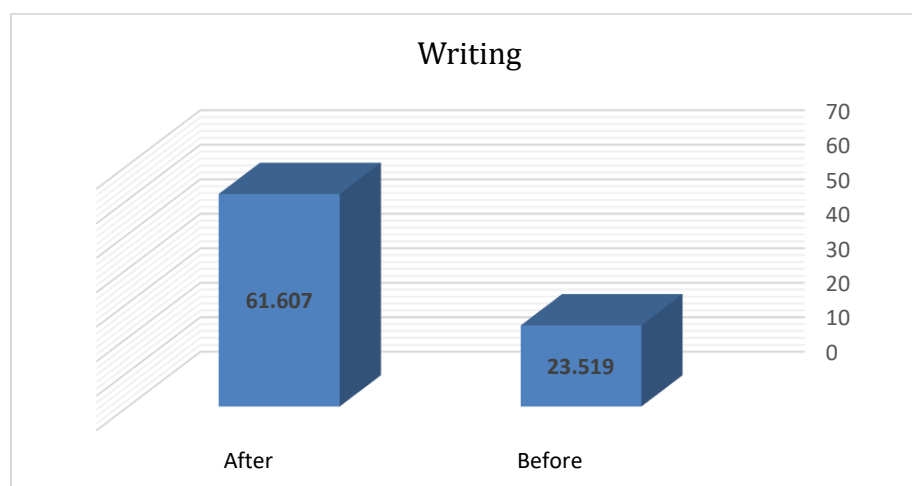


Figure 12. Significance of the differences between the average scores of children in the pre and post-test to the fifth indicator "Writing"

The observations of post intervention literacy practices explored with children using writing materials, writing activities in both languages include *Arabic* and *English* and using technological devices for searching purposes and word processing such as using computer and iPad devices. The most striking finding to generate from the data is that the average score of children in the pre-test was "23.519", and these results indicating that there were real differences between the two tests in favor of the post-test, which confirmed these analyses. There was a significant positive correlation between teachers' teaching performance in post literacy coaching workshops and children's writing growth and improvement in the classroom activities.

Discussion

The current study contributes to the existing body of research on the significant contributions regarding literacy coaching practices by evaluating preschool teachers teaching instruction in the classroom. These practices influenced the ways that preschool learn and develop in relation to emergent literacy skills. The uniqueness of the results drew from the current study as it added important descriptive and analytical findings on the subject of emergent literacy leaning among Saudi preschool children. Accordingly, two main contributions of this study emerged and narrowed from the range of variation. These were the effect of preschool teachers' emergent literacy practices in pre- and post-intervention program; and

the effect of children's literacy skills and learning outcomes, which will be discussed.

Contribution #1

The Effects of Literacy Coaching on Teachers' Practices

The primary analysis of teachers' teaching instructional changes was in exact alignment with the main focus of the literacy coaching outcomes. The finding of this study reported that coaches were discussing the visual presented data and the teaching strategies feedback with teachers in both stages in pre- and post-intervention program which improved teachers' performance during the coaching program. Using direct literacy observations, results showed that teachers after literacy coaching training were more like to make real transformation in the physical classroom environment and practices and this significant difference was between the mean scores. These results agreed with the previous findings by Landry et al. (2006), Powell et al. (2010) and Wasik (2010), who emphasized on the importance of sharing the reflective feedback between coaches and teachers on the implementation of new strategies and practices relating to some aspects of targeted instructional approach on the improvement on teachers' professional outcomes.

Additionally, the current study reported that there no significant differences were found between preschool teachers' levels of education nor years of

teaching experiences in relation to children literacy outcomes. This due to higher mean score (214.408) confirmed that there was clear significance of the differences between the averages scores of children's literacy practices in the pre and post-test of intervention program. Further analyses indicated that although only 44% of preschool teachers had achieve criterion within 6 weeks designed as a requirement for the literacy intervention program, all teachers were keen to take the coaches' comments and feedback into account beside the peer reflections on and modeling strategies. In future studies, its will be vital to assess how the individual differences in teachers' teaching skills that may impact the usefulness of different formats in relation to coaching process.

Contribution #2

The Effects of Literacy Coaching on Children's Literacy Outcomes

Research is lacking on targeted emergent literacy skills development in preschool children in Saudi Arabia in relation to examine the influencing of literacy coaching program on learning outcomes. From the subsequent analysis, it appeared that there were significant differences in the mean scores in each indicator included *language, literacy attitudes, making meaning process, concept about print and symbols and writing* in pre- and post-literacy coaching intervention program.

As noted above, the implantation of targeted literacy practices in relation to developing preschool *language* skills by adding new teaching practices and modified activities yield higher rating score on the post intervention (39.628) in children languages and this include both in *Arabic* and *English* classroom practices. The significant post intervention score indicated the positive influence of literacy coaching outcomes of teachers' practices relating to children through interactions with others; hears and responds to others in small groups; follows verbal directions; uses language for a range of functions and explores with writing materials in the classroom. Interestingly, this correlation is related to the positive changes of teachers' instructional teaching attitudes in developing children oral language and revealed the impact of rich classroom activities on children literacy learning outcomes. These vital findings supported the previous finding by Hamre and Pianta

(2007), who found that there was a positive relationship between the improvement of children emergent literacy and language achievement in preschool and the high quality of classroom environment that they enrolled in.

