

ABSTRACT

Within the country of Saudi Arabia, all early childhood education (ECE) teachers in both public and private schools are female. Despite this demographic fact, there has been little academic study into their professional journeys, challenges, and ambitions. This study brings the voices of these women forward. Through the methodological technique of “portrait” based narrative inquiry inspired by cultural anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson, and building on the framework of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, this study explores how six female educators working in Saudi Arabia’s ECE have entered the field and negotiated their professional journeys throughout the years.

In this study I argue that the narratives composed from the six women I interviewed illustrate the complexities and contradictions that underpin Saudi Arabian ECE. The study reveals the overwhelming influence of patriarchal norms, policies, and practices in Saudi Arabia and how they intersect to shape the capacity of women educators to bring about social change, as well as a restating of what it means to be a Saudi Arabian citizen, as daughters, siblings, wives, mothers, and educators. These narratives challenge the perception of Saudi Arabian ECE as an environment filled with apathetic teachers who are completely dominated by patriarchal systems and unable or unwilling to engage productively in discussions of reform. At the same time, these narratives offer a window into the world of subordinated women and the marginalization of their pedagogical thought, particularly in an educational system that is frequently trapped in centralized policies and where professional opportunity and upward mobility for women are often limited. The implications of these findings for our understanding of the prospects and contributions of ECE in Saudi Arabia are subsequently examined.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Academic Studies: MEd – Master of Education, University of British Columbia, 2011

BA – Family Studies, University of British Columbia, 2007

GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Early Childhood Education

Courses

EDST 508A/B	Review of Research in Educational Studies
EDST 577	The Social Context of Educational Policy
EDST 580A	Directed Study
EDST 593A	Ethics and Education
EDST 601A	Doctoral Seminar
EDST 602B	Doctoral Seminar

Instructors

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PRESENTATIONS

“Saudi Arabian Early Childhood Education: A Battleground of Social and Political Ideologies.” Presented October 2, 2017 at the UBC Third Inter-University Seminar on Educational Research.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Prof André Mazawi
Prof Marilyn Chapman
Prof Linda Farr Darling



a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
(Educational Leadership and Policy)

BALSAM ALRASHEED

MEd – Master of Education, University of British Columbia, 2011
BA – Family Studies, University of British Columbia, 2007

Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 12:30 pm
Room 1306A, Ponderosa Commons (Oak House), 6445 University Blvd
Latecomers will not be admitted

**“Composing Journeys: Understanding the Lived Experiences of
Saudi Arabia’s Female Early Childhood Educators”**

EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Chair:

Prof Laurie Ford (Human Development, Learning, and Culture)

Supervisory Committee:

Prof André Mazawi, Research Supervisor (Educational Leadership
and Policy)

Prof Marilyn Chapman (Language and Literacy Education)

University Examiners:

Prof Shauna Butterwick (Educational Leadership and Policy)

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