

INSTILLING SOCIAL AND PERSONAL VALUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH READING-BASED ACTIVITIES

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Abstract. This study explores how children's literature contributes to instilling social and personal values in early childhood. Conducted within Arab society in Israel, the research compares methodologies of developing values over three years: one that combined story reading with follow-up activities and another that focused solely on reading. Using a mixed quantitative–qualitative approach (Schwartz Value Questionnaire and interviews), it examined how 30 stories influenced value formation and reading development. Findings show that integrating post-reading activities significantly enhances both value acquisition and reading comprehension. The most emphasized values were acceptance of others, love, respect, responsibility, and identity. The study highlights the educational potential of literature-based experiential learning in early childhood.

Keywords: early childhood, children's literature, values education, reading skills.

FORMAREA VALORILOR SOCIALE ȘI PERSONALE ÎN COPILĂRIA TIMPURIE PRIN ACTIVITĂȚI BAZATE PE LECTURĂ

Rezumat. Acest studiu explorează modul în care literatura pentru copii contribuie la formarea valorilor sociale și personale în copilăria timpurie. Realizată în cadrul societății arabe din Israel, cercetarea compară metodologii de dezvoltare a valorilor la copii pe parcursul a trei ani: un grup de educatoare care a combinat lectura textelor cu activități aplicative și un alt grup care s-a axat doar pe lectură. Printr-o metodologie mixtă, cantitativă și calitativă (chestionarul valorilor Schwartz și interviuri), au fost analizate efectele a 30 de texte pentru copii, asupra formării valorilor și dezvoltării competențelor de lectură. Rezultatele arată că activitățile postlectură îmbunătățesc semnificativ atât dezvoltarea valorilor, cât și înțelegerea textului. Cele mai evidențiate valori au fost acceptarea celorlalți, iubirea, respectul, responsabilitatea și identitatea. Studiul subliniază potențialul educațional al îmbinării literaturii cu activități experiențiale în educația timpurie.

Cuvinte-cheie: educație timpurie, literatură pentru copii, formarea valorilor, competențe de lectură.

Introduction

This study examines the impact of early childhood reading on the instilling of values among children in Arab society in Israel. The study focuses on the role of children's literature as a tool for transmitting social, cultural, and religious values in various Arab educational frameworks. The study concerns two main types of values: universal values - social values that aim to prepare the Arab child to function in Arab society, and individual values - values that allow the child to express themselves and fulfill themselves while maintaining their Arab identity.

Arab society in Israel is at a complex intersection between tradition and innovation, between maintaining cultural identity and integration into broader Israeli society. In this

context, early childhood reading serves as a vital bridge between traditional values and the contemporary needs of the younger generation. The study examines how children's literature in Hebrew and Arabic contributes to the formation of the identity of Arab children, strengthens their identification with the Arab community and culture, and prepares them for life in a multicultural society [10], while emphasizing the values of mutual respect, coexistence, and strong cultural identity.

The study included a comparison between two groups of children: one group to whom a kindergarten teacher read stories, and a second group that read the stories themselves and participated in follow-up activities. The study findings indicated significant differences between the groups in terms of the assimilation of values and their impact on the children's behavior.

Literature Review

Various studies support the argument that values act as evaluation systems and guiding principles that allow a person to determine the level of importance they attribute to events, behaviors, ideas, and objects. These systems serve [9] as "importance indicators" arranged in a certain hierarchy, which helps people evaluate themselves, others, and events in their environment, while forming a basis for making decisions in a variety of situations. The concept of "value" is characterized as a "multidimensional" concept [4], which is reflected in the many different and diverse definitions found in professional literature. Values shape attitudes and guide behaviors, a fact that has been proven in multicultural studies [1]. The concept of "value"[7] emphasizes both the emotional and cognitive dimensions, since values shape our worldview. In addition, values influence the motivational dimension by serving as guides and principles that direct our behavior, as they are the product of our personal choice. Values are rooted within us at conscious and unconscious levels, and the consequences of violating them are internal, such as regret, shame, and guilt [14].

Numerous studies show that attitudes that express values effectively predict appropriate behaviors. Therefore, it is possible to predict behavioral patterns [9] based on value systems, since attitudes mediate between values and behavior. Behavior constitutes one of the building blocks in the multidimensional structure of the concept of "value"[12,15]. The issue of "values education" is controversial both globally and in Israel and is at the center of the dilemma regarding the role of the education system and state institutions in imparting values. There are differences of opinion on this issue that cannot be resolved unequivocally. Society determines, according to its values, what modes of thinking, beliefs, and actions must be passed on to future generations.

