

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES
CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

CHALLENGES OF PREPARATION AND UTILIZATION OF TEACHING
MATERIALS IN PUBLIC PRESCHOOLS AROUND SHASHEMENE CITY

BY:

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Addis Ababa Ethiopia

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APPROVAL SHEET

This research paper entitled: “challenges of preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public preschools around shashemene city” is prepared and submitted by **Tesfa George Isles** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in **Early Childhood Care and Education**, has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval.

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education is a crucial phase that significantly influences children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. The quality of teaching materials is a vital component of effective early education, directly affecting children's engagement and learning outcomes. However, public preschools in Ethiopia often face significant challenges in preparing and utilizing teaching materials. This study aims to investigate the complexities surrounding the preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public preschools around Shashemene City. The research employed a quantitative and qualitative approach, utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis to gather data from preschool teachers and administrators. The findings reveal a multitude of interconnected challenges that public preschool teachers face. These include severe financial constraints leading to resource shortages, limited teacher training and professional development opportunities, insufficient administrative support, and the lack of culturally relevant teaching materials. The study also highlights the critical importance of high-quality teaching materials in supporting children's holistic development and promoting effective early childhood education. The study provides evidence-based recommendations to address these challenges, such as increasing funding allocations, enhancing teacher training programs, strengthening administrative support, and prioritizing the development of culturally responsive teaching materials. These findings can inform policy decisions and guide efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Early childhood education is a foundational phase that significantly influences children's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Ginsburg, 2007). Research has consistently shown that the quality of teaching materials is a vital component of effective early education, directly affecting children's engagement and learning outcomes (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). In public preschool settings, however, the challenges associated with preparing and utilizing teaching materials have been inadequately addressed in both policy and practice.

Public preschools often operate under strict budget constraints, leading to resource shortages that hinder the acquisition of high-quality teaching materials (Smith et al., 2019). These financial limitations can force educators to resort to low-cost alternatives that may not adequately support diverse learning objectives. Moreover, the lack of designated time for planning and preparation means that teachers frequently experience burnout, which further detracts from their ability to develop engaging and effective teaching materials (Martin, 2021).

In addition to resource and time constraints, the professional development opportunities available to preschool educators are often insufficient. Many pre-service teacher training programs do not equip future educators with the skills needed for effective material preparation and utilization (Roberts, 2019). As a result, many teachers feel unprepared to create or adapt materials that meet the developmental and cultural needs of their students.

Collaboration among educators is essential for the sharing of resources and best practices. However, the isolation experienced by many preschool teachers limits their access to peer support and innovative teaching strategies (Williams & Reyes, 2022). This isolation not only impacts material preparation but also affects the overall quality of instruction.

Furthermore research indicates that inadequate funding is a primary barrier to acquiring suitable teaching resources. Many public preschools operate on tight budgets, which limits their ability to purchase or create high-quality educational materials (Zelalem, 2021). As a result, educators often resort to improvising with limited or outdated resources, which can compromise the quality of instruction and negatively affect student engagement (Tadesse, 2019). This lack of adequate

materials not only hampers the learning process but can also discourage teachers from employing innovative teaching strategies that are essential for effective early childhood education.

Hence, the relevance of teaching materials to local cultural contexts is crucial. In a nation characterized by significant cultural diversity, the use of generic or non-contextualized teaching materials may fail to resonate with children, leading to disengagement and diminished learning outcomes (United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2020). Culturally relevant materials that reflect the experiences and backgrounds of the children can significantly enhance engagement and comprehension.

As public preschool classrooms become increasingly diverse, the demand for culturally relevant materials has become more pronounced. Educators are often challenged to source materials that reflect the backgrounds and experiences of all students, risking alienation for those whose cultures are not represented (Gonzalez, 2021). This highlights the importance of inclusivity in early childhood education, where diverse materials can foster a sense of belonging and engagement among all learners.

Given these challenges, this study aims to investigate the complexities surrounding the preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public preschools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public preschools in Ethiopia face several interconnected challenges that significantly impede the quality of early childhood education. The first main challenge is inadequate funding. Many public preschools operate under severe financial constraints, limiting their ability to acquire essential teaching materials (Zelalem, 2021). This financial limitation often results in overcrowded classrooms where teachers have insufficient resources to create an engaging learning environment. Consequently, educators frequently resort to using minimal or outdated resources, which can hinder effective teaching and compromise the educational experience for young learners (Tadesse, 2019).

Additionally, the lack of culturally relevant teaching materials poses a significant problem. Given Ethiopia's rich cultural diversity, it is crucial for educational resources to reflect the varied backgrounds of its student population. However, many preschools tend to utilize generic materials that do not resonate with the local context (Admassu, 2022). This disconnect can lead to reduced student engagement and motivation, as children may not see their own experiences

and cultures represented in their learning materials. Culturally appropriate teaching materials have been shown to improve learning outcomes by fostering a sense of belonging and relevance among students (UNICEF, 2020).

Insufficient teacher training is another critical barrier affecting the effective preparation and utilization of teaching materials. Many educators lack access to professional development programs that focus on how to create and use teaching materials effectively (World Bank, 2021). This gap in training leads to a reliance on outdated or inappropriate resources, further diminishing the quality of education. Teachers may feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of developing their own materials without the necessary guidance and support, resulting in missed opportunities for enhancing children's learning experiences.

Moreover, the technological gap in education exacerbates these challenges. While the global trend in education emphasizes the importance of integrating technology into early childhood settings, many public preschools in Ethiopia lack the necessary infrastructure and resources to do so (UNESCO, 2021). This limitation restricts teachers' ability to utilize digital teaching materials, further curtailing innovative instructional strategies that could enhance learning outcomes.

In summary, the challenges related to the preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public preschools in Ethiopia are multifaceted and deeply interconnected.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of producing teaching materials from local resources?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of using available teaching materials in their classrooms?
3. What are the primary challenges faced by public pre-school teachers in utilizing teaching materials in their classrooms?
4. What types of teaching materials are available in public pre-schools, and how accessible are they to teachers and students?
5. To what extent do pre-school administrators provide support, training, and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in utilizing teaching materials?

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the challenges of preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public pre-schools around Shashemene city and to assess ECE teachers' perceptions of these challenges. The study aims to raise awareness about the importance of effectively utilizing teaching materials and encourage educational sectors to prioritize and address this issue.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To assess teachers' perceptions of using available teaching materials in their classrooms.
2. To evaluate teachers' perceptions of producing teaching materials from local resources.
3. To identify the primary challenges of utilizing teaching materials in pre-schools.
4. To determine the types of teaching materials available in public pre-schools and their accessibility to teachers and students.
5. To examine the extent to which pre-school administrators provide support, training, and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in utilizing teaching materials.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it provides a detailed analysis of the practical issues faced by educators in public pre-schools. It highlights the critical areas needing intervention and offers evidence-based recommendations to enhance the quality of early childhood education. The findings can help shape policies and practices that support teachers and improve learning environments for young children, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes.

The findings of this research are expected to benefit ECE centers in Ethiopia and the Ministry of Education by providing insights into the preparation implementation and use of teaching materials. The community and teachers may gain a better understanding of the importance of producing and utilizing these materials, leading to greater support. The findings could help the administrators' advice their teachers more effectively and review material development.

1.6 Operational Definitions

Challenges: The different obstacles faced by the pre-school teachers in their work environment.

Preparation: Developing and making ready the teaching materials from different materials in the environment.

Utilization: The proper use of the teaching materials that are available in the work environment.

Pre-school Teacher: A professional trained in child development or early childhood education involved in programs for preschool children in various settings (Good, 1973).

ECE: Early childhood education, encompassing learning from birth to eight years old.

ECDE: Early Childhood Development and Education, covering development from birth to eight years.

Teaching/Learning Materials (TLM): Educational materials used by teachers to support specific learning objectives.

Preschool: An educational establishment for early childhood education before compulsory primary education.

Holistic Development: Development in all areas, including physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral/spiritual aspects.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview The review of related literature was focused on the following areas:

- Teaching Materials
- The role of Teaching Materials in Education
- Utilization of Teaching Materials
- Availability and Accessibility of Teaching Materials
- Preparation of Teaching Materials
- Challenges Faced by Teachers
- Administrative Support and Policies
- Importance of teaching and learning materials
- Theories of teaching and learning materials
- The role of teaching and learning materials in implementation of ECDE curriculum

2.1 Teaching Materials

Teaching materials are integral to the educational process, serving as vital tools that enhance learning and support effective instruction. As educators strive to create engaging and meaningful learning experiences, the selection and utilization of appropriate teaching materials become paramount. This literature review explores various definitions, classifications, and the significance of teaching materials in educational settings.

Definitions and Classifications of Teaching Materials

Teaching materials encompass a broad range of resources utilized by educators to facilitate learning. According to Miller and Almon (2009), these materials can be categorized into physical resources, such as textbooks and workbooks, and digital resources, including educational software and online content. This dual classification highlights the diverse formats that teaching materials can take, catering to various instructional needs and learning environments. Morrison (2011) further expands this classification by including visual aids, manipulatives, and multimedia resources, which are designed to engage students through different modalities, thus addressing multiple learning styles and preferences.

Berk (2009) emphasizes the significance of multimedia resources, asserting that effective teaching materials should encompass a variety of formats, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive applications. This variety not only enriches the learning experience but also fosters increased student motivation and engagement, which are crucial for promoting active learning environments. The incorporation of multimedia materials allows for a more dynamic classroom experience, where students can interact with content in ways that traditional resources may not permit (Berk, 2009).

The Role of Teaching Materials in Education

Research underscores the vital role that teaching materials play in promoting student engagement and improving educational outcomes. Gordon and Browne (2015) argue that well-prepared teaching materials can facilitate understanding and retention of information by providing concrete examples and practical applications. The effective use of these materials can also help bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world scenarios, making learning more relevant to students. Furthermore, integrating culturally relevant materials is essential in diverse educational settings, as it helps students relate the content to their own experiences and backgrounds (UNESCO, 2011).

The availability and accessibility of teaching materials significantly impact teaching effectiveness. Ogunyemi (2014) notes that educators often encounter challenges related to resource allocation and material preparation, which can hinder their ability to deliver quality instruction. Inadequate teaching materials can lead to disengagement and a lack of motivation among students, ultimately affecting their academic performance (Tadesse, 2019). Research indicates that when teachers lack sufficient resources, they may resort to outdated or irrelevant materials, which can diminish the overall quality of the educational experience (Ogunyemi, 2014).

Effective Utilization of Teaching Materials

While the availability of teaching materials is crucial, their effective utilization is equally important. Teachers must receive adequate training to adapt and use these materials in ways that meet the diverse needs of their students (World Bank, 2021). Morrison (2011) emphasizes the need for professional development programs that equip educators with the necessary skills to create and implement teaching materials effectively. Such training can empower teachers to

tailor resources to specific learning contexts, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience.

Moreover, the integration of technology into teaching materials presents both opportunities and challenges. The rise of digital resources has transformed the landscape of education, providing new ways to engage students. However, many educators face barriers such as lack of access to technology and insufficient training, which can impede the effective use of these resources (UNESCO, 2021). For instance, teachers may struggle to incorporate interactive software into their lessons due to inadequate infrastructure or technical support, ultimately limiting the benefits of these innovative materials (UNESCO, 2021).

