

**Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education in Addis Ababa: Caregiver Child
Interaction, Parental Perception and Social Competence of Children
(Input-Process-Output Approach)**

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This is to certify that the Dissertation prepared by Girma Lemma Fantaye: entitled: *Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education in Addis Ababa: Caregiver Child Interaction, Parental Perception and Social Competence of Children* and submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Philosophy (Applied Developmental Psychology) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

SSA: Sub-Saharan African

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children

ECD: Early Childhood Development

GER: Gross Enrollment Ratio

ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education

EFA: Education for All

MDG: Millennium Development Goal

NGO: Non Governmental Organization Non Governmental Organizations

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FDRE: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

NPF: National Policy Framework

SOPG: Strategic Operational Plan Guideline

EMIS: Education Management Information System

ETP: Education and Training Policy

CIS: Care Giver Interaction Scale

SCTRS: Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale

MoE: Ministry of Education

ECERS: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale

HOC: Homogeneity of Covariance

LFDP: Lideta Family Development Program

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

MRA: Multiple Regressions Analysis

VIF: Variance Inflation Factor

ETB: Ethiopian Birr

IMCI: Integrated Management of Childhood Illness

ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa Regions

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to describe and explain the contexts that shaped the caring and educational roles of ECCE centers in transiting the preschool child to the wider culture of school life in Addis Ababa with emphasis to the analysis of quality of care giver-child interaction, parental perception of ECCE programs and relationships to outcome variable in the area of social development. The theoretical discourse that shaped the research was fusion of different theories that articulated the importance of care giver child interaction for the holistic development of preschool children in the developmental sciences. A twenty-six item standardized instrument was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the quality of caregiver child interaction in preschool care and education centers. The overall mean value computed for the seventy classrooms observed from the Care giver Interaction Scale was found to be 3.29. Forty-three percent of the classrooms observed were below this mean value indicating that care giver child interaction was below the expected level. A significant proportion of the generalized variance in the Care giver Interaction Scale score was accounted for by the interaction of class size and care givers experience. Findings demonstrated that quality of care giver child interaction varied with center type, time of observation, space, physical set up, and access to learning and stimulating materials. A significant proportion of the variance in children's social competence score was accounted for by the interaction of center type by father's educational level. Parental perception of the role of preschool centers and quality of relationship with the centers varied across center types, socio economic status of parents and provisions availed in the centers. Implications to improve quality of ECCE programs in the study site are forwarded.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The far reaching benefit of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to children in particular and the society at large has been given substantial attention in the psychological and educational literatures. During the past decades, there has been a steady increase in scientific evidences that establish the importance of early years for later development. Research works demonstrated the importance of early care and education, family support, and innovative educational curriculum in preparing high risk and normal children for initial success in school (Currier, 2001; Essa, 1999; Kagan & Neuman, 2005; Lynch, 2006/07; Ramey & Ramey, 2005; Flett, 2008; Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009; Woodhead, Ames, Vennam, & Workineh, 2009).

The importance of early childhood care and education can be justified from three overlapping arguments. The scientific argument maintains the strong link between quality ECCE programs and outcome variables in the cognitive, social, and emotional development domains (Lynch, 2006/07, Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009). Reviewing various sources, Kagan and Neuman(2005) documented that young children who receive quality early care and education are likely to demonstrate better cognitive and language abilities.

The economic argument, presumes the long-term benefits of ECCE to society at large. This argument is based on the cost benefit analysis of early intervention versus late intervention. Although early intervention programs are expensive, their cost is much lower than the cost needed to mitigate school failures, special education needs, delinquency and other social problems at later stages (Essa, 1999).

The Social equity argument conceives early childhood care and education as an overarching right of children to live and to develop to their full potential (Woodhead, 2005). The social equity argument is in alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC, 1989) that advocates the rights of children to survive and get access to health and education services as part and parcel of compelling human rights. The convention underlined the importance of meeting the best interests of children by means of delivering high quality and integrated services to children.

Lack of access to early childhood care and education programs predicts not only decreased school performance at later stages, but also other efficiency measures of the educational system and future social behaviors during adolescence and adulthood (Carnegie Report, cited in Ramey & Ramey, 2005:234). Analyses of national data from 47 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, for example, showed strong association between average primary completion and low repetition rates with preprimary enrollment (Pence, Evans, & Garcia, 2008). A follow-up study of participants in the Perry Preschool Project at age forty showed that the graduation rate from high school for those who participated in the program was 66% compared with only 45% for the control group (Young, & Mustard, 2008).

The importance of early childhood care and education is not only to children who are in the mainstream but also to the special population of young children. Early childhood programs could bring these special children into the mainstream of society in their early stages of development with minimum cost. Reviewing the works of different researchers Essa (1999) stated that:

Researchers have concluded that good early child hood programs not only improve the lives of the children and families involved but also result in substantial economic benefits for society. Although early intervention programs are expensive, their cost is more than recovered in subsequent years through greater schooling to risk success, decreased need for special education, lowered delinquency and arrest rates, and decreased welfare dependence(5).

A technical committee composed of representatives from mainline ministries, international organizations, higher education institutions, and Nongovernmental Organizations for developing the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education(2010) conducted a situation analysis and showed that most Ethiopian children live and grow under difficult conditions The policy framework indicated the high child mortality rate , low level of maternal education, and the low school attendance rate of children in the age group ten to fourteen as risk factors that threatened children's well being. The National Policy Framework considers ECCE program as an intervention strategy to curb the problem of child labor and also as an indispensable means in protecting the rights of children. The technical committee underlined the importance of early childhood care and education as an alternative strategy to enhance children's development and protect them from being vulnerable to problems in the environment. Furthermore, impoverished environment, the problem of HIV-AIDS, the high prevalence of children with special needs, child labor (Habtamu, 2002) and other forms of child abuse singularly and cumulatively made Ethiopian children highly vulnerable to risk factors. Social and economic problems in the country necessitate the provision of quality early childhood care and education service as protective factor (Habtamu, 1996).

The report of an international conference on early psychosocial intervention project with the objective of developing strategies to minimize the harmful effects of environmental risk factors on Ethiopian children (Tirusew , Teka , Daniel ,& Desalegn , 2001), underlined the importance of early childhood care and education program. The report recommended government's active involvement in the management and expansion of early childhood care and education programs, cognizant of the fact that this is the foundation for future development of Ethiopian children.

There are other mounting evidences that urge the Ethiopian government to pay due attention to this sector. The high cost of overcoming poor school performance at later age, government's accountability to protect the rights of parents to get quality service in return for the money they pay for their children are tenable reasons to expand, publicize and enforce quality standards for early child hood care and education programs.

The Education and Training Policy (1994) document has stipulated important statements on the importance of early child hood care and education. Issues such as the relevance of delivering quality education to speed up human development, the need for an integrated research undertaking to address cross cutting educational issues, and the contribution of teachers competency at all levels of the education including kindergarten education to promote equity, quality and relevant education are core ideas addressed in the policy document. The document in its specific objectives section clearly puts the role of kindergarten education in making the child ready to meet the demands of formal schooling. It states "kindergarten education will focus on all round development of the child in preparation for formal schooling" (Education and Training Policy, 1994: 14)

Social and economic developments that have been taking place globally and nationally further triggered the demand of ECCE. Demographic and contextual factors influenced the demand and future trend of ECCE programs. The change in the patterns of roles played by the family members especially featured by increasing number of women involvement into the work force (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005) called for the establishment and expansion of ECCE centers that would provide stimulating and caring environment to young children. The demographic changes are also forces that shaped the need for ECCE. The high fertility rate in developing countries resulted in higher number of the young population and necessitated the provision of developmentally appropriate services in ECCE centers.

Although many scholars and policy makers argued on the cost effectiveness of early childhood care and education programs in terms of its return in healthy development of children, the current status of early child hood care and education program in providing quality services and making it accessible to children still remains a challenge especially for SSA countries. United Nations Committee (2005) report as cited in Woodhead et al., (2009: 8) indicated that:

While coverage rates are increasing worldwide, early child hood services of good quality remain inaccessible to the majority of the world's children. This is especially true for children in the poorest countries- and for the most disadvantaged among them. The upshot is a perverse outcome for equity: those with the most to gain from ECCE are least likely to participate.

For the last few decades, improvements have been observed in Gross Enrollment Ratio of pre-primary education in the developed and developing nations. United Nations

Education Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2010) report has shown that about One-hundred and Forty Million children were enrolled in preschool programs worldwide in 2007. The Gross Enrollment Ratio was raised from 33% in 1999 to 41% in 2007. Despite this unprecedented rise in Gross Enrollment Ratio, the disparity between the developed and the developing nations is still wide. While enrollment increased from five million in 1999 to ten million in 2007 in SSA countries, the coverage rate remained to be not more than ten percent.

The situation in Ethiopia is not different. The low profile of the sector can easily be discerned from the Ministry of Education Annual Reports (EMIS, 2005, 2007/2008). The Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2005) has shown that only 1,497 preschools were serving 153,280 children with negligible participation rate of 2.7 %. Since then it was reported that enrolment has been growing at approximately 17.4% per year with the rate of 20.3% per year. Yet in 2007/08 out of the estimated 6.76 million children of the appropriate age group (Ages 4-6), only about 263,464 children have been reported to have access to pre-primary education in 2,740 kindergarten sites all over the country, which somehow improved the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) from 3.1 to 3.9 percent (Education Statistics Annual Abstract, 2007/2008). A cursory comparison with some African countries demonstrates that ECD has not been a pressing state policy in Ethiopia for decades. Preprimary Gross Enrollment Ratio for selected African countries as early as 2004, for example, was much greater than the current Ethiopian condition. Cameroon (20%), Cape Verde (53%), Equatorial Guinea (40%), Ghana (42%), Kenya (53%), and Eritrea had (7%). Countries like Mauritius and Seychelles have dramatic records as big as 95% and 102% respectively (World Bank, 2007; UNESCO, 2006). These rates contrast markedly with low

enrollment in Ethiopia. And yet, this growth when assessed against the vows made by African leaders as early as the 60's at the UNESCO meeting held in Addis Ababa to universalize early childhood care and education service to all children, is far away from the target (Pence and Nesamenang, 2008).

In the Ethiopian context these centers are predominantly established and run by Non-governmental Organizations, communities, private institutions, and faith-based organizations. Hence, one could safely conclude that the government's role in the sector is so minimal at least in terms of public expenditure except that it is accountable for developing curriculum, training teachers, and providing supervisory support (Educational Statistics Annual Abstract, 2007/08). What is more disgusting is the issue of equity. The fact that these centers are concentrated in the urban centers and are privately owned makes the service inaccessible to rural and disadvantaged children that make up the bulk in this age group. In terms of certain performance indicators such as Gross Enrollment Ratio, and Pupil-Teacher Ratio, traditionally known regions for their relatively better standing in primary and secondary education still remain to be beneficiaries of early child hood care and education services.

The Government of Ethiopia has shown commitment to safeguard the rights of children in getting access to basic education. The support system is also laid to foster children's healthy development. Regional and global conventions of which the Ethiopian Government is the signatory provide the foundation and framework to safeguard the rights of children to get basic education; health services and protection from risk factors that could threaten their full development. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the child, the 1999

Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), the 1996 Social Welfare Policy of Labor and Social Affairs are all cornerstones and opportunities to ensuring the healthy development of children (FDRE, 1995; Mackelech, 2007; Tirusew, 2005). However, the services delivered to young children are piecemealed and functioned in a subtle way, which did not bring equity and quality care and education services to preschool children.

Achievements have been registered at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of the educational system. Strenuous efforts have been made and strategies launched to bring change in these sectors in terms of access and equity. These efforts and commitments, however, did not trickle down to change the situation in ECCE centers and as such no substantial and coordinated work has been accomplished to change the conditions under which these centers are operating. As Pence and Nsamenang (2008) commented, Early Childhood Development (ECD) was paid low recognition compared to its ‘older siblings’: primary, secondary and tertiary education. Aido (2008) also stated that “ Sectorial priorities and activities override ECD needs”(p.38). This disproportionate and skewed attention to the primary and secondary education was also commented by UNESCO report (cited in Woodhead, 2005) labeling Ethiopia as “the only young lives country with no official program targeting children under the age of 3 years” (p.14).

Very recently the endorsement of the National Policy framework and Strategic Operational Plan Guideline documents for Early Childhood Care and Education (2010) ushered a new development in the history of the sector. The documents marked a shift in the understanding of childhood in the Ethiopian context and brought the issue of ECCE onto national agenda. As Aido (2008) stated the presence of the framework would

facilitate the implementation of aforementioned international conventions and commitments. Despite operational and logistic problems looming around these new documents, the policy framework can be considered a turning point for children and all stakeholders working in the area.

The effect of various forms of early childhood care and education programs is related to the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs, the underlying philosophies upon which the programs are founded, issues related to equity, access and quality. Although variations do exist with respect to modalities of implementation, important components include: having a well-specified curriculum, the quality and pattern of relationship between adults and children, and their relationships to developmental milestones in areas of cognitive, linguistic and social competence (Ramey & Ramey, 2005).

Earlier thoughts ascribed the caring of children mainly to parents. However, the emerging transactional model conceptualizes childhood as a developmental stage emerging from a triad interaction involving care givers, parents, children and factors such as policies and guidelines at macro level. Hence, “the new paradigm of the sociology of childhood” (Prout and James; cited in Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005:49) conceives childhood as not marginalized stage; but an integral part of the social structure of the society. Mayall (cited in Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005) stated that “Children are considered to be a social group: psychological individualization of children gives way to sociological consideration of how as a group their lives are affected by large-scale socio-economic factors” (p.49). The traditional conceptualization that conceives the well being of children to either care givers or parents seems to be out moded. The new modality re-

conceptualize early child hood care and education program as a triangular process involving care givers, parents, children and the society at large to effect developmental outcomes in the cognitive, social and emotional domains.

One of the strategies towards this end is developing need-based curriculum that would enable efficient service delivery system to meet the cognitive and social needs of preschool children. Early intervention requires the identification of the developmental needs of these children and the provision of developmentally appropriate care and education for their normative development (Ramey & Ramey, 2005). When family-supported program is linked with stimulating center-based program, the positive effects persist into primary education. The issue of developmentally appropriate quality ECCE program in this research is conceptualized along this new modality in which the development of preschool children is shaped and configured by the reciprocating relationship involving care givers, children themselves, parents and the contexts under which these programs are operating.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The role of education in realizing sustainable development was clearly underlined in the goals of UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2005). Social development, economic development, and environmental protection are the three mutually reciprocating pillars of sustainable development. Hence, early child hood age is the prime developmental stage in which fundamental attitudes and values can be formed in relation to the three components of sustainable development.

Following the 1998 conference attended by Ministers of Education of African member states (UNESCO,1998) it has been an urgent task for the Ethiopian government to

formulate culturally appropriate and integrated ECD policy that involve the main stream ministries. The development of the National Policy Framework and Strategic Guideline can be considered as an outgrowth of this conference despite the delay in time. This sector wide approach shown in the National Policy Framework has the advantage of maintaining cross-sector links among concerned bodies working in the area of ECD. The policy document appreciates important concepts in ECD such as developmentally appropriate ECCE program for the holistic development of children. The policy document as well underlines the importance of active involvement of parents in the overall undertakings of ECCE programs.

The effect of this new understanding into the realm of ECCE attracted the attention of the public at large and has brought the problem of ECCE as an important social, and research agenda. The growing interest in early childhood care and education by the Ethiopian government, researchers and practitioners was further impetus to move the sector from being marginal problem to a shared and central concern.

Programs may vary in quality due to the contexts in which ECCE centers operate. The unifying themes across all programs that characterize quality early child hood care and education include well-educated and trained staff, a low-child-to-teacher ratio and small classes, a rich curriculum that emphasizes language, pre-literacy, and pre-numeric activities, as well as motor, emotional, and social development, health and nutritional services, and lots of structured play, and parental involvement (Lynch,2006/07; Poppe and Clothier ,2006/07; Jalongo;2006/07).

Nowadays quality is a cross cutting issue at all levels of the educational system in Ethiopia. Reports and few empirical studies indicated that, the state of early child hood care and education in the Ethiopian context remained sub- standard compared to many African

states. According to UNESCO Cluster office Addis Ababa (2006) report, none of the preschools visited by the office met structural standards set by the Ministry of Education. However, there is a noticeable lack of empirical data about quality early childhood care and education at national and regional levels. In spite of this objective problem prevailing in the sector, it is convincing to research on the process and structural dimensions of quality preschool care and education program in relation to outcome variables.

The issue of quality care giving in the Ethiopian context, henceforth, does necessitate gathering of pertinent empirical evidence on program quality in community-based, private and government supported early childhood care and education centers. The few privately owned centers operating in the urban centers mainly serving children of the middle and upper class do not reflect the essence of quality because quality is contextually determined.

The existing domestic works focused on distal quality indicators such as class size and other infrastructure issues. Relatively speaking, the structural features of ECCE centers have been better addressed in research works. Government standards set for preschool centers describe some structural and care giver characteristics based on the assumption that such features as teacher-child ratio and educational level of teachers affect the daily experience of children in center-based settings. The child-care giver interaction which is an essential component in the psycho-social development of preschool children has been minimally attended quality issue in the Ethiopian context. In the present Ethiopian context intervening aggressively on the process indicators of quality is strategically viable approach in spite of the substantial financial resource needed to improve the impoverished structural settings especially in the government and community owned ECCE centers. The National Policy Framework for Early childhood Care and Education (NPF, 2010) as well suggests the

necessity to promote quality child-care giver interaction both at home and center-based settings.

Professional development programs that would enhance the capacity of kindergarten teachers and supporting families so that they would adequately discharge their care giving and educational roles and more over strengthening the mutual relationship between the preschool centers and parents at large is strategically viable and pragmatic research approach.

Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education in the context of this research covers programs that cater service for children aged 4-6 years enrolled in ECCE private, government and faith-based centers. The Education and Training Policy (1994), and the National Policy Framework (2010) have indicated that ECCE program must be comprehensive in its nature addressing the holistic development of children in the domains of cognitive, social and emotional developments. According to the National Policy framework for early childhood Care and Education (2010) document, one of the major goals of the program is to enable children to acquire basic skills in the area of pre-reading, pre-writing, counting, arithmetic and social competency as a strategy to make them ready for formal schooling.

In light of the above argument and the growing demand for the sector at large in terms recognizing the contribution of ECCE for later development of children, it necessitates undertaking research to explore relationships between the different dimensions of quality in the context of center based programs. In order to get a comprehensive understanding of quality issues it is imperative to answer questions such as: Under what circumstances does this sector operate? What should be the priority area? How do parents perceive the care

giving process? What is the contribution of ECCE centers in preparing children for the formal school system?

This research, therefore, attempts to describe and explain the role of selected structural and process variables that shaped the caring and educational roles of ECCE centers in transiting the preschool child to the wider culture of school life in Addis Ababa City Administration with emphasis to the analysis of quality care giver-child interaction, parental views of quality ECCE issues and relationship to outcome variable in the area of social development. An analysis of the contexts in center based settings with the intent of delineating critical issues and problems that have impeded the delivery of quality service and highlighting priority areas that would implicate the development of intervention strategies is also agenda of this research.

1.3. Objectives of the research

The general objective of this research is to describe and explain the contextual situations that shaped the caring and educational roles of preschool care and education centers in transiting the preschool child to the wider culture of school life in Addis Ababa City Administration with emphasis to the analysis of quality of care giver-child interaction, parental views and understanding of quality issues, and relationship with social competence of preschool children. In more specific terms, the objectives of this research are to:

- Examine the quality of care giver-child interaction in ECCE centers;
- Investigate the relationship between center type, class size, care giver educational level, and care giver experience and quality of caregiver-child interaction;
- Identify classroom and center based instances that can be attributed to quality care giver-child interaction;
- Analyze the status of social competence of preschool children;

- Analyze the relationship between center-based factors, processes and children's demographic characteristics and the social competence of preschool children;
- Explore the views and perceptions of parents about quality early childhood care and education program.

1.4. Research questions

- 1.4.1. What is the status of quality care giver-child interaction in ECCE centers?
- 1.4.2. Do structural variables such as center type, class size, and, care giver s' experience have significant effect on care giver child interactions?
- 1.4.3. What specific classroom and center based instances can be attributed to quality care giver child interaction?
- 1.4.4. What is the status of the social competence of preschool children?
- 1.4.5. Do children's demographic variables have significant effect on the social competence of children?
- 1.4.6. Does quality of care giver-child interaction and structural variables significantly relate to social competence of preschool children?
- 1.4.7. What is the perception of parents about aspects of quality ECCE program?