There are difficulties in defining a "core of values" common to society. This stems from the fact that contemporary society and its values are influenced by various social groups, such as parents, economic entities, government institutions, and various

ideological currents, which seek to influence values education both within and outside of school. Today, young people live in a society in which there are no clear and defined values [2,3], and different values compete for their attention and allegiance. Supporters of values education argue that teaching and "values education" should not be separated, since the teacher transmits values through their teaching method and personality. Others view education as an illusion. Opinions, therefore, remain divided regarding the authority and ability of the school to educate in values, mainly since there is no agreement on a common and uniform core of values across all educational streams.

Literature as a Tool for Imparting Values

Children's literature includes works adapted to children in terms of content, language, and theme. The current study examines the value content and educational messages in works for children, from the perspective that literature reflects the culture in which it was created and serves as an important tool [9,8] for teaching values at an early age. Many researchers view it as a significant educational tool. Many cultures have adopted the idea that literature serves as a means of preserving tradition, reinforcing values, and integrating the child into society.

This approach is also emphasized in the curricula of kindergartens in Israel. Thus, the "Framework Program for Kindergarten" states [7]: "Through literature, children internalize moral, social, national, and religious values. Literature provides a common cultural basis for language and metaphors." One of the goals of the field is defined as imparting universal, religious, and social values. According to the traditional academic approach [10], "children's literature serves as a messenger of the education system." This approach is prevalent in many cultures that view literature as a shaping factor for society and value education [5,6]. Even when writers do not explicitly intend this, they become agents of society and are expected to make an educational-social contribution.

Methodology

The current study is part of a comprehensive doctoral research project, in which 60 kindergarten teachers from southern Israel participated over a period of three years. The participants were divided into two parallel research groups: Group A, which engaged in reading stories in combination with enrichment activities and application following the reading, and Group B, which focused on reading the stories alone without additional activities. This division allowed for a comparison and examination of the effects of different teaching methods on the acquisition of values through children's literature in early childhood. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, in addition to examining the values according to the Tor Gonen model (2000) [3], to examine the values found in children's literature that the children receive during the three years in the study kindergartens.

Research Population

The study was based on 30 stories that the children receive in kindergarten. Each year, the children receive ten stories, one story each month. The study was conducted in 60 kindergartens in southern Israel, which were divided into two groups: Group A, which read the stories and also developed accompanying activities, with the aim of examining the effect of these activities on the acquisition and learning of values, compared to Group B, in which the kindergarten teachers only shared and read the stories in kindergarten.

Results

The research findings are part of the findings of the doctoral thesis, which consist of examining the values in the stories the children read over a three-year period, the kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards values, and the qualitative research. In this section, I selected only the quantitative part of the study that answers the research question.

Table 1 presents the values that kindergarten teachers selected as their primary values. The teachers chose "acceptance of others" as the primary value with the highest percentage, followed by "love" in second place, "respect" in third place, "responsibility" in fourth place, and "identity" was selected in last place.

Additionally, the following describes the selection of the number of values, with some teachers choosing only one value, two values, or more.

Table 1. Distribution of values that kindergarten teachers chose to transmit during activities

Number of Values	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Details
One value	19	30%	Acceptance of others (9, 47%), Responsibility (5, 26%), Love (2, 10%), Respect (2, 10%), Identity (1, 5%)
Two values	5	8%	Love and respect (2), Love and responsibility (1), Love and acceptance of others (1), Respect and acceptance of others (1)
Three values	14	22%	Love, respect and acceptance of others (6), Love, respect and responsibility (3), Love, responsibility and identity (1), Responsibility, respect and identity (1), Acceptance of others, responsibility and respect (1), Acceptance of others, identity and respect (1)
Four values	12	19%	Love, responsibility, respect and acceptance of others (9), Love, respect, acceptance of others and identity (1), Love, respect, acceptance of others and responsibility (1)
Five values	13	21%	Love, respect, responsibility, acceptance of others and identity (13)
Total	63	100%	

The table shows the distribution of respondents according to the number of values they mentioned in their responses, revealing an interesting pattern of distribution. Approximately 30% of respondents chose to mention only one value, which may indicate strong personal focus or a clear perception of a leading value. In contrast, the group of respondents who mentioned all five possible values numbered 13 teachers (21%),

indicating a broad perception of values as a unified whole. The percentages among the remaining groups (two to four values) are distributed in a relatively graduated manner, with the preference for three or four values appearing among approximately 41% of respondents, suggesting complexity in the value worldview of a large portion of the respondents.