2.2 Availability and Accessibility of Teaching Materials

One of the primary challenges identified in the literature is the limited availability and accessibility of teaching materials in public pre-schools. Studies have found that many pre-schools, particularly those serving low-income communities, often lack a sufficient quantity and variety of high-quality teaching materials (Barnett et al., 2017; Curenton et al., 2015). This shortage can hinder teachers' ability to provide engaging and developmentally appropriate learning experiences for their students.

Moreover, even when teaching materials are available, they may not be easily accessible to teachers and students. Factors such as inadequate storage, organization, and distribution systems can impede the effective utilization of these resources (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Pianta et al., 2005). This lack of accessibility can lead to inefficient use of teaching materials and limit their impact on student learning.

2.3 Preparation of Teaching Materials

Definition and Importance of Preparation of Teaching Materials

The preparation of teaching materials refers to the intentional design and selection of educational resources that facilitate learning experiences for young children. In public preschools, effective teaching materials are crucial for promoting developmentally appropriate practices, enhancing engagement, and supporting diverse learning needs (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2020). As the foundation for future learning, high-quality teaching materials can significantly influence children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Alignment with Early Learning Standards

A primary consideration in preparing teaching materials for preschool is aligning them with established early learning standards. The NAEYC (2020) emphasizes that materials should promote developmental milestones and support various learning domains, including language and literacy, cognitive development, and social-emotional growth. Research shows that teaching materials designed in accordance with these standards not only enhance children's engagement but also facilitate meaningful learning experiences (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp, 2016). By ensuring that materials are developmentally appropriate, educators can foster a supportive learning environment that encourages exploration and curiosity.

Integration of Play-Based Learning

Play is a central element of early childhood education, and the preparation of teaching materials should reflect this pedagogical approach. Play-based learning allows children to actively explore and engage with their environment. Bodrova and Leong (2007) highlight that teaching materials that promote imaginative play, such as role-playing props and open-ended resources, foster creativity and critical thinking. The inclusion of hands-on activities and manipulatives not only encourages children's curiosity but also supports intrinsic motivation, which is essential for effective learning in preschool settings (Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, & Singer, 2009).

Cultural Responsiveness

Culturally responsive teaching materials are vital in public preschools, where classrooms often reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences. Research indicates that materials representing various cultures and languages enhance children's sense of belonging and engagement (Gay, 2010). For example, books and resources that feature characters from diverse backgrounds help children see themselves in their learning environment. Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that culturally relevant pedagogy validates children's identities and promotes respect and appreciation for diversity among peers, thereby creating a more inclusive educational setting.

Collaboration in Material Development

Collaboration among educators is essential in the preparation of teaching materials for public preschools. Joint planning allows teachers to share resources, ideas, and best practices, resulting in more comprehensive and effective materials. According to Little (1990), collaborative efforts foster a sense of community among educators and promote professional growth. When teachers

work together to create materials, they can ensure that resources are inclusive and address the diverse needs of their students, ultimately enhancing the quality of the educational experience.

Importance of Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is critical for preschool educators to enhance their skills in preparing effective teaching materials. Training in early childhood education principles, culturally responsive practices, and play-based learning strategies equips teachers with the knowledge to create high-quality resources. Desimone (2009) suggests that professional development should be sustained, collaborative, and focused on practical applications, which helps educators implement new strategies effectively in their classrooms. By investing in teachers' continuous learning, public preschools can improve the quality of educational materials and support better learning outcomes for children.

Factors to Consider When Developing and Selecting Learning Materials

Choosing appropriate teaching and learning materials is an essential skill for teachers in Early Childhood Development and Education. Selection involves choosing and developing appropriate materials for teaching and learning. Adequate care should be taken when selecting materials for ECDE children. Kitao (1995) states that materials appropriate for a particular class need to align with an instructional philosophy, approach, method, and techniques suitable for the children and their needs. They should provide accurate, natural, and current information.

Teachers and caregivers need criteria for selecting materials that stimulate young children. Criteria include safety, appropriateness for learning use, durability, versatility, and aesthetic appeal (Ng'asike, 2002).

Teachers should be knowledgeable and skilled in selecting and using the best materials, making supplementary materials, and adapting materials for different activities. Materials should influence the theme and learning activities, helping learners to learn. Teachers should follow the curriculum and provide, make, or choose materials, adapting and supplementing them as needed and monitoring children's progress and needs.

Children prefer brightly colored and attractive materials. Ng'asike(2002) states that materials should be simple, with various shapes, colors, and textures. They should be aesthetically appealing and align with good design principles. Walls, furniture, and floor coverings should be

painted in neutral solid colors to provide a background for learning materials. Wall displays should encourage children's curiosity and inquisitiveness.

2.4 Challenges Faced by Teachers

Teachers play a crucial role in the effective utilization of teaching materials, but they often encounter various challenges. Studies have highlighted the lack of training and professional development opportunities for teachers on effectively integrating teaching materials into their instructional practices (Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Mashburn et al., 2008). Without the necessary knowledge and skills, teachers may struggle to maximize the potential of these materials in supporting children's learning.

Additionally, teachers often report limited time to prepare and plan for the use of teaching materials, as they are burdened with other administrative and instructional responsibilities (Curenton et al., 2015; Pianta et al., 2005). This time constraint can hinder their ability to effectively select, organize, and integrate teaching materials into their lesson plans.

Moreover, teachers face the challenge of adapting materials to meet the diverse needs of students in their classrooms. Differentiated instruction requires materials that can cater to various learning styles and developmental levels, which can be a daunting task without adequate support and resources (Tomlinson, 2001). Teachers also contend with the physical condition and availability of materials, which can be outdated or insufficient in quantity (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

2.5 Administrative Support and Policies

The effective utilization of teaching materials in public pre-schools is also influenced by the level of administrative support and the presence of clear policies or guidelines (Ackerman & Barnett, 2005; Pianta et al., 2005). Studies have found that pre-school administrators play a crucial role in ensuring the availability, accessibility, and appropriate use of teaching materials (Barnett et al., 2017; Curenton et al., 2015). However, some pre-schools may lack the necessary administrative support and clear policies to guide the procurement, storage, and integration of teaching materials.

Administrators are responsible for fostering an environment where continuous professional development is encouraged, enabling teachers to stay updated on best practices for using teaching materials (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Effective policies should also include

provisions for regular assessment and feedback mechanisms to ensure that the use of teaching materials is optimized (Odden & Picus, 2014).

2.6 The Role of Teaching and Learning Materials in ECDE

In modern education, the best Early Childhood Education is delivered by well-trained, well-educated, and knowledgeable teachers. Bishop (1985) emphasizes the crucial role of teachers in national development, warning that discontented and frustrated teachers cannot foster the necessary economic, cultural, and moral growth.

A better future depends on quality education for future citizens. Communities must ensure children have conducive learning environments. Teachers are responsible for selecting and providing suitable learning materials that help children master familiar skills and challenge them to develop new ones. According to Kitao (1995), teachers should help learners by providing, making, and choosing materials, elaborating on them, and monitoring and evaluating children's progress and needs.

Teachers must be skilled in producing and selecting the best materials, making supplementary materials for the class, and adapting materials for different activities. Materials must align with learners' levels and influence the theme and learning activities. Bishop(1985) stresses that curriculum improvement relies on suitable textbooks, teacher's guides, and other teaching and learning materials.

Materials play a significant role in shaping the curriculum. Classrooms should be organized so children can manage their materials with teacher support and engage in their own activities. The materials should challenge children slightly above their current ability level, fostering new skills and knowledge acquisition. Allwright (1990) argues that materials should teach children to learn and provide resources for ideas and activities, giving teachers a rationale for their actions. O'Neil (1990) adds that materials can be beneficial even if not specifically designed for children, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and adaptability.

Overall, the literature underscores the critical importance of preparing and utilizing teaching materials in public pre-schools and addressing various challenges to ensure quality early childhood education.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in the study, including the research design, description of the study area, sources of data, population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The purpose of this research is to investigate The Challenges of Preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public pre-schools around Shashemene city, focusing on public preschools. To achieve this, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed, utilizing cluster sampling to select a representative sample of schools.

3.2 Study Population and Sample

The total population for this study consists of 9 public pre-schools within Shashemene city. Given the manageable size of the population, a sample of 6 pre-schools was selected. This selection aimed to provide meaningful insights into the practices and outcomes in the early childhood education settings.

The target population is comprised of teachers and principals from the following public pre-schools: Bulchannanaa, Melka Eessaa, Aleeluu, Edu Maddaa, Biherawi and Buurqaguudinaa. The total study population included six (6) principals and 33 teachers or ECE professionals.

3.2.3 Sampling Technique

Cluster sampling is the chosen method for selecting the sample of pre-schools for several key reasons:

Definition and Context: Cluster sampling involves dividing the population into distinct groups (clusters) and randomly selecting entire clusters for study. In this case, each school serves as a cluster.

Practicality and Efficiency: With a small total population of 9 pre-schools, cluster sampling simplifies the sampling process. By randomly selecting entire pre-schools, we streamline data collection, reducing logistical complexity.

Homogeneity within Clusters: The selected pre-schools exhibit similarities in characteristics such as demographics, educational programs, and community context. By sampling entire pre-schools, we maintain a representative sample while ensuring that the educational dynamics within each cluster are considered.

Minimizing Costs and Resources: Conducting research within fewer clusters minimizes travel and administrative expenses. This is particularly beneficial for studies with limited budgets and time constraints.

Randomness and Representation: Randomly selecting 6 out of the 9 pre-schools ensures that each pre-school has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample. This enhances the randomness and representativeness of the sample, mitigating potential selection bias.

Focus on Group-Level Analysis: Since the research aims to understand phenomena at the pre-school level (e.g., teaching materials preparation and utilization), cluster sampling aligns well with these objectives. Analyzing data at the cluster level allows for insights into school-wide dynamics that may not emerge from individual sampling.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The data was collected through a combination of questionnaires, observations, and interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The researcher employed several data collection methods:

Questionnaires: Structured questionnaires were developed to gather quantitative data from the teachers and administrators in the selected pre-schools. The questionnaires included a mix of closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert scale) and open-ended questions to capture specific practices and insights. Topics covered areas such as teaching material preparation, utilization of teaching materials.

Observation: An observation checklist was created to systematically observe teaching material availability, preparation and utilization of the teaching materials. classroom interactions. This checklist outlined specific indicators to assess during observations, such as availability of teaching materials, student engagement with teaching materials, types of activities done with the teaching materials. Observations were conducted in the natural classroom settings to ensure authentic data collection.

Interviews: A Semi-structured interviews was conducted with the administrators. These interviews provided qualitative insights into perceptions and experiences related to challenges of preparation and utilization of teaching materials in the public pre-schools around Shashemene city. Interview questions were open-ended, allowing participants to elaborate on their thoughts and experiences.

Document Analysis: Used to analyze teachers' academic and professional qualifications, curriculum records, and the number of children and teachers in the ECE centers.

3.5 Data Collecting Instruments

Questionnaires: The questionnaires were pilot-tested with a small group of educators to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability. Feedback was incorporated to refine the questions. The final version was distributed in paper format or hard copies.

Observation: The observation checklist was designed to include specific criteria for evaluation. This involved categories such as: Availability of teaching materials, Preparation of teaching materials, classroom environment (Organization, accessibility, and safety).

Interview guide: The interview guide outlined key themes and questions to explore during the interviews. Topics included:

- Teachers' perceptions of preparing teaching materials and utilization
- Challenges faced in utilization of teaching materials.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Sampling Process: The researcher used the simple random sampling method to select the 6 pre-schools from the total population of 9. This was done using a random number generator to ensure impartial selection.

