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## ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the early childhood language and literacy program of Dubai Flower Preschool, a group of nurseries and early learning centers with 26 locations in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The study sought to identify the preschool's challenges and problems in the implementation of the early years education program; focusing on language and literacy instruction, strategies, and evidence-based practices. It also examined the quality of learning in the preschool, with particular focus on instructional materials, level of content knowledge of the educators, and instructional strategies used in teaching language and literacy, particularly in the UAE setting. It looked at the relationship between the educators' level of content knowledge and their teaching strategies, relationship between the educators' level of professional development and level of content knowledge, and how instructional materials enhance student engagement and student learning. The study utilized the descriptive survey method with the application of both quantitative and qualitative analyses of data. Participants of the study were the Senior Educators (Lead Teachers) of Dubai Flower Preschool. Six teachers were observed through purposive sampling to examine and evaluate their instructional strategies, and to determine how the instructional materials enhanced language and literacy learning in their classrooms. Evidence and data on teachers' level of content knowledge in language and literacy instruction, perceived frequency of effective implementation and program characteristics of Dubai Flower Preschool were gathered to investigate teachers' concerns, needs, and challenges regarding curriculum, planning, and instructional practices.

Results showed that Dubai Flower Preschool promotes language and literacy education through its strong program characteristics, integrating and creating a balance among different curriculum approaches within the British EYFS curriculum framework. The curriculum integrates play and music, brain development, and emotional well-being in teaching language and literacy; teachers utilized a variety of instructional materials, including ICT materials and online resources to aid in teaching. Many teachers integrated language and literacy in academic and non-academic activities such as math, music, and playtime. This knowledge can aid in structuring early years programs and develop continuing professional development initiatives to further improve teaching practices.

The educators' preschool teaching experience was not perceived as a major contributing factor for effective language and literacy teaching practices, but it was seen as a major contributing factor to overall effective teaching practices. Teaching experience and educational background

were positively associated with teacher confidence and preparedness, but do not necessarily ensure effective instructional practices. Teachers' attitude, daily work, and experiences gained from ongoing instructional practices, personal background, and knowledge of theories learned during teacher trainings are the most influential factors. Hence, the study concluded that, for the teachers, effectiveness increases with experience and openness to more learning and professional development. The teachers' needs were expressed through interviews, particularly the need to seek further training on fundamentals of instructional design, teaching reading strategies, and assessment in language and literacy. It was further observed that there was a high level of student engagement because educators utilized innovative and child-centered teaching approach and strategies. The study showed that strong professional development and effective instructional strategies and materials are imperative in the teaching-learning process to enhance language and literacy learning in the early years.