

Parental Considerations of Child Day-Care Centres in Israeli Palestinian Society

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Currently there is a paucity of studies in Israel regarding the considerations guiding parents in their choice of a day-care centre for their children. The few studies that deal with this subject concentrate on two areas of consideration: convenience and quality, while there is almost no reference to culture, beliefs, and religion. The discussion in Israel regarding religious day-care centres is particularly limited, with no in-depth studies of religious organisations and their importance for parents. This dearth of studies is especially noticeable with regards to Palestinian society in Israel.

The goal of the current article is to examine parents' considerations in three content areas: convenience, quality, and religion. The population of Palestinian parents in Israel is a traditional one that has almost never been studied in this context. The study compares parental considerations of day-care centres operated by religion-based organisations as well as those not operated by religion-based organisations. Service suppliers to Palestinian society in Israel are diverse and include religious organisations. Despite their being a major factor in delivering day-care services in the absence of an extensive supply of public frameworks, these organisations have rarely been studied in this context.

The current study is quantitative and based on a self-administered questionnaire. 551 parents of children in day-care centres participated, most of whom defined themselves as being religious to very religious, although not all of them use religious day-care centers. 290 parents placed their children in religious day-care centres compared to 261 parents who placed theirs in non-religious centres.

The study reveals that considerations of quality are most emphasised by Palestinians when choosing a framework for their children, whether they are religious or not. This finding agrees with other studies in Israel and elsewhere, according to which the quality of care is parents' main consideration. A very central place was also afforded to the religious character of the framework, which

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is interesting considering that many of the parents were sending their children to non-religious frameworks.