Preparation of Instruments: The researcher developed the questionnaires and observation checklist, incorporating feedback from the pilot testing phase. The researcher ensured that all instruments were culturally relevant and accessible to participants.

Data Collection:

Distribution of Questionnaires: The researcher distributed the questionnaires to all the teachers and administrators in the selected pre-schools. And then the researcher provided clear

instructions, explained the purpose of the study, and ensured anonymity in responses. The researcher also set a deadline for completion and sent reminders as needed.

Observation Sessions: The researcher conducted a scheduled observation sessions in each pre-school, ensuring that they occur during regular class times. The researcher aimed to observe multiple classrooms within each pre-school to gather a range of data. Hence, the researcher used the observation checklist to document findings systematically.

Conducting Interviews: The researcher scheduled a semi-structured interview with the pre-school administrators and teachers. And then conduct the interviews in a comfortable setting for the participants, ensuring confidentiality. The researcher also used audio recording (with consent) to capture the responses accurately, and then transcribed the interviews for analysis.

Data Management:

The data was collected and organized when the questionnaires and observation checklists were completed. The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews, maintaining confidentiality by anonymizing the participants' identities. Furthermore all of the data was stored securely in a password-protected file.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using Descriptive statistics, like frequencies, percentiles and mean, by utilizing SPSS version 21 software. The analyzed data were presented in tables.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount in conducting this research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including teachers and principals from public pre-schools in Shashemene city, ensuring they were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits. Participants were assured of voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Written consent forms were collected and confidentiality was strictly maintained, with all data anonymized and securely stored. The study prioritized participant welfare; ensuring benefits outweighed risks, and obtained permission from the University of Addis Ababa, Department of Early Childhood Care and Education. The research respected cultural sensitivities, using appropriate and sensitive methods and instruments. Transparency, accountability, and respect for participants were maintained throughout.

3.8 Scope of the Study

The scope of the research defines the boundaries within which the study was conducted. The study focused on public pre-schools in Shashemene city, Ethiopia, involving 39 participants, including pre-school teachers and administrators, to understand their perceptions and experiences. It examined specific challenges in utilizing teaching materials, such as shortage of teaching materials, budgetary constraints, inadequate storage, and insufficient teacher training, and assessed the availability and quality of educational corners like language, math, outdoor, science, social, and creativity. The research also explored teacher perceptions of locally produced teaching materials and evaluated the support, training, and professional development opportunities provided to them. Data were collected through surveys and interviews, analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, within a specified time frame to capture the current state of practices. The study focused solely on public pre-schools, and the findings are context-specific to Shashemene city, with limited generalizability to other regions or private pre-schools. Despite the limited sample size, the research aims to offer actionable insights and recommendations to improve early childhood education in the studied area.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the analysis and findings from the data that was gathered from the respondents. All completed questionnaires from the teachers were edited for completeness and consistency. Summaries of data findings together with their possible interpretations have been presented by the use of percentages and frequencies.

4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents

4.2.1 DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER

The data collected regarding the gender of the teachers who participated in the study were analyzed and recorded as shown in table 4.1 and below

Table 4.2.1: Distribution of the teacher's gender

male	18	46.2
female	21	53.8
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the majority of respondents from a total of 39(100%) of the teachers 21 (53.8%) were female and 18 (46.2%) of them were male teachers.

4.2.2 DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

The data collected regarding the age of the teachers who participated in study was analyzed and reported as shown in table 4.2.2 below

Table 4.2.2 Age of the teachers in years

Responses	Freq	%
Between 18-25	14	35.9
Between 25-30	15	38.5
Between 30-35	8	20.5
40-45	2	5.1
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that from a total of 39(100%) teachers the majority or 15(38.5%) were between the age 25-30 years, and 14(35.9%) of them were between the age 18-25 years, the table also shows that 8(20.5%) of the teachers were between the age 30-35 years, and the minority of the participants or 2(5.1%) of them were between the age 40-45 years.

4.2.3 DISTRIBUTION BY ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

The data collected regarding the academic qualification of the teachers who participated in study was analyzed and reported as shown in table 4.2.3 below

Table4.2.3 Academic qualification of the teachers

Responses	Freq	%
MA	1	2.6
BA	16	41.0
Diploma	11	28.2
Certificate	11	28.2
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the majority or 16(41%) of the teachers were qualified with a BA degree, the table also shows that 11(28.2%) had diplomas and the same amount or 11(28.2) of the teachers had certificates, and the minority or only 1(2.6%) teacher had MA degree.

4.3 Distribution of Questions related to Preparation and Utilization of Teaching Materials to The Pre-school Teachers.

Table 4.3 I feel confident in my ability to prepare effective teaching materials.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	7	21.2%
Agree	10	30.3%
Neutral	9	27.3%
Disagree	5	15.2%
Strongly Disagree	2	6.1%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Overall, the data indicate that a significant majority of participants (51.5%, n = 17) expressed confidence in their ability to prepare effective teaching materials, as they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the respondents feel competent in their skills related to instructional material preparation.

Conversely, 21.3% (n = 7) of participants indicated a lack of confidence, as they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This reveals a minority of respondents who may require additional support or resources to enhance their skills in this area.

The neutral response category accounted for 27.3% (n = 9) of the participants, indicating that a significant portion of respondents may feel uncertain or ambivalent about their capabilities. This neutrality suggests that there could be a need for further exploration into the factors contributing to this uncertainty, such as experience level, training, or specific challenges faced in material preparation.

Table 4.3.1 I have access to a wide variety of teaching materials for my classroom

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	5	15.2%
Agree	5	15.2%
Neutral	7	21.2%
Disagree	11	33.3%
Strongly Disagree	5	15.2%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Participants were asked about their access to a variety of teaching materials for their classrooms. The responses indicate a significant lack of access, with 33.3% (n = 11) disagreeing and 15.2% (n = 5) strongly disagreeing with the statement. In contrast, only 15.2% (n = 5) strongly agreed, and another 15.2% (n = 5) agreed. The neutral response category constituted 21.2% (n = 7). This distribution suggests that access to teaching materials is a concern among a majority of participants, indicating a potential area for improvement in resource availability.

Table 4.3.2 The time I spend preparing teaching materials is manageable.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	12	36.4%
Agree	8	24.2%
Neutral	4	12.1%
Disagree	4	12.1%
Strongly Disagree	5	15.2%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Regarding the manageability of time spent preparing teaching materials, responses were more positive. A notable 36.4% (n = 12) of participants strongly agreed, while 24.2% (n = 8) agreed. However, 12.1% (n = 4) of respondents felt neutral, and an equal percentage (12.1%, n = 4) disagreed. Additionally, 15.2% (n = 5) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that while many

participants find their preparation time manageable, there remains a substantial minority who do not, highlighting the need for ongoing support in time management for teaching preparation.

Table 4.3.3 I often seek input from colleagues when preparing teaching materials.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	3	9.1%
Agree	11	33.3%
Neutral	15	45.5%
Disagree	4	12.1%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

When inquiring about seeking input from colleagues during material preparation, 33.3% (n = 11) of participants agreed, indicating a collaborative approach among some. However, a considerable 45.5% (n = 15) remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty about the practice or variability in collaboration among peers. Only 9.1% (n = 3) strongly agreed, while 12.1% (n = 4) disagreed. This indicates that collaboration may not be a widespread practice, and further encouragement of teamwork could be beneficial.

Table 4.3.4. The resources provided by my school help me create high-quality teaching materials

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	6	18.2%
Neutral	6	18.2%
Disagree	14	42.4%
Strongly Disagree	7	21.2%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Participants were also asked about the effectiveness of school-provided resources in creating high-quality teaching materials. The results reveal a troubling trend: 42.4% (n = 14) disagreed, and 21.2% (n = 7) strongly disagreed, indicating a lack of confidence in the resources available.

Only 18.2% (n = 6) strongly agreed and an equal percentage (18.2%, n = 6) remained neutral. This indicates a critical need for schools to assess and improve the resources they provide to support teachers effectively.

Table 4.3.5 I feel that I receive adequate training for preparing teaching materials.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	6	18.2%
Agree	7	21.2%
Neutral	8	24.2%
Disagree	10	30.3%
Strongly Disagree	2	6.1%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

In terms of training adequacy for preparing teaching materials, 18.2% (n = 6) strongly agreed, and 21.2% (n = 7) agreed, while a substantial 30.3% (n = 10) disagreed. Additionally, 24.2% (n = 8) remained neutral, and 6.1% (n = 2) strongly disagreed. This suggests that while some participants feel adequately trained, a significant portion expresses dissatisfaction, indicating a potential gap in training effectiveness that may need to be addressed.

Table 4.3.6 I frequently update my teaching materials to reflect current educational standards

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	10	30.3%
Agree	10	30.3%
Neutral	5	15.2%
Disagree	2	6.1%
Strongly Disagree	6	18.2%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Participants reported on their practices regarding updating teaching materials to reflect current educational standards. A combined total of 60.6% (n = 20) either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. However, 15.2% (n = 5) were neutral, and 24.3% (n = 8) expressed disagreement,

with 6.1% (n = 2) strongly disagreeing. This suggests a positive trend towards updating materials, although the responses highlight that some teachers may still struggle to keep their materials current.

Table 4.3.7 I often use technology to aid in the preparation of teaching materials

Responses	Freq	(%)
Agree	11	33.3%
Neutral	8	24.2%
Disagree	8	24.2%
Strongly Disagree	6	18.2%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Regarding the use of technology in preparing teaching materials, 33.3% (n = 11) agreed, indicating a positive trend. However, 24.2% (n = 8) were neutral, and an equal percentage disagreed, with 18.2% (n = 6) strongly disagreeing. These results suggest that while some educators are integrating technology into their preparation processes, there is still a significant portion of respondents who may benefit from training or resources in this area.

Table 4.3.8 I find it easy to adapt existing materials to meet the needs of my students

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	3	9.1%
Agree	9	27.3%
Neutral	10	30.3%
Disagree	8	24.2%
Strongly Disagree	3	9.1%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Participants were asked about the ease of adapting existing materials to meet their students' needs. The responses were varied: 9.1% (n = 3) strongly agreed, and 27.3% (n = 9) agreed, while 30.3% (n = 10) were neutral. A notable 24.2% (n = 8) disagreed, and another 9.1% (n = 3)

strongly disagreed. This indicates that while some teachers find adaptation manageable, many face challenges, highlighting a need for support in customizing materials effectively.

Table 4.3.9 I feel that collaboration with parents enriches the preparation of teaching materials.

Responses	Freq	Percentile (%)
Strongly Agree	5	15.2%
Agree	5	15.2%
Neutral	15	45.5%
Disagree	7	21.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	3.0%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

When evaluating the perception of collaboration with parents in preparing teaching materials, only 15.2% (n = 5) strongly agreed, and another 15.2% (n = 5) agreed. A significant 45.5% (n = 15) were neutral, while 21.2% (n = 7) disagreed and 3.0% (n = 1) strongly disagreed. This suggests that while some educators see value in parental collaboration, a large portion remains uncertain or uninvolved, indicating an opportunity for schools to foster stronger partnerships with families.