Examination of the selected content reveals dominance of certain values: acceptance of others appears at the highest rate in responses that mentioned only one value (47%), followed by responsibility (26%) and love (10%). As the number of values in the response increases, recurring combinations can be identified that include acceptance of others, love, and respect—the three leading values—and sometimes also responsibility and identity. For example, all respondents who mentioned five values (13 people) included all possible values, indicating a holistic perception and integration between personal values (identity, responsibility) and social values (acceptance of others, respect, love).

The findings reflect a clear trend of recognition of social-community values, such as acceptance of others and respect, as particularly important—even among those who mentioned a limited number of values. Love, although appearing frequently, is less prominent as a single value and more as part of extended combinations, perhaps suggesting its perception as a complementary rather than leading value. Identity, on the other hand, appears with relatively low frequency, and it may be perceived as something internal and self-evident that does not require explicit mention. At the educational or cultural level, it can be concluded that there is a strong emphasis on values of tolerance, acceptance, and mutual respect, which may indicate a value trend that guides social discourse or value education in the institution or community from which the data was taken.

Following the above, a comparison was made between the two groups of kindergarten teachers in the number of values they selected.

Table 2. Comparison Between Two Groups of Kindergarten Teachers (Experimental and Control) in the Number of Values

Number of Values	Experimental Group with Follow-up and Parent Involvement (30)	Control Group without Follow-up (29)
One value	9 (31%)	9 (31%)
Two values	5 (17%)	1 (3%)
Three values	7 (24%)	4 (14%)
Four values	5 (17%)	5 (17%)
Five values	3 (11%)	3 (11%)
Six values	1 (3%)	7 (24%)

For the comparison between the two groups before the activity and after the activity, using independent measures and dependent measures at both time points for both groups (and also within the same group), t-tests were conducted. Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 present the results of the comparison between the two groups at both time points.

In the first stage, a t-test was conducted to compare the two groups before the start of the experiment, in order to ensure that both groups started from a similar point without significant differences between them in terms of values.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for value dimensions among kindergarten teachers by group variables before the start of the experiment and t-test values for differences between them

Dimension	Group	N	Mean (1-5)	Standard Deviation	t
Universalism	Without home follow-up	29	4.21	2.16	-1.391
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	4.96	1.97	
Benevolence	Without home follow-up	29	2.03	1.00	-0.132
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	2.07	0.88	
Tradition	Without home follow-up	29	3.23	1.82	-0.447
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.44	1.77	
Conformity	Without home follow-up	29	3.66	1.91	0.516
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.43	1.36	
Security	Without home follow-up	29	3.64	1.95	0.128
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.58	1.74	
Power	Without home follow-up	29	3.55	1.59	1.591
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	2.96	1.28	
Achievement	Without home follow-up	29	2.60	1.48	0.408
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	2.48	0.87	
Hedonism	Without home follow-up	29	3.51	1.81	0.670
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.24	1.18	
Stimulation	Without home follow-up	29	3.67	1.87	1.101
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.22	1.17	
Self-Direction	Without home follow-up	29	3.46	1.72	1.055
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.01	1.53	
Self-Transcendence	Without home follow-up	29	2.67	1.12	1.581
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	2.28	0.73	
Conservation	Without home follow-up	29	3.51	1.75	0.059
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	3.49	1.44	
Self-Enhancement	Without home follow-up	29	3.36	1.52	1.121
	Home-kindergarten collaboration	30	2.98	1.05	

The findings presented in the table above indicate non-significant differences between the two groups of kindergarten teachers (teachers without coordination and follow-up with parents and teachers with collaboration with parents) before the experiment, meaning that both groups are similar in terms of values. A comparison was conducted between the two groups of kindergarten teachers (teachers without coordination and follow-up with parents - the control group, and teachers with collaboration with parents - the experimental group) after the experiment, using t-tests for two independent samples.

Discussion and Conclusions

The research findings indicate the positive impact of kindergarten activities following story reading on value acquisition and reading skill improvement among children align with the extensive research literature in this field. These findings attest to the central importance of literature as a multi-dimensional educational tool that combines reading skill

development with the instillation of social and moral values. The connection between these two dimensions is not coincidental but stems from the dual nature of literature as a medium that conveys both content and skills, both emotion and thought.