1.5. Significance of the study

The provision of early childhood care and education program and allocation of public resources to the sector are determined by socio-political decisions. However, enrichment to the program should come from theoretical and empirical evidences in the area of child development research. It is important to back and augment decisions at all levels of the educational system including early childhood care and education with empirical evidences. Informed decision is an outcome of research-based empirical evidences about the structural and process aspects of ECCE. The Education and Training Policy document (MOE, 1994) recognizes the cross cutting edge of educational researches

at all echelons of the education system to the improvisation of quality education to meet the developmental needs of children. The curriculum as envisaged by the Education and Training policy document is meant to:

Create a mechanism for an integrated educational research, and overall periodic evaluation of the educational system, whereby a wide ranging of participation is ensured to foster appropriate relation among the various levels of education, training, research, development and societal needs, maintaining the required standards (Education and Training Policy, 1994:13)

The study of early childhood care and education framed by developmental theories that recognizes the importance of multiple concurrent forces within the child's developmental niche is so important in the Ethiopian context. Empirical evidences pertaining to early childhood care and education in particular and early intervention programs in general are meager or at least inadequately researched area. Evidences on the status of care giving and its relationship to socio-demographic and outcome variables mediated by center-based factors is lacking. Investigating the road map by which programs strive to enhance major developmental milestones of children and how children's development is constructed in these centers has theoretical and practical significance. This study, therefore, is a contribution towards narrowing paucity of theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence that relate the care giving process to socio-contextual situations and developmental outcomes in ECCE settings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides recent available research information and discussions on selected aspects of quality early childhood care and education program in the light of input-process-output modality. The themes of the review have been chosen to reflect topics of research and knowledge that address the most significant areas of quality early childhood care and education. Each section of the review is coined with the basic research questions formulated to guide the research process.

The review begins with a cohesive presentation of theoretical underpinnings of ECCE research. Developmental theories and educational philosophies that shaped ECCE research and practice were selectively identified and treated. Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's social development theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Montessori's educational philosophy are the theoretical frameworks upon which this research is founded. The next section of the review dwells on issues pertaining to quality early childhood care and education research and discussions related to the structural versus process aspects of ECCE programs. It attempts to review empirical evidences to demonstrate the relationship between structural and process variables at one end and social competence as an outcome variable at the other end. The third section of the review is about meanings, conceptualizations, and assessment strategies of social competence in the context of ECE programs in general and Ethiopian context in particular. The fourth section of the review deals with the importance of networking ECCE programs with parents to enhance children's readiness to meet the demands of primary school curriculum. The last section of the review provides a glimpse of knowledge on the current status of ECE programs in the Ethiopian

context. In this last section an attempt has been made to see ECCE in terms of child rights and conventions and the need to provide quality ECCE services to promote children's development.

2.1. Early Childhood Care and Education and Developmental Theories: a theoretical discourse

Developmental psychology has been the major discipline that marked not only advances in human knowledge about child development but also a dominant discourse in understanding the interplay between the child's multi-layered milieu and the importance of quality care and education. Lubeck(cited in Dahlberg, Moss, &Pence,2005 :100) stated that "child development knowledge has been so foundational to the field of early childhood care and education that erasing it would seem to leave us in a mindless limbo". The relation between the two can be understood in the area of research that demanded the setting of criteria to establish quality standards to assess the developmental appropriateness of ECCE programs and to explain the interaction of contextual factors influencing the programs. This relation between developmental psychology and the discourse of early childhood care and education sustained to be a major interest in academic undertakings as well as in every day understanding of the child's life in institutions (Dahlberg, Moss, &Pence, 2005; Walsh,2005).

The new paradigm of the sociology of childhood aligns itself with the constructivist perspective. This approach takes into account the child's "world of diversity" (Pence & Nesmenang, 2008), instead of looking at the child as a biological entity whose development is constructed in isolation, detached from the systems the child is growing. The new paradigm recognizes childhood as a social construction whose environment is constructed

for and by children, within an actively negotiated set of social relations. Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (2005) also noted the importance of examining social processes taking place in the child's everyday life.

Theories in developmental psychology underlined the importance of quality care giver-child interaction for cognitive and social development of children. Piaget and Vygotsky implicitly or explicitly, for example, acknowledged the indispensable contribution of social transaction between care givers and children to children's development. Carl(2005) also noted that it is the quality of the relationship created by the sensitive care giver that provides the framework for assistance and encouragement and promotes development.

The concept of equilibration in Piaget's developmental theory, for example, presupposes the importance of active interaction between children and their environment. Accordingly, children assimilate new actions into existing schema and accommodate them into new groupings through active transaction with the environment. The forces that implicate development in children according to Piaget originate from within and without. These forces that explain developmental processes in children according to Piaget are four. Baldwin (1980) summarized Piaget's hypothesis of the developmental processes as follows.

----- the process of development are, first, certain maturational ones, although their exact role is not clear; second, the results of experience with the environment itself; third, the result of explicit and implicit teaching of the children by other people in their environment; and fourth, the process of equilibration, which is set in motion whenever the children's belief system develops far enough to begin to contain self-contradiction(p.254)

Piaget's model of social interaction emphasizes cooperation between equals. Accordingly, reciprocity in this social relation is better achieved and equilibrium in thinking is better realized when children are able to discuss problems as equals. Peer partners understand each other and reciprocate their views and feelings in goal directed activities better than when they are engaged with adults. Peer interactions may help preschool children to become aware that there are alternative views of looking into situations during playing and learning. Peer interaction, therefore, is the dominant discourse to absorb the views and feelings of others. According to Piaget (cited in Barbara, 2005), "The child's socialization with his fellows is greater or at least different from his socialization with adults alone. Where the superiority of the adult prevents discussion and cooperation, the play fellow provides the opportunity from such social conduct as will determine the true socialization of the intelligence" (p.78). The constructivist caregiver is one who tunes in and picks up children's reactions and ideas rather than trying to impose his/her own predetermined goals (Carl, 2005).

Although Vygotsky approaches the role of social interaction from different perspective in the sense that he conceived development as moving from the social to the individual, both Vygotsky and Piaget shared the notion that interaction is essential to effect children's development. Vygotsky(1978,cited in carl,2005) contends that the gap between what a child can do alone and what he/she can do with someone's help(zone of proximal development) is reduced when children develop their competencies through interactions with others. According to Vygotsky(cited in Essa,1990: 115), "Social interaction, especially dialog, between children and adults is the mechanism through which specific cultural values, customs, and beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation."

Vygotsky's theory was found to be relevant in early childhood care and education programs both in terms of practice and research. His notion of zone of proximal development, for example, underlined the importance of tuning early childhood care and education programs to the interest and needs of individual child through careful identification of developmental missing elements. Synthesizing the works of Vygotsky's assertions, Essa(1990) stated that "in addition to providing a stimulating environment in which young children are active explorers of and participants, early educators need to promote discovery by modeling, explaining, and providing suggestions to suit each child's zone of proximal development."(p.117)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of child development is also a theoretical framework that underlined the profound importance of maintaining quality relationship between the child's immediate and distant systems. This theoretical framework conceives the necessity of bridging the child's transition between home environment, early childhood care and education centers and schools. The porous nature of the territory between these Microsystems enables easy flow of information and resources to enhance the child's development. The preschool child as center of gravity is influenced by the combined set of interrelations between settings in the systems such as the family, ECCE centers, community, early childhood care and education policies, and child rearing practices at large. For the child's cognitive, social, and emotional developments, the activities of the different structures in the ecosystem need to be tuned and interact in coordination to the best interest of the preschool child. According to the Ecological model, the developmental potential of the home and child care institutions is enhanced when a supportive link of mutual trust, positive orientation, goal consensus and two-way communication is established between the systems.

(Carl, 2005) as well noted that when caregivers and parents work together to participate in open communication and positive interactions, the child fulfills developmental needs.

Hence, in light of the above theoretical discourses this research conceptualizes the social development of the preschool child in early childhood care and education centers as something evolving, developing and crystallizing from quality positive interaction with care givers, peers, classroom and center based contexts and from mutual understanding and quality support network established between ECCE centers and parents.

2.2. Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education programs: Input, Process, and Output Approach in Perspective

The approach in conceptualizing quality early childhood care and education is to make its meaning operational in a socially and historically constructed framework. Carr (cited in Peralta, 2008) stated that “definition of quality reflects the values and beliefs, needs and agendas, influences and authorities of various decision groups who have an interest in those eservices.” How and by what mechanisms quality ECCE services are delivered in early childhood care and education centers is determined by social, cultural, political and historical contexts.

The argument that quality in early childhood care and education centers is a socially constructed concept does not necessarily mean that it is a bizarre concept. Opportunities in research and practice in the field enabled to have a shared understanding of it. Rather “the infiltration of many concepts into the everyday early childhood practices in different countries through the exchange of ideas in an international setting” enabled to narrow down theoretical differences and helped to achieve mutual understanding (Tietze, Cryer, Bairrao, Palacios, &Wetzel, 1996:449).

The issue of quality early childhood care and education in center based settings is not simply a theoretical abstraction but should be viewed in terms of child rights and the long term benefits accrued from the delivery of services in the centers. The landscape of quality ECCE is a comprehensive phenomenon comprising the holistic development of the child, developmental appropriateness of programs, the impact of early experience on later developments, the role of establishing partnership with parents and the combined effect of enabling the transition of children from one micro environment to a hierarchically complex system. Hence, the discourse of quality ECCE is a topical issue in research and in the formulations of strategic policy frameworks and operational plans. It has become an indispensable component of early childhood care and education researches and practices in the area of child development.

Despite its elusive nature to define, quality is, therefore, an essential component of early childhood care and education research agenda. Researches that focus on early childhood care and education consider the issue of quality as their first and foremost agenda. Assessment of implementation strategies, the relevance of programs that would bring a positive difference in the lives of children and their families, and the extent to which these programs have achieved the goal of promoting cognitive and social development of children are cardinal issues addressed in these research works (Meisel,&Burnett,2006).

The symbiotic relationship between research and policy framework in a way that one feeds the other has strategic importance in reaping the benefits of quality and equitable early childhood care and education programs. There is a need for policy makers to look into recent evidences from neuroscience and developmental researches that justify the long term cognitive and emotional benefits of quality early intervention. The complementarily

relationship between research and policy would enable to devise guidelines for good practice and help to work out a regulatory framework within which the efficiency of early care and education can be assessed (Wood head. Ames, Vennam , & Wiorkineh ,2009 ; Flett, 2008).

A relatively rapid increase in the number of early childhood care and education centers especially those owned by the private sector need to be supported and monitored by a framework to ensure quality. As commented by the United Nations Child Rights Committee, early childhood services are fragmented not properly planned and without adequate regulatory mechanisms for quality control. The Committee called upon countries to:

Develop rights-based, coordinated, multi-sectorial strategies in order to ensure that children's best interests are always the starting point for service planning and provisions. These should be based around a systematic and integrated approach to law and policy development in relation to all children up to 8 years old. A comprehensive framework for early childhood services, provisions, and facilities is required, backed up by information and monitoring systems (cited in Woodhead, Ames,Vennam ,&Wiorkineh,2009:6)

The increasing importance of quality in early childhood care and education can also be viewed from growing interest of parents for services and technologies catered by institutions and the need to make wise choices and decisions based on information from experts and researchers (Dahlberg, Moss, &Pence, 2000). There is a consensus among practitioners and researchers in the mainstream that children and their parents have the right to get developmentally appropriate and quality care and education services.

The discourse of quality ECCE research presupposes the setting of standards and criteria against which the provision of services can be gauged with a certain degree of

certainty. The measurement of attributes at different levels of the child's environment, the process of setting objectively verifiable criteria against which the efficiency of service delivery can be assessed, and identification of performance indicators at center and policy making levels are some of the basic tenets of quality early childhood care and education program.

The challenge, however, is to establish a common yardstick that serves diverse situations and that accommodates structural and process aspects under which the centers are functioning. Children, parents, early childhood care and education center teachers, and policy makers might not agree and arrive at a definitive answer to the question 'what constitutes quality?' As the possibility of standardization loses meaning in the face of diversity and complexity (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2000), it appears reasonable to seek meaning contextually.

The parameters for assessing quality in early childhood care and education range from economic or political environment to structural-philosophical aspects of programs as well as processes children face in their day-to-day center-based interactions (Tietze, Cryer, Bairrao, Palacios, & Wetzel, 1996). Currier (2001) categorized preschool quality measurement scales into two components i.e. 'Structural' and 'Classroom process' in which the former includes attributes such as teacher-pupil ratio, class size, teachers and administrators background characteristics and the latter comprising teacher-child interaction, the layout of classroom materials, and developmental appropriateness of programs.

According to Peralata (2008), the commonly used quality criteria include: parental involvement, adult-child interaction, suitability of program, involvement in play, physical space, and stability of routines. Despite variations in setting parameters in the assessment of

quality, criteria that take into account the inherent philosophies of the programs as well as the dynamics between the various agencies and their views are important dimensions whilst addressing quality issues.

The structural versus process dilemma that attracted the attention of early childhood care and education researchers is inconclusive. Despite the fact that the structural aspects of early childhood care and education centers are linked to children's academic and social competency, (Howes et al, 2008) their effect size remained to be small. The weak association between the structural aspects and outcome variables directed the attention of researchers to consider classroom process variables. Children's direct experience in the centers and their interactions with care givers: described as "the engine of development" by (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998 cited in Howes et al., 2008) was found to be important quality correlates of developmental outcomes.

Classroom interactions between children and care givers in a state of positive social and emotional atmosphere promote early literacy and language development. Effective interaction built around instructional content areas was found to be predictor of children's general knowledge area and academic skills (Howes et al., 2008).

Research findings documented in the literature of early childhood development have shown the importance of building mutually satisfying relationship between children and adults. This has been attested by early and modern theories of child development (Osofsky and Thompson, 2009). The idea of "affect attunement" coined by Stern (1985 ; cited in Osofsky and Thompson, 2009) to describe the ability of both partners in bringing feelings, images and memories to their mind, for example, would help to predict the behavior of one another and a means to monitor one's behavior. The concept of "emotional availability"

developed by Emde (1980; cited in Osofsky and Thompson, 2009) to illustrate the instrumental role of reciprocity for optimal emotional development emphasizes adult's capacity to read the emotional cues and work towards meeting these needs. Hence, the presence of a consistent care giver that values and appreciates the well being of a child in ECCE centers is not only the most determinant factor in the child's development but also a protective element against risk factors.

The child's behavioral tendencies to use the preschool care giver as a social reference builds not only mutual emotional bond between the two, but also encourages optimal environmental exploration for cognitive and social development. Important factors that mediate care giver-child interaction include behavioral repertoires of both the child and the caregiver and the quality of bi-directional flow of information governed by the give-and take principle. In summarizing research findings, Kelly and Barnard (2009) reported that care giver characteristics such as looking at, smiling at, vocalizing to, and physical proximity are adult behavioral repertoires that enhance cognitive and social development.

An important component in the caring and education of preschool children involves understanding, describing, and improving interactions taking place within the micro-system that facilitates the social ecology of the transition period (Pianta, & Kaufman, 2006). The state of interaction between preschool children and their care givers in center-based settings is a crucial element in children's readiness for school. Citing various sources Palermo et al., (2007) stated that children who experience warmth or closer teacher-child relationships tend to have fewer behavior problems, like school more, and perform better academically than do children who experience more conflicted teacher-child relationships. The child-adult interaction process that shapes school readiness is based on the contention that neither the

child nor the environment alone would contribute substantially in smoothening the transition period. Rather, “child-by-environment model” (Palerno, 2007), provides a comprehensive picture of the factors that shape children’s school readiness. Birch and Ladd (1997), Palermo et al., (2007), showed that teacher-child closeness was positively associated with kindergarteners’ self-directedness, and greater competency behavior such as assertive social skills, and peer sociability at the end of first grade. Emphasis on the quality of the interaction among preschool teachers, children, and materials reflect the widely accepted view that the effects of early care and education settings derive from these exchanges (Howes, & Richie, 2002; Pianta, 1999; Cited in Crouch et al., 2006). Classrooms and play grounds in early childhood care and education centers are developmental niches in which preschool children’s developmental outcomes are configured through the process of child-care giver-setting triad interactions. Analogous to the child’s home environment, ECCE classrooms are “the most proximal settings nested within child care centers” (p.303) for predicting quality of child care services (Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes, &Debby, 1997). This research conceptualizes quality of ECCE programs as a function of the combined effects of structural and process variables interacting in multiple ways to effect preschool children’s development in center based settings. Hence, the process aspect of ECCE programs in this research is defined by the quality of interaction between care givers and children at one end and children and the physical setting at the other end.

2.3. Social competence: A Developmental Outcome of Early Childhood Care and Education Program

Social competence is a generic developmental concept with multifaceted edges. In spite of that, it appeared a challenge to come up with an all accepted definition. Accordingly,

for some, it pertains to how individuals solve the most fundamental problems in human relationships (Guralnick,&Neville, 1997; cited in Apple, and Spenciner,2008). Stormashak and Welsh (2005) defined social competence as the capacity to elicit desirable social outcomes and avoid negative ones across a variety of situations. Sroufe (1996; cited in Bierman,& Erath, 2006) conceived social competence as an “organizational” construct involving the capacity to regulate and adapt behavior in dynamic interpersonal situations. Though social competence might predominantly refer to socially desirable behavior, it involves a cognitive dimension that allows children to execute these skills in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the demands of particular social environment. Definition of social competence has shown much change as a result of theoretical and research shifts in developmental psychology. These shifts in research interests focused on children’s ability to engage in positive relationships with parents, peers, and teachers (Raver, and Zigler, 1999).

An appropriate social behavior among preschoolers is the capacity to demonstrate positive affect towards peer groups during games that require perspective-taking skills. Learning to regulate one’s emotions to communicate fairly and clearly to others is particularly a critical component for preschool children’s success in their relationship with others (Stormashak and Welsh, 2005; Ayoub, and Fischer, 2006).

Though the emotional bond between parents and children is so important, peer relationships play pivotal role for healthy psychological development of children. Because children’s peer interactions and positive peer relations have been viewed as critical element for development, educators have suggested for intervention efforts to promote young children’s peer-related social competence (Brown, Odom, Samuel, & Holcombe, 1996). This is because peer interactions become so frequent and take place for a lapse of extended period.

Peer relationship creates opportunities for young children to share ideas and disclose their secrets to peers in more appealing manner. This emotional attachment among peers facilitated by conversations contributes to children's developing psychology (Thompson, & Lagattuta, 2006)

Empirical evidences show peer relationships are better predictors of social competency of children in preschool care and education centers. Children benefit more in academic areas of learning from positive relationships in classrooms (Kampe, 2004; in Apple, & Spenciner, 2008). Sustained interactive play in which a partner coordinates her/his efforts toward common goals is an important prosocial behavior observed during preschool period. Cooperative play skills are positive predictors of school engagement at elementary school (Bierman, & Erath, 2006).

The ability to communicate effectively with play mates is also an important predictor of social competency among preschoolers. The dialogue and the fore-against debate that arise during play require the use of appropriate language skills and exchange of ideas that would bring play partners into a common understanding. This process of give and take interaction founded on win-win basis mediated by proper expressive and receptive language skills exemplified in "civil way of interacting with others" (Gottman, 1983 cited in Bierman, & Erath, 2006) nurtures interaction and predicts sustained positive peer friendships.

Affectionate emotional repertoires during play or any goal directed activity is contingent on understanding of the feelings of the other partner. A socially competent child reads the feeling of his play mates "fueling the identification of cause-effect links" (Bierman, & Erath, 2006:600) between one's initiative acts and reactions of others and reciprocating in an acceptable way to the other side. Apart from cementing good friendship between children,

emotional understanding has a buffering effect of aggressive behavior. Thompson & Lagattuta (2006) noted that emotional understanding defined as emotional expressiveness, emotion regulation, and emotion knowledge predict teacher and peer measures of social competence in kindergarten centers. Socio metric ratings of peer acceptance in preschool centers also showed that children who are sensitive to the feelings of others and able to assess social situations with accuracy also tend to be well liked by their peers in school. Conversely, observed lapses of emotion regulation and high rates of emotional outbursts predict low teacher ratings of social competence and low levels of peer-nominated acceptance (Denham & Holt, 1993; Bierman & Welsh, 2000, cited in Bierman, & Erath, 2006).

Quality Care giver-child interaction in a center and/or family settings provides opportunities for the development of communication skills, empathy, social and cognitive abilities, and self regulatory capacities. Research findings demonstrated that skills critical to social competence, such as emotional regulation, impulse control, and social adaptability are related to quality adult-child interactions (Greenbers, Kusche, & Spetz, 1991; cited in Stormashak, & Welsh, 2005). Developmental science researches suggest preschool teacher-child relationships provide a critical context for social-emotional development of children during the preschool and early elementary years, and influence social-emotional learning in both formal and informal ways (Pianta, 1999 cited in Bierman, & Erath, 2006).