An unexpected result was that the averages on children's *literacy attitude* had the lowest achievement score (28.001) after the post coaching intervention program compared with the other indicators. The visual represented data aligned closely with classroom activities consist of encouraging children looking at or reading images and texts in Arabic or English; integrating literacy within play indoor and outdoor experiences, asking children to be read to in *Arabic* or *English*; exploring the illustrations whilst they being ask to read; responding to questions and comments to texts read to them, and encouraging children to draws, reads, writes during the classroom daily routines and activities. However, the average score relates to children literacy attitudes indictor increased from pre- to post coaching intervention program in which children reached higher level on the final classroom observations. In addition, the smaller pre to post improvement relate to literacy attitudes may exemplify adaptations to children's emerging capabilities which drew the attention toward further future investigation.

All of literacy coaching activities relate to *making meaning process* focused on improving preschool teachers regarding to developing specific target skills through applying specific assessment, curriculum and instructions. Accordingly, the constant observations of children in post literacy coaching intervention achieved (29.101) average score which indicated that there was slight improvement in children's skills relating to retelling, reading stories; responding to narrative or factual text after reading, listening and responding to comments or questions; and understanding a range of purposes of texts. Result also indicated that teacher- child interaction during the process of making meaning when reading texts, or responding to questions and comments had lower level of development. Although observational data reported the gradual enhancement of all skills children were had in relation to activities relate to the process making meaning indicator, the improvement was lower on the average compared to other emergent

literacy indicators. The limited number of social interaction opportunities children had regarding reading and listening activities in which children can hear and acquire more skills in reading comprehension and acquisition of the vocabulary may need to be coached and developed in depth.

In addition, literacy coaching on the subject of the content area of *concept about print and symbols* predicated that children had high level of increase compared to other indicators. The area of phonological awareness was also had higher average score in post coaching intervention program which was observed during naming and identifying rhyming words activity. This result was agreed with previous finding by Miburn et al. 2015), who indicated that there was a gradual improvement observed in teachers who received coaching as they had higher quantity of phonological awareness conferences that were in line with strategies instructed and applied during the emergent literacy workshops. The subsequent analysis revealed that the clear development of children skills in recognizing symbols and reading print in the environment; knowing the right different directions of written languages in *Arabic* and *English* in printed resources; and differentiating between the text and illustrations.

Interestingly, the comparison between children learning relating to concept about print and symbols in the average scores were significantly increased rapidly from (20.334) in pre coaching to (56.071) average score. These results referred to teachers' teaching strategies that were applied into the classroom practices included modeling, scaffolding and monitoring children ongoing learning progress during the post coaching intervention program. These significant results in the current study contradicted the previous finding by Powell et al. (2010), who reported that the area of phonological awareness in literacy coaching plans had lower level of attention related to classroom resources. Overall, these findings relating to *concept about print and symbols* reflected that children benefited from literacy coaching in ways that went beyond the traditional literacy teaching practices to developing interactive teaching style.

Importantly, the current study reported the indicator of writing had the highest average score of

(61.607) of literacy attainment being assessed in the post literacy coaching intervention program compared with other emergent literacy indicators. As literacy coaching took place over 5 weeks, children were represented higher abilities and interest during the *writing* activities in specific target skills. The observational data showed the improvement in children abilities in relation to exploring writing materials, writing in both languages *Arabic* and *English* activity and using technological devices such as computer for word processing and searching. The primary evaluation of writing exercise and activities in the classroom reflected the promotion of children's writing skills among different age groups. This interesting evidence pertaining to writing showed that there was large amount of attention to writing area observed in classroom practices which had positive influence in developing children emergent wiring skills. To sum up, the indicators relate to children concept about print and symbols and interest in writing were distinguishing in fairly higher level of teachers' attention to consider in literacy classroom practices.

Limitations and Need for Future Research

Although the current study carried out strong findings in the field of early childhood education Saudi Arabia particularly the subject of emergent literacy learning, limitations were existed. First, teachers in the study were agreed to participate voluntarily, it is inevitable that small number of teachers faced few difficulties to complete the tanning workshops for 6 weeks in relation to overload teaching work and responsibilities. However, this limitation didn't show any direct influence relating to teachers' motivation and interest to participate to involve in the literacy coaching intervention as teachers were keen to share their co-teaching experiences in ways that reflected their eager to improve their practical knowledge. A further limitation was the lack of access children's household's literacy practices in order to get boarder picture of the influence of literacy coaching outcomes on children's literacy learning at home context using different research method for investigation such as survey.

An additional limitation was that literacy coaching program took place over short term across 6 weeks of observing children literacy learning progress, thus

examine emergent literacy growth for long-term is needed. A related issue, not addressed in the current study, reading comprehension skills and the acquisition of the vocabulary need to be investigated more through providing children with multiple opportunities in multiple times. Another limitation emergent from this study is that although there were number of bilingual children who participated in this study and showed clear improvement in reading and writing progress, more research is needed to explore the individual literacy practices at school and home contexts. It should be also noted that results occurred from this study may not generalize to other literacy coaching approach that don't have the same literacy indicators. The type of research site as the early childhood settings were public sector, including private settings will be more beneficial in term of making comparison between different types of settings which may impacted the findings.

Conclusion

Although this study drew clear picture about evaluating the positive impact of utilizing literacy coaching approach on the acquisition of early literacy learning, it has thrown up many inquiries in need of more investigation. The literacy coaching approach applied in this study provided teachers with the opportunities to recognize their strengths and weakness through working with coaches which yields new opportunities for professional development. Importantly, it may be useful step to share this approach with administrators, directors and parents through organizing intensive literacy coaching program that assist to develop young children emergent literacy skills at early age in home and school settings. Exposing parents to this useful approach will enhance children's attitudes and practices outside the school context which will have in turn the deep influence on children's language and literacy acquisition in the future schooling progress.

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