



Brief

Education for Kindergarten Managers: A Career Perspective

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The article examines the importance of the specific leadership studies for kindergarten head teachers in a career perspective. We study whether those who have completed the study is more inclined to continue working as kindergartens head teachers compared to those who have not. Additionally, we investigate whether kindergarten head teachers perceive that their leadership study for kindergarten head teachers have had an impact on their career paths. These questions are in the study linked to the age of the head teachers, where they pursued their kindergarten head teacher leadership studies, and the size of the kindergarten they currently manage.

A large survey among kindergarten head teachers in 2022 is used to shed light on the article's objectives. The survey was sent out by e-mail to almost all kindergarten head teachers (managers) in Norway. Data from the national kindergarten register on, among other things, the kindergartens ownership (private, state, or municipal) and number of employees was linked to the survey. The response rate was 40 percent (1,760 responses in total).

The survey indicates that completing the leadership study for kindergarten head teachers has no bearing on their considerations regarding whether they will continue as kindergarten head teachers in the future. Approximately two out of three who have completed the leadership study for kindergarten head teachers state that the study has significantly influenced their career paths. Head teachers who completed their leadership study at institutions placing less emphasis on kindergarten-related topics are more likely to assert that the study has been crucial for their career paths.

There is no support for the assumption that head teachers in large kindergartens perceive their leadership study to be more important than head teachers in smaller kindergartens.

However, a higher proportion of head teachers in municipal kindergartens answer that the study has been important for their careers.

Further, we find that the younger the head teacher is, the more likely it is that they answer that the leadership study for kindergarten head teachers has been important for their career. This might be related to an understanding of one's own competence. Younger head teachers can feel more secure when they have carried out the head teacher study, while older head teachers with long experience might feel that they have the competence they need regardless of whether they have completed the study or not. It could also be that for younger kindergarten head teachers it has to a larger degree been a prerequisite that they have carried out the leadership study to be employed as a head teacher. In general, the level of competence in the population has increased over time, and with it also the requirements to obtain leadership positions.

Nearly two out of three respondents envision being kindergarten head teachers in five years' time, and among those who have completed the leadership study for head teachers, 63 per cent state that the leadership study has been important for their wish to continue as kindergarten head teachers. It testifies to a great degree of stability among those who are head teachers in kindergartens today and indicate that many are satisfied with the position they have. This applies regardless of whether the kindergarten they lead is large or small, or whether it is owned privately or by the municipality.

The main picture that emerges from our material is one of significant stability among those currently serving as head teachers in kindergartens, with the majority envisioning themselves continuing in their roles—at least for the next five years. At the same time, the majority of those who have completed the kindergarten head teacher study express that the study has been important for their careers. This may mean that the kindergarten head teacher study is perceived as useful in a more comprehensive and demanding daycare. It may also be an expression of the fact that having finished the kindergarten head teacher study has become necessary to get a position as a kindergarten head teacher at all.

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