Table 4.3.10 I have sufficient time during the school day to prepare teaching materials.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	9	27.3%
Agree	5	15.2%
Neutral	9	27.3%
Disagree	8	24.2%
Strongly Disagree	2	6.1%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

On the question of having sufficient time during the school day to prepare teaching materials, 27.3% (n = 9) strongly agreed, and 15.2% (n = 5) agreed. However, 27.3% (n = 9) remained neutral, while 24.2% (n = 8) disagreed, and 6.1% (n = 2) strongly disagreed. This indicates that

while a portion of participants feels they have adequate time for preparation, a significant number do not, suggesting a need for better scheduling and time management strategies.

Table 4.3.11 The variety of materials available to me caters to different learning styles.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	3	9.1%
Agree	6	18.2%
Neutral	8	24.2%
Disagree	7	21.2%
Strongly Disagree	9	27.3%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Regarding the variety of materials available to cater to different learning styles, only 9.1% (n = 3) strongly agreed, while 18.2% (n = 6) agreed. A notable 24.2% (n = 8) were neutral, and 48.5% (n = 16) expressed disagreement (21.2%, n = 7 disagreed; 27.3%, n = 9 strongly disagreed). This suggests a significant concern regarding the availability of diverse materials that accommodate various learning styles, indicating a need for improvement in this area.

Table 4.3.12 I feel supported by school leadership in my efforts to prepare teaching materials.

Responses	Freq	(%)
Strongly Agree	4	12.1%
Agree	7	21.2%
Neutral	10	30.3%
Disagree	9	27.3%
Strongly Disagree	3	9.1%
Total	33	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

Finally, participants reflected on the support they feel from school leadership in their efforts to prepare teaching materials. A mere 12.1% (n = 4) strongly agreed, while 21.2% (n = 7) agreed. The neutral category constituted 30.3% (n = 10), indicating uncertainty. Additionally, 27.3% (n

= 9) disagreed, and 9.1% (n = 3) strongly disagreed. These results suggest that many educators do not feel adequately supported by their leadership, indicating a potential area for improvement in fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching material preparation.

In conclusion, the survey results highlight several critical areas related to educators' experiences in preparing teaching materials. While many participants express confidence in their time management and the updating of materials, significant concerns emerge regarding access to diverse resources, the adequacy of training, and the perceived support from school leadership. Notably, a majority of respondents indicate dissatisfaction with the materials available to them and the impact of these resources on student engagement and learning outcomes. Furthermore, collaboration with colleagues and parents appears limited, suggesting opportunities for enhancing teamwork and community involvement.

4.4: Distribution of Question related to potential challenges of effective utilization of teaching materials

4.4.1 The data collected regarding the potential challenges associated with the utilization of teaching materials in a pre-school setting. The data collected, presented in table 4.4.1, and illustrates varying levels of agreement or disagreement across different aspects of this issue.

Table 4.4.1

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
The pre-school has a sufficient budget allocated for purchasing teaching materials	10.3	7.7	35.9	25.6	20.5
The pre-school has a wide variety of teaching materials available for use in the classrooms	7.7	0.0	20.5	61.5	10.3
The teaching materials are well-organized and easily accessible for teachers	5.1	12.8	33.3	33.3	15.4
Teachers receive adequate training on how to effectively utilize the available teaching	10.3	17.9	35.9	17.9	17.9

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
materials					
The pre-school has a clear policy or guidelines on the use of teaching materials	12.8	48.7	20.5	12.8	5.1
The teaching materials are well-maintained and in good condition	7.7	20.5	30.8	30.8	10.3
The pre-school provides sufficient time for teachers to plan and prepare lessons using the available teaching materials	28.2	33.3	30.8	7.7	0.0
The pre-school encourages and supports teachers to be creative in using the teaching materials	17.9	56.4	15.4	7.7	2.6
The teaching materials are aligned with the pre-school's curriculum and learning objectives	12.8	20.5	51.3	15.4	0.0
The pre-school has a system in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials	12.8	38.5	30.8	7.7	10.3
The pre-school provides adequate storage and maintenance facilities for the teaching materials	7.7	43.6	33.3	15.4	0.0
The pre-school encourages parental involvement in the utilization of teaching materials	25.6	28.2	41.0	5.1	0.0
The pre-school collaborates with other institutions to share and exchange teaching	15.4	28.2	35.9	15.4	5.1

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD
materials					
The pre-school regularly updates and replaces outdated or damaged teaching materials	0.0	17.9	33.3	38.5	10.3

Note: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N= Neutral, D- Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The Mean Score for Each Response Type

Responses	(SA)	(A)	(N)	(D)	(SD)
Mean	10.06	20.5%	32.05%	21.05%	2.75%

Budget Allocation: The data collected concerning budget allocation shows that only 4 (10.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that the pre-school has a sufficient budget for purchasing teaching materials. A notable 10 (25.6%) of the respondents disagree, indicating a substantial concern regarding budgetary provisions.

Variety of Teaching Materials: The data collected concerning Variety of Teaching Materials a significant majority 24 (61.5%) disagree that there is a wide variety of teaching materials available. This suggests a notable deficiency in the diversity of resources for instructional purposes.

Teacher Training: The data collected concerning teacher's training responses are mixed, with 7 (17.9%) of the respondents strongly agreeing and 7 (17.9%) disagreeing that teachers receive adequate training. This highlights a potential disparity in training practices across the pre-school.

Encouragement for Creativity: The data collected concerning encouragement for creativity a majority 22 (56.4%) of the respondents agree that the pre-school encourages and supports teachers to be creative in material utilization. This indicates a positive aspect amidst other challenges.

Updates and Replacements: The data collected concerning updates and replacements of teaching materials shows that a significant 15 (38.5%) of the respondents disagree that teaching materials are regularly updated and replaced. This highlights concerns regarding resource renewal and maintenance.

Overall, the data underscores a multitude of challenges in the effective utilization of teaching materials in pre-school settings, ranging from budgetary constraints to issues related to organization, training, policy, maintenance, and collaboration. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring the provision of quality education and fostering an enriching learning environment for young children.

4.5: Distribution of Question related to Availability of teaching materials

4.5 The data collected regarding the availability of various educational corners and materials in a public pre-school setting reveals several significant insights. Below is a summary of the findings with relevant interpretations, presented in table 4.5, and it illustrates varying levels of availability and non-availability across different aspects of this issue.

Table 4.5

items	V G	G	A	B A	N A
Availability of language corner	0.0%	0.0%	25.6%	41.0%	33.3%
Availability of math corner	0.0%	0.0%	20.5%	53.8%	25.6%
Availability of outdoor corner	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	43.6%	41.0%
Availability of science corner	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	64.1%	33.3%
Availability of social corner	0.0%	0.0%	17.9%	48.7%	33.3%
Availability of music corner	0.0%	5.1%	30.8%	35.9%	28.2%
Availability of creativity corner	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	56.4%	38.5%
Availability of ECE Syllabus	7.7%	41.0%	48.7%	2.6%	0.0%
Availability of teaching guides	7.7%	38.5%	46.2%	7.7%	0.0%
Availability of toys	0.0%	2.6%	38.5%	35.9%	23.1%
Thematic teaching materials	0.0%	12.8%	41.0%	35.9%	10.3%

Note: *N=39, V G= Very Good, G= Good, A=Average, B A= Below average, N A= Not available*

The Mean Score for Each Response Type

Responses	(VG)	(G)	(A)	(BA)	(NA)
Mean	1.4%	9.1%	26.57%	38.69%	24.23%

Further interpretation of the data collected from the table above was presented as follow:

It's important to focus on the most critical and impactful findings that highlight both strengths and areas for improvement. Here are the five key aspects that the researcher thought would be most relevant and compelling to present:

Availability of Science Corner: As it is shown above in table 4.4 the science corner received the highest below average rating 25 (64.1%) from the respondents, with an additional 13 (33.3%) of the respondents stating it is not available, pointing to a substantial gap in this provision.

Availability of Creativity Corner: As it is shown in the table above the data collected concerning the availability of creativity corner most of the respondents or 22 (56.4%) rated the creativity corner as below average, with 15(38.5%) of the respondents indicating it is not available, signaling a notable area for improvement.

Availability of Outdoor Corner: As it is shown in the table above the data collected concerning the availability of outdoor corner states that a combined total of 33 (84.6%) of respondents rated the outdoor corner as below average 17(43.6%) or not available 16 (41.0%), highlighting a critical area for enhancement.

Availability of ECE Syllabus: As it is shown in the table above the data collected concerning the availability of The ECE syllabus received positive feedback, with a majority rating it as average 19 (48.7%) or good 16 (41.0%), of the respondents indicating strong availability.

Availability of Teaching Guides: As it is shown in the table above the data collected concerning the availability of teaching guides, Similar to the ECE syllabus, teaching guides were rated positively, with most respondents indicating they are available 18 (46.2%) stated average, and 15 (38.5%) of the respondents stated good.

Overall the data indicates significant areas of concern regarding the availability of educational corners in the pre-school. The language, math, outdoor, science, social, and creativity corners

were predominantly rated as below average or not available. However, the ECE syllabus and teaching guides received positive ratings, suggesting that curriculum-related materials are well-provided. The availability of toys received mixed responses, highlighting moderate availability.

The findings suggest that while the pre-school excels in providing curriculum-related materials, there are critical gaps in the availability of specialized educational corners. These deficiencies could impact the overall learning experience and development opportunities for children. Addressing these gaps is essential to enhance the pre-school's educational environment.

4.6 Distribution of Questions related to potential factors that challenge the use of teaching materials

Table 4.6.1

items	V T	N T	N S
Lack of skill in the production of learning materials	41.0%	17.9%	41.0%
Lack of support from the relevant people	61.5%	12.8%	25.6%
Most materials not readily available in the environment	41.0%	23.1%	35.9%
. Lack of funds to purchase some of the necessary tools	53.8%	15.4%	30.8%
Commitment of teachers to some other business	33.3%	43.6%	23.1%
. Lack of self-commitment from the teachers	38.5%	41.0%	20.5%
Negative attitude of parents	15.4%	30.8%	53.8%
Lack of motivation from the teachers	41.0%	30.8%	28.2%

Note: VT= *Very true*, NT= *Not true*, NS= *Not sure*

The Mean Score for Each Response Type

Responses	<i>VT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>NS</i>
Mean	40.68%	26.92%	32.36%

Note: VT= Very true, NT= Not true, NS= Not sure

Lack of Support from the Relevant People: A majority (61.5%) of participants feel that there is insufficient support from relevant stakeholders. Only 12.8% disagree, and 25.6% are unsure. This indicates a strong perception of a lack of necessary backing from key individuals or groups.

Lack of Funds to Purchase Necessary Tools: Over half of the participants (53.8%) believe that there is a lack of funds to acquire necessary tools, while 15.4% disagree and 30.8% are unsure. This underscores financial constraints as a significant barrier.

Most Materials Not Readily Available in the Environment: 41.0% agree that materials are not readily available, 23.1% disagree, and 35.9% are unsure. This highlights a concern about the accessibility of educational materials, with a notable portion of participants undecided.

Lack of Motivation from the Teachers: 41.0% feel that teachers lack motivation, 30.8% disagree, and 28.2% are unsure. This points to concerns about teacher motivation, with a considerable proportion of participants undecided.

The data collected from the 39 participants indicated several perceptions regarding potential factors that challenge the use of teaching materials in the educational environment. A significant proportion (41.0%) of participants reported a lack of skill in the production of learning materials as very true, with 17.9% indicating this was not true, and 41.0% being unsure. Additionally, a majority of participants (61.5%) believed there was a lack of support from the relevant people, whereas 12.8% did not share this view, and 25.6% were uncertain. The availability of materials was another concern, with 41.0% agreeing that most materials were not readily available in the environment, 23.1% disagreeing, and 35.9% being unsure.

