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Entitled

*INNOVATION IN KINDERGARTEN (KG) SCHOOLS IN AL AIN: ENABLING AND HINDERING
FACTORS AND PROCEDURES FOLLOWED*

by

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with innovation in KG schools in Al Ain, specifically the enabling and hindering factors and procedures followed. The government of Abu Dhabi established Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) in 2005 which is now known as the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). ADEK seeks to develop education and educational institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, implement innovative educational policies and programs which aim to improve education in accordance with the highest international standards by the launching of the New School Model (NMS) which includes a new curriculum, advanced teaching methods, learning materials and resources. These aim to enhance student performance by developing the student as a communicator, a thinker, a problem solver, creative and innovative person. The first purpose of this study is to investigate the factors which facilitate or hinder the implementation of innovation in the Kindergarten (KG) schools in Al Ain. The second purpose of this study is to identify the procedures or steps used in implementing innovation practices in KG schools in Al Ain. A descriptive quantitative research method was conducted by distributing a questionnaire to teachers and administrators in all Al Ain Kindergartens during 2015-2017 (N=686). The researcher conducted interviews in three kindergartens (23 participants) with three principals, six vice principals, five heads of faculties and nine teachers. The conceptual framework for the innovation focus that guided this study was built from a combination of literature related to change processes, innovation factors and innovation process. The framework identified five different approaches which explain factors creating the innovation which are: (a) school leadership factors, (b) school context factors, (c) teachers' factors, (d) parents and students' factors, (e) curriculum, teaching and assessment factors. The main results of the study show that almost all teachers and school leaders indicated that teacher factors, curriculum, teaching and assessment factors, parents and students' factors and school context factors were the main factors that hinder implementing innovation in kindergartens schools in Al Ain, while the main factor that facilitates implementing innovation was school leadership factors. The highest facilitating factor for implementing innovation was "understanding the importance of innovation for our students", which indicates that school leaders and teachers understood why innovation is important for our students. The most hindering factor for implementing innovation was "students' innovation inside or outside class should be part of their assessment", which indicates that school leaders and teachers sometimes believed that students' innovation inside or outside class should count toward their assessment and if it does not, they do not take it seriously.

Keywords: Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC), Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), New School Model, school innovation, innovation factors, innovation stages, UAE education, KG schools.