Hence, consistent and sensitive care giving behavior of preschool teachers in ECCE centers would contribute much to children's social competence. The ECCE environment should provide opportunities for peer contacts and support children in their explorations and interactions with people and settings.

Although the ability to make connections between one's behavior and others' expectations is eminent as developmental milestone of childhood stage, kindergarten children differ in their ability to learn, sequence, organize, and self-regulate their emotions depending on individual and center based factors (Lyon, 1996, cited in Ayoub and Fischer, 2006).

Differences in defining social competence have resulted in the use of selected criteria and assessment techniques to address target skills. An observational assessment of young children's social interactions with peers and other members of the center would be a viable avenue to gather data related to children's competency in achieving social goals .

Observational tools have been in place to gather information about aspects of social competence of children. These tools vary from the use of rating scales completed by teachers and parents to participatory observation techniques in the case of ethnographic studies (Brown,Odom,& Holcombe, 1996) . Two approaches seem to be used in the assessment of social competence of preschool children. The “molecular” approach of assessing social skills emphasizes on discrete behaviors such as maintaining eye contact, the frequency of smiling in reciprocal relationship between children and adults while the “molar” approach targets on broader social domains (Bierman, &Erath, 2006). Despite differences in importance attached to these two approaches in the assessment of children's social competency, consideration of broader developmental milestones seem to be more informative than focusing on specific behaviors. These broad based approaches are interactions represented by multiple behavioral exemplars such as taking turns in play and sharing of materials and communication skills (Bierman, & Erath, 2006).

Most early childhood care and education centers focus on literacy and numeric competencies. Children's competencies in the social domain seem to be inadequately

attended area. However, children's social relationships and experiences during the early years are critical elements "not just for learning, but for learning to learn" (Parlakian, 2003; cited in Apple, & Spenciner, 2008). As noted by Martito, Biersteker, Sagnia, & Kabiru (2008) comprehensive and holistic programs should capitalize on the social and interpersonal nature of children's earliest engagements with their world as foundations for all aspects of development. It is for this same reason that many educators proposed that high quality preschool programs should include a fourth "R" in their curricula i.e., establishing relationships with peers (Brown, Odom, & Holcombe, 1996).

Domestic reports show that early childhood care and education teachers are engaged in the development of literacy and numerical abilities of children very often paying less attention to overall stimulation (National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, 2010; UNICEF, 2007).

Preschool education curriculum material (MoE, 2008) identifies five major objectives and broad areas around which pre primary education is anchored. According to the curriculum material, these thematic areas are meant to bring change along four developmental directions i.e., Physical, cognitive, emotional and social. The social wing is geared towards bringing change in areas of fostering meaningful interaction with others, and encouraging children to exercise immediate environmental exploration. A number of target behaviors have been set in the curriculum material to mark social competence. Participation in cooperative play, use of appropriate and acceptable language, showing affectionate behavior to others, becoming responsive to the need and interests of others, negotiating on equal basis, and resolution of conflicts through discussion and dialogue, respecting each other, abiding by rules and regulations in play and other cooperative activities, participating

in imaginative play, demonstrating exemplary behavior to others are some of the expected outcomes. The National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education document (2010) as well stipulates target skills in the social-emotional competency domain. The policy framework identifies “self regulation, intrinsic learning motivation, and the ability to cooperate with other children” (p.25) are benefits that preschool children may reap from ECCE programs. Social competence in this research is conceptualized as an outcome variable along the input-process-output ECCE program modality manifested in prosocial behavior, play skill, and communication skill. The assessment of social competence of ECCE children in the context of this research is framed along the broad based molar approach in which items drawn from various sources are meant to address basic tenets of the construct in the Ethiopian program context.

2.4. Parental Perception and Understanding of Quality Early Childhood Care and Education

The role of ECCE programs in making the child ready for the formal school system deserved special attention in early childhood care and education literatures. Increasing attention has been given to the ecology in which this knowledge acquisition and skill building readiness process takes place.

The transition period is conceived as a systematic process in which the child’s development is shaped by the transaction of home and center based environments in an organized and planned way. The transition ecology as a system contributes in smoothening the path between home and school environments and ensures uninterrupted development of children as they move from less structured preschool care and education program to the wider and demanding primary school programs. Myers (1995, cited in Young and Mustard,

2008) reviewed 19 ECD programs in developing countries and showed that early care and education exposure correlated highly with improved school success. Prochner and Kabiru (2008) also noted that nursery school was to make a link between the natural and indispensable fostering of the child in the home and the social life. The National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2010) and Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Pre-primary Curriculum (MOE, 2008) documents underlined the benefits accrued from investing in the early years. The policy documents spelled out the benefits of parental participation in ECCE programs as a strategy to enhance children's "ready to learn" (p.18) which Reymonds (1995) set as a "criterion to school success"(p.1) in areas of cognitive and social developments.

The transition ecology assumes mobilization of all available support mechanisms within the home, center and community environments in which these micro-systems work in a pulsating fashion to bring about success at primary school. This process of supporting children to adequately meet the social and cognitive requirements of the schooling system is an organized developmental and educational endeavor by parents, teachers, the community, mainline ministries supported by government policies operating at various levels of the Macro-system (Pianta & Kaufman, 2006). In this respect, the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education ECCE (2010) document underlined the importance of integrating the management and activities of ECCE services. It stated:

Management of ECCE services and programs through various sector ministries and organizations should be streamlined and approached in an integrated way.

Numerous partners will work together in the provision of early childhood care and

education and collaboration should be regulated by the comprehensive policy framework (p.30).

The modalities of the “transition ecology” (Pianta, &Kaufman,2006) are understood in different ways. The skills-only model (Kaufman and Pianta,2000 cited in Pianta, &Kaufman,2006) conceptualizes the transition period “in terms of child characteristics such as readiness skills, chronological age, or level of maturation, with little to no focus on ecological, or even developmental features”(p.491). The skills-only model despite its popularity in influencing policy and practice is criticized for its incompleteness to address ecological variables. Furthermore, it de-emphasizes the psychosocial component of transition and readiness. The situation in Ethiopia is not exceptional.

An alternative to the skill-only model is the developmental/ecological model. This model takes into account the changes observed in the child and the ways in which the micro-developmental niches interact in an integrated manner to configure transformation of children’s competencies along the developmental domains (Pianta, &Kaufman,2006). The developmental/ecological model is comprehensive in the sense that it views the child in a web of interconnected and interdependent factors such as family, school, peer, and more broadly community contexts throughout the transition phase that make the child ready to move into the next hierarchically structured milieu. The broad-based social ecology that surrounds the child and shapes competencies in a reciprocating multi-path ways is the essence of the transition process addressed by the developmental/ecological model.

Readiness in the context of early childhood care and education is a multifaceted concept. Although researchers and government agencies uniformly agree on the importance of children’s readiness to meet the demands of the formal schooling, there are competing

views on its constituents. Grossly speaking, readiness for school is viewed as a “fixed or prerequisite set of physical, intellectual and /or social skills needed in order for children to be able to fulfill the requirements of the formal school environment”(Kagan,1990 cited in Catherine &Scotch-Little, 2006:154).

School readiness is socially constructed concept. It gets meaning in a given context, culture and historical period. According to the social constructivist views as reviewed by Catherine &Scott-Little (2006):

Persons involved in the conceptualization of readiness develop shared meanings of school readiness, and their shared meanings are shared by the context within which readiness is defined. Cultural, historical, institutional and political forces influence on what skills, knowledge and abilities are important for children's success in school” (p.155).

Research findings, for example, have shown that there are shared views and differences among parents and teachers on the meaning of readiness. Parents and preschool kindergarten teachers seem to prioritize health, social competence, and effective communication as markers of school readiness. Other studies have shown that parents and preschool teachers place considerable weight on preschool children's academic competence and basic knowledge such as letters of alphabet (Catherine &Scott-Little, 2006). These same researchers indicated that social-emotional and physical aspects of readiness are widely accepted benefits accrued from ECCE programs.

The role of families in making children ready for the formal school system by creating a stimulating home environment and by paving the ground work for early school success in the cognitive and social domains is essential element that should not be

compromised. Citing various sources Pianta,&Kaufman (2006) stated that “Parents’ behaviors toward their children and the stimulation, materials, and routines they provide in the home environment support the self-regulatory skills, motivation, language, pre-literacy, and social skills”(p.498). Deficiencies encountered in preschool care and education centers can easily be amended by home-based family support experiences. The relationship between preschool teachers and parents would create trustworthiness and better opportunities for early intervention to promote cognitive abilities and social competence skills. Common goals set by parents and teachers creates consistent contingencies for good behavior and enhance the continuity between home and school to provide an integrated cultural experiences for the child (Barth, 1979; Comer & Haynes, 1991 cited in Pianta,&Kaufman , 2006).

Linking ECCE centers with parents would enable to make use of the embedded indigenous cultural knowledge and draw home experiences to facilitate the child’s development. It is impossible to tease out the child’s home environment from center-based environment for the simple reason that the two reciprocate with each other for the optimal development of children.

The issue of maintaining partnership between families and activities of early childhood care and education centers has been paid greater attention in the literature. The challenge, however, is how to achieve quality family involvement in all aspects of early childhood programs (Knopf, &Swick, 2007). According to Pence and Nesamenang(2008) , the major impediment to early child development in Africa is failure to blend the cultural heritages at home and in the community into the existing service systems.

The involvement of families is necessitated from the growing reliance of parents on early childhood programs and the need to get professional support from early childhood care

and education teachers and practitioners. This perspective presumes development of skills and abilities as offshoots and continuation of experiences children encountered prior to coming to ECCE centers. Hence, the multi-level relationships between preschool centers, family and the community are important arena for children's smooth transition into the formal school system.

The broader view of school readiness takes into account not only specific skills and abilities that the child is able to demonstrate at the end of preschool education program but active involvement of all parties in the child's immediate and distant systems. Accordingly, readiness as a multi-dimensional construct includes the capacity of families, early care and education programs, and the broader community to support children's learning and development (Little, Kagan, & Firelow, 2006). Building a strong mutual support and relationship between ECCE centers, families and the community at large facilitates the holistic Psycho-Social and physical development of children, and at large contributes to the social well being of families (Martito, Biersteker, Sagnia, & Kabiru, 2008).

The dynamics in the family structure exemplified in the gradual transformation of extended families to nuclear ones, the changing role definition of family members, and the growing concern of parents for educational and social competency of their children are some of the changes that gave impetus to the increased involvement of parents in ECCE programs (Swick, 2004; cited in Knopf, & Swick, 2007).

Parents are expected to take active part and have a say in their children's day-to-day experiences in early childhood care and education centers. The heavy work load of Ethiopian parents especially mothers coupled with the pounded economic problems might not enable them to adequately respond to the requests of ECCE centers. As a matter of fact the

dynamics in family structure and the changing roles of parents especially mothers might have reduced the time parents spend with their children. This increasing obligation to bring families in close collaboration with the centers, nevertheless, is not backed by the provision of amenable resources to make parents to be active participants in carrying out the expectations. As Bronfenbreneur(2005, cited in Knopf,&Swick, 2007) indicated, no one has provided the time or resources to parents to negotiate the requests.

To enhance a viable family-preschool partnership there is a need to devise an empowering strategy so that parents could play pivotal role in all aspects of children's development in ECCE centers. The new ECCE National Policy Framework (2010) acknowledges families roles in the overall activities of ECCE centers. The policy framework states that "The family is the first responsible body for supporting the holistic development of their children and hence they need to be empowered and supported to ensure that they are effective in their roles" (p.21). The strategies may include provision of parenting education, essential supports that would enable families to take part in quality maintaining efforts and to seek and create more diverse pathways (Knopf, &Swick, 2007). Knopf,&Swick(2007) suggested diverse supportive and adaptive family involvement pathways. These include: accessing pathways that enhance participation, placing a viable set of supportive mechanisms that help and encourage parents to use the different venues for involvement and facilitate ways to use their talents and strengths.

Although the problem of access is a challenge to early childhood care and education programs, parent-teacher or parent-ECCE relationships provide a window of hope to reduce the differences in children's competencies as a function of transition. Preschool-parent partnership is an important component of the transition ecology. The missing elements in the

preschool care and education centers can be best grasped through active involvement of parents in building children's achievement in multiple domains at home setting. The vast majority of Ethiopian parents, however, are uneducated and lack fundamental knowledge with regard to the importance of early care and education (National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, 2010). In spite of this situation, parent-ECCE partnership is not adequately brought to the research agenda of quality ECCE. Yet early childhood development programs provide increased opportunities for parental empowerment and community resource mobilization and empowerment and the policy framework considers parental education as one of the "basic pillars for ECCE service delivery" (p.22) in the Ethiopian context.

In Ethiopia, like other countries, chronological age has been serving as a basis for determining readiness for the formal school system. The chronological age designated by Ministry of Education is seven, though; this age apex seems to come down currently. In addition to the chronological age, children's physical ability to reach their ears over their head is taken as meeting motor development. The intellectual and social readiness is assumed to be in consistent with the chronological age and motoral development. Whether or not these two indicators are dependable tools for screening "ready children" from "not ready children" and predict children's performance at later stage are not empirically supported. Currently, the practice is an "all pass scheme" that does not detain ECCE children for extra diagnostic program to achieve developmental level for the cohort group stipulated in the curriculum. The contents of early learning standards set in the curriculum (MOE, 2008) identify specific skills and knowledge deemed important for children's' school readiness. Some variations exist for the age cohorts 3, 4, 5, and 6.

One of the key indicators of quality early childhood care and education is the extent of parental participation in assisting the transition of children from ECCE programs to the wider culture of the formal school system. Quality of ECCE program is weighed by the extent to which parents are actively involved in the overall undertakings ranging from participation to collaboration with care givers and preschool management. Hence, the quality of network established between parents and ECCE centers in capacitating the preschool child to meet the demands of the formal school system is an essential component of quality ECCE research. Parental views and perceptions regarding quality of relationships, care givers behavior, the status of children in possessing the expected skills of the age group, and by large on the overall efficacy of programs to meet the objectives of the curriculum are pivotal issues in ECCE quality research. Parent- ECCE relationship and collaboration in this research is conceived as one component of the input-process dimension of quality ECCE program. It is meant to enhance children's developmental milestones and to enable the preschool child to meet the demands of the formal school curriculum via pulling parental resources for effective ECCE program implementation. In that sense it is essential to capture parental perception and understanding of the various facets of ECCE programs and the extent of their participation and collaboration in enabling effective transition of children to the formal school system.

2.5. An Overview of the Current Status of Early Childhood Care and Education in Ethiopia

In strict sense public interest in modern early childhood care and education started as early as 1900 with the opening of the first kindergarten center in Dire Dawa (Demeke, 2003). Since then, there is a lapse of over one hundred years. Over those years the

sector has been crawling and at times deadly stagnating without making meaningful move in terms of access and quality. In absolute terms one could argue that the sector has been cornered, marginalized and children in this age group have been denied of their child rights.

Kindergarten program is a preprimary education program that caters service to children 4 to 6 years. According to Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2009-2010), the gross enrollment ratio for the nation was 4.3%. Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2009-2010) has shown that the population within this age range was about 7,127, 883. Out of the estimated 7.12 million children of this cohort group about 341, 315(4.8 %) have been reported to have access to preprimary education being served in 3,318 centers in the country. Whether or not these droplets of changes trickling for the last so many decades can be taken as promising one is a theoretical and practical question. One could easily imagine to what extent children of this age group lacked access to one or another form of ECCE services.

Empirical studies and baseline surveys conducted by academic institutions and philanthropic organizations (e.g., UNICEF, 2007), for example, advocated the importance of need-based child care services as part and parcel of the overall child rights. Very recently regions have started to run preschool classes (commonly called zero-grade programs) within the primary school premises with the intent of mitigating the problem of access. It is true that the current mainstreaming of ECCE into the first cycle of primary education is reported to have increased enrollment tremendously. In terms of access this approach has drawn thousands of underprivileged preschool children to these premises. This state supported preprimary education program, though, its purpose and implementation strategies are not explicitly stated it can have multiple positive effects for Ethiopian children. Apart from paving the way for smooth transition to the formal education by bridging the gap between

children that had access to the service and the ones that are denied of this opportunity, it is expected to increase school success by reducing the high dropout rate observed in the first cycle of the primary education. However, absence of clear guideline on the management of these centers is the other side of the coin. The primary schools that operate under serious budget and logistic constraints are expected to host these centers. Whether or not this resource sharing strategy would yield better result in preparing the out of access children for the formal school system is open to empirical research. Whether or not this increment is meaningful and promising in terms of providing quality service to children is also a point of argument.

A fast growing increment in preschool enrollment domestically and globally can be attributed to changes in population in the age group, and to some extent related to family variables such as income, educational and employment status of parents especially mothers. Maternal employment statistics for example showed increase in mother's involvement into the work force. As a matter of fact, these working mothers especially in the urban areas rely more and more on center-based care and education services. The changing public attitude towards the importance of early years of life is also one possible push factor for parents to send their young children to kindergarten centers as viable option. Ethiopian families these days seem to invest on their children unlike the previous times in which children's fate was left to luck and the deity.

A land mark that can be considered as a promising breakthrough and opened a glimmering opportunity for Ethiopian children is the endorsement of the National Policy Framework for Early childhood Care and Education (2010) policy document. After its "long

incubation period” (Boakye, 2008), the policy document might be considered as a triggering factor for ECCE to take off.

The development of ECCE policy document cannot be taken as a miraculous event in the history of early childhood care and education in Ethiopia. Rather it is a natural outcome of socio-historical events that took place domestically and globally. A number of push and pull factors prompted the development of the policy document. The 1998 conference by African Ministers of Education (UNESCO, 1998), the steady and unprecedented support given by development partners such as the UNICEF and the World Bank to the sector created sense of urgency in Ethiopia to formulate sector wide and developmentally appropriate ECD policy that involved main stream ministries. The crisis Ethiopian education system is facing in terms of drop outs especially at primary level, the situation of orphans and vulnerable children for instance due to HIV/AIDS, and an obligation for the government to ensure the well being and development of children in light of MDG and EFA goals are all push factors that contributed to the inception and formulation of the policy framework.

It is true that the Ethiopian government responded to the development of a policy framework after a lapse of about five years. Many African countries developed and adopted ECD policy long ago. Although aggressive course of actions have not been taken to put into practice the National Policy Framework so far, one could perceive the endorsement of the policy framework as starting point from which ECD might awaken from its long hibernation.

The synergy among the three ministries is especially a corner stone that would enable to undertake systematic and holistic interventions. As Boakye(2008) noted such holistic approach would shift the status of early childhood care and education from “survival to development, from need to rights, and from sector-based thinking to cross-sectional”(p.175).

Before the onset of this policy framework structural and process issues pertinent to ECD have been swinging from one ministry to another or from one department to the other within the Ministry of Education. Historically these sector ministries have been acting as “territorial ministries” as noted by (Boakye, 2008) than acting synergistically for the well being of Ethiopian children. The ECCE has been rambling for several decades in pursuit of sound early childhood philosophy, policy framework, and implementation guidelines. What is new about this policy framework is that it clearly stipulates vision-mission statements, guiding principles of the policy framework, goals and strategic objectives as well as the structural framework for its implementation.

There existed a problem of conceptualizing the proto types of early childhood care and education services and the modalities adopted in the various centers. Nurseries, kindergartens, preschool education and very recently zero-grade programs are nomenclatures associated with early childhood care and education programs delivering service to age groups three to six. One possible explanation for this bizarre idea could be lack of comprehensive policy framework and operational guideline that could be used as a frame of reference for distinguishing the type of programs and the age groups they are instituted for.

Variations are not only in nomenclature. Public reaction to each of these institutional types vary from perceiving the different programs as centers providing custodial and protective services to the belief that these centers are places with enriched learning and stimulating environment for holistic development of children. The National Policy framework for Early childhood Care and Education document (2010) stipulates the four basic pillars of ECD service delivery comprising: parental education, health and early

stimulation program (prenatal to 3+years) preschools: community based kindergartens (4-6+years), and community-based Non-formal school readiness programs.

The modalities of early childhood care and education vary considerably. They range from the long standing traditional Church and Koranic early childhood care and education institutions to modern preschool programs crafted along the Euro-American types. They vary considerably in terms of structure as well as process. Whether these centers are operating along Rousseau's *lazes-faire* approach, Froebel's notion of supervised play or Montessori's modality of environmental exploration is not clear.