Financial constraints were highlighted, with 53.8% of participants agreeing that there was a lack of funds to purchase necessary tools, 15.4% disagreeing, and 30.8% unsure. The commitment of teachers was also questioned, with 33.3% agreeing that teachers were committed to other business, 43.6% disagreeing, and 23.1% unsure. Self-commitment from teachers was seen as lacking by 38.5% of participants, while 41.0% disagreed, and 20.5% were unsure. Parental

attitudes were mostly uncertain, with 15.4% agreeing that there was a negative attitude of parents, 30.8% disagreeing, and 53.8% unsure. Finally, 41.0% of participants felt that teachers lacked motivation, 30.8% disagreed, and 28.2% were unsure.

These findings suggest a range of perceived challenges, with significant portions of participants expressing uncertainty on several issues, indicating areas where further investigation and intervention may be necessary.

Availability of Teaching/Learning Materials

Table 4.6.2: Availability of Teaching/Learning Materials

Response	Frequency	Percent
Not enough	27	69.2
Enough for all children	12	30.8
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that a significant majority (69.2%) of participants reported that there were not enough teaching/learning materials, while 30.8% indicated that there were enough materials for all children (see Table 4.6.2). This highlights a substantial issue with resource availability.

Teaching Methods

Table 4.6.3: Teaching Methods

Response	Freq	%
Involves children in demonstration	18	46.2
Children not involved	21	53.8
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the participants reported that in 53.8% of the cases, children were not involved in demonstrations during teaching, while 46.2% indicated that children were involved (see Table 4.6.3). This suggests a need for more interactive teaching methods.

4.7 Questions related to the impact of quality of material on teacher performance

Table 4.7.1: Availability of Teaching Materials

Response	Freq	%
Very good	2	5.1
Good	9	23.1
Average	18	46.2
Below average	10	25.6
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the availability of teaching materials is predominantly rated as average (46.2%) or below average (25.6%), with fewer participants rating it as good (23.1%) or very good (5.1%). This indicates that there is significant room for improvement in the provision of teaching materials.

Table 4.7.2 Durability of Teaching Materials

Response	Freq	%
Good	13	33.3
Average	14	35.9
Below average	12	30.8
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the durability of teaching materials is mostly rated as average (35.9%) or good (33.3%), with a significant portion also rating it as below average (30.8%). This suggests that while some materials are durable, a notable amount may require more frequent replacement or repair.

Table 4.7.3: Use of Teaching & Learning Materials by Teachers

Response	Freq	%
Very good	8	20.5
Good	17	43.6
Average	11	28.2
Below average	3	7.7
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the majority of participants rated the use of teaching and learning materials by teachers as good (43.6%) or very good (20.5%), while a smaller percentage rated it as average (28.2%) or below average (7.7%). This indicates a generally positive use of materials by teachers, though there is still some room for improvement.

Table 4.7.4: Children's Participation in Group Activities

Response	Freq	%
Very good	18	46.2
Good	15	38.5
Average	3	7.7
Below average	3	7.7
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that Children's participation in group activities is predominantly rated as very good (46.2%) or good (38.5%), with few participants rating it as average (7.7%) or below average (7.7%). This suggests a high level of engagement among children in group activities.

Table 4.7.5: Teacher's Assessment of Children's Work

Response	Freq	%
Very good	7	17.9
Good	16	41.0
Average	12	30.8
Below average	4	10.3
Total	39	100.0

Note: Freq= Frequency, %= percent

The table above shows that the majority of teachers rate their assessment of children's work as good (41.0%) or very good (17.9%), with a significant portion also rating it as average (30.8%). A smaller percentage rated it as below average (10.3%), indicating that while assessment practices are generally positive, there is room for improvement in ensuring consistent high-quality assessments.

The data collected from the 39 participants reveals both strengths and areas for improvement in the use of teaching materials and educational practices. The availability of teaching materials is generally seen as average or below average, highlighting a need for better provision of resources. The durability and attractiveness of these materials are mixed, indicating that while some materials are effective, others may need replacement or enhancement. Teachers' use of these materials is largely positive, as is children's participation in group activities, suggesting effective engagement strategies. However, assessments of children's work show a range of quality, pointing to the need for more consistent and rigorous evaluation methods. Overall, these findings suggest that while there are many positive aspects of current practices, addressing the identified areas for improvement could enhance the educational experience for both teachers and students.

Overall, the data reveals a mixed level of satisfaction with various aspects of teaching materials and educational practices. While there are strengths, such as the effective use of materials by teachers and high levels of children's participation in group activities, there are also notable areas for improvement, including the availability, durability, and appropriateness of teaching materials. Addressing these areas can enhance the quality of education and outcomes for children in early childhood education settings.

4.8 Interview Questions Related To The Qualitative Aspect Of The Study.

4.8.1 Interview Questions Administered To The Principals Of The Pre-Schools.

Interview Analysis

Availability of Teaching Materials: A significant theme that emerged during the interviews conducted with principals of public pre-schools was the insufficient availability of teaching materials. While a few principals reported having access to basic teaching aids, a majority expressed concerns regarding the quality and relevance of the resources at their disposal.

Principal A expressed frustration, stating, "The variety of teaching materials in our school is insufficient. We often have to make do with outdated or incomplete sets of materials." This highlights a critical gap in the resources that are essential for effective teaching and learning. Principal C echoed these concerns, saying, "We do not receive the teaching materials we need on time. Sometimes, we go through an entire term without getting the necessary items." This delay not only hampers lesson planning but also disrupts the learning experience for children.

When analyzing the feedback from all six principals: 50% (3 principals) indicated that while some materials were available, they described them as generally "up-to-date and diverse," though this diversity was often limited in scope. 33.3% (2 principals) categorized their teaching materials as "inadequate," citing significant deficiencies in both variety and quantity. 16.7% (1 principal) acknowledged the existence of some gaps but felt they were "manageable," indicating that their school could still function adequately despite these challenges.

The findings point to an uneven distribution of teaching materials across public pre-schools, which reflects larger systemic issues related to resource allocation. Schools that are better funded or have more proactive management teams tend to enjoy a richer variety of teaching aids, while

others struggle significantly with shortages. This inconsistency can severely impact the quality of education provided, resulting in unequal learning experiences for students across the city.

Budget Allocation and Management: The interviews brought to light substantial concerns regarding the management of budgets allocated for teaching materials. Many principals expressed their frustration over inconsistent funding and inefficient procurement processes that hindered their ability to secure necessary resources.

Principal D remarked, "The budget for materials is insufficient and poorly managed. We rarely receive the funds on time, and when we do, they are often diverted to other needs." This misallocation can severely limit a school's ability to invest in quality teaching materials. Conversely, Principal B noted a more positive experience, describing the budget process as "transparent" and inclusive of teacher input, which helped ensure timely procurement of materials.

From the interviews, the distribution of views on budget management was as follows: 50% (3 principals) described their budget management practices as transparent, highlighting the importance of teacher involvement and adequate reviews to guarantee effective procurement of materials. 33.3% (2 principals) lamented poor budget management, which frequently resulted in delays and insufficient funding. 16.7% (1 principal) expressed satisfaction, noting that their budget was well-managed and regularly reviewed to address the school's needs effectively.

The lack of uniformity in budget management leads to delays in the acquisition of teaching materials, contributing further to the challenges faced by both teachers and students. Schools with robust budget processes can respond more flexibly to material shortages, while others find it difficult to procure even the most basic resources necessary for effective teaching.

Policy and Guidelines on Teaching Materials: While most principals agreed that policies regarding the use and management of teaching materials existed, they often noted that these policies were outdated and poorly communicated to the teaching staff.

Principal E remarked, "There are policies in place, but they haven't been updated in years, and there's little effort to communicate them to staff regularly." This lack of clarity can lead to confusion and inconsistencies in the application of these policies. Principal F added, "The guidelines are communicated during staff meetings, but they are rarely enforced, which creates

confusion among the teachers." This situation underscores the need for more systematic and rigorous enforcement of existing policies.

In analyzing the perspectives of the six principals: 66.7% (4 principals) reported that their policies were outdated and not effectively communicated. 16.7% (1 principal) mentioned that clear policies were shared through regular meetings and an online portal, highlighting an effective communication strategy. 16.7% (1 principal) noted that comprehensive policies were communicated during staff orientation and supplemented by periodic refresher courses.

The absence of clear, up-to-date policies and ineffective communication between administration and teachers exacerbates the difficulties in utilizing teaching materials. Schools that have well-established policies are better equipped to ensure consistency in the preparation and use of materials, yet these instances remain exceptions rather than the rule.

Organization and Accessibility of Teaching Materials: The principals provided varied accounts regarding the organization and accessibility of teaching materials within their schools.

Principal C stated, "Our teaching materials are centrally organized and easily accessible, which makes it easier for teachers to find what they need." This level of organization can significantly enhance the teaching process.

- In contrast, Principal D complained, "The materials are disorganized and scattered across different areas, making it difficult for teachers to locate them when needed." Such disorganization can be a major hindrance to effective teaching.

Upon evaluating the responses: 50% (3 principals) indicated that materials were centrally organized and well-maintained. The other 50% (3 principals) reported that materials were disorganized, leading to delays in lesson preparation and execution.

The disorganization of teaching materials in numerous schools leads to significant inefficiencies. Teachers often find themselves wasting valuable time searching for materials rather than focusing on lesson planning and student engagement. This disorganization further diminishes the overall quality of teaching and learning experiences.

Professional Development: A consensus emerged among most principals regarding the lack of sufficient professional development opportunities for teachers, particularly in relation to the preparation and utilization of teaching materials.

Principal A emphasized, "We receive some professional development, but it rarely focuses on teaching materials. More attention is given to general pedagogy." This suggests a gap in targeted training that could enhance resource utilization. Principal E added, "The training we do receive is minimal and often not very practical in terms of classroom application." Such inadequacies highlight the need for more relevant and practical training programs.

From the analysis: 66.7% (4 principals) noted that professional development opportunities were inadequate, particularly regarding the practical use of teaching materials. 33.3% (2 principals) reported receiving regular training that included guidance on the latest teaching materials, indicating some schools recognize the importance of ongoing professional development.

The lack of focused training on the practical use of teaching materials limits teachers' ability to engage students effectively and fully utilize available resources. Implementing regular, targeted professional development could significantly improve teachers' capabilities in preparing and using teaching materials.

Overall, the findings highlight systemic challenges that require immediate attention. Addressing these issues through improved resource allocation, transparent budget management, clear communication of policies, better organization of materials, and targeted professional development can significantly enhance the teaching and learning environment in public pre-schools.

4.8.2 Interview Questions Related To Preparation And Utilization Of Teaching Materials Administered To The Pre-School Teachers Of The Public Pre-Schools.

Preparation Process of Teaching Materials: A prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the varied approaches teachers take in preparing their teaching materials. Their practices range widely, from utilizing available resources to hurriedly preparing materials due to time constraints. The results showed that 6.1% of teachers (2) indicated that they initiate their preparation by thoroughly "reviewing the curriculum and gathering ideas from online resources and colleagues." This suggests a proactive approach where some teachers actively seek out diverse ideas to enhance their teaching. 12.1% (4 teachers) shared that they derive joy from experimenting with different materials and often seek input from their students, highlighting an interactive and adaptive teaching style.

However, a significant 39.4% (13 teachers) confessed to feeling overwhelmed by their workloads. This pressure often leads to the repetitive use of familiar materials, which can stifle creativity and diminish the dynamism of their teaching. Additionally, 33.3% (11 teachers) acknowledged that they frequently rush through the preparation process due to relentless time pressures. This hurried approach often results in feelings of dissatisfaction with their material choices and effectiveness.

The findings underscore the substantial time constraints faced by teachers, which often leads to hasty preparation methods and a reliance on familiar, less innovative materials. Teachers who enjoy a more collaborative environment and have sufficient time appear more willing to explore and experiment with different resources. Conversely, those under significant pressure tend to fall back on old materials, which can adversely affect student engagement and learning outcomes.

Effectiveness of Teaching Materials: When asked about the types of teaching materials they found most effective for engaging students, teachers shared diverse insights: which 21.2% (7 teachers) reported that "visual aids and games" were the most effective for sustaining student interest and involvement in lessons, indicating a preference for interactive and engaging materials. Conversely, 33.3% (11 teachers) indicated that many of their existing materials did not align with the interests or learning styles of their students, which often led to student disengagement and diminished classroom interaction. Furthermore, 15.2% (5 teachers) mentioned that worksheets were particularly ineffective, as they failed to maintain students' attention, suggesting a need for more engaging alternatives.

Teachers face significant challenges when attempting to align their materials with the diverse interests and learning preferences of their students. While visual and interactive materials are recognized as effective engagement tools, the limited availability of such resources often compels educators to rely on less stimulating options, such as worksheets, which can hinder student motivation and learning.

Challenges in Sourcing and Creating Materials: Teachers encountered a range of challenges when sourcing or creating teaching materials, predominantly driven by budget constraints, time limitations, and a lack of culturally relevant materials. Where 24.2% (8 teachers) reported that they creatively adapt existing resources to better meet their needs, showcasing their resourcefulness and commitment to providing quality education despite obstacles. 27.3% (9

teachers) noted difficulties in locating materials that reflect the diverse backgrounds of their students, which can be particularly critical in fostering an inclusive classroom environment. 21.2% (7 teachers) explained that time constraints often forced them to engage in last-minute preparations, which is far from ideal and does not promote thorough educational planning. Additionally, 9.1% (3 teachers) pointed out that restrictive budgets severely limited their capacity to acquire adequate materials for their students.

The process of sourcing and creating effective teaching materials poses significant challenges for many educators, particularly in light of budgetary restrictions and a scarcity of culturally relevant resources. Teachers often find themselves resorting to hasty solutions, which can compromise the educational experiences of their students.

Determining Age Appropriateness of Materials: In discussing how they assess the appropriateness of materials for various age groups, teachers provided the following insights: 27.3% (9 teachers) indicated that they collaborate with colleagues to gain insights on suitable materials, which fosters a sense of community and shared learning among educators. 33.3% (11 teachers) confessed that they often guess what might be appropriate due to the absence of clear guidelines, revealing a sense of uncertainty in their decision-making. 21.2% (7 teachers) expressed hesitancy and uncertainty about selecting age-appropriate materials, which may inhibit their willingness to explore new resources.

The lack of clear guidelines regarding the appropriateness of materials for different age groups creates uncertainty among teachers. Although collaboration with colleagues is beneficial, many still feel hesitant about their choices, resulting in reluctance to experiment with novel materials.

Effectiveness and Engagement with Materials: Teachers shared examples of materials that had either succeeded or failed in engaging their students: which 33.3% (11 teachers) reported that worksheets frequently failed to engage students, with many students "zoning out" during their use, highlighting the limitations of traditional approaches. 30.3% (10 teachers) mentioned that some art projects were overly complex for their students, leading to frustration rather than learning. Conversely, 21.2% (7 teachers) noted that storytelling props were notably effective in igniting students' imaginations and fostering engagement.

The effectiveness of teaching materials is highly variable, with hands-on and interactive tools typically proving more engaging than traditional worksheets. Teachers often grapple with the challenge of balancing material complexity and simplicity, particularly for younger learners.

Collaboration with Colleagues: Teachers reflected on the role of collaboration with colleagues in influencing their preparation processes: where 33.3% (11 teachers) noted that productive team meetings often led to the generation of new ideas and improved materials, indicating the benefits of collaborative environments. However, 30.3% (10 teachers) admitted to feeling hesitant to approach colleagues for assistance, and 24.2% (8 teachers) reported limited collaboration due to their colleagues being preoccupied with their own classes.

While collaboration is valued and can foster innovation, many teachers experience isolation due to time constraints and a lack of willingness to seek help. This absence of collaboration can impede the sharing of ideas and resources essential for enhancing teaching material preparation.

Impact of Budget Constraints: Teachers reported that the school's budget significantly influenced the types of materials they could prepare: where 27.3% (9 teachers) mentioned that they frequently had to spend their own money to acquire necessary materials, highlighting the financial burden placed on educators. And 24.2% (8 teachers) expressed frustration regarding how the budget severely limited the quality and quantity of available materials, constraining their teaching efforts. In contrast, 30.3% (10 teachers) noted that they had learned to be resourceful, often utilizing recycled materials to supplement their classrooms.

Budget constraints present a formidable challenge for teachers, with many resorting to personal funds or improvised solutions with recycled materials to meet their classroom needs. While some educators demonstrate remarkable resourcefulness, this reality underscores systemic inadequacies in supporting teachers with sufficient educational materials.

Utilization of Technology: When discussing their use of technology in preparing and utilizing teaching materials, teachers expressed diverse perspectives: Where 45.5% (15 teachers) reported using educational websites to discover interactive resources that engage their students, reflecting an openness to integrating technology. 27.3% (9 teachers) expressed discomfort with technology, preferring to rely on basic tools and traditional methods. Additionally, 27.3% (9 teachers) noted that technical failures during lessons often disrupted the flow of teaching, leading to frustration and setbacks.

While many educators have embraced technology as a means to enhance their teaching, others face difficulties with its implementation, whether due to discomfort or technical issues. The mixed responses indicate a pressing need for professional development focused on effectively integrating technology into the classroom.

Staying Updated on Teaching Strategies and Resources: Teachers shared how they keep informed about new teaching strategies and resources: where 24.2% (8 teachers) rely on networking with other educators to discover innovative strategies and resources, fostering a community of shared knowledge. However, 45.5% (15 teachers) admitted feeling disconnected from new educational trends due to their busy schedules, which limits their engagement in professional development. 30.3% (10 teachers) noted that they seldom have time to pursue professional development, further impeding their ability to stay current with advancements in education.

Many teachers feel a significant disconnect from emerging educational strategies and resources, largely due to overwhelming time constraints. While networking can enhance awareness, the lack of structured professional development opportunities leaves many educators feeling out of touch with modern teaching practices.

Support and Resources Needed: In discussing what support or resources would enhance their ability to prepare effective teaching materials, teachers identified several critical needs: where 42.4% (14 teachers) expressed frustration over the lack of available resources, with many indicating that they were forced to create materials from scratch, increasing their workload significantly. 30.3% (10 teachers) emphasized the need for more funding to secure higher-quality materials, which would better support student learning. 27.3% (9 teachers) suggested that access to a well-stocked resource library would greatly enhance their ability to find and utilize effective teaching materials.

Teachers are in urgent need of enhanced support in terms of resources and funding. The current lack of adequate backing forces many to create their own materials, compromising both their time and the quality of education provided to students. Access to shared resources and increased funding would be essential steps toward improving the preparation process.

Balancing Preparation with Other Teaching Responsibilities: Balancing preparation time with other teaching responsibilities emerged as a common challenge for educators: where 21.2% (7

teachers) reported that they attempted to prepare materials during quieter moments in the classroom, trying to maximize their limited time. 24.2% (8 teachers) felt overwhelmed with their preparation responsibilities to the point of neglecting lesson planning altogether, which can compromise the educational quality provided to their students. Additionally, 21.2% (7 teachers) noted that they frequently worked late into the night to catch up on preparation tasks, contributing to feelings of burnout.

The overwhelming workload faced by teachers complicates their ability to balance preparation with other responsibilities. Many feel pressured to extend their work hours, leading to stress and potentially diminishing their overall teaching performance.

Adapting Materials for Diverse Learning Needs: Teachers discussed their approaches to adapting teaching materials to accommodate diverse learning needs: And 42.4% (14 teachers) expressed uncertainty regarding how to modify materials for different learning needs, often resorting to "one-size-fits-all" solutions that may not address individual student requirements. 18.2% (6 teachers) reported employing various strategies, such as visual aids and hands-on options, to support diverse learners effectively. 15.2% (5 teachers) struggled to adapt materials effectively due to limitations in time and resources, hindering their ability to provide tailored support.

The challenge of adapting teaching materials to meet the diverse learning needs of students is significant for many educators, particularly when they lack the necessary resources and training. A reliance on generic materials can hinder the effectiveness of instruction, underscoring the need for targeted professional development.

These findings underscore the critical need for systemic support in education, focusing on resource availability, professional development, and collaborative opportunities to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

4.9 Analysis Results Gathered Through Observation

The observation checklist provides a critical lens through which the preparation and utilization of teaching materials in the public pre-schools can be objectively assessed. The checklist was applied in the six public pre-schools around Shashemene City, evaluating various aspects of teaching materials, including their availability, organization, and appropriateness, as well as how

teachers interact with and utilize these materials during classroom instruction. The following themes emerged from the analysis:

Availability of Teaching Materials: One of the central factors evaluated during the classroom observations was the availability of teaching materials. The presence of diverse, high-quality teaching aids is essential for creating an engaging and effective learning environment, especially for young children in pre-school settings. However, the observation results showed significant variation between schools:

33.3% of the observed classrooms had a visible variety of teaching materials readily available, which suggests that some pre-schools were relatively well-resourced. In these classrooms, there were clear examples of visual aids such as charts, blocks, and manipulatives, which facilitated interactive learning. 33.3% of the classrooms had a more limited selection of materials available, often consisting of outdated or worn items that had clearly seen extensive use over time. In these cases, the materials, though present, were inadequate in variety or quality to sufficiently support the range of learning activities needed for early childhood education.

The remaining 33.3% of classrooms observed had no visible teaching materials available during the lesson, forcing teachers to rely on traditional teaching methods, such as lecture and chalkboard instruction, without the support of engaging, hands-on tools for students.

The lack of sufficient teaching materials in many of the classrooms highlights a major challenge in public pre-schools: resource scarcity. This disparity across schools points to unequal resource allocation, leaving many teachers ill-equipped to provide varied and engaging lessons. The absence of teaching materials in some classrooms is particularly concerning, as young learners benefit most from tactile, visual, and interactive learning tools. In such environments, the burden falls on teachers to creatively manage without the materials needed to promote meaningful engagement and learning.

Age Appropriateness of Teaching Materials: Another key aspect evaluated was whether the available materials were appropriate for the age group of the pre-school children. In early childhood education, age-appropriate materials are critical for ensuring that students remain engaged, challenged, and supported in their developmental stage. In 16.7% of classrooms, the materials available were deemed age-appropriate, designed specifically to match the developmental needs of the children. These materials included puzzles, blocks, and storybooks

that catered to the cognitive and motor skill development of pre-schoolers. 50% of classrooms had materials that were only "average" in terms of age-appropriateness. In these cases, the materials provided were either too advanced or too simplistic, lacking the targeted stimulation necessary for the children's developmental level. For example, some classrooms had materials intended for older children, or conversely, tools meant for toddlers, which failed to engage the pre-schoolers effectively. 33.3% of classrooms had materials that were entirely inappropriate for the students' age group. These included items such as overly complex puzzles, textbooks meant for older children, or abstract learning tools that were difficult for young children to comprehend. The misalignment between teaching materials and the developmental needs of the students underscores the challenges teachers face in curating or sourcing appropriate tools. This misalignment may be due to budgetary constraints that limit the school's ability to purchase age-specific materials, or a lack of professional guidance on what constitutes age-appropriate tools for early childhood learners. Without suitable materials, teachers may struggle to maintain student interest or provide the necessary cognitive stimulation, further impacting learning outcomes.