The finding indicating a positive impact of kindergarten activities on value acquisition supports sociological theories of education [12], which view literature as a central socialization tool. As Albert and other researchers have noted, literature reflects and transmits social, family, and cultural values. The activities that kindergarten teachers implement following story reading constitute a vital bridge between literary content and the child's internalization of it. Without this bridge, children may remain at the level of passive absorption of the story, without processing the messages and values embedded in it in a deep and meaningful way.

The discussion and activity following reading allow children to process the value messages in the story actively and deeply [14,15]. When the kindergarten teacher leads a discussion about character behavior, the choices they faced, and the consequences of their actions, she provides children with tools for moral understanding and critical thinking development. This process goes beyond cognitive processing alone and touches the emotional and social dimensions of learning. Children learn not only "what happened" in the story, but also "why it happened," "how the characters felt," "what we would do in their place," and "what we can learn from this"[4,2].

This process aligns with the humanistic approach that views education as a process of building bridges between the self and the social environment. When children discuss moral dilemmas concerning story characters together, they are practicing social decision-making in a safe and protected space. They can explore the implications of different choices without experiencing the real consequences and develop insights that can guide them in their real lives. This is essentially a type of "value laboratory" where children examine moral principles and practice their application in social situations [9,6].

Beyond this, practical activities such as role-playing, artistic creation, or dramatization of the story allow children to experience values in a physical and experiential way. This experience deepens understanding and strengthens value internalization beyond the cognitive level alone. When a child embodies a character facing a moral conflict [1,3], they internally experience the tension between different possibilities, understand the emotions involved in choice, and develop empathy toward the character and toward others in similar situations. This aligns with learning theories that emphasize the importance of active and experiential learning among young children.

Additionally, group activities create opportunities for interpersonal communication and social skill development. When children work together on a story-based project, they must negotiate, cooperate, listen to different opinions, and reach agreements. These processes strengthen the social values conveyed in the story and train children in their practical application. This creates a positive cycle where the story conveys values, the activity deepens them, and the social experience reinforces learning [5,11].

The finding indicating reading skill improvement following activities conducted after story reading emphasizes the importance of meaningful connection between content and skill. When children participate in post-reading activities, they are repeatedly exposed to words, expressions, and linguistic structures that appeared in the story. This repetition is not mechanical or boring but occurs in a meaningful and interesting context that strengthens linguistic memory and deepens understanding [12]. Words do not remain disconnected units but become part of a broader meaning network.

Furthermore, diverse activities allow children to access content through multiple intelligences - through language, movement, drawing, music, and social interaction. This multi-dimensional approach increases the chance that each child will find an accessible way to connect with literary content and develop their reading skills. Children who struggle with auditory learning may develop better understanding through physical or creative activity, thereby strengthening their overall reading ability. This adaptation to individual differences promotes educational equity and allows each child to develop their potential [13,15].

Additionally, activities encourage children to return to the text, search for details, compare events, and analyze cause-and-effect relationships. These processes develop higher-order thinking skills required for deep reading and reading comprehension. When a child is asked to explain why a certain character acted as they did, or to describe what would have happened if the character had acted differently, they develop analytical abilities that will serve them in reading more complex texts in the future. They learn not only to read the words on the page but also to read "between the lines," understand hints, identify patterns, and predict developments [9].

The research also indicates that activities improve children's motivation to read. When reading is connected to interesting and enjoyable activities, children develop a positive attitude toward books and reading in general. They begin to see reading not only as an academic task but also as a source of enjoyment, exploration, and discovery. This attitude forms a vital foundation for developing lifelong reading habits and continued growth in literacy.

However, it's important to note that despite the positive findings, the impact of kindergarten activities depends largely on the quality of implementation and their adaptation to children's unique needs. Not every activity automatically achieves the desired goals. Appropriate teacher training, careful activity planning, and continuous development of effective implementation methods are required [10,8,3]. The kindergarten teacher must know her children, understand their needs, and adapt activities accordingly. Additionally, the wide diversity among children in cultural background, developmental level, and learning styles must be considered. Activities suitable for one group of children may be less effective with another group.

These findings align with the qualitative research findings that included the Schwartz questionnaire to examine teachers' attitudes toward the values assigned to them, as well as

in-depth interviews with three kindergarten principals. The mixed methodology of the research strengthened the reliability of the findings and provided them with additional depth. The Schwartz questionnaire, known in research literature for examining attitudes toward values, allowed systematic examination of kindergarten teachers' perceptions and approaches. The questionnaire findings showed that there is alignment between the values kindergarten teachers identify as important and the values conveyed to children during post-story reading activities [12,18].

