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Five Scholars Receive the Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant in Early Child Development

Established in 2013, the Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant for Global Early Child Development provides opportunities for scholars who are from and/or are working in an international context to conduct dissertation research in global early child development. Recipients of the grant are each awarded $5,000 USD to support dissertation research, as well as a two-year student membership to SRCD. This grant honors Patrice L. Engle, a pioneer and leader in global early child development whose work spanned multiple sectors, countries, and research fields.

SRCD congratulates the 2020 Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant winners: Mashael Altwijri, Javzandulam Batsaikhan, Raha Hassan, Clement John Kabungo, and Dickson Mukara Matsantsa Ong'ayi.



Mashael Altwijri, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

“A Mixed Method Approach to Investigate the Associations Between Saudi Parenting Behaviors and their Preschoolers' Self-regulation”

Mashael Altwijri is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) under the supervision of Dr. Holly Hatton-Bowers. Mashael received her B.A. in Pre-school Education from King Saud University. She also earned an M.S.Ed. in Child Psychology from Duquesne University, and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Child Development at UNL. While at UNL, she is engaging in a variety of research activities including conducting her own research studies exploring cultural influences in parenting and child development aiming to fill an important gap in the literature involving diverse families, especially among Arab populations. Furthering her interest, Mashael’s dissertation will address the limited research and tools that exist by implementing a mixed method convergent design study to explore relations between Saudi maternal parenting and their preschool children’s self-regulation skills through different maternal, child, and cultural factors using both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these associations and enhance the validity of the study findings. This project shall benefit researchers who are interested in Middle Eastern societies, as these populations are rarely represented in the literature within the field of early childhood and family

relations. Upon graduation, Mashael will return to Saudi Arabia and join Princess Nourah University as a faculty member of College of Education. She plans to build on the findings of her dissertation and design culturally appropriate parenting programs that enhance both mothers' knowledge and children social emotional development.



Javzandulam Batsaikhan, New Mexico State University

"Formal Preschool Educational Programs as a Choice of Herder Parents in Mongolia: A Qualitative Case Study of five-year-old Taviul Children"

Javzandulam Batsaikhan is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at New Mexico State University under the supervision of co-chairs Dr. Candace Kaye and Dr. Jeanette Haynes Writer and dissertation committee members Dr. Mary Prentice and Dr. Lynnette Bagwell. Her dissertation topic is "Formal Preschool Educational Programs as a Choice of Herder Parents in Mongolia: A Qualitative Case study of Young *Taviul* Children". *Taviul* refers to the children from herding families in remote locations who live with other families in a district (*soum*) or provincial center (*aimag*) to gain access to formalized schooling. Using cases of *taviul* pre-school children and their families as a focus, along with interview data gathered

from kindergarten teachers, kindergarten directors, and an official with the Mongolia Ministry of Education, the purpose of the study is to investigate the current preschool education policy for the livestock herding population of Mongolia and its implementation. *Taviul* children living apart from their families are reported to have low emotional stability. Although the *taviul* phenomenon mostly occurs at the primary, secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary education levels, *taviul* children are also found in preschool education settings, which is a crucial period of human development and therefore poses special challenges. As a research topic, the phenomenon of the *taviul* child is a complex subject involving consideration of educational access, policies and systems, children's rights, and the cultural living context in rural areas of Mongolia.



Raha Hassan, McMaster University

"Children's Temperament and Psychosocial Development in Erbil, Kurdistan"

Raha Hassan is a doctoral candidate at McMaster University working under the supervision of Dr. Louis Schmidt in the Child Emotion Laboratory. Her research broadly focuses on the influence of temperamental shyness and self-regulation on the socioemotional development of preschoolers, and whether there are

cross-cultural differences in these relations. This grant will allow her to return to her birthplace of Kurdistan, Iraq and examine whether there are cross-cultural differences in the influence of shyness and self-regulation on socioemotional functioning, given that the cultural perceptions of shyness differ in North America and in the Middle East. Relatively little previous work has examined the correlates of shyness outside of North America, and especially in the Middle East, and so she will first determine whether current measures of shyness in North America are both reliable and valid when translated into Kurdish before moving forward to examine the psychosocial correlates in Kurdish children. Raha hopes that identifying factors that may decrease risk for developing social and psychological problems in shy children can improve developmental outcomes for both Kurdish and Canadian children.



Clement John Kabungo, University of Zambia

“Assessing the Involvement of Fathers and Extended Family Members in Child Development Programs in Kasama and Lusaka Districts, Zambia”

Clement John Kabungo is a doctoral candidate in Educational Psychology at University of Zambia, working under the supervision of Dr. Sylvia Mwanza-Kabaghe and Professor Sophie Kasonde-Ng’andu. His research

focuses on investigating fathers and extended family members' involvement in child development programs, specifically cognitive development skills among children of ages 2 to 6 years. The study is set to take place in two districts of Zambia, namely Lusaka and Kasama, which have different cultural backgrounds. The study aims to gain insights into the level and impact that fathers and extended family members' participation have in child development programs covering health, nutrition, education, and childcare. This is particularly important given the traditional context in Zambia where fathers are not fully involved in such child development programs. After his dissertation, Clement's goal is to put research into practice and help communities and policy makers develop interventions and policies that will enhance fathers and extended family members' participation in child development programs in low- and middle-income countries. Clement holds bachelors' degree in Special Education and History and Master's degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Zambia.



Dickson Mukara Matsantsa Ong'ayi, Syracuse University

"Paternal Risk Factors and Preschoolers Academic and Social Skills in Kenya: The Mediating role of Protective Factors"

Dickson Mukara Matsantsa Ong'ayi is a doctoral candidate in the department of Human Development and Family Science in Falk college at Syracuse University under the supervision of Professor Jaipaul Lalla Roopnarine. Dickson holds a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Studies from Kenyatta University, Kenya and a master's degree in Child Development from the University of Haifa, Israel. Dickson's major research focus is on fatherhood, fathering, and early childhood outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. Other subsidiary interests include early childhood education; father-child relationship, allocare, and children's socio-emotional and academic outcomes across sub-Saharan Africa; parenting style in different ethnic groups in Africa; intimate partner violence, economic hardship, and children's psychological well-being, and social skills outcomes in Africa. Dickson's dissertation seeks to examine associations between intimate partner violence, paternal depression, parenting practices vis-a-vis children's literacy and numeracy skills, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, and the mediating role of social support, ethnic socialization, and constructive conflict resolution behavior on these associations in Kenyan families. Dickson hopes the findings from this study will be useful in the development of parenting policies and intervention programs that target fathers in promoting family welfare and children's optimal development in low- and middle-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa.