

Education for Hope A New Model for Arab Child Upbringing



Social Upbringing of Children in the Arab Countries

«Field Study»

Abstract

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in the Arab Countries

"Field Study"

New Mind .. New Human .. New Society

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The Arab Council for Childhood and Development (ACCD) is an Arab regional non-governmental organization working in the field of childhood development. ACCD was founded in 1987 upon the initiative of HRH Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz, ACCD's President, and a resolution issued by the League of Arab States.

“Education for Hope”

A New Model for Arab Child Upbringing
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The opinions expressed in this study do not necessarily reflect the views of ACCD and the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND).

"We must review the policies and systems of childhood affairs through addressing the roots of the social and cultural problems, in addition to adopting methods of upbringing and education that enhance children's abilities and culture, along with providing them with opportunities of participation and creativity"

Talal Bin Abdul Aziz

Partners

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Social Upbringing of Children in the Arab Countries
"Field Study"
"Towards a New Model of Upbringing"

Abstract

The study has aimed to provide realistic data for the Arab society and children's view of the prevailing methods of upbringing children, through a field study of the status of Arab children upbringing in a number of Arab countries (Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt), in order to develop the foundations of a new model of social upbringing in the Arab world. Within this overall objective, the study has sought to achieve the following sub-objectives:

- Studying the methods and mechanisms of positive social upbringing in the family and the school.
- Studying the methods and mechanisms of negative social upbringing in the family and the school.
- Identifying ways in which children respond to mainstream social upbringing mechanisms (upbringing outcome).
- Evaluating the mainstream model of the upbringing process in the Arab family and schools.
- Developing a model of upbringing that combines elements that enable the building of good citizens that have the ability to participate actively in the life of their communities.

Field data were collected through quantitative and qualitative research tools, and two questionnaires were applied. The first questionnaire was applied to a sample of 1261 children aged 12 – 17 years (males and females). The second questionnaire was applied to a sample of 737 fathers and mothers. The quantitative tools (focus discussions, in-depth interviews and narratives) were implemented through conducting 10 focus discussions with teachers (4

discussions) and children (6 discussions), 10 in-depth interviews with fathers and mothers, and 18 narratives of children, parents and teachers (6 narratives per category, in each of the studied countries).

The study has concluded a number of important results that can be summarized as follows:

- There is a semi-consensus among the male and female members of the sample that the upbringing of boys and girls differed these days from the past.
- Conservative trends are increasing and Arab societies lag behind and prefer to adopt a conservative vision in the process of social upbringing. There is a consensus that the past is better than the present, and this consensus increases with age. - There is no one method followed by parents in all situations, but the method varies, there is no pure democracy and no extreme rigor.
- The results also showed that the dialogue and the democratic method was the most used methods in the studied Arab countries (42.14 in average), and the use of violence and rigor came in the second place by (32.07 in average).
- There is a clear tendency towards the use of punishment techniques in comparison with the methods of reward. While nearly three-quarters of the sample emphasized the use of deprivation as a method of punishment, the reward methods did not exceed 67.2% (praise and tributes).
- The Arab family is keen to practice the blatant interference in children's lives, and allow them to choose only in certain circumstances; the limits of intervention by parents are very wide, ranging from interference in hobbies, the selection of friends, and even the selection of internet sites.
- There is a steady trend towards freedom for males and narrowing the scope of freedom for females. These results clearly reflect the fluctuation of social upbringing between intervention (especially with females) and freedom (especially with males).

- There is a semi-consensus among the sample of children that the method (rigor and violence) is one of the most common methods within the family and school in the Arab countries under study.
- The paradox of social upbringing is evident when comparing the world of adults to the world of young people, or when looking at the discrepancy that arises when parents are asked what they are doing with the children and ask the children about what is practiced with them by the parents. The results showed that the method of democracy and dialogue is one of the most widely used methods in the studied Arab countries from the perspective of parents (parental trends). If we move to children, we find that there is almost a consensus among the children that the style of "rigor and violence" is one of the most common methods within the family in the Arab countries under study.
- There are two disparate worlds according to the gender variable in perceptions and practices. At the level of gender perceptions of the methods of social upbringing practiced with them at home and school; the results indicated that there are statistically significant differences: At the family level, females were more inclined to assert that positive methods were the most widely used within the family, while males were more assertive that negative methods were the most commonly used.
- And if we look at solidarity relations in the family, by studying the situations in which the family members meet with each other, we find that the most situations are related to food 76%; in holidays and seasons 52.5%; in family occasions 43.5%; and 42.3% on weekends.
- The situations of punishment surpassed the situations of reward, as the situations of punishment reached ten, while the situations of reward were only five.
- The results showed an increase in the use of positive methods (democracy, freedom, support, dialogue and participation) when the parents are of high education level.

- The role of parent's educational level was reflected in the behavioral outcomes of children, as there was a positive relationship between the level of mother education and positive outcomes. The higher the level of mother education, the more inclined the children to bearing responsibility, the citizenship, the participation and the integration, and decreased the average of negative outcomes (deficit and distrust, withdrawal and isolation, lack of awareness, violence and aggression).
- Public school students were more likely to emphasize the widespread use of negative methods based on rigor, violence, domination, and fluctuation in treatment, intimidation and punishment within the family, while students of private and international schools emphasized the prevalence of methods based on freedom, democracy, debate, dialogue, tolerance and acceptance.

In general, the results of the current study reveal that there are manifestations of the imbalance in the Arab social upbringing at the family and school levels, and at the level of the parents' perceptions and the children's perceptions. Arab upbringing is "inherently traditional" at the school and family levels. The perception continues to see that the child has an evil tendency, the child is a young adult, upbringing is a preparation for life, not a life, upbringing is about taming and not liberating. Thus, one of the cornerstones of social upbringing in Arab culture revolves around the principle of normalization of the Arab child to obey and submit to adults, whether through domination or over-care. Moreover, the methods of upbringing used by the majority of Arab families negatively affect the growth of independence, self-confidence and social competence. The child is raised to get used to be subject to submission, compliance and evasion of responsibility, thus increasing negative and weak decision-making skills not only in behavior but in the way of thinking.