The interviews with principals (not included here in the research) added a managerial and organizational dimension to understanding the process. The principals reported changes in children's behavior, improvement in the educational climate in the kindergarten, and growing enthusiasm among kindergarten teachers for the activities. They noted that the integrated approach of story reading with follow-up activities created a richer and more experiential learning space than the traditional approach of reading alone. The methodological triangulation [10] - combining quantitative findings with qualitative data - strengthens the conclusion that the activity indeed significantly affects children's ability to acquire values. The questionnaire provided measurable and objective data, while the interviews provided deeper understanding of processes and impacts. All this led to a clear and evidence-based result that activities conducted by kindergarten teachers following story reading indeed positively affect value acquisition and reading skill development.

The importance of reading in kindergarten stems from its being the initial foundation for all future learning. Kindergarten constitutes the first educational framework where children are systematically and structurally exposed to reading, and their initial experiences with books and texts largely determine their relationship with reading for life. Early childhood is characterized by high brain plasticity and openness to learning, making it the ideal time for instilling love of reading and imparting basic literacy skills. Studies show that children who receive rich and positive exposure to reading in kindergarten develop significant advantages that are maintained throughout their educational journey [20].

Beyond the technical skills of reading, exposure to literature in kindergarten expands children's vocabulary, develops their expression ability, and enriches their inner world. When children are exposed to a wide variety of stories, they learn about different worlds, diverse characters, and many life situations [20,11]. This exposure enhances imagination, develops abstract thinking ability, and prepares children to cope with life's complexity. Reading in kindergarten is not just preparation for elementary school but a meaningful experience that contributes to the child's personal and emotional development.

The contribution of activities done following story reading is multi-dimensional and strengthens both reading skills and value acquisition in complementary ways that refine each other. When a child participates in a creative activity based on a story they read [8,9], they repeatedly process the content actively and creatively. This process deepens their understanding of the text, strengthens memory, and develops additional connections between new information and their existing knowledge. Activities create a rich "meaning

network" around the story, where each additional experience strengthens and deepens understanding.

In the dimension of value acquisition, activities allow children not only to hear about values or talk about them but also to experience them and practice their application. When children participate in role-playing based on a moral dilemma from the story, they not only understand the value abstractly but also experience the challenges and complications of implementing it in reality [16,10]. They learn that values are not simple rules but complex guides for behavior that require judgment, empathy, and contextual understanding. This process deepens value understanding and strengthens willingness to implement values even in challenging situations.

The connection between reading skill development and value acquisition is not only complementary but also mutual and reinforcing. When children are excited by the valued content of a story, they develop higher motivation to read and understand the text. Emotional and value involvement increases attention, improves memory, and deepens understanding [17]. Conversely, when children improve their reading skills, they can access more complex texts and explore more sophisticated moral dilemmas. This creates a positive cycle of mutual growth in both areas [2,4].

The impact of activities and experiences in kindergarten continues and develops in first grade and elementary school in general. Children who received rich exposure to reading and values in kindergarten arrive at first grade with significant advantages. They have a broader vocabulary, more developed listening ability, familiarity with narrative structures, and rich experience with diverse characters and situations. Beyond this, they arrive with a positive attitude toward reading and expectation for new literary experiences [3]. In the value domain, children arrive in first grade with a more solid value foundation and more developed skills for moral discussion and thinking about social dilemmas. They know various ways of coping with conflicts, have more developed empathy ability, and are practiced in expressing opinions and listening to other opinions. These skills form a vital foundation for coping with the social and academic challenges of elementary school [18].

However, the continuity of positive impact is conditional on continuing and reinforcing reading and value learning in subsequent grades. Like any skill or ability [6], reading skills and values acquired in kindergarten require continuous cultivation and deepening. Elementary schools must continue to develop the foundations laid in kindergarten, present new challenges, and deepen learning in both areas. This includes exposure to more complex texts, discussion of more sophisticated moral dilemmas, and activities that combine reading with value exploration.

Studies show that when there is continuity between kindergarten and school in reading and values, positive effects are amplified and expanded. Children who receive this continuity show higher achievements in reading comprehension [17,20], more developed expression ability, more advanced critical thinking, and superior social skills. They also

develop identity as "readers" and as "people with values," an identity that guides them throughout life and affects their personal and professional choices [4,5].