A number of early childhood care and education centers here in the capital and the regions especially in the urban areas, for example, claim that their programs are crafted along the Montessori approach. Though this approach emphasizes the development of academic concepts, practical life skills, development of the senses, and character (Epstein et al., in Walsh, & Petty, 2007), it is not clear to what extent the physical environment and processes in these centers are contributing to these aspects of development in a natural and orderly manner. The Montessori approach presets the availability of sand trays, chalkboards, and language cards to enhance imagination which many centers in the Ethiopian context are lacking (with the exception of few private ECCE centers). Ministry of Education has set standards for preschool centers in terms of size of the compound and classrooms, facilities, offices, toilets, dining rooms, and first aid kits. However, according to UNESCO Cluster office Addis Ababa (2006) report, none of the preschools visited by the office met the standard set by the Ministry of Education. The newly developed curriculum (MoE, 2002), is a means towards standardization of programs. However, exaggerated differences in structural and process aspects in the centers could result in

significant variations among children in terms of immediate learning experiences and lasting cognitive and social outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

3.1. Design of the study

The choice of a research design in early childhood care and education studies is guided by theoretical underpinnings and the situation prevailing in a particular context. According to Hauser-Cram, Warfield, Upshur, and Weisner (2009), a comprehensive and broader treatment of early childhood intervention program efficacies is an outcome of three competing approaches namely: “the nature of developmental change, adherence to the traditional inquiry methods in the traditional scientific paradigm, and the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies”(p.487). Validity of research findings in early childhood intervention programs, therefore, is a function of fair and judicious attention paid to each of these three approaches. The challenge in designing a research plan, therefore, is a matter of choosing a broader methodological approach than sticking to these specific elements (Canella, 2005; Pence & Nsamenang, 2008).

Philosophical discourses and major developmental theories do influence our thoughts regarding research design and more generally configure our understanding of early childhood care and education. Our conceptualization regarding research, policies, the role of parental and teachers’ involvement in the field are all influenced by the dominant theoretical discourses in developmental psychology and implicate “the whole ecology of early childhood pedagogy” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005:44).

A theoretical paradigm that positively influenced research methodology in early childhood care and education studies appears to be the ecological perspective in which the child is understood within a web of sub-systems operating in a transactional path (Vogler,

Crivello, &Woodhead, 2008). Recent childhood studies indicated the significance of recognizing the interaction between children and care givers in multiple ways within the social environment. Developmental theories emphasized the transactional model and how ecological variables in the system interact to shape the child's development (Hauser-Cram et al, 2009).

An overarching approach in researching the developmental appropriateness and quality of early child hood care and education is to see the relationship between input, process, and outcome variables depending on the relative emphasis given to each of these dimensions at the design stage. Accordingly, the structure and process variables are seen as correlates of scores on measures of developmental outcomes in which indicators of quality care have predictive significance for children's development (Dahlberg, Moss, &Pence, 2005).

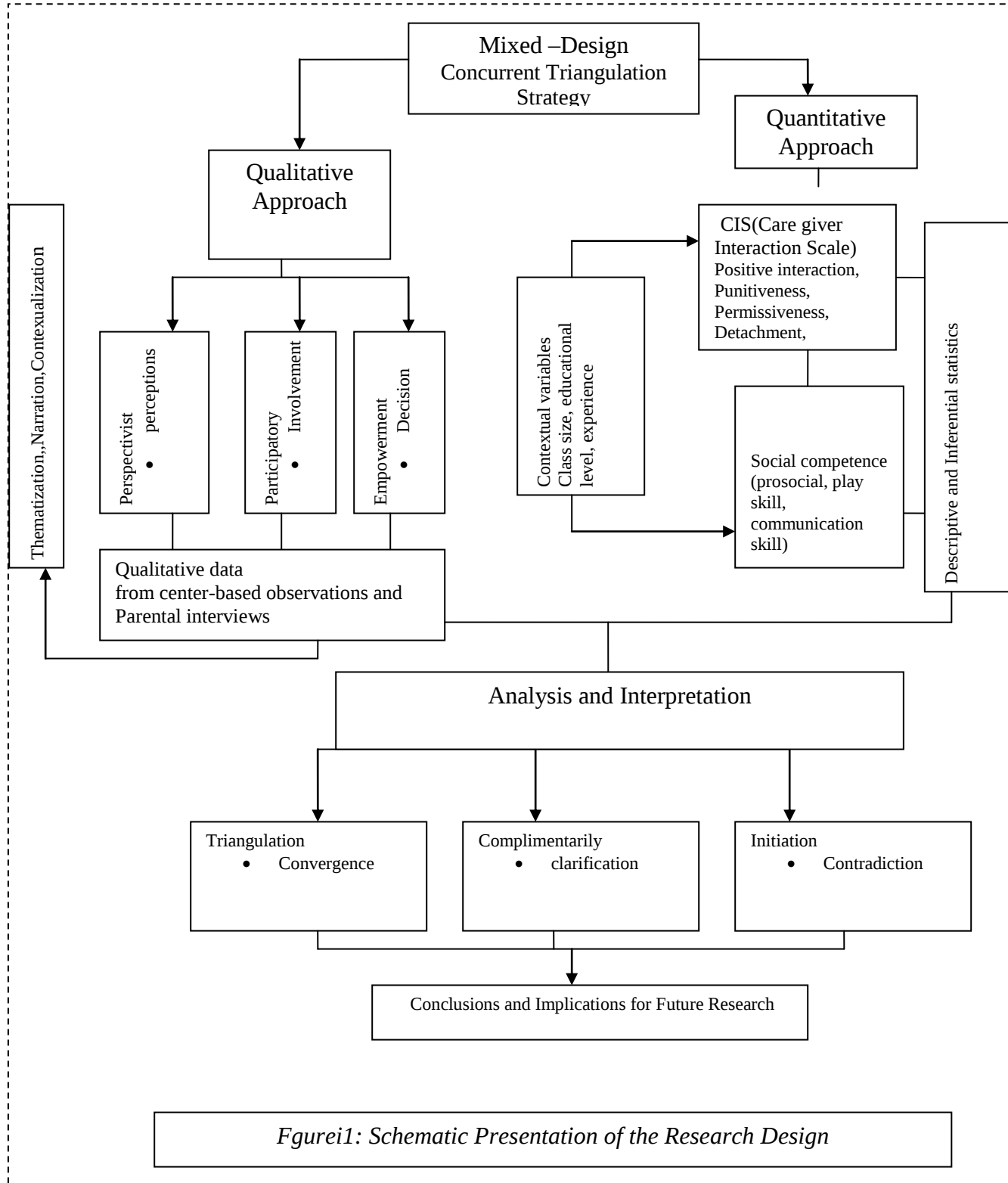
This research design, therefore, recognizes the importance of examining social competence of pre-school children as a function of care givers interaction with preschool children and structural variables in early childhood care and education centers. As part of quality ECCE program, it is also planned to capture the perception of parents about the role of early childhood care and education centers in transiting children to the formal school system and meanings they attach for sending children to the centers.

Method of inquiry is mixed research design in which the quantitative and qualitative approaches complement each other in a way to represent and understand the subjective and objective dimensions of the program. According to Hauser-Cram et al, (2009), the exclusive use of quantitative measurement would narrow our understanding of the

phenomena and hence the complementary quantitative-qualitative method appears to be the default design in ECCE researches.

In line with the aforementioned argument, the qualitative approach would help to capture data to be obtained from observations and meanings and interpretations parents ascribe to quality early childhood care and education programs. Perceptions, the nature of involvement in the program, and the degree of decision-making by parents would enable to capture experiences of parents. Hauser-Cram et al.,(2009) stated that “the perspectivist, participatory, and empowerment models take most seriously the point of view of the participants in a program, compared to conventional evaluation designs and measures that have been motivated more often by the concerns of policy makers and funding agencies”(p.494).

For the quantitative aspect of the research design, observation checklist was employed to assess the quality of care giver interaction and teachers rating scale to capture social competencies as indicator of outcome variable. From the mixed-design approach the Concurrent Triangulation Strategy was used to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data and cross-validate or corroborate findings obtained from different sources (Creswell, 2003). The strategy included triangulating data to verify convergence of findings from observation scales and interview, complementarities of methods to enhance or clarify results obtained from different sources and the use of initiation design to discover contradictions and paradoxical findings to generate hypotheses for further studies (Hauser-Cram et al.,, 2009). Schematic representation of the research design is shown below.



3.2. Study site

The study area for this research is the capital city of Ethiopia-Addis Ababa. The Education Statistics Annual Abstract (2011/2012) of City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau shows the city has relatively high density of kindergarten enrollment population in the 4-6 years age group compared to other regions. It was reported that there were about 1000 Kindergartens in the region. Gross Enrollment Ratio reached 100% showing significant increment in the years 2008-2012. Interestingly, Gross Enrollment Ratio for boys and girls was exactly similar across these years. As of 2010, percent of primary schools with pre-primary classes increased from 62.9 % & in 2010 to 100% in 2011/12. Pupil-teacher ratio and pupil-section ratio have also shown improvements for the last couple of years. Programs in the region are relatively mature and have been operational for the last several years. Furthermore, there was fair representation of public, community, and faith-based centers distributed across the sub cities. About 75% of Kindergartens are owned by the private sector. The remaining 25% is shared by “Others” (9%), Public (8.5%), and Government (7%). This situation has provided an opportunity to assess variations attributed to center and other contextual variables.

3.3. Sampling

Five sub cities for the main study and one for the pilot were selected on purposive sampling technique. These sub cities were chosen specifically because they serve a large number of the 5-6 year old population (upper kindergarten) and centers representing private, government, charity and faith based types. Each sub city was represented by different center types. The number of boys and girls enrolled in all center types for the main and pilot studies was obtained from the Regional Educational Abstract report

(2011/2012). Number of centers and children enrolled were proportionally determined. Centers were again chosen on availability sampling techniques. Centers that have shown consent to participate in the research were selected. The sampling procedure allowed computation of aggregate quality scores and enabled comparison of center types on several parameters including the four components of the classroom interaction scale and the social competency measure. At 95% confidence interval with 5% marginal error the expected sample size for kindergartens is about 70 and for the children 280. From the total sample size estimate, the sample size for each stratum was computed. Total population and sample size for each stratum are shown in Table one.

In each participating classroom, kindergarten teachers sent a written message in advance to parents through children to solicit a consent describing the purpose of the study. Children eligible for the study were whose parental consent was obtained and whose age range fall between five and six years. In addition to the consent message, a family contact notice and a short demographic questionnaire which would enable to conduct an interview with parents were sent. Twenty parents which have shown consent to be interviewed were approached for the main study.

Table 1: Sampled kindergarten centers and children for the main study

Sub cities	Number of Kindergarten	Population	Centers Sampled	Children Sampled	Parents Interviewed
Bole	122	14226	15	60	4
Kolfe Keranayo	168	21659	15	60	4
Nefas Silk Lafto	176	19726	15	60	4
Arada	160	8732	15	60	4
Lideta	45	6527	10	40	4
Total			70	280	20

Source: City Government of Addis Ababa Education Bureau, Education Statistics Annual

Abstract 2011/12

3.4. Instrument Development and Validation process

3.4.1. Care giver Interaction Scale (CIS)

Research findings identified important factors that mediate care giver-child interaction and its relationship to developmental outcomes. These elements include behavioral repertoires of both the child and the caregiver and the bi-directional flow of information between the two. Reciprocity is the psychological world in which the child and adult attempt to read the behaviors, needs, moods, and intentions of the other (Osofsky & Thompson, 2009). In summarizing research findings, Kelly and Barnard (2009) reported that adult characteristics such as looking at, smiling at, vocalizing, holding or touching the infant were found important inputs in cognitive and social developments.

Care giver interaction with children in preschool care and education centers is an important constituent in effecting cognitive and social development of children. Cognitive and social outcomes in preschool care and education centers are outcomes of the classroom environment and the quality of social interaction between care givers and children (Hoowes, & Smith, 1995). Although the structural aspect of early childhood care and education centers such as adult-child ratio, group size, and teacher characteristics are linked to child outcomes, the child's experiences with the teacher and any other care giver are found to be strong predictors of cognitive and social outcomes. Studies linking quality of child care to child outcome variables suggest that process quality measures have strong predictive value of child outcome variables than do the structural aspects of quality (Howes, Phillips, & White book, in Hoowes, & Smith, 1995). Kindergarten teachers who structure their classrooms for better positive social interactions with children would provide greater emotional security to

children, and enhance cognitive and social outcomes. Skillfully constructed classrooms by teachers can have the potential to effect positive developments in preschool children even if structural aspects are not functioning at optimal level (Howes, & Smith, 1995).

The importance of infrastructure of the preschool environment depends on how teachers put them to use in their interactions with children (Howes & Smith, 1995; Hamre, Goffin, & Sayre, 2009; Mashburn & Pianta, 2009). Accordingly, well-organized classrooms are characterized by the quality of affect and behavioral management skills of teachers during interactions and the provision of stimulating environment that supports cognitive and social competencies.

Quality of care giver-child interaction is assessed by the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)(Arnett,1989). Unlike rating instruments such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) that examines program quality across a wide range of dimensions, the CIS is better suited to make an “in-depth, process oriented observations” (Meisel,&Burnett, 2006) targeting specific goal of preschool education program. Limiting one’s observation to few and selected behaviors in a defined setting would enhance objectivity and facilitate shared understanding of the phenomena under investigation. As stated by Raver, & Zigler (1999), “With greater specificity in our research language, it will be easier to communicate with one another, and with those partners monitoring the impact of programs on the children”(p. 377).

The CIS assesses the interactions of the lead teacher with preschool children in the kindergarten classrooms, using a scale of 1 (*Not at all true*), 2 (*Somewhat true*), 3 (*Quite a bit true*), and 4 (*Very much true*). The original instrument includes 26 items factor analyzed into four subscales: Positive Relationship, Punitiveness, Permissiveness, and Detachment. The

author considers high scores to be desired for the Positive Relationship subscale, with moderately high scores desired for the Permissiveness subscale and low scores desired for the Punitiveness and Detachment subscales. The instrument has administration, scoring and interpretation instructions. The psychometric properties of the scale are:

- Internal consistency and inter-rater reliability of 0.65 or higher. Cronbach alphas of 0.91 for the positives interaction and 0.90 for harshness (punitiveness) subscales were also reported. Some researchers found 0.98 and 0.93 overall Cronbach alpha values for lead and assistant teachers respectively.
- Concurrent validity coefficients of 0.43 to 0.67 were reported between CIS and Early childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).
- In addition, scores from this instrument have been found to be influenced by structural characteristics of the classroom (Petrogiannis, & Melhuish, 1996,cited in Tietze, Cryer,Bairrao,Palacios,&Wetzel,1996).

The use of an observation checklist to investigate the process aspect of quality in early childhood care and education centers found to be useful in another culture would probably raise the issue of fairness and appropriateness to use it in the Ethiopian context. However, the items in CIS as a measure of care giver interaction address “what is necessary to meet children’s developmental needs across different cultures” (Tietze, Cryer, Bairrao, Palacios,&Wetzel,1996: 449).

The revised curriculum material (MoE, 2001) segmented pre-school education into two major parts. The first part is for pre-school children age 4-5 years and the second is for children 5-6 years. In general the major objective of the pre-school education in the Ethiopian context is to enhance physical, social, and emotional developments of children

age 4-6 in center based programs through the provision of basic skills in the areas of language, mathematics, environmental science and aesthetic education. The curriculum gives due emphasis to child-centered activities, interactions in and out of classrooms and more over to the role of parents and care givers in enhancing the holistic development of pre-school children.

Strategically it is advisable to work on the process aspect mainly on care givers interactions to bring change in the activities of preschool programs. In the Ethiopian context, therefore, the payoff from this approach is more rewarding than dwelling on the structural and design aspects of preschool care and education centers. Hence, in view of the policy document and the strategic importance of prioritizing the process aspects, the four subscales of CIS namely Positive Relationship, Punitiveness, Permissiveness, and Detachment are better predictors of social competence of preschool children. These four sub-scales appear to be core areas by which the efficacy and appropriateness of care giving can be assessed in the Ethiopian context. Professional development programs that would enhance the capacity of kindergarten teachers and supporting families can be devised based on evidences obtained from such classroom-based observational studies focusing on the process aspect. As noted by Martito, Biersteker, Sagnia,&Kabiru(2008) much of the success of ECD programs in Africa is going to be determined by ministries policies and allocation of budget to personnel trainings in the sector .

3.4.1.Validation of the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)

A rigorous psychometric analysis and interpretation was done and reliability coefficients were determined during pilot testing. All decisions regarding the inclusion and

appropriateness of items were based on validity and reliability information obtained from the pilot study.

The pilot study was carried out in a purposively selected ECCE centers in Akaki-Kality Sub City. The presence of private, government, community and faith-based centers representing children from different socio-economic backgrounds enabled to conduct the pilot study in this sub city. Twenty center based observations were conducted under different physical settings and chunks of time; early in the morning when national anthem was sung, while classes were conducted during break as well as lunch time. Observations conducted in such natural environments would provide an ongoing record of care givers' and children's interaction as it actually occurs. Observation time in each setting ranged from 45 minutes to one and half hours. It may be cumbersome to capture every bit of care giver and child behaviors within short period of time. However, with sustained vigilance and by setting limits on the length of the observation sessions and by identifying samples of behaviors, one could come up with dependable data on care giver child interaction. Table 2 below shows distribution of the center types included in the pilot study.

Table 2: Distribution of center types observed

Center types	Frequency	percent
Private	10	50
Government	7	35
others	3	15
Total	20	100

In this pilot study an overall Alpha of 0.815 was found indicating a strong internal consistency of the items. Alpha values for the positive interaction, punitiveness, detachment, and permissiveness subscales were found to be 0.823, 0.829, 0.827, and 0.725 respectively denoting strong internal consistency of the items within the sub scales too(see Appendix A).

Data for the main study were collected by three second year graduate students enrolled in the Institute of Educational Research, one cultural anthropologist and the researcher. Prior to data collection the three graduate students have undergone a live observation in two practice classroom at Bole sub city to familiarize themselves with the instrument. These two live visits to the classrooms and guidance from the researcher helped to attain acceptable degree of agreement between the observers. Inter-rater agreement between the three observers was computed. In general in the second session the agreement between the observers has shown much improvement. The overall agreement between the three observers was found to be 87% implying that data collectors had more or less similar understanding and interpretation of the CIS scale items. Table 3 shows percent of agreement between the three observers with respect to the 26 CIS items.

Table 3: inter-rate agreement between the three observers in two practice classrooms (N=26)

Observers	Classroom one		Percent	Classroom two		Percent
	Number of items	Exact matching		Number of items	Exact matching	
1 and 2	26	21	80.77	26	17	65.00
1 and 3	26	17	65.00	26	18	69.23
2 and 3	26	19	73.00	26	24	92.3

The fourth data collector who visited the centers at Kolfe Keranio sub city had a good command of the research agenda while participating in the pilot study at Akaki Kaliti sub city. Following the practice sessions a thorough discussion was made between the researcher and the four data collectors on experiences gained from these preliminary classroom visits.

3.4.2. Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale (SCTRS): Item Development and Validation Process

Two approaches were adopted in the development, adaptation and refinement of the instruments. These are population and expert sampling. A pool of items applicable to the age cohort was prepared. This pool of items was judged and subjected to expert reviews with respect to content validity and its developmental appropriateness. The items were checked for relevance, representativeness, specificity, and clarity by these experts. Inter-rater reliability coefficients were computed to ascertain the degree of match between the judges. Following initial content validation the items were further evaluated for grammar, wording, randomization of items, and instrument length by measurement specialists. This validation process enabled to shape the final instrument.

Content validity

The Child Attribute Checklist developed by Katz & McClellan (1991), articles by Zigler & Trickett (1978), McCall, Groark, & Fish (Infant Mental Health Journal DOI 10.1002/imhj), and the review by Stormshak and Welsh (2005) were exhaustively studied by the researcher. A systematic analysis of the pre-primary education curriculum material (MoE, 2008) was reviewed and basic tenets of developmental milestones of pre-school children in the area of social development were captured. The overall goal of social development as

stated in the curriculum material is to bring change in areas of interaction with others, and to encourage children to exercise immediate environmental exploration. Assessment of developmental milestones that are indicated in the curriculum materials can inform about how children can best be helped, how children's accomplishments can be enhanced, and how care givers and parents can more adequately assist children in realizing their potentials (Meisel,&Burnett,2006).

Items pooled and adapted from the above cited works and those framed by the researcher based on abundant literature in the area were aligned to the basic developmental tenets and goals set in the curriculum material. A pool of forty six items was developed at an initial stage. The items in the pool were assorted into four major areas. These are: Prosocial behavior, Play skills, Emotion regulation, and Communication skills (see Appendix B). Broader definition of social competence such as this will allow to examine children's social development in diverse contexts from a broader perspective (Raver, &Zigler, 1999).

The prosocial, emotional, play and communication skills that preschool children demonstrate under different settings were tapped. Maximum numbers of items were included under each cluster so as to produce comprehensive subscale that would measure each of the dimensions. Each item was reviewed against its compatibility to the objectives and anticipated developmental outcomes of preschool children in the Ethiopian context as stipulated in the revised curriculum material.

Phase one of the validation process

In order to determine the appropriateness of the identified categories and items pooled from various sources the zero-draft instrument was given to second and third batch applied developmental psychology PhD students in Addis Ababa University. The draft instrument

had also a space at the end to solicit comments and suggestions of the graduate students regarding the appropriateness of the dimensions and the items. Each item was rated for its applicability along a three point scale ranging from applicable (3) to inapplicable(1).Twenty three questionnaires were distributed and seventeen returned.

Inter-rater reliability was computed between the sixteen judges. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for pair-wise judges. Correlation coefficients ranged from perfect positive agreement($r=1.00$) between judge No 8 and judge No 9 to negative coefficient($r= -0.616$) between judge No 1 and Judge No 4. This result was expected. Inter-rater agreement is likely to be affected by raters' background knowledge on the subject, their commitment to carry out the assignment and more profoundly by their theoretical and philosophical persuasions. In fact except five students the remaining twelve students were from educational psychology background. Most of the comments and suggestions forwarded by these PhD students focused on the psychometric properties of the items rather than the developmental appropriateness of the items to measure social competence of preschool children. Despite the variations observed among the judges in conceptualizing the construct, the analysis has provided useful information for further polishing of the instrument. Table 4 below summarizes the suggestions of judges on the appropriateness of the items to measure the constructs and certain psychometric shortcomings observed in framing the items.

Table 4: Suggestions of eleven judges on the appropriateness of the items to measure social competence

Judges	Comments/suggestions	Construct	Reference item
2	Avoid two or three ideas in one item	Emotion regulation	3.9, 3.10
4	Additional items are required and clarifications on some of the items	Communication and good manner	4.1-4.7
5	Some revision work is needed	Emotion regulation	3.3, 3.4, 3.15
11	Advisable to frame the items on a five-point scale	All categories	All items
13	Revision work	Positive orientation to others, communication and good manners	1.5.4.1
14	Better to measure communication and good manner separately, good manner is nearer to emotional regulation than communication	Communication and good manner	4.1-4.7
15	Phrases and words such as all types of children, win-win style, negotiates, compromises need to consider age of children and relevant development theories	Positive orientation regulation	1.5. 3.4
16	Include negative items for reverse coding	All categories	All items
17	Delete the word positive, be specific and behavior should be measurable,	Positive orientation to others,	Dimension one,1.11

The above comments and suggestion were accommodated and further revision work was made. More items have been constructed and added into the pool. Major revision work has been done in terms of representing certain behavioral indicators of preschool children by using verbs and adjectives to make the assessment focused and objective. The number of items was raised from forty six to fifty three (see Appendix C).

This new version was again sent to three senior lecturers in the Institute of Psychology at Addis Ababa University. All of them are graduates of developmental psychology and currently working their PhD dissertation in the same area. Following the same procedure they were instructed to rate each item along a three point scales ranging from inapplicable (1) to applicable (3). This was followed by face- to- face brainstorming sessions

so as to boost up the validity of the instrument. Inter- rater agreement was estimated using Pearson product moment correlation. Reliability coefficients as estimates of inter-rater reliability are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between three judges (n=53)

	Judge one	Judge two	Judge three
Judge one Pearson correlation		0.555**	0.542**
Judge two Pearson correlation			0.435**

***Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

As shown in Table 4 , Pearson product moment correlation coefficients as estimate of inter- rater agreement between the three judges were found to be statistically Significant ($p < 0.01$) . Frequency distributions showed that about 7 % of the items were rated as inapplicable, 25% as moderately applicable, and 89% of the items as applicable. These figures are further demonstration of the appropriateness of the items to measure the social competence construct. Item 1.12 which reads “shows interest in the world around him” and item 1.15 which reads “tends to enjoy center/family-based activities” were rated as inapplicable by the three judges and item 1.11 which reads “is less liked and preferred by other children” was rated as inapplicable by two judges. Items 1.12 & 1.15 were dropped and replaced by items that measure specific instances. Item 1.11 was amended and included into the pool. The face-to-face brain storming sessions with the three lecturers triggered further insight and the need to elaborate each and every item in such a way that they would address the four dimensions of social competence and developmental milestones of preschool age children as stated in the curriculum material. For those items found to be ambiguous, behavior-oriented verbs and phrases were put in parenthesis to enhance common

understanding on the items. Based on discussions with the judges further revision work has been done and the scale was made ready for translation into Amharic language.

In order to achieve language equivalence (Gardner and Kosmitz, 2006), the first draft of the English version was translated into Amharic by the researcher and a social anthropologist who has good command of both languages. This was followed by series of brainstorming sessions until agreement was reached on every other item (see Appendix D).

The Amharic version was back translated into English by a bilingual lecturer from the Department of Ethiopian Literature and Folklore. It was confirmed that the two versions were linguistically equivalent.

The instrument was piloted in selected ECCE centers at Akaki- Sub City. A preliminary visit was made to the four centers to get consent from the owners and the management. The purpose of the study was elucidated to all stake holders in the centers. They were noted that their cooperation was indispensable to conduct the research. They agreed to be part of the study. A letter was also sent to parents to solicit their permission for involving their children in this research. Fifty parental questionnaires were sent to parents via the head teacher and forty-seven (94%) were signed and returned.

Random sampling technique was used to select children from four classrooms representing the four center types. Tables 6 and 7 show number of male and female children representing the four center types.

Table 6: Distribution of Center types included in the pilot study

Center type	Frequency	Percent
Private	20	40.0
Government	10	20.0
Community	10	20.0
Faith-based	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 7: Distribution of male and female children involved in the pilot study

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	22	44.0
Female	28	56.0
Total	50	100.0

All children were within 5-7 years range enrolled in the upper kindergarten program and were likely candidates heading to the primary education program in the coming academic calendar.

3.4.3. Procedures

Preschool teachers' role in the development of social competence of preschool children is indispensable. Preschool teachers in their day to day activities use different strategies to inculcate appropriate social skill in the minds of children. Preschool teachers play a mediating role when conflicts arise between children in play ground and classrooms and try to pacify and resolve differences using various strategies such as words rather than fists (Raver, & Zigler, 1999). Varieties of techniques employed by preschool teachers encourage children to regulate their emotions in acceptable and normative standards. Hence, it would be realistic to involve teachers in the assessment of social competence of children. Raver and Zigler(1999:377) suggested to involve teachers as main partners in the collection of observational data. They stated that “capitalizing on teachers’ observational

expertise, by employing teacher reports that are grounded in specific behavioral descriptions of children's social behaviors and positive affect" would enable to successfully tap data on the dimensions of social competence. Although standardized tests are widely used techniques in assessing children's social competence, teachers' ratings are typical strategies to solicit ecologically valid data (Kontos, & Herzog, 1999).

Children enrolled in each classroom were cared and educated by two female kindergarten teachers who had certificate training in preschool teaching. On the average an hour length session was spent in each center with care-givers to discuss the meaning attached to the items in each subscale, and the procedures to be followed when rating each child. Eventually this helped to have a common understanding between the two raters in each center.

A separate scoring sheet was prepared for the two raters to record ratings of the children in their respective classrooms. The average of the two ratings for each child and each item was computed and transcribed to the original instrument. Inter-rater reliability as a measure of agreement between the ratings of the two preschool teachers with respect to a given child was computed (Gravetter, & Forzano, 2009). The percentage of agreement ranged from 65% to 93% in the different center types indicating that teacher' ratings of preschool children were reliable. Negatively stated items were scored in the reverse direction. Total score for each child was computed and item total correlation was determined to select items that have better psychometric properties (see Appendix E). Overall Alpha and subscale coefficients as well as the correlation between the subscales were found to be very high indicating strong internal consistency of the instrument. Alpha values for the selected items in the respective sub-scales are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Reliability statistics for the overall instrument and the subscales

Scales	Number of items	Alpha
Overall	35	0.899
Prosocial	12	0.8345
Play skill	9	0.7283
Emotional control	8	0.5161
Communication skill	6	0.8105

3.4.4. Interview Items

The issue of maintaining partnership between families and early childhood care and education centers is considered as having far reaching benefits for smooth transition of children to the formal school system. Gunn, Berlin, & Fuligni (2009) characterized parents as engines of change in early interventions. The importance of involving families can be witnessed from the growing reliance of parents on early childhood programs for the well being of their children and the need to get professional support from early childhood educators and practitioners. The challenge, however, is to achieve high quality family involvement in all aspects of early childhood programs (Knopf, &Swick, 2007).Data pertaining to family involvement in the day-to-day activities of early childhood care and education centers was gathered through an in-depth interview with parents. Qualitative data pertaining to care givers behavior, reasons for sending children to preschool care and education centers, parental interests, the goals and values they have for their child, and the outcome they expect as a result of enrollment of their children in ECCE centers were collected and thematically analyzed (see Appendix F).

3.4.5. Lessons learned from the pilot study

The observation for the pilot study was conducted in multiple realities and settings and thus enabled the researcher to capture quantitative and qualitative data. What is more, the natural setting both in the classroom and outside classroom lent a hand to gather at the spot instantaneous information on the process of interaction between care givers and children. Unlike questionnaire based survey, observing interactions in the different center types using a scale was a taxing job. This was the hardest way the researcher ventured. Yet the pay off from such design was ultimately found a promising one.

Every data collection procedure has its limitations and merits. Observational studies are not exceptions. For instance my presence in the study site was seen as a threat to the well being of some of the teachers and owners of the centers. This was particularly true to the private ones. In not few cases they were not able to differentiate a supervisor's role and a researcher's role. They suspected me as supervisor coming from the sub-city education desk with a mission of fault finding. The difference between academics and supervision was blurred to the center owners and the teachers alike. Many teachers, for example, presented their daily lesson plans the moment the researcher entered their classrooms. Many of them also asked for comments at the end of the observation sessions. The researcher was able to witness many of them in a state of excitement being anxious and agitated while teaching in the presence of the researcher. The researcher could imagine that it was not their natural behavior they used to demonstrate in their "normal" sessions. They wanted to be graded as "best teachers". Not in few cases they warned the children to show "patience" and to be "disciplined" in the presence of a guest. To reduce the effect of relational problems, a strong mutual understanding and trustworthiness was maintained before conducting the main study. The purpose of the research was clearly spelled out from the outset and shared to the care

givers and the management in the centers. This precautionary measure enabled to solve the impact of “Gate keepers” as labeled by Bogdan and Beklein (1992) individuals who stand as stumbling blocks to access data. Openness, transparency, mutual benefit based on trust worthiness between the researcher and ECCE owners facilitated smooth data collection during the main study.

The analyses from the pilot study yielded important findings in understanding the relationship between Care giver interaction and social competence of preschool children. Results implied the importance of addressing the issue with the inclusion of more children and centers and consideration of center-based variables and see their effects using multivariate statistics such as MANOVA. Since the general purpose of the research was to investigate the linear combination of the dependent variables with the main and interaction effects of the independent variables the use of factorial MANOVA necessitated. Rather than running Univariate ANOVAs, the simultaneous treatment of the dependent and independent variables was expected to show interactions and relationships from different perspectives. The research questions and data management procedures for the main study’ therefore, were realigned accordingly for the main study.

3.4.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Before encoding the collected data to computer, data were organized by center type and other contextual variables noted in the instrument section. The data were entered to SPSS version 20. After careful data cleaning work, statistical analyses such as homogeneity tests, descriptive statistics, correlations, t-tests, ANOVA, MANOVA, and regression analysis were employed for the quantitative data pertaining to care giver interaction scale, social competence instrument and the structural variables.

The qualitative data obtained through interview, open ended items and case reports were examined for relevance, trustworthiness and crosschecked by the researcher. An in-depth analysis was carried out to understand contexts, settings, and social process underlying quality of care giving process and parental perception of quality care giving based on data obtained from field notes and interview transcripts.

Table 9: A Framework for the quantitative data analyses

Objectives	Variables	Analyses techniques
1 Describe the quality of care giver interaction	Positive interaction, punitiveness, detachment and permissiveness	Frequencies of observers' ratings, Descriptive statistics
2.Determine the effect of structural variables	caregiver experience, class size, center type,	Correlation,ANOVA,and MANOVA
3.Assess the social competence of preschool children and its relationship to center types and selected demographic variables of children	Prosocial behavior, play skill, communication skills, center type, sex, Fathers educational level	Descriptive statistics, Correlation, MANOVA, and ANOVA,
4.Investigate the relationship between center and process variables and social competence	class size, , experience, gender, caregivers' training, quality caregiver child interaction and social competence scores	Descriptive statistics, Correlation and Multiple regression analysis

Table 10: A Framework for the qualitative data analyses

Objectives	Variables	Analysis
6. Capture specific care giver and center-based instances related to positive interaction, punitiveness, detachment and permissiveness	Keywords, phrases, actions	Categorization and thematization, triangulation
7. Parental perception and understanding of quality care giving ,their reasons for sending children to preschool centers	participation, collaboration, communication	Categorization, thematization, triangulation, keywords, quotations

A framework for the analyses of the relationship between quality of care giver-child interaction in ECCE centers and outcome variable in the domain of social development and the mediating effect of certain structural and contextual variables in the child's developmental niche and views of parents is presented in Tables 9 and 10.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The general objective of this research was to describe and explain contexts that shaped the caring and educational roles of ECCE programs in transiting the preschool child to the wider culture of school life in Addis Ababa with emphasis to the analysis of quality care giver-child interaction and its relationship with social competence of preschool children. Quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to quality of care giver child interaction, social competence of preschool children solicited from observation of seventy centers and interviews conducted with parents were analyzed. The first section of the chapter deals with the analysis of quantitative data obtained from observation checklist in classrooms employing descriptive and inferential statistics to examine relationships between selected structural variables and quality care giver child interaction measures. That was followed by analysis of qualitative data obtained from field notes and series of observations carried out during indoor and outdoor activities. The third section deals with the analysis of qualitative data captured from interviews with parents on several issues related to parental participation and collaboration with ECCE centers. The fourth section attempts to analyze the relationship between selected structural and process variables with social competence of preschool children.

4.1. The status of care giver child interaction in ECCE centers

4.1.1. The relationship between care giver child interaction and selected structural variables

The first section of the chapter attempts to analyze data captured from observations carried out in classrooms and indoor activities where care givers and children interact in multiple settings to achieve mutual understanding and an optimal psychological satisfaction mainly targeting outcomes in the in the cognitive and social domains. Analysis pertaining to this section

emanated out of the quantification of data obtained from the use of checklist during the entire classroom observations. The research questions formulated from the outset to guide data type, data collection procedures and data analyses techniques relevant to the overall quality of care giver child interaction in center-based situations were:

- What is the status of quality care giver-child interaction in ECCE centers?
- Do structural variables such as center type, class size, care giver experience have significant effect on quality of care giver child interaction?

Data were analyzed for 70 ECCE centers selected using proportional random sampling technique representing private, government, and “Others” the third category denoted as faith and charity-based types. The effect of human and material resources on students’ achievement has been emphasized in the educational and psychological researches. Factors such as school infrastructure, class size, teacher experience, qualification and availability of instructional materials have been found important indicators of quality education especially in low-income countries (Parcel and Dufur). Raw data concerning class size, care givers educational level, duration of training in early childhood care and education and care givers teaching experience in ECCE centers were collected during classroom observations.

Quantitative data on the quality of care giver child interaction were collected using the twenty six CIS items and scores were computed for the observed class rooms. The statistical procedures used in the quantitative analyses included: data cleaning, checking of distributions for Multivariate normality, Homogeneity of covariance, descriptive statistics, correlations, and Wilk’s Lambda to test main and interaction effects in Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA).

The mean value for the overall CIS care giver child interaction scale was 3.29 with a standard deviation of 0.5289. The overall mean values computed from the CIS scale ranged between 1.73 and 3.96. An inspection of the separate mean values for the observed classrooms indicated that 43% of the observed classrooms were below this overall mean value. This figure is somehow nearer to the median value which apportions the distribution into two halves suggesting that quality of care giver interaction was below the average value in almost half of the observed classrooms.

Descriptive statistics for the four subscales was computed. Mean of the positive interaction subscale was 3.15 values the individual classrooms ranging from 1.50 to 4.00. Forty one percent of the observed classrooms fall below this mean score indicating that care giver child interactions in the ECCE centers was at moderate level. It would be more informative to see the nature of interaction with regard to each item in the subscales. The lowest mean value was for item ten ($M = 2.59$). This item reads “when talking to children kneels, bends, or sits at their level to establish better eye contact”. This suggested that one-to-one face interaction between care givers and children was low and care givers tended to be less-responsive to the children’s cues. The mean scores for items 17, and 19 that read “pays positive attention to the children as individuals” and “encourages children to exhibit prosocial behavior” were found to be below the average score for the scale suggesting that care givers behavior in terms of availing choices and opportunities for self development was not adequate.

The minimum and maximum values for the punitive sub scale were 1.44 and 4.00. The overall mean value was 3.54. A close inspection of the distribution of the mean values for the observed classrooms showed that 44% were below this mean value. The mean value for item

12 reads” places high value on obedience” was found to be 3.31. This is the lowest item mean value in the subscale. The next lower item mean values were for items 18,11, and 13 that read” expects children to stay calmly”, “is critical of the children”, and “ speaks with irritation to the children”($M=3.35$, $M=3.40$, and $M=3.47$ respectively)

The overall mean value for the detachment subscale was found to be 3.2. Item 21 that reads “spends considerable time in activity not involving interaction with children” and item 23 that reads” does not supervise the children very closely” had mean values of $M=3.09$ and $M=3.11$ respectively).

The permissiveness subscale was composed of three items. The overall mean value for the observed classrooms with regard to this subscale was 3.08. The mean value for item 26 that reads “exercises firmness when necessary” was 2.76. This value is towards the lower end of the scale suggesting that care givers tend to be permissive and hesitant in setting and practicing clear and concise rules.

The CIS care giver child interaction instrument items were formatted along a four point scale ranging from one to four. If a score of two and below is taken as undesirable and three and above as desirable, it is interesting to note that the mean values for the separate subscales fall to the upper end suggesting that quality of care giver child interactions are on the positive direction. It is however, interesting to closely inspect score distributions of each item in the four subscales (see appendix G). Except item No 10 in the positive interaction subscale that reads “ when talking to children, kneels, bends or sits at their level to establish better eye contact” and item 26 that reads “exercises firmness when necessary “($M=2.59$, and $M=2.76$) all other items were rated toward the upper end of the scale indicating that the overall quality of care giver child interaction was in the desired direction. What is more

interesting is the mean of the punitiveness subscale is greater when compared with the separate mean values of the other three subscales. When the negatively worded items in this subscale are coded in the reverse direction care givers behaviors were rated as non-punitive. A high score indicated non-punitive behavior of the care givers and high quality care giver child interaction. Results are shown in table 11.

It would be interesting to see the distribution of mean values with regard to center types. A score of two and below is taken as being low quality interaction. A score of three and above is taken as high quality care giver interaction. Extrapolating the points between these two ranges 2.5 is the midpoint. Classrooms whose mean values fall below this midpoint were taken as having low quality care giver child interaction profile. Analysis of the frequency distributions of mean values showed that 12 (32%) were in the “private” and “Other” category. A relatively more number of private centers had mean values below this midpoint. The lowest mean values ($M = 1.50$) and ($M = 1.00$) were recorded for the government center types in the positive interaction and punitiveness subscales. Similarly, the lowest mean values $M = 1.44$ for the positive interaction subscale, $M = 1.75$ for the detachment subscale were recorded in the private and “Other” center types. It is interesting to note here that the popular view that puts the private centers on the ivory tower in providing top quality ECCE program might not be always true especially when viewed in terms of quality care giver child interactions.

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for the Care giver Interaction Sub-scales (N=70)

Dependent variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					statistics	Std. Error	statistics	Std. Error
Positive Interaction	1.50	4.00	3.1500	.63560	-.765	.287	-.358	.566
Punitiveness	1.44	4.00	3.5444	.51290	-1.655	.287	3.413	.566
Detachment	1.75	4.00	3.2000	.80825	-.488	.287	-1.318	.566
Permissiveness	1.00	4.00	3.0810	.75381	-.605	.287	-.050	.566

In order to examine the effect of selected center based variables such as center type, class size, and care giver experience on quality of care giver child interaction, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and as a follow up technique Univariate Analysis of Variance(ANOVA were carried out. The basic research question formulated for this particular section was:

- Do structural variables such as center type, class size, and care giver experience have significant effects on quality of care giver child interaction?

One way analysis of variance was carried out to see if there is statistically significant mean difference between the three center types with regard to quality of care giver interactions. The variable center type was trichotomized into three levels: private, government and “Others”. The third category included faith and charity-based centers. Descriptive statistics for the three center types with regard to the four measures of quality care giver child interaction are shown in Table12.

Table 12: Descriptive statistics on the four measures of the care giver child interaction and center types

Subscales and center types		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower	Upper		
						Bound	Bound		
Positive interaction	Government	23	3.1870	.70344	.14668	2.8828	3.4911	1.50	4.00
	Private	23	3.0391	.66656	.13899	2.7509	3.3274	1.80	3.90
	Others	24	3.2208	.54292	.11082	2.9916	3.4501	2.20	4.00
	Total	70	3.1500	.63560	.07597	2.9984	3.3016	1.50	4.00
Punitiveness	Government	23	3.6039	.44169	.09210	3.4129	3.7949	2.22	4.00
	Private	23	3.4541	.62578	.13048	3.1835	3.7247	1.44	4.00
	Others	24	3.5741	.46414	.09474	3.3781	3.7701	2.33	4.00
	Total	70	3.5444	.51290	.06130	3.4221	3.6667	1.44	4.00
Detachment	Government	23	3.3913	.73014	.15224	3.0756	3.7070	2.00	4.00
	Private	23	3.0652	.90522	.18875	2.6738	3.4567	1.75	4.00
	Others	24	3.1458	.77990	.15920	2.8165	3.4752	1.75	4.00
	Total	70	3.2000	.80825	.09660	3.0073	3.3927	1.75	4.00
Permissiveness	Government	23	3.0290	.75821	.15810	2.7011	3.3569	1.00	4.00
	Private	23	3.1014	.74830	.15603	2.7779	3.4250	1.67	4.00
	Others	24	3.1111	.78431	.16010	2.7799	3.4423	1.33	4.00
	Total	70	3.0810	.75381	.09010	2.9012	3.2607	1.00	4.00

Histograms with normal curves were used to verify the fulfillment of normality assumption for the subscales (see appendix-H). The normal Q-Q plots of the observed values of each of the scales were compared against the expected normal distribution. No serious departure from the normality assumption was seen from the scatter plots (see Appendix- I). Having fulfilled the normality assumption, one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to see if there is statistically significant difference between the three center types in terms of quality care giver child interaction measures. “F” ratios for all four measures of care giver child interaction did not reach statistical significance indicating that center types did not differ in quality of care giver child interaction in center based ECCE programs. Results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Summary of ANOVA table

Dependent variables	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Positive Interaction	Between Groups	.435	2	.217	.531	.591
	Within Groups	27.440	67	.410		
	Total	27.875	69			
Punitiveness	Between Groups	.290	2	.145	.544	.583
	Within Groups	17.862	67	.267		
	Total	18.152	69			
Detachment	Between Groups	1.330	2	.665	1.019	.367
	Within Groups	43.745	67	.653		
	Total	45.075	69			
Permissiveness	Between Groups	.094	2	.047	.080	.923
	Within Groups	39.114	67	.584		
	Total	39.208	69			

Average class size for the observed classrooms was found to be 36.88 with standard deviation 11.78. Experience as measured by number of years served in ECCE centers ranged between 1 and 32 which is so wide and thinly distributed at both ends. The mean value for experience was 8.44 with standard deviation 6.27. Results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Descriptive statistics for the variables class size and care givers' experience (N=70)

Independent Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Class size	5.00	63.00	36.88	11.78	.141	.287	-.198	.566
Experience	1.00	32.00	8.44	6.27	1.649	.287	3.511	.566

Mean values for the observed classrooms were computed from the total Care giver Interaction Scale and for the four subscales separately. Classroom size and care givers' experience were taken as independent variables and the four sub-scales computed from the care givers interaction scale as dependent variables. Class size was dichotomized into two levels. Class size below the average value and class size above the mean value were taken as the two levels. Similarly after close inspection of the frequency distribution of care givers'

experience, this variable was dichotomized into two levels; seven years and below as one category and eight and above as another category.

MANOVA is a generalization of ANOVA that allows simultaneously treatment of more than one dependent and independent variables. A benefit of MANOVA over univariate techniques is that it handles multiple dependent measures and allows for the multiple operationalizations of constructs and for the analysis of the relationships between groups and among dependent measures. In MANOVA mean differences on two or more dependent criteria are evaluated simultaneously (Bray & Maxwell, 1985 cited in Bray, H. ; Maxwell ,Scott, E. and Cole ,1995)). Distinct but conceptually related measures of interaction were obtained from each classroom. Positive interaction, punitiveness, detachment and permissiveness were taken as dependent measures of care giver interaction and multivariate analysis of variance was carried out to see the relationship between center types, class size and caregivers teaching experience and the four dependent variables. Multivariate Analysis of Variance as statistical analysis was used to ask whether a combination of the four quality care giver child interaction measures varies as a function of class size and care givers teaching experience in ECCE centers. Mean scores on all the four measures for each classroom served as dependent variables.

Before running the multivariate test, the following assumptions were checked.

a. Multivariate normality

- Each of the dependent variables in the CIS scale (positive interaction, punitiveness, detachment and permissiveness) was checked for normal distribution separately and jointly. Bivariate normality between the dependent variables was checked using the elliptical pattern of the distribution on scatter plots.

- The second assumption was independence of observations. Observation shall be placed once and only once in the respective cells.

b. Homogeneity of Covariance (HOC)

- The most common approach to investigate HOC in MANOVA is BOX'S M test. Statistical significance of BOX's-M test in Multivariate Analysis of Variance is violation of the distribution of the dependent variables from normality.

Each pair of the dependent variables was checked for bivariate normality using scatter plots. The scatter plots looked elliptical indicating that all the dependent variables are normally distributed. The assumption of independence of observations was verified in the sense that all groups were mutually exclusive and measurements were not repeated. Stem and leaf displays were used to inspect for normality within each of the four cells in this 2x2 design. Skewness, and kurtosis statistics were also within the acceptable range for each group across the four cells of the two independent variables. Accordingly, the assumption of normality was fulfilled to run the factorial MANOVA in the data. Results of the BOX-M test for Homogeneity of Covariance (HOC) was not statistically significant, BOX-M=48.495, $F(30,11593.321)=1.436$, $P=.06$. Therefore, HOC was also reasonably assumed to run MANOVA.

Correlation coefficients were computed between the four dependent variables. All Coefficients were found to be positive and statistically significant. The smallest coefficient was between the Punitive subscale and the Permissiveness subscale ($r=0.290$). The highest correlation coefficient was between Positive interaction subscale and the Detachment subscale ($r=0.765$). Results are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Bivariate correlations between the four CIS subscales (N=70)

Dependent Var.	Positive Int.	Punitiveness	Detachment	Permissive
Positive Int.		.460**	.765**	.744**
Punitive	—	—	.550**	.290*
Detachment	—	—	—	.655**

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*****. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Factorial Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was carried out to investigate the effects of classroom size and care givers' experience on the four dependent variables. Specific research questions pertinent to quality of care giver child interaction and its relationship to class size and care givers' experience that address two main effects and one interaction effect were formulated.

- Averaging across the two levels of class size, is there a difference on the composite score created for the four dependent variables?
- Averaging across the two levels of experience, is there a difference on the composite score created for the four dependent variables?
- Does the effect of class size differ as a function of care givers' experience on the composite score of the four dependent variables?

Three multivariate tests were conducted on the four dependent variables. Two main effects for the independent variables class size and care givers' experience and one interaction effect for the combination of class size and experience were determined. The interaction of class size by experience was found to be statistically significant, Wilk's $\Lambda=0.850$, $F(4,63)$, $P<0.03$, partial eta-hat-square $\eta^2=0.150$. Since Wilk's Λ is the variance not

accounted for by the interaction of the two independent variables,1- Wilk's Λ is the variance accounted for by the interaction effect of class size and care givers' experience. Hence, 16 % of the generalized variance in the four dependent variables was accounted for by the interaction of class size and care givers experience. By Cohen's standards (Cohen &Cohen, 1985) the variance accounted by these two independent variables was moderately sufficient. Multivariate test results are shown in Table16.

Table 16:Multivariate Test: class size and care givers experience on quality of care giver interaction

Variables	Effect	Value	F	Hypot h df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squ.	Noncent. Parameter	Observ ed Power
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.985	1032.021b	4.000	63.000	.000	.985	4128.086	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.015	1032.021b	4.000	63.000	.000	.985	4128.086	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	65.5	1032.021b	4.000	63.000	.000	.985	4128.086	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	65.5	1032.021b	4.000	63.000	.000	.985	4128.086	1.000
Class size	Pillai's Trace	.098	1.703b	4.000	63.000	.161	.098	6.810	.493
	Wilks' Lambda	.902	1.703b	4.000	63.000	.161	.098	6.810	.493
	Hotelling's Trace	.108	1.703b	4.000	63.000	.161	.098	6.810	.493
	Roy's Largest Root	.108	1.703b	4.000	63.000	.161	.098	6.810	.493
Experience	Pillai's Trace	.099	1.735b	4.000	63.000	.153	.099	6.940	.502
	Wilks' Lambda	.901	1.735b	4.000	63.000	.153	.099	6.940	.502
	Hotelling's Trace	.110	1.735b	4.000	63.000	.153	.099	6.940	.502
	Roy's Largest Root	.110	1.735b	4.000	63.000	.153	.099	6.940	.502
Class size * Experience	Pillai's Trace	.150	2.783b	4.000	63.000	.034	.150	11.132	.732
	Wilks' Lambda	.850	2.783b	4.000	63.000	.034	.150	11.132	.732
	Hotelling's Trace	.177	2.783b	4.000	63.000	.034	.150	11.132	.732
	Roy's Largest Root	.177	2.783b	4.000	63.000	.034	.150	11.132	.732

b. Exact statistic

c. Computed using $\alpha = .05$

Averaging across class size, there was no statistical evidence for a difference between classrooms below and above the cutoff point; Wilk's $\Lambda=0.902$, $F(4, 63) = 1.703$, $p=.16$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.099$. Averaging across experience, there was no statistical evidence for a difference between the two groups with respect to quality of interaction (Wilk's $\Lambda=0.901$, $F(4,63)=1.735$, $p=.15$, partial eta squared $\eta^2 = .099$). Summary of MANOVA is shown in Table 17.

Table 17: MANOVA Summary

Effect	Wilk's Λ	p	partial η^2
Class size x Experience	0.850	0 .03	0.150
Class size	0.902	0.16	0.098
Experience	0.901	0.15	0.099

Omnibus "F" test showed significant interaction effect of class size and care givers experience on the four CIS dependent variables. MANOVA analysis offers unique advantages over univariate ANOVA. However, combination of univariate and multivariate approaches provides useful information for the interpretation of the unique and common contribution of each variable. A follow-up technique to MANOVA was pursued following a statistically significant multivariate interaction test to examine the corresponding univariate ANOVA for each measure of caregiver interaction dependent variables. A step down follow-up analysis would help to disclose this relationship (Tabachnick, & Fidell, 2007, Bray, James H. , Maxwell ,Scott E. & Cole ,David,1995). One of the techniques to identify which of the dependent variables was effected by the interaction of class size and care givers experience is to order the dependent variables logically in terms of their practical and theoretical importance and run regular ANOVA's . Univariate 'F' tests were made only for the interaction effect on the four dependent variables separately, with Positive Interaction entered first and the remaining dependent variables as covariates. Alternatively each of the

dependent variables was entered into the model while the remaining dependent variables acted as covariates. After adjusting for the effects of the other dependent variables, a statistically significant interaction effect was found on the Detachment subscale $F(2, 53) = 7.34, p = .002, \eta^2 = .270$.

4.1.2. Specific classroom and center-based instances that can be attributed to quality care giver-child interaction?

At the end of the CIS scale three open ended questions were framed to capture qualitative data on contexts in which ECCE programs are run, classroom situations and care givers and children's overall behavior in due course of interaction. Case reports were also included in the analysis to have an in-depth understanding of the situation prevailing in the centers and the extent to which these circumstances promoted positive interaction between children and care givers. The overall approach of collecting and analyzing the qualitative data was based on the assumption that the natural setting is the direct source of data. The approach focused on description of events in the process of care giver child interaction in multiple settings rather than focusing on the outcomes resulting from this interaction. The data obtained from field notes taken throughout the data collection phase complemented the qualitative data obtained through the open ended questions. Multiple realities in the ECCE environment enabled collection of thick and rich data pertaining to care givers and children's behavior resulting from the interaction process. This section attempts to answer the following research question.

- What specific classroom and center-based instances can be attributed to quality care giver-child interactions?

4.1.2.1. Description of the contexts in which ECCE programs function

The contexts for the observation have brought a number of different scenarios which had substantial meanings in terms of care giver child interactions. Some of the scenarios enhanced affective feelings and reciprocities between care givers and children while others had negative connotations on children's development. Contexts vary with respect to center types; private, government and faith-based type's .Scenario varied with respect to time of observation; before classrooms begins, while classrooms were on progress, lunch and snack times. Observation scenarios varied with regard to not only center types but also within center types. Faith-based centers, for example, vary in terms of the religious rituals they perform. The private centers, for example, vary in terms of physical facilities and furnishings. In general the situation in the private centers seemed appealing compared to the government ones in terms of facilities and furnishings. The situation in these centers seemed appealing in terms of safety and hygienic conditions. Much more, the popular view in the society favors the private centers. It is true that the government centers particularly the newly emerged zero-grades are working under impoverished environments. Popular view is not always true. Some private centers had bigger class sizes than the average figure. Parallel to this argument, it is not uncommon to find 30-40 children in the government owned centers. Hence, data pertaining to center types are captured along these different dimensions and contexts. Process-based observations in the different center types resulted in soliciting diverse contextual data.

Some of the contexts under which the observations were carried out were attractive and interactive. Devotion scenarios (Flag ceremonies) were not places only for singing the National Anthem. Classrooms were not places only for developing literacy and numeric

abilities. They were also places for socialization. Play grounds were not only places for wilderness. They were places for goal oriented motor activities. Classrooms were decorated by rich and stimulating materials. They were meant to develop children's imagination, fantasy, and thought processes. Play grounds were also places for nurturing certain values and virtues that arise from affectionate relationship between peers. They were places for exercising peaceful conflict resolution that arise from engaging in cooperative and competitive games. Specific contexts that impacted care giver child interaction were identified during observation sessions and their overall scenes and contents are described below based on field notes taken during observations.

Devotion time

Regardless of race (foreigners care and teach in some of the private centers), ethnicity, religion, sex, and other background characteristics eye catching episodes are performed during devotion time. Devotion time is the peak, pinnacle, high momentum context in the interaction process. The situation during devotion time was moving in a kind of ascending order, following chain of events. The moving scenario in simple terms was that actions that pack in a less movement occur first, while actions that come next were more complex as they were pushed by the preceding event and thus the momentum accelerates leading to the climax of the care giver child interaction. The true meaning of care giver child interaction gets meaning here. Devotion time was not simply a set of acts. Rather it was well planned and systematically structured event with clear objectives. It starts with simple episodes and gradually transcends into complex set of events and movements that promote children's holistic development in the area of cognitive, affective and social domains. A designated care giver takes the lead. In almost all cases this designation of responsibility goes to the younger

ones. All care givers, however, were part of the scene. They were not bystanders. The scene starts with greetings. In some non-secular centers it started with daily prayers. Monday is atypically day. Nails and hair should be cut. Uniforms should be neat and tidy. Care givers supervise the hygienic status of children. A child who is not to the standard for that particular day is advised and instructed. Care givers were so meticulous of not ridiculing or harming the child's ego in these events. That was followed by brief age-appropriate physical exercise. Left-right hand stretching, head shoulder up-down movements, left-right and circular heap twisting and deep breathing. All motor movements are accompanied with hand clapping, songs, chorus, rhythms and voices of euphoria. The general pattern of the flag ceremony was same across the different center types. However, songs vary from center to center. The language, the content of the songs could vary depending on the value the center attaches. In Muslim oriented ECCE center, for example, children sing in three languages; Amharic, English, and Arab. First period also starts with religious songs followed by songs that cherish their school and country at large. In one of the faith-based centers, for example, where care givers are affiliated to be member of Protestant church, spiritual songs are common every morning including the national anthem despite the fact that some children kept silent may be for different religious affiliations. Few of the songs signaling the deliberation of classroom activities are narrated below.

1. I love you

I love you, you love me

We are happy family

With a great big hug and kiss from me to you

Won't you say you love me too?

2. If I'm

If I'm I'm S^S

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4. 1, 2, 3, 4

1, 2, 3, 4

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4.1.2.2. Description about classrooms observed

First sessions in the classrooms continue with similar zeal and positive emotions paralleling the devotion time. Observed classrooms range from the chaotic to well and professionally organized ones. Within these two extremes one could observe a mixture of scenes that could have positive and negative bearings on children's development. Class size, space, arrangement of facilities, physical set up, organization and display of learning and stimulating materials and their contribution to children's development vary from center to center. Despite these variations, one could possibly argue that there was lots of promising classroom situations that promoted care giver child interaction and contributed to children's development in the cognitive and social domains.

Movement is directly related to space. Movement entails interaction by narrowing the physical and social distance. Classrooms within the average size promote easy flow of information and one to one interaction. Bigger class sizes constrict movement. Small sized classrooms something like 3x3 accommodated as many children as 30. Even in bigger classrooms students sit congested 3 or 4 on a single bench. Some classrooms were awkward.

Not only their size but their geometrical shape doesn't lend for easy interaction and movement. Size to width is not proportional.

In small sized classrooms space limitation enforced care givers to limit themselves in close proximity to the blackboard. This in turn shaped the classroom environment to be care giver-dominated. .It resulted in minimal or no opportunity for children to interact with the environment in multiple ways and directions. Space limitation enforced fixed sitting arrangement and unidirectional eye and body gestures. Sitting arrangements were not solely dictated by space. Religious doctrines and life styles as well had their own implications in centers with Islamic orientation. Sitting arrangements had a different picture. Boys and girls did not sit intermingled. Boys and girls sit in separate rows. The interaction was limited to eye-to-eye contact. Physical contact was prohibited. This kind of sitting arrangement has its roots in Islamic religious doctrine. Islam puts limit to the mix up of men and women in public. The logic behind is, the more men and women are mixed up, the more it becomes easy to have either extra marital or early marriage relationships. It is assumed that that type of relationship can have negative consequences such as increased number of divorces, high number of unmarried young people, and the possibility of upbringing children in a single parent family. Accordingly, the cumulative effect of these will be disturbed social system. Limited mix up of boys and girls continues at least up to age 15 which is a mark for puberty. However, this pattern of relationship between boys and girls is influenced by ways of life, societal norms and practices. Some argue that these kinds of practices should begin at early age so that children experience them at early age. According to Islam, children should learn good things from parents, adults and their environment. They should be a role model for their children. Children are free and anything they do cannot amount to sin before age 15.

Care givers, therefore, are encouraged to treat children as gentle as possible with no difference between boys and girls.

Fixed sitting arrangement is likely to impede interaction. It impeded, for example, complete visualization of the environment. Hence, child-to-child interaction in the observed classrooms was seriously jeopardized. Large class sizes limited the opportunity for individual care and support. These were important scenes the researcher captured during classroom observations. The presence of child-sized seats opened the opportunity for restructuring and configuring the classroom setting in such a way that it promoted care giver-to-child and child-to-child interactions. Moveable chairs as opposed to fixed and big-sized desks did not create territorial claim among children. Interestingly some of the centers had blackboards fixed on opposite walls. This kind of arrangement facilitated effective use of the physical environment and furnishings. Care givers were seen to effectively transit children from one activity to the other without taking too much time on one activity. The private center types popularly appreciated for quality of service do not overwhelmingly fulfill the standard class size. The newly opened zero-grade government owned centers are not also the worst place in terms of class size. There were a number of government-owned centers with abundant space. What was interesting is the presence of space does not necessarily favor care giver-child interactions. Government- owned centers with spacious classrooms did not effectively use the space to promote care giver child interactions and child-to-child interactions. Many of the newly opened government owned zero-grade classrooms are functioning within the premises of the formal school system. It seems that they have similar classroom sitting arrangements with the formal classrooms. This

stereotyped classroom configuration with inappropriate child-sized physical settings paralleled the formal school classrooms.

In its entirety all classrooms observed were stuffed by stimulating learning and teaching materials ranging from teacher-made to child-made from local to industrial products. In not few cases classrooms were stuffed wall to wall with pictures, drawings, numbers, letters, real objects, and a host of materials found in the micro-macro ecological contexts. In not few cases again classrooms were congested with learning and stimulating materials to the extent that the materials excessively covering the walls and spaces difficult to read and pick them for immediate use

One could possibly say that care givers have made maximum effort to make their classroom environment stimulating and child friendly to enhance interactions. In most cases these materials were paper works than being objects with three dimensions. The interaction was more of paper and pencil than being humanly. Many centers in the capital propagate that their programs are aligned to the Montessori child education philosophy. None of the classrooms observed, however, had sand trays, clays, or objects that children can work with. Availability of learning and teaching materials is one opportunity. Access to these materials and their effective utilization is another bigger opportunity. In spite of the fact that care givers tended to stick to the traditional chalk-talk method, these learning materials did not seem to serve any meaningful purpose. Their use value did not seem to go beyond decorating classroom walls. The undesirable scenario was children did not have access to these materials. In case these materials are used it was through the mediator; the care giver. In most cases the interaction was formal the care giver acting as an authoritative figure. Child-environment link was subordinate to this relational process. There was no direct contact

between the children and these materials. In all classrooms observed there was no attempt to switch the interaction between care givers and children to children and physical materials posted on walls and displayed on tables. The interaction process between care givers and children and child -to-material were all confined in sedentary style without any physical movement from one place to another.

Major classroom constituents posted on walls

- Pictures of wild animals like Lion, Zebra, Buffalo, Birds, Domestic animals;
- Body parts;
- Vegetables;
- Colors;
- Alphabet English, Amharic, Arabic;
- Numbers in words and numerals;
- Vocabularies representing all walks of human life;
- Mathematical symbols.

The posted and displayed materials on the wall and tables are not limited to these.

The good thing is that these materials were not put haphazardly. Rather they were clustered along subject areas. Classrooms were departmentalized as mathematics corner, language corner, and environmental science corner.

Observations at play grounds and during break times

Play grounds, snack and lunch time breaks are ideal natural settings to observe care giver child interaction and child-to-child interactions. Preschool play grounds and break time activities parallel natural settings in the child's home environment. During observations, the researcher was able to recognize that ECCE centers widely varied in terms of space and

furnishings for outdoor interactions. Some centers had spacious play grounds. Others were functioning in a constricted physical environment. In most cases play grounds were either concrete or covered by gravel. It is not uncommon for children to stumble on physical objects. Trees are randomly and haphazardly planted. In a brief break-time observation one could easily encounter two or more incidences of physical injuries of children. Let alone to have space for relaxed motor activities, it is even difficult to find space for a child to be engaged in solitary play. There seems serious space limitation in the private centers. Many of the private centers are functioning in houses which were once built as residential quarters. The interior part of these houses was restructured and partitioned into smaller classrooms. The newly opened government owned zero-grade preschool centers are functioning in the premises of the already established primary schools. These preschool centers are operating at one end of these establishments. There are no special structural adjustments except that there is a fence that separated them from the formal grade levels. Without exception almost all ECCE centers; private, government or “Other”(faith-based and charity ECCE centers) have swinging apparatuses, sliders, merry go rounds despite space limitations to promote gross motor activities.

In some centers classrooms serve multiple purposes. They serve as dining rooms. They serve as nap taking places. The private centers seem to provide better nap taking space compared to the government ones. In not few cases the private centers have separate nap taking and dining halls. Nap taking does not seem a scheduled phenomenon for the upper kindergarten children. It all depends on personal choice. Instead of nap taking some children go out of the classroom and play with peer groups without being supervised by care givers.

4.1.2.3. Description of care givers' profile

Care givers' age range between 21 and 58 years. The mean age is 31 years with standard deviation of 8.21. About 57 % of care givers were below the mean denoting that many of the care givers are in the younger age group. Sixteen percent of them had secondary education whereas 81% had above grade 12 education. With regard to their training only 4.4% joined preschool teaching without any training whereas 95.6% had training ranging from three months to one year. The older batch passed through intensive preschool teacher training programs under the auspices of ministry of education and Nongovernmental Organizations. Some ten years back private colleges in the capital and regions opened training programs and started to produce kindergarten teachers. There was a wide variation among these private colleges and institutions in their training programs in terms of curriculum, duration of training, trainees and trainers' profile.

Care givers included in this study are all females. The traditional stereotyped outlook that segregated males and females into different professions is typically evidenced in preschool teaching career in the Ethiopian context. Traditionally, care giving is females' exclusive responsibility. Teaching especially kindergarten teaching where consistent care and follow up is needed, the task seems to be ascribed to females. The unwelcoming story is that female high school graduates unable to join higher education institutions are front liners to join this profession. The high number of preschool teachers with grade twelve and below grade 12 education levels is a further testimony that the market is open to this gender group. This low profile of care givers in terms of academic background is exemplified in their low language skills and lack of conceptual understanding in some areas of the cognitive domain. During classroom observations it was possible to capture spelling mistakes, grammatical

inconsistencies, and other related conceptual mistakes that can be attributed to their low educational backgrounds.

A number of care givers' behaviors in the cognitive domain were not proper in terms of capacitating children's language and communication skills. These include improper pronunciations, incorrect grammar usage, spelling and conceptual errors. Some of the misspelled words, conceptual errors and words posted on the wall or written on the blackboard captured during classroom observations are shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Spelling and conceptual errors

Spelling errors		Conceptual errors	
Words	Errors	Words	Errors
Vowels	voules	Tell	Say
Tongue	toungue	like	Found
Nail	neil	See	look
Tiger	Tigre	Listen	hear
Zebra	zebre		
Perfume	parfum		
beside	besid		
small	smell		
cobra	kobra		
tooth	toothe		

While actual learning was in progress, it was common for care givers to make wrong pronunciations and phonetic distortions. What is more, in rehearsing words children were encouraged to pronounce the misspelled words or the wrong concepts loudly. In almost all centers children were encouraged to say words in extremely loud voices to the extent that it was impossible to hear what they echoed. The more they repeat loudly, the more it seemed to the care giver that they are learning. The researcher saw this situation as an impediment to child-care giver interaction particularly in identifying child-based interests and providing support on an individual basis. The modern ECCE classrooms seem to have much communality with the church and Koran teaching methods. Although it is advisable to accompany the learning of words and sentences using chorus, the syllabi in the respective words were not uttered out in their natural manner. Indeed, it was sickening to observe a care giver pronouncing not only the word ‘scissors’ as ‘successors’ but also urging her students to mimic her a minimum of five times.

In the observed centers much emphasis was given to the development of numeric and literacy with little or no attention to other aspects of development such as prosocial behavior and communication skills. Classroom sessions were didactically structured in a rigid and fixed manner like that of the formal school system. Lesson plans were prepared in exactly the same way in the formal school system allowing little or no room for activities other than the development of literacy and numeric abilities. In almost all cases teachers wanted children to show their excellence and brevity in reading, writing and computational skills. The transition from one activity to the next was so slow and does not transcend in a natural pace. Hence, children were forced to stay idle detached from any meaningful interaction with care givers and peers which ultimately perpetuated disciplinary problems in the classrooms.

Except in rare cases care givers were found to be highly affectionate with a sense of close attachment with children. Physical punishment seems exception than being a rule to discipline children. The traditional view that children should show strict adherence to adults' obligations seems to wither away gradually. One could witness those traditional adults' views, beliefs and attitudes toward children are getting changing for the betterment of their development. Spare the rod and spoil the child principle seems obsolete. Care givers in their interaction with children did not make use of the strategy of maintaining discipline with a rod of iron. Punishment especially physical punishment is becoming absurd in disciplining children and its relevance is becoming outmoded in the face of ECCE centers. This is a new perspective in child rearing practices in the Ethiopian society. A number of instances observed during data collection process substantiated the affectionate relationship between care givers and ECCE children.

In some centers care giver child interaction begins outside the main gate. Care givers with their white gowns make a queue just outside the main gate. By the time the child is dropped by his/her parent or any significant person, he/she is expected to greet every care giver awaiting there. Care givers kiss, hug, and make brief communication with the child about his/her home, mom and dad. This is also an important moment for care giver-parent interactions. Brief communications are exchanged. The status of the child is reported by the care givers at that brief moment. If there is something that worries parents, it is at this particular moment opinions exchanged and temporary solutions suggested. The situation demonstrated that it is impossible to rule out the importance of supportive relationship between parents and care givers to meet the physical and psychological needs of children.

Care givers' affection is a substitute for unsecured parental love and care at home. At times they are better than the biological parents. Children prefer to stay in early childhood care and education centers than living and growing in hostile family environments. Partly they played a parenting role. They themselves have children at home. The love, affection children lacked at home was secured by these care givers in ECCE centers. The emotional warmth, physical and psychological stimulations, the caring attitude were all proven ways to put the child on the right path of development. A child deprived of adult interactions at home environment entertains relaxed feelings and enjoys care givers love and affection in the process of interaction in a reciprocating way in a center-based setting. Early childhood care and education environment is uncontested developmental niche for the child. Care givers are not only substituting for those children who face one or another form of deprivation in the family but also an option for those living and growing in supporting family environment.

In not few cases care givers had multiple responsibilities. They acted as facilitators or assistant directors on top of their daily routines. Although they seemed to be exhausted from this daily hassle, they discharged their responsibilities with utmost diligence and morale. Care givers in a given classroom shared equal responsibilities. Otherwise, though not emphatically spelled out, one is said to have the status of lead teacher and the in-experienced one acted as an assistant. In the Ethiopian context the two care givers discharged their duties and responsibilities on equal basis. Unlike the Western care giving system, one is not a lead teacher and the other an assistant. For instance, in a given session, language is taught by one of the care givers while the other takes her turn and starts teaching arithmetic. In the mean time both of them interchangeably check exercise books and monitor discipline. Interestingly, the two care givers at times show quite different temperaments, which clearly

exhibited the pattern of care givers behaviors. It is likely that such situation would cause role model ambiguity among children.

At times one assistant served two classrooms. Episodically she moved between two classrooms. At times the role of the assistant care giver was played by children themselves like, for example, distributing and collecting exercise books. In terms of personal qualities these care givers were well mannered; highly devoted to their profession and well being of the children they cared. Many of the care givers in the young age group had fascinating behaviors appealing to children and were good role models.

4.1.2.4. Care giver behavioral repertoires related to quality caregiver-child interactions

The Classroom Interaction Scale was formatted to capture qualitative data. Along each item a separate space was provided for capturing specific behavioral instances that promote or obstruct care giver child interactions. Furthermore, words and phrases that describe the meaning of each item were carefully sorted out from the literature and put in parenthesis along each item. Ninety five words and phrases were carefully selected from the literature, analyzed for their relevance and categorized along the four dimensions in the CIS observation checklist. Naturalistic observation is so complex. The use of such descriptive words and phrases in observational studies would help as filters to decide the incidence of specific instances in a particular context and setting. These at the spot behavioral instances captured during care giver-children interaction are thematically categorized along the four subscales; Positive Interaction, Punitiveness, Detachment and Permissiveness dimensions. Case reports were also included in the analysis to have an in-depth understanding of the situation prevailing in the centers and the extent to which these circumstances promoted positive interactions between care givers and children.

Instances of positive interaction

- Posting names of top students of the week on classroom walls and displaying their work for others;
- Posting names of best performing group leaders on classroom walls and displaying their work for others;
- Assigning children to take multiple responsibilities;
- Conducting lessons dramatically ;
- Care givers attempt to know details about children;
- Care givers hug, kiss and play with children;
- Care givers interest in their job despite the challenges;
- Care givers supporting children, for example, sharpening pencils, showing sensitivity to children's problems;
- Care givers skill and willingness to use different learning materials such as puzzles and teacher made materials.

Instances of punitive behavior

- Unnecessarily restricting the movement of children; forcing them to sit in one place outside the classroom;
- Ignoring children's small successes, for example, unrewarding the child with only one error while appraising those with no mistakes;
- Placing high value on obedience, for example, remarks such as ' Don't talk', ' Cross your hands on your chest' etc.;
- Expecting overt perfection like negotiating for unrealistic discipline;

- Using roaring voice and being watch full for prolonged period to see obedience, by saying, for example, “Hands on chest don’t move. If you move we will get into open fight”;
- Emitting coarse voice, “Did I say that? get out there”;
- Strong tone of rejection “You messed, spoiled the dining hall”;
- Being agitated care giver puts finger on mouth insisting children not to breathe even a word;
- Tone of threatening “I don’t want to see any child who is not able to read”;
- Humiliating a child by posing a question, for example, “Who is fat in this class?”
- Verbal insults for example “*askeyame*” meaning ugly;
- Threatening behavior ”If you don’t follow rules you know what follows”

Instances of detachment

- Lack of close supervision such as leaving children unattended while playing risky games;
- Minimal or no attention to children with disability: a case in point was , a female child around 4/5 years old apparently looking mental retarded was observed putting dust and other materials into her mouth and playing alone excluded from other children;
- Carelessness on the part of care givers-Children dinning in the open air, sitting on play ground exposed to dust;
- Refraining from eye-to eye contact with children with a sense of disappointment;
- No or meager attention to children with silent or docile behavior;

- Paying little or no meaningful attention to children who isolated themselves from the group;
- Allotting less time to child-to-child interactions;
- Existence of some children being out of sight and not recognized by care givers;
- Unidirectional classroom interaction and spending much time on the traditional chalk and talk method;
- More of paper and pencil interaction than the human aspect;
- Giving more attention to routine activities than attempting to identify the missing elements in the cognitive and social development;
- Absence of conditions that motivate children to learn from each other;
- Disorganized group-based learning conditions;
- Much focus on routine activities such as checking and correcting exercise books;
- Boring scenario at times spending not less than 10-20' in one activity; Care givers being idle for prolonged time;
- Being disinterested to be called (Repeatedly saying ' Don't call me miss, miss, miss);
- Showing insensitivity to problems i.e. leaving children for extended period without educational materials: ;
- Reservation to give suggestion or comment on what has been done;
- Focusing on few and selected children only;
- A feeling of boredom, fatigue (Why do you bother me so much?)
- Exhibiting a state of disinterest to solve children's problem with remarks such as "Go home and ask your father or mother"

Instances of permissive behavior

- Unsupervised or unattended scenario during break time. No less than 80% of the children spend the break time unsupervised;
- Non-interference to disturbances, lack of close supervision;
- Watching children but not actually making any meaningful interaction;
- Little or no appropriate measures to control misbehaving children;
- Children climb on tables, kneel on the floor and scribble on the wall unnoticed by care givers ;
- Lack of close follow up to minor health irregularities; for instance, a child claiming stomach discomfort goes to a toilet unescorted;
- Insensitivity to a child's hygiene, for example eating before washing, and leaving lunch box/snacks without being covered.

4.1.3. Case reports

Observational case study technique within the general mixed research approach was chosen to move from broad exploratory observations to more directed data collection and analysis of activities and situations in selected center types. This approach helped to identify particular center types with atypical properties in program implementation. Field notes on the overall situation that could be implicated to quality care giver child interaction in the centers were taken during indoor and outdoor observations. Case analysis of three centers are described below.

4.1.3.1. Case analysis one (Community-based center type)

A day before my appearance in the center, I took an appointment for a classroom observation. I arrived at 8:00 a.m. The guard was there. Very briefly I introduced myself and

the purpose of my visit. He listened with curiosity and advised me to stay outside the gate until the director and care givers arrive. Early comers stayed with me outside the gate. They too are not allowed to get into the compound before the arrival of care givers. Some of them are coming from distant places walking all the way without being escorted by a parent or any other significant person. I saw a good number of them, their faces covered with sweat and/or their clothes spoiled with mud, a sign for walking a long way. Many of the adults who escorted the children drop them at the gate and hurriedly run to carry out their daily errands. The center is located along a road that serves pedestrians, carts, and vehicles. It is not difficult to imagine that these children are vulnerable to all sorts' of danger that could threaten their well being. The guard plays dual role. Apart from his daily routine as a guard, he takes care of their well being till the arrival of care givers. He offers custodial service.

The center is a faith-based supported by Norwegians. It was meant to support poor children in the community. Parents are from the downtrodden section of the population, comprising daily laborers, petty commodity traders and the like, practically with meager or no income. Children are screened on the basis of their poverty status to get access to the center. Kebele administration arbitrates their poverty status. Once three urban dwellers give their testimony about their impoverished home environment, they are entitled to join the center.

Some children come without lunch boxes. During lunch time the luckiest ones' eat while the have-nots stay outside. Some parents bring a piece of bread or anything available late in the afternoon for those who did not carry their lunch boxes. Poverty deprives the fulfillment of basic biological needs. Its lasting effect is physical as well as a psychological one. It is a threat to the child's ego development. It is touching to see a child sitting

bewildered while his/her peers eating something from their lunch boxes. Ethiopian children from low income population are growing under deprivation: deprived of food, deprived of hygienic environment, deprived of affection: growing in a vicious circle of poverty.

At 3:30 pm it is time to go home. Everybody is hurried to leave the compound. Again the luckiest ones find a close person or a parent waiting to pick them. The unfortunates should again stay outside the gate until somebody comes and pick them. At times this may last until late evening. I learnt that children who are not picked timely are products of broken family or children who are living in a turmoil family environment. A girl once stayed until late evening. It was her father's responsibility to pick her. He was drunkard. He forgot his fatherhood responsibility. She had to stay until 9:00pm. Still no body was there to mind her. The guard reported the case to the nearby police quarter. The police threw the case back to the guard. Somehow the guard managed the problem and took the girl to her home late midnight. A number of child abuse cases are results of such neglect and rejection.

4.1.3.2. Case analysis two (Charity based center type)

Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working on development programs adopted different strategies like rights-based approach to address economic and social problems with a view to ensuring the well being of children and their parents. Major interventions include programs such as education for children; skill training for parents especially mothers, and child welfare advocacies. In Ethiopia various Non-Governmental Organizations work along this direction. Good Neighbors is an International, Humanitarian and Development Non-Governmental Organization in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCOSOC). Its mission is to improve the lives of others especially those of children through education, health, community development,

sanitation, and disaster relief projects. Currently Good Neighbors is working in 29 countries supporting approximately 16.8 million people, including 9.6 million children. This international NGO has the vision of capacitating people through education supporting every child to get access to schooling and empowering families for sustainable development. Good Neighbors has set the vision of supporting 780,000 poor children in 100 countries by 2020.

Good Neighbors started operating in Ethiopia in 1997. In the capital the project is running a multifaceted program in Lideta, Yeka, and Gullele sub cities. The Lideta Family Development Program (LFDP) is an integrated holistic program focusing on empowerment of families and the local community to become self-reliant. Good Neighbors preschool center (MELKAM ATSEDE HITSANAT) functioning in Lideta Sub city is meant to support preschoolers and children who have been deprived of their educational rights due to poverty. The project in this sub city has devised a multifaceted strategy of promoting the physical and emotional development of children growing in the vicinity.

Melkam Child Center (MCC) was one of the preschool centers functioning under the auspices of Good Neighbors. A two-day visit at the center enabled the researcher to capture important features of the center and its specialty in terms of the holistic development of children. MCC is providing service for 120 children with 30 children per classroom. In line with the general mission of Good Neighbors, this charity-based center provides multifaceted service to children and their parents. The children served in MCC are drawn from poor of the poorest families, single parents (sometimes labeled as semi orphans) that lead their livelihood as daily laborers and beggars. Orphan children were also beneficiaries of services in this center. The bad story is that these same children have been once engaged in begging at Lideta Saint Merry Orthodox Church gate located adjacent to the preschool center.

The children in MCC are not only provided with educational services but also with educational materials and school uniforms. Children cared and educated in this center get lunch and breakfast services from Monday to Friday including fruits, milk and vegetables. Good Neighbors MCC provides medical services to the children and health-related education to parents to reduce child and maternal mortality. As part of the overall multifaceted program, children in MCC have the privilege of getting medical care and complete annual medical checkups.

What is interesting about this center is it is strongly networked with parents. At least two home visits are made every month by social workers working in the center and communications are made with parents on the psycho social well being of the children. Social workers in the center advice parents on several issues related to children and devise strategies to enhance their coping mechanisms. The center has different extra-curricular activities to enhance children's cognitive and emotional development. Field trips, recreation programs, get together events, library readings, computer literacy programs are some of the provisions in the center.