Organization and Accessibility of Materials: The organization of teaching materials within the classroom was another important focus of the observation checklist. Organized, easily accessible materials allow teachers to incorporate a variety of tools into their lessons without delay, fostering a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

50% of the classrooms were observed to have well-organized materials. These classrooms featured designated areas or shelves where teaching aids were stored neatly, allowing teachers to easily access what they needed during lessons. This level of organization significantly enhanced lesson fluidity, as teachers could swiftly incorporate different resources into their teaching without disrupting the flow of the class. In contrast, the other 50% of classrooms had materials that were either disorganized or difficult to access. In some cases, materials were scattered throughout the room or stacked in inaccessible storage areas, forcing teachers to spend valuable time searching for tools during the lesson. This disorganization led to delays and disruptions, reducing the overall effectiveness of the teaching session.

The contrast in material organization across classrooms highlights the critical role of effective classroom management in the utilization of teaching resources. Teachers in well-organized

classrooms were able to deliver smoother, more engaging lessons by integrating a variety of materials into their teaching. Conversely, the lack of organization in other classrooms contributed to a less efficient teaching process, where valuable instructional time was lost. This points to the need for better organizational systems and support in material management within schools.

Spaces for Hands-On Activities: A key component of effective early childhood education is the provision of spaces for hands-on activities, which enable children to actively engage with materials and apply what they are learning through exploration and manipulation.

50% of classrooms had designated spaces for hands-on activities, such as tables for art projects, play areas with manipulatives, or reading corners with storybooks. These areas allowed children to engage directly with learning materials in a structured yet flexible way, enhancing their experiential learning and promoting collaboration among students. In 33.3% of classrooms, spaces for hands-on activities were available but not well-defined or regularly used by teachers. In these cases, while the physical space existed, it was not optimally utilized, limiting its potential to enhance interactive learning experiences. 16.7% of classrooms lacked any visible spaces specifically designated for hands-on learning, which hindered the opportunities for students to engage with materials in a meaningful, tactile way.

The availability of spaces for hands-on activities is critical for fostering active learning in pre-school environments. The absence or underutilization of these spaces in some classrooms points to either a lack of resources or insufficient teacher training on the importance of active learning spaces. Pre-schools that dedicate spaces for interactive, material-based learning create more opportunities for students to develop cognitive, motor, and social skills, which are essential at this developmental stage.

Teacher Engagement with Materials: The level of teacher engagement with the materials was also a focal point of the observation. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling the use of materials and guiding students in how to interact with them.

In 50% of classrooms, teachers were actively engaged with the materials, seamlessly integrating them into their lessons. These teachers demonstrated how to use the materials, encouraged students to explore, and facilitated interactive learning sessions. This level of engagement not only made the lessons more dynamic but also increased student participation and interest. In

33.3% of classrooms, teacher engagement with materials was inconsistent. Teachers occasionally used the available resources but did not incorporate them into their lessons in a systematic or sustained way. This led to missed opportunities for deeper student engagement. In 16.7% of classrooms, teachers rarely used the available materials, opting instead for traditional methods of instruction, such as lecture and chalkboard writing, without incorporating hands-on tools.

Teacher engagement with materials is a key determinant of their effectiveness in the classroom. When teachers are actively involved in using and demonstrating materials, students are more likely to interact with them and absorb the lessons being taught. The inconsistent or lack of engagement in some classrooms suggests that teachers may need more training or support in effectively utilizing the materials they have available, especially in cases where traditional methods of instruction dominate. This could be due to insufficient training in material usage or a lack of time and confidence in integrating diverse teaching aids into daily lessons. Professional development programs focusing on how to effectively incorporate teaching materials into pre-school curricula could help teachers maximize the educational potential of the materials they have.

Time Allocated for Material Preparation: The observations also examined whether teachers had dedicated time for preparing materials during the school day. Adequate preparation time is crucial for teachers to organize, plan, and customize materials to fit the specific needs of their students and lesson plans.

In 16.7% of classrooms, teachers were observed to have clearly allocated preparation time, allowing them to adequately plan for lessons and select the most suitable materials. This preparation time visibly improved the overall quality of instruction, as teachers appeared more confident and organized in their delivery. 50% of the classrooms showed evidence of insufficient preparation time, with teachers rushing to prepare materials either during the lesson or immediately before class began. This rushed preparation limited the effectiveness of the materials used, as teachers did not have enough time to tailor them to the specific learning objectives or needs of the students. In 33.3% of classrooms, there was no visible evidence that teachers had any time allocated for material preparation, which meant that lessons often relied on improvised or repetitive use of the same materials.

The lack of dedicated preparation time is a significant issue that affects the quality of teaching materials used in the classroom. Teachers who do not have sufficient time to prepare often rely on the same materials repeatedly, leading to less dynamic and engaging lessons. The observations underscore the importance of providing teachers with structured time during the school day to focus on material preparation, ensuring that lessons are well-planned and supported by appropriate resources.

Classroom Layout and Conduciveness to Material Use: The classroom layout was also assessed to determine whether it was conducive to the effective use of teaching materials. A well-organized classroom layout can facilitate better interaction with teaching aids and support different learning activities, from group work to individual exploration.

50% of classrooms had layouts that were conducive to using teaching materials effectively. In these classrooms, desks and learning stations were arranged to promote group activities, movement, and easy access to resources. This layout encouraged students to engage with the materials more frequently and fostered an interactive learning environment. 33.3% of classrooms had average layouts, where materials were available but not always positioned for easy use. In these cases, students had limited opportunities to interact with materials independently, as the layout did not support fluid movement or easy access to different resources. 16.7% of classrooms had layouts that were restrictive, with little space for students to move around or interact with materials. In these settings, teaching aids were either underutilized or completely inaccessible, reducing the potential for hands-on learning.

The classroom layout plays a significant role in how effectively teaching materials are used. A conducive layout encourages exploration, collaboration, and independent learning, allowing students to take full advantage of the materials available. In classrooms where the layout is restrictive, the learning process becomes more passive, with fewer opportunities for students to engage directly with teaching aids. Schools could benefit from reconsidering classroom design to support more interactive and dynamic use of materials.

Teacher Collaboration on Material Preparation: The observation also focused on whether there was evidence of collaboration among teachers in the preparation of teaching materials. Collaboration can lead to more diverse and innovative use of resources, as teachers share ideas and strategies for using materials effectively.

In 50% of classrooms, there was clear evidence of teacher collaboration, with shared resources and materials that were co-prepared by multiple educators. This collaboration often resulted in a richer variety of materials and more innovative teaching approaches, as teachers brought different perspectives to the preparation process. In 33.3% of classrooms, there was some evidence of collaboration, but it was limited, often restricted to occasional sharing of ideas or materials rather than systematic teamwork. In 16.7% of classrooms, there was no observable evidence of collaboration among teachers, with each educator preparing materials in isolation. This led to less diversity in the teaching aids used and a reliance on traditional or repetitive materials.

Collaboration among teachers significantly enhances the variety and creativity of teaching materials, improving student engagement and learning outcomes. When teachers work together to prepare materials, they can draw on a broader range of ideas and strategies, making lessons more dynamic and responsive to the needs of different learners. Schools should encourage more systematic collaboration between teachers, possibly through scheduled planning sessions or shared material libraries.

Overall, the observation checklist provides a detailed look at the many factors that influence the preparation and utilization of teaching materials in the public pre-schools around Shashemene City. From the availability and appropriateness of materials to classroom layout, teacher collaboration, and time for preparation, the findings reveal a range of challenges that affect the effectiveness of teaching. These challenges rooted in resource shortages, disorganization, and time constraints suggest the need for systemic improvements in material provisioning, teacher support, and professional development.

Hence, addressing these challenges could significantly improve the learning environment for pre-school children, ensuring that they have access to a wide range of age-appropriate, well-organized, and engaging teaching materials that support their cognitive, emotional, and social development.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study identified several critical challenges that public preschool teachers face in this regard:

Availability and Accessibility of Teaching Materials: The study found that public preschools in the Shashemene area often operate under severe financial constraints, leading to a shortage of high-quality teaching and learning materials. Many schools have to make do with limited or outdated resources due to insufficient funding. Even when some materials are available, teachers and students may not have easy access to them due to issues with storage, organization, and distribution within the preschools.

Challenges Faced by Teachers: The research highlighted the lack of sufficient training and professional development opportunities for teachers to develop the necessary skills for effectively creating and using teaching materials. Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility of preparing materials, as they have limited time due to their other administrative and instructional responsibilities. Additionally, the study found that collaboration among teachers is often limited, reducing opportunities for them to share best practices and resources.

Administrative Support and Policies: The findings indicate that preschool administrators provide inadequate support, training, and professional development for teachers to enhance their skills in utilizing teaching materials. The study also revealed that policies and funding allocations at the system level do not sufficiently prioritize the procurement and maintenance of high-quality teaching and learning resources.

Importance of Teaching and Learning Materials: The literature review underscored the critical role of teaching materials in supporting children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Effective use of these materials can enhance student engagement, foster meaningful learning experiences, and ultimately improve educational outcomes. However, the study found that the current challenges in public preschools are impeding the ability of teachers to leverage these important instructional tools.

Culturally Relevant Materials: A key finding of the study was the lack of culturally responsive teaching materials that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the student population in the Shashemene area. The use of generic or non-contextualized materials can lead to disengagement and diminished learning outcomes, as children may not see their own experiences and cultures

represented in the learning resources. Incorporating materials that are relevant to children's cultural experiences was highlighted as essential for fostering a sense of belonging and promoting inclusive learning environments.

In summary, the study painted a comprehensive picture of the interconnected challenges that public preschool teachers face in effectively preparing and utilizing teaching materials. These challenges span resource availability, teacher capacities, administrative support, and the importance of culturally relevant materials. The depth of these findings underscores the urgency for systemic interventions to address these issues and improve the quality of early childhood education in the Shashemene region.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

The study on the challenges of preparation and utilization of teaching materials in public preschools around Shashemene City has revealed a complex and multifaceted set of issues that are hindering the effectiveness of early childhood education in the region. The key findings underscore the severe resource constraints faced by these preschools, the limited capacity of teachers to develop and use high-quality teaching materials, the inadequate administrative support and policy-level prioritization, and the lack of culturally responsive learning resources. These interconnected challenges have profound implications for the quality of teaching and learning experiences in public preschools, ultimately impacting the holistic development and learning outcomes of young children. The study's findings emphasize the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address these barriers and improve the provision of effective early childhood education in the Shashemene area.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and the discussion presented in the previous chapter, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified challenges:

Recommendations for Preschool Administrators:

- Provide comprehensive, ongoing training and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in designing, creating, and effectively integrating teaching materials into their instructional practices.
- Facilitate the establishment of teacher learning communities and collaborative networks to encourage the sharing of resources, lesson plans, and innovative approaches to using teaching materials.
- Implement robust systems for the efficient storage, organization, and equitable distribution of teaching materials within preschool settings, ensuring accessibility for all teachers and students.