Finally, research findings strengthen the view that children's literature sees a powerful educational tool that combines basic skill development with social value instillation. They emphasize the critical importance of investment in this field in kindergarten and the need for continuity and deepening throughout the educational journey. Only thus will it be possible to realize the great potential inherent in literature as a means for advancing children in all areas - cognitive, social, and value-based alike [19].

Research Conclusions

The current research led to several central conclusions important for developing educational policy and improving pedagogical practice in kindergartens. The central conclusion is that there is a positive and clear impact of activities performed by kindergarten teachers following story reading on two central areas: value acquisition and reading skill development. The findings show that this integrated approach is more effective than story reading alone and significantly advances children in both areas simultaneously.

Another important conclusion is that the mixed methodology implemented in the research - combining quantitative measurements with the Schwartz questionnaire and in-depth interviews with principals - provided a complete and reliable picture of the impacts. Methodological triangulation strengthened the reliability of findings and indicated that activity effects are noticeable both at the quantitative and qualitative levels. Kindergarten teachers reported positive attitudes toward the values conveyed, and principals observed behavioral and academic changes among children.

The research proves that the importance of kindergarten as a fundamental stage in developing literacy and values is indisputable. Early childhood is characterized by high brain plasticity and openness to learning that allow significant and long-term educational impacts. Children who received rich exposure to literary and valued activities in kindergarten developed a strong foundation that will serve them throughout their educational journey.

Additionally, the research emphasizes the importance of the mutual connection between reading skill development and value acquisition. Research findings show that the two areas strengthen each other - emotional and value involvement in a story improves reading comprehension, while simultaneously developed reading skills allow deeper exploration of value content. This insight is important for planning integrated and effective curricula.

The research also raises the importance of educational continuity. Findings indicate that positive effects of kindergarten activities continue and develop in first grade and beyond, provided there is persistence in reinforcing reading and value learning. The

conclusion is that early childhood education must be part of a continuous and coordinated educational system.

Additionally, the research emphasizes the need for continuous teacher training and development of diverse pedagogical tools. The quality of activity implementation is critical to their success, and it depends on the kindergarten teacher's professional knowledge, creativity, and understanding of children's unique needs. The research indicates the need for significant investment in educational staff training and development of quality pedagogical resources.

The research also raises the importance of personal adaptation and pedagogical flexibility. Findings show that activity success depends on the ability to adapt them to the unique needs of each group and each child. Differences in cultural background, developmental level, and learning styles require an adapted and diverse approach.

Finally, the research contributes to broader understanding of literature's role in education. It strengthens the view that sees literature not only as a means for developing reading skills but also as a powerful tool for value and social education. Findings indicate the great potential inherent in integrated educational approaches that harness the power of story and experiential activity together.

These conclusions raise important practical implications for educational policy and field practice. They indicate the need for increased investment in early childhood education, development of integrated curricula, training of quality educational teams, and building educational continuity between different stages of the education system. The success of the approach depends on kindergarten teachers' ability to develop diverse, interesting, and child-adapted activities that connect the story to daily life and children's inner world. This requires continuous investment in teacher training, development of a diverse activity bank, and encouragement of pedagogical innovation in the field. Only thus will it be possible to realize the great potential inherent in literature as a means for advancing children in all areas - cognitive, social, and value-based alike.

Follow-up Research and Research Limitations

Despite the significant contribution of the current research to understanding literature's role as a tool for developing values and reading skills in early childhood, there is great importance in expanding research through follow-up studies that will examine long-term effects in different sectors of the education system. Future research could focus on the impact of different story types (such as folk tales, modern stories, or reality-based stories) on diverse developmental areas, including emotional regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution. Additionally, there is room to examine the impact of parental involvement in the process on the degree of value internalization among children.

However, several fundamental limitations related to the research's mixed methodology should be noted. First, the sample design was limited in scope and included kindergartens from only a certain geographical area, which may impair the ability to

generalize findings to other populations. Second, although combining quantitative and qualitative methods strengthened data reliability, subjective biases in interviews or interpretive gaps in questionnaires may have affected the result. Additionally, kindergarten teachers' and principals' attitudes may reflect institutional expectations rather than necessarily authentic personal perceptions.

Finally, an additional limitation lies in the short time frame of child follow-up. The current research did not allow examination of effect continuity beyond the beginning of elementary school. Future longitudinal studies that examine the cumulative impact of literary and value activities over the years will be able to enrich understanding of their contribution to child development and building personal and social identity. This will create a solid foundation for formulating long-term educational policy based on solid empirical evidence.

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