Good Neighbors MCC provides vocational education and training to parents with the conviction that family-based capacity building strategy can break the cycle of poverty in the child's home environment. Accordingly, mothers of these children are supported to be engaged in income generating activities and made beneficiaries of relief aid. By the time data were collected in the center, mothers of some children, for example, were undergoing training in sewing, and management of micro-businesses.

After completion of the preschool program, children are transited to nearby primary education schools. The MCC center still continues supporting the children like ,for example,

covering their registration fees, buying school uniforms and educational materials, and provision of medical checkups. Tutorial classes are also arranged for these children. Interestingly, these children love the center more than their home. Even if they were transferred to the nearby primary schools, they still maintain strong attachment with MCC. Graduation from the MCC center is not welcomed by many children. The transition to the formal school is not marked by a feeling of achievement and fulfillment. Many of the benefits they enjoy as preschool children are now curtailed. They are forced to lead their life with meager resources available at home. A follow up report of the educational achievements of children enrolled in MCC center has shown that 5-7 children were able to join higher education institutions.

4.1.3.3. Case analysis three (Faith based center type)

Lideta Mekaneyesus Kindergarten is a faith-based institution located at Lideta Sub city though children enrolled in the center have different religious orientations and diverse home backgrounds. Parents need not be Protestants or member of the Evangelical church for entitlement to put their children in this center. The center was established in the mid of 1960's by American Mennonites Missionaries. Adjacent to the center in the big compound, Evangelical church preaches the bible in English and Amharic languages to reach the International community and Ethiopians. Care givers in the center are graduates of Debrezeit Community Development Social workers school, Empress Menene School and Kotobe Teachers' College. Kindergarten teachers training has its roots in these institutions dating back to the 1950's and 1960's. As a matter of fact most of the care givers in this center have not less than 30 years of care giving and teaching experiences.

The care givers in Lideta Mekaneyesus Kindergarten are entitled to certain fringe benefits such as life insurance expense and 80 % of medical costs are covered by the church. What is exceptional about the care givers in this center is that pension schemes have been put into effect since 1960. Care givers in the private and community centers are not privileged to be beneficiaries of Government pension schemes. In an informal discussion with these latter groups, the situation that deprived them from being beneficiary of Government pension scheme adversely affected their career commitment and psychological well being.

Lideta Mekaneyesus is non-profit making center. Yet, children are fee-paying. However, there are children sponsored by the center for free education. Children, whose mothers are sexually abused, physically tormented by their employers in due course of their engagement as maiden servants do get free access to the center. What is interesting about this center is that it provides safe and protective environment to these abused mothers. Apart from getting counseling service, these mothers stay at the center for some time to rehabilitate themselves from the trauma they experienced.

The center has strong working relationship with the Ethiopian Red cross Society, and Regional Educational Bureau. These institutions capacitate care givers Knowledge and skills in child care practices through workshops and seminars. The Ethiopian Red Cross Society trained care givers in first aid treatment and this enabled them to help children before referral procedures are in place. The credentials displayed in the director's office are testimonials for the strong bond maintained between the center and the community at large to enhance the care giving system in the center.

Class begins with devotion time. Early before class begins there are thanks giving prayer in the director's office. The devotion time is marked by thanks giving to God. It starts with a statement that signifies care givers heartfelt love and affection for the children.

“Almighty protect these innocent children from any harm”

Once in a month care givers pay extended prayer to God and fast for the well being of the children. Drop and Pick time moments are opportunities for parents and care givers to make brief discussions on children's status and daily experiences. Special incidents observed by care givers are reported and communicated to parents immediately after daily classroom schedules are winded. In a given calendar year there are at least four meetings convened by the center to discuss with parents. Detailed biographical data about the children are compiled and easily accessed to reach parents in case needed. Data pertaining to children's sex, age, woreda, Kebele, house number, Fathers and Mothers occupational status, their phone numbers, number of brothers and sisters at home are available in the director's office.

A worth mentioning experience observed in this center is that children take responsibilities in turn to carry out some routines in classrooms and dining rooms. Assigned children for that particular day in their respective classrooms place lunch boxes, bottles, cups, bags, and learning materials in their righteous places. Tables and chairs are cleaned and reinstituted in their places after meal by children assigned for that particular day. These daily routines are scheduled for the week and children accept the assignment enthusiastically and responsibly. Social competence exemplified in role taking, sympathy, sharing attitude, and a sense of accomplishment are instilled by assigning children to age appropriate tasks and by encouraging them to discharge these responsibilities. It was possible to observe in the classroom that this situation stimulated child-to-child interactions.

4.2. Social competence of preschool children

The purpose of this section is to investigate whether prosocial behavior, play skill and communication skill of children differ as a function of the different center types, children's back ground characteristics, and selected structural and process variables in ECCE centers. These variables represent ecological settings in the child's micro system relevant to home and center based settings. Hence, the analysis attempts to find out differences in children's social competence associated with center types, children's back ground characteristics and relationships attributed to structural and process variables. Center type is categorized into three levels: government, private, and 'Others'. The category 'Others' is a band of faith-based, charity-based and community center types. Data pertaining to children's background characteristics include children's sex and parental educational level represented by Fathers' educational level. Fathers' educational level was segmented into four. 'Read and write', 'Primary education', 'Secondary education' 'Diploma and above'. Raw data regarding care givers training, care givers teaching experience, class size were also collected. Positive interaction as one of the process variables was computed from the Care giver Interaction scale. The Social competence overall scale was theoretically represented by the prosocial subscale, play and communication skills subscales. The emotional subscale was originally part of the overall social competence instrument. For the main study this section was left out. The items in the emotional subscale were found to overlap with the items in the other subscales. The fact that items in this subscale were not mutually exclusive could result in distorting the effect of the composite score in assessing the status of the social competence of ECCE children.

Children were rated by care givers using the Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale. As indicated in Table 19 the number of children in each center type was more or less equal with slight variations favoring the private center type. Data pertaining to 97% of the sampled children cared and educated in the three center types are available for the analysis.

Table 19: Frequency distributions and percentages of children sampled from the centers

Center types	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Government	89	32.6	32.7	32.7
Private	97	35.5	35.7	68.4
Others	86	31.5	31.6	100.0
Total	272	99.6	100.0	

Cell frequencies with respect to fathers' educational level are shown in Table 20. Since the design of the research is survey type, unequal cell frequencies is not uncommon. Children whose fathers have secondary education accounted for 35 percent. This is the highest frequency observed in the four cells. The lowest frequency is in the "read and write category" which accounted 18.4% of the sampled children.

Table 20: Frequencies and percentages for the variable Fathers' educational level

Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Read write	38	13.9	18.4	18.4
Primary	46	16.8	22.2	40.6
Secondary	72	26.4	34.8	75.4
Diploma and above	51	18.7	24.6	100.0
Total	207	75.8	100.0	

The following research questions pertinent to this section were formulated.

- What is the status of social competence of preschool children?
- Are there mean differences between boys and girls in social competence as measured by pro social behavior, play skills and communication skills?

- Averaging across the three levels of center types, is there a difference on the composite score created for the three dependent variables?
- Averaging across the four levels of fathers educational level, is there a difference on the composite score created for the three dependent variables?
- Does the effect of center type differ as a function of fathers' educational level on the composite score of the three measures of social competence?

Each of the dependent variables in the Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale (Prosocial behavior, Play and, Communication skills) were checked for normal distribution separately and jointly. Bivariate normality between the dependent variables was checked using the elliptical pattern of the distribution on scatter plot. The normal Q-Q plots of the observed values of each of the scales were compared against the expected normal distribution. No serious departure from the normality assumption was seen from the scatter plots (see appendix-J).

Table21: Descriptive Statistics for the three measures of social competence

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Prosocial behavior	272	11.00	60.00	25.55	4.69	.621	.148	10.43	.294
Play skill	271	9.00	24.00	19.24	3.22	-.816	.148	.306	.295
Commun. skill	271	5.00	15.00	10.94	2.84	-.369	.148	-.950	.295

Descriptive statistics for the separate subscales and for each of the items in the social competence teacher rating scales were computed. Mean value computed from the overall instrument was 55.6. Frequency distribution of the scores computed from the overall instrument has shown that about 48% of the scores fall below this mean value. The mean

value for the prosocial subscale was 25.55. When distribution of scores in this subscale was compared against the mean value for the subscale, about 51% fall below this figure. Similarly, the mean values for the play and communication subscales were found to be 19.24 and 10.94; 46% and 52 %fall below the respective mean values. The lowest mean values were recorded for items 21 and 23 in the communication subscale that read “uses culturally inappropriate language(insults)” and “adjusts his speech to fit the status of listeners(raises hand to communicate with teacher”($M= 1.94$ and $m= 2.16$, respectively).

Children’s score seemed to be distributed to the upper end of the prosocial behavior subscale suggesting that their social competence is in the desirable direction. The top four mean values were for items, 6,10,4, and 9 in the prosocial behavior subscale. Care givers rated children as being cooperative, sympathetic to others’ problems, tolerant, and possessing positive attitude to others.

4.2.1. Social competence and children’s sex?

Approximately equal number of male and female children was sampled from each classroom and they were rated by their respective care givers in relation to the three measures of social competence. Mean values for each of the groups were computed along the three subscales. A glance at the mean values for the two groups shows that male and female children seem to be rated similarly by their care givers. Although there seemed to be differences, one could guess that these differences are marginal. Descriptive statistics for the two groups are shown in Table 22.

Table 22: Descriptive statistics for male and female children along the three measures of social competence

Dependent variables	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	Female	136	56.2059	8.80834	.75531
	Male	135	55.0889	10.51258	.90478
Prosocial	Female	136	25.7500	3.96979	.34041
	Male	135	25.3556	5.34548	.46007
Play skill	Female	136	19.3897	3.06273	.26263
	Male	134	19.1194	3.38738	.29263
Communication skill	Female	136	11.0662	2.82896	.24258
	Male	134	10.8358	2.85803	.24690

“F” MAX test was conducted to test for equality of variance in the two groups. Furthermore, descriptive statistics and histograms were inspected prior to conducting the “t” statistics. Leven’s test for equality of variance was found to be not significant indicating that the variances are not homogeneous for the two gender groups. An independent “t” was computed to verify whether or not these differences were statistically significant. Groups were compared separately along the three dependent measures of the rating scales. Results indicated that boys and girls did not significantly differ in their prosocial behavior, play skills, and communication skills. Results are shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Independent Samples t-test for equality of mean between boys and girls

Social competence	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for equality of mean			95%Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig	t	Df	Sig(2tailed	Lower	Upper
Total	2.021	.156	.948	269	.344	-1.20197	3.43596
Prosocial	1.259	.263	.690	269	.491	-.73112	1.52001
Play skill	1.927	.166	.688	268	.492	-.50326	1.04387
Communc. Skill.	.158	.692	.666	268	.506	-.45106	.91178

4.2.2. The effect of center type and Fathers educational level on children's social competence

The general design for the analysis of the effect of center type and parental background characteristics on the status of social competence of preschool children was factorial Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). Hence, it was important to investigate the linear combination of the dependent variables in relation to main and interaction effects of the independent variables. Center type and fathers educational level were taken as independent variables. Both of the independent variables have more than two levels. Hence, when the total sample size is apportioned into the 3x4 cells, it is likely that some cells might have smaller cell frequencies compared to others. In spite of that, it is important to cross-tabulate the two variables and inspect the observed expected frequencies falling in the respective cells to ascertain the presence of minimum number in each compartement.

Table 24: Center type * Fathers' educational level cross tabulation

		Fathers' educational level				Total
		Read and write	Primary	Secondary	Diploma and above	
Government	Count	22	16	19	9	66
	% of Total	10.6%	7.7%	9.2%	4.3%	31.9%
Private	Count	7	15	32	25	79
	% of Total	3.4%	7.2%	15.5%	12.1%	38.2%
Others	Count	9	15	21	17	62
	% of Total	4.3%	7.2%	10.1%	8.2%	30.0%
Total	Count	38	46	72	51	207
	% of Total	18.4%	22.2%	34.8%	24.6%	100.0%

When using MANOVA, it is necessary to have more cases than the number of dependent variables in each cell (Tabachnik,& Fidell,2005). When the case –to- dependent variables ratio is too low in the cells, the cell is likely to be singular. This will result in reduced power and non-significant multivariate “F” ratios. Some researchers (Seo,Kand,and Fujikoshi;cited in Tabchnik,&Fidell,2005) ,however, reported that robustness of normality can be maintained in MANOVA with overall N=40,n=10 per group. The smallest cell frequency in Table 24 is denoted by ‘private’ versus ‘read and write’. This approximates the suggested cell frequency size. According to (Seo,Kand,and Fujikoshi;cited in Tabchnik,&Fidell,2005) with larger sample size, even with unequal sample size and when the dependent variables are normally distributed it is likely that the analysis would be robust.

The number of valid cases when apportioned into the 3x4 cells, the expected cell frequency is about 17. This number is greater than the cell sample size suggested by (Tabachnik,& Fidell,2005) fulfilling the assumption of multivariate normality of the sampling distribution of means even with unequal sample sizes in the 3x4 cells. Skew ness as

measures of normal distribution is within the acceptable range across the three dependent variables. To ascertain linearity scatter plots for each pair of the dependent variables within each group was done using SPSS PLOT.

Table 25: Pearson product moment correlation between the dependent variables

		Prosocial	Play skill	Commun. skill
Prosocial	Pearson Correlation		.691**	.591**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
Play skill	Pearson Correlation			.725**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000

Multivariate Analyses of Variance of composite statistics of the dependent variables; prosocial behavior, play skill, and communication skill as a function of center type, fathers' educational level, and center type by fathers' educational level were computed and shown in Table 26. The two main effects for center type and fathers' educational level and interaction effect for the combination of center type by fathers' educational level were found to be statistically significant.

Table 26: Multivariate test results of center type

	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's trace	.064	2.121	6.000	386.000	.050	.032
Wilks' lambda	.937	2.113 ^a	6.000	384.000	.050	.032
Hotelling's trace	.066	2.104	6.000	382.000	.052	.032
Roy's largest root	.042	2.697 ^b	3.000	193.000	.047	.040

a. Exact statistic

b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Averaging across center types, there was statistical evidence for a difference between government, private and the ‘others’ category as a function of the three dependent measures of preschool children’s social competence (Wilk’s $\Lambda=0.937$, $F(6, 382.22) = 2.113$, $p=.05$ partial eta $\eta^2=0.032$. Since Wilk’s Λ is the variance not accounted for by center type, 1-Wilk’s Λ is the variance accounted for by center types. Hence, 6.3% of the generalized variance in the three dependent variables was accounted for by center types.

Averaging across fathers educational level, there was statistical evidence for a difference between fathers’ educational levels as a function of the three dependent measures of preschool children’s social competence (Wilk’s $\Lambda=0.916$, $F(9,467.428)=1.8998$, $p=.05$ partial eta $\eta^2=0.029$. Since Wilk’s Λ is the variance not accounted for by Center type, 1-Wilk’s Λ is the variance accounted for by father’s educational level. Hence, 8% of the generalized variance in the three dependent variables was accounted for by father’s educational level. Results are shown in Table 27.

Table 27: Multivariate test results of father’s educational level

	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's trace	.085	1.889	9.000	582.000	.051	.028
Wilks' lambda	.916	1.898	9.000	467.428	.050	.029
Hotelling's trace	.090	1.899	9.000	572.000	.050	.029
Roy's largest root	.065	4.199 ^a	3.000	194.000	.007	.061

a. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

The third research question in this section was formulated to find out whether the effect of center type differed as a function of fathers’ educational level with regard to children’s social competence along the three dependent variables: prosocial behavior, play

skill, and communication skill. The interaction of center type by fathers' educational level was found to be statistically significant, Wilk's $\Lambda=0.841, F(18,582), P<0.01$, partial eta squared $\eta^2=0.056$. Sixteen percent of the generalized variance in the three dependent variables was accounted for by the interaction of center type by father's educational level. By Cohens' standards (Cohen and Cohen, 1985) the variance accounted for by the interaction of the two independent variables was moderately significant.

Table 28: Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance of prosocial behavior, play skill, and communication skill scores

Sources of Variance	Wilks' Lambda	df1	df2	Multivariate F
Center type	.937	6.000	384.000	2.113 ^b
Fathers' educational level	.916	9.000	467.428	1.898
Center type by Fathers educational level	.841	18.000	543.543	1.900

a. Design: Intercept + Center type + Fathers' educational level + Center type * Fathers educational level

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Because Omnibus MANOVA showed significant main and interaction effects, it is appropriate to further investigate the nature of the relationships between the independent variables and the three dependent variables separately. The Univariate Analyses and contrasts will clarify the nature of main and interaction effects and ascertain where the differences may be occurring. Separate Univariate Analyses of Variance were run to see the relationship between the dependent variables and each of the independent variables.

Tests of between subjects' effects showed that the effect of center type was found to be statistically significant for the variable prosocial behavior ($F(2,177.424)=4.014, p=0.02$; $R^2=0.116$, adjusted $R^2=0.066$). Hence 11.6% of the variance in children's prosocial score

was accounted for by differences in center types. The effect of center type on children's play skill and communication skill scores did not reach statistical significance ($F(2, 58.281) = 2.890, P=0.058$; and $F(2, 16.376) = 1.070, P=0.345$ respectively).

Since the overall "F" ratio was found to be statistically significant for the prosocial behavior scale, it necessitated to investigate pair wise differences between the three center types with respect to this dependent variable. Tukey's HD test was run to see these differences. Results indicated that children in private centers outsmarted their counterparts cared and educated in the government and the 'Other' category (private vs government mean difference 1.821, $p=0.039$, private vs Others mean difference .2408, $p=0.007$). Tests of between subjects' effects were not statistically significant for the play skill and communication skill scores of preschool children. Hence, it was needless to make pair wise comparisons. Yet children in private centers did show better play skills compared to their counterparts in the 'Other' category (mean difference 1.377, $P=0.023$).

Table 29: Univariate Analysis of Variance between center type and the three measures of social competence

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Prosocial	177.424	2	88.712	4.014	.020	.040
Play skill	58.281	2	29.141	2.890	.058	.029
Communication skill	16.376	2	8.188	1.070	.345	.011

Although multivariate test showed statistically significant effect of fathers' educational level on the composite score of children's social competence measures on the three dependent variables, none of the univariate tests reached statistical significance to claim the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variables singularly. Interestingly, however, the mean difference between children whose fathers read and write and children

whose fathers had secondary education differed in their prosocial behavior favoring the former ones (read and write vs secondary education; mean difference =2.113, $p=0.04$).

Omnibus MANOVA indicated that 16 % of the variance in the three dependent variables was accounted for by the interaction of center type and fathers' educational level. Univariate analysis of variance further confirmed that the interaction effect was so important in explaining children's social competence. The effect of center type by fathers' educational level was statistically significant along the three dependent variables; prosocial behavior, communication and play skills $F(6,460.186,=3.471,P=0.003)$; $F(6,142.583,=3.106,P=0.006)$; $F(6,131.979=2.181,P=0.046)$, respectively). Summary of results is shown in Table 30.

Table 30: Tests of Between-Subjects' Effects of center type, fathers educational level and interactions

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Square
Corrected Model	Prosocial behav.	561.699 ^a	11	51.064	2.311	.011	.116
	Commun. skill	183.066 ^b	11	16.642	2.175	.017	.110
	Play skill	182.901 ^c	11	16.627	1.649	.088	.086
Center type	Prosocial behav.	177.424	2	88.712	4.014	.020	.040
	Commun. skill	16.376	2	8.188	1.070	.345	.011
	Play skill	58.281	2	29.141	2.890	.058	.029
Fathers' education .level	Prosocial behav.	96.822	3	32.274	1.460	.227	.022
	Commun. skill	26.404	3	8.801	1.150	.330	.017
	Play skill	7.921	3	2.640	.262	.853	.004
Center type * Fathers edu.lev.	Prosocial behav.	460.186	6	76.698	3.471	.003	.097
	Commun. skill	142.583	6	23.764	3.106	.006	.088
	Play skill	131.979	6	21.996	2.181	.046	.063

a. R Squared = .116 (Adjusted R Squared = .066)

b. R Squared = .110 (Adjusted R Squared = .059)

c. R Squared = .086 (Adjusted R Squared = .034)

Marginal mean plots for the three dependent variables in relation to center type and fathers educational level were compared using graphs. It was found that children cared in the

private centers and whose fathers' educational level was in the “read and write” and “primary education” categories were rated high in relation to their prosocial behavior compared to children in the government and faith or charity based centers. On the other hand, children cared in government center types and whose fathers educational status was “diploma and above” were found to be rated as having better prosocial behavior. Interestingly, children cared and educated in the “Other” center type were rated as low by care givers regardless of their fathers' educational level (for marginal plots see figure 2)