- Advocate for increased administrative support and autonomy to enable preschools to make informed decisions on the procurement and utilization of teaching materials that best suit their local context and student population.

Recommendations for Teacher Education Institutions:

- Incorporate robust, hands-on instruction on the development, selection, and utilization of teaching materials throughout pre-service teacher training programs, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Offer continuous professional development opportunities for in-service teachers to continuously improve their skills in creating, adapting, and effectively integrating teaching materials into their instructional practices.
- Collaborate with preschool administrators and policymakers to align teacher training curricula with the evolving needs and challenges faced by early childhood educators in the field.
- Establish research-practice partnerships to investigate and disseminate innovative approaches to the preparation and utilization of teaching materials that can be replicated and scaled up in public preschool settings.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

To build upon the findings of the current study, the following suggestions for future research are proposed:

- Expand the geographical scope of the study to include a representative sample of public preschools across different regions of Ethiopia, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and the development of context-specific solutions.
- Explore the perspectives and experiences of parents, community members, and early childhood education experts to gain a more holistic understanding of the challenges and potential strategies for improving the availability and effectiveness of teaching materials in public preschools.
- Investigate the specific strategies and interventions that have been successfully implemented in other low-resource contexts to address the challenges of preparing and

utilizing teaching materials, and evaluate their potential for adaptation and scalability in the Ethiopian context.

- Develop and pilot innovative approaches to the design, production, and distribution of high-quality, culturally responsive teaching materials that can be sustainably integrated into the public preschool system.

By addressing these comprehensive recommendations and suggestions for further research, policymakers, education authorities, preschool administrators, and teacher education institutions can work collaboratively to overcome the critical challenges identified in this study and significantly improve the quality of early childhood education in the public preschools around Shashemene City and beyond

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APENNDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

Hello sir/Madam you are privileged to be one of the respondents selected to participate in this study. The purpose of the study is to establish some facts on the challenges of using teaching and learning materials in public pre-schools. Your positive response will help give a feedback to the researcher. It's ideal to be honest and give individualized responses. Any information that's obtained shall be exclusively confidential. The questionnaire consists of three parts and you will be instructed and guided on how to respond to each part. Tick on an appropriate answer/ write the needed information in the space provided.

Instructions

1. Do not write your name on this paper.
2. These questions are based on the challenges of using teaching and learning materials in public pre-schools around Shashemene City.
3. Any answers that you give will be treated confidential.
4. You are requested to respond by ticking in the brackets provided.
5. Some questions you will be required to write a full commend.

Section A-General information

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE OF PARTICIPATION: _____

RESEARCHERS NAME: _____

RESEARCHER'S PROJECT NAME: _____

RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE: _____

Number of teachers in the school:

SEX: MALE _____ FEMALE _____

Number of children in the ECDE center:

Boys _____ Girls _____ total _____

SECTION A- TEACHER'S INFORMATION

1. Teaching experience in years. Please tick as appropriate.

Less than a year [] Between 3-5 years []

Between 1-2 years [] Above 5 years []

Between 2-3 years []

2. Indicate your academic qualification by putting a tick in the bracket.

MA [] Certificate []

BA []

Diploma []

If others please specify _____

3. Age information bracket

Below 18 years [] Between 18-25 []

Between 25-30 [] Between 30-35 []

Between 35-40 [] Between 40-45 []

Over 45 years []

SECTION B. Questions Related To Preparation Of Teaching Materials

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
I feel confident in my ability to prepare effective teaching materials.					
I have access to a wide variety of teaching materials for my classroom.					
The time I spend preparing teaching materials is manageable.					
I often seek input from colleagues when preparing teaching materials.					
The resources provided by my school help me create high-quality teaching materials.					
I feel that I receive adequate training for preparing teaching materials.					
I frequently update my teaching materials to reflect current educational standards.					
I often use technology to aid in the preparation of teaching materials.					
I find it easy to adapt existing materials to meet the needs of my students.					
I feel that collaboration with parents enriches the preparation of teaching materials.					
I have sufficient time during the school day to prepare teaching materials.					
The variety of materials available to me caters to different learning styles.					
I believe that the quality of teaching materials directly impacts student learning outcomes.					
I feel supported by school leadership in my efforts to					

prepare teaching materials.					
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SECTION C. Questions related to potential challenges of utilization of teaching materials

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The pre-school has a sufficient budget allocated for purchasing teaching materials					
The pre-school has a wide variety of teaching materials available for use in the classrooms.					
The teaching materials are well-organized and easily accessible for teachers.					
Teachers receive adequate training on how to effectively utilize the available teaching materials					
The pre-school has a clear policy or guidelines on the use of teaching materials.					
The teaching materials are well-maintained and in good condition.					
The pre-school provides sufficient time for teachers to plan and prepare lessons using the available teaching materials					
The pre-school encourages and supports teachers to be creative in using the teaching materials					
The teaching materials are aligned with the pre-school's curriculum and learning					

objectives					
The pre-school has a system in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials					
The pre-school provides adequate storage and maintenance facilities for the teaching materials					
The pre-school encourages parental involvement in the utilization of teaching materials.					
The pre-school collaborates with other institutions to share and exchange teaching materials.					
The pre-school regularly updates and replaces outdated or damaged teaching materials.					

SECTION C: Availability of Materials

4. CHECKLIST-CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT DISPLAY AND RECORDS

Activity area	Very Good	Good	Average	Below average	Not Available
Language corner					
Math's corner					
Outdoor corner					
Science corner					
Social corner					
Music & movement corner					
Creative corner					
Availability of ECE syllabus					

Availability of teachers guide					
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SECTION D: Questions related to teaching material development

1. How do you develop the materials used in teaching?

In groups with other teachers []

Individually []

Brought by the parents []

Other specify _____

2. 1. Who among the following contributed a lot in providing the materials currently in use?

The teacher []

Collected by children []

Supplied by the school []

3. List down problems you encounter with the ECE class as far as material provision is concerned.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

SECTION E: Using the table below place a tick in the box against each factor in the column that best explains the degree of seriousness of the factor that challenge the use of teaching materials.

FACTOR	V. true	Not true	Not sure
Lack of skill in the production of materials			
Lack of support from the relevant people			
Most materials not readily available in the environment			
Lack of funds to purchase some of the necessary tools			
Commitment of teachers to some other business			
Lack of self - commitment			
Negative attitude of parents			
Lack of motivations			

SECTION H - Impact of the instructional method

1. Compare the following lessons

a) A lesson taught using materials in group activities

Can be covered quickly within 30 min []

Cannot be covered within 30 min []

b) A lesson taught with the use of teaching/ learning materials.

Is very enjoyable to both teachers and children []

Is boring to both teachers and children []

2. List down two advantages of using materials in an ECE class.

3. List down two reasons why some teachers do not use teaching/ learning materials in their lessons.

4. Do you think that preparing teaching/learning materials is difficult? A, YES B, NO

If your answer for the question was yes, please state the reasons.

5. Why is it important that every child has his/her own materials when teaching is in process?
And what happens if they don't have their own materials?

SECTION I: THE IMPACT OF QUALITY OF MATERIAL ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Specific area	Very good	Good	Average	Below Average
Availability of materials				
Durability				
Attractiveness				
Appropriateness				
Relevance to the theme				
Neatness of materials				
Locally available materials				
Use of teaching & learning materials by the teacher				
Use of materials by children				
Children's participation in group activities				
Work given to children				
Teacher's assessment of children's work				

Section2. Observation Checklist for Utilization of Teaching Materials in Public Pre-schools

Observer's Name: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Pre-school Name: _____

Observation checklist

Items	YES	NO
General Classroom Environment: Availability of Teaching Materials		
Are a variety of teaching materials visibly available		
Are the materials age-appropriate for the students		
Organization of Materials		
Are materials well-organized and easily accessible to the teacher		
Is there a designated area for storing teaching materials		
Classroom Setup		
Is the classroom layout conducive to using teaching materials		
Are there spaces for hands-on activities		
Preparation of Teaching Materials: Time Allocated for Preparation		
Does the teacher have dedicated time for preparing materials		
Is preparation time visibly managed during the school day		
Collaboration with Colleagues		
Is the teacher collaborating with colleagues for material preparation		
Are there discussions or shared resources evident among staff		
Utilization of Technology		
Is technology being used to aid in the preparation of materials		
Are digital resources available for use in lesson planning		
Utilization of Teaching Materials: Engagement of Students		

Are students actively engaged with the materials being used		
Do the materials facilitate interactive learning experiences		
Adaptation for Diverse Needs		
Are materials adapted to meet the needs of students with varying abilities		
Is there evidence of differentiated instruction through material use		
Feedback Mechanism		
Is there any system in place for gathering student feedback on materials		
Does the teacher modify materials based on student responses		
Challenges Noted: Resource Limitations		
Are there observable signs of insufficient materials or resources		
Does the teacher express frustration regarding material availability		
Time Constraints		
Does the teacher appear rushed during material preparation		
Are there indications that preparation time impacts lesson quality		
Support from Administration		
Is there visible support from school leadership in providing materials		
Are teachers provided with professional development opportunities related to material preparation		

Additional Observations:

- Any specific incidents or comments related to challenges faced?

- Suggestions for improvements in material preparation and utilization?

Section 3 Interview Questions for the Pre-School Teachers Regarding Teaching Material Preparation.

1. Describe your typical process for preparing teaching materials?

2. What types of teaching materials do you find most effective for your students?

3. What challenges do you face when sourcing or creating teaching materials?

4. How do you determine the appropriateness of materials for different age groups?

5. Can you share examples of materials that worked well or poorly?

6. What role does collaboration with colleagues play in your preparation process?

7. How does your school's budget impact the materials you can prepare?

8. In what ways do you utilize technology in your preparation?

9. How do you stay updated on new teaching strategies and resources?

10. What support or resources would enhance your ability to prepare materials?

11. How do you balance time spent on preparation with other teaching responsibilities?

12. How do you adapt materials for students with diverse learning needs?

Section4. Interview questions for the pre-school principals on Preparation and Utilization of Teaching Materials in Public Pre-schools:

Interviewer's Name: _____

Date of interview: _____

Pre-school Name: _____

1. Can you describe the current state of teaching materials available in your pre-school? Are there any gaps or shortages in the variety and quantity of materials?

2. How does the pre-school allocate and manage the budget for purchasing teaching materials? Do you feel the budget is sufficient to meet the needs of the school?

3. What policies or guidelines are in place at the pre-school regarding the use and management of teaching materials? How are these policies communicated to teachers?

4. Can you share your experiences with the organization and accessibility of teaching materials in the pre-school? Are they easily accessible and well-maintained?

5. What kind of training or professional development opportunities are provided to teachers on the effective utilization of teaching materials? Do you feel these are adequate?

6. How does the pre-school encourage and support teachers to be creative and innovative in their use of teaching materials? Can you provide some examples?

7. How are the teaching materials aligned with the pre-school's curriculum and learning objectives? What processes are in place to ensure this alignment?

8. Does the pre-school have a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching materials? If so, can you describe this process?

9. Can you share your thoughts on the level of parental involvement in the utilization of teaching materials at the pre-school? How can this involvement be improved?

10. What challenges or barriers have you encountered in effectively utilizing teaching materials in your pre-school? What strategies or solutions have been implemented to address these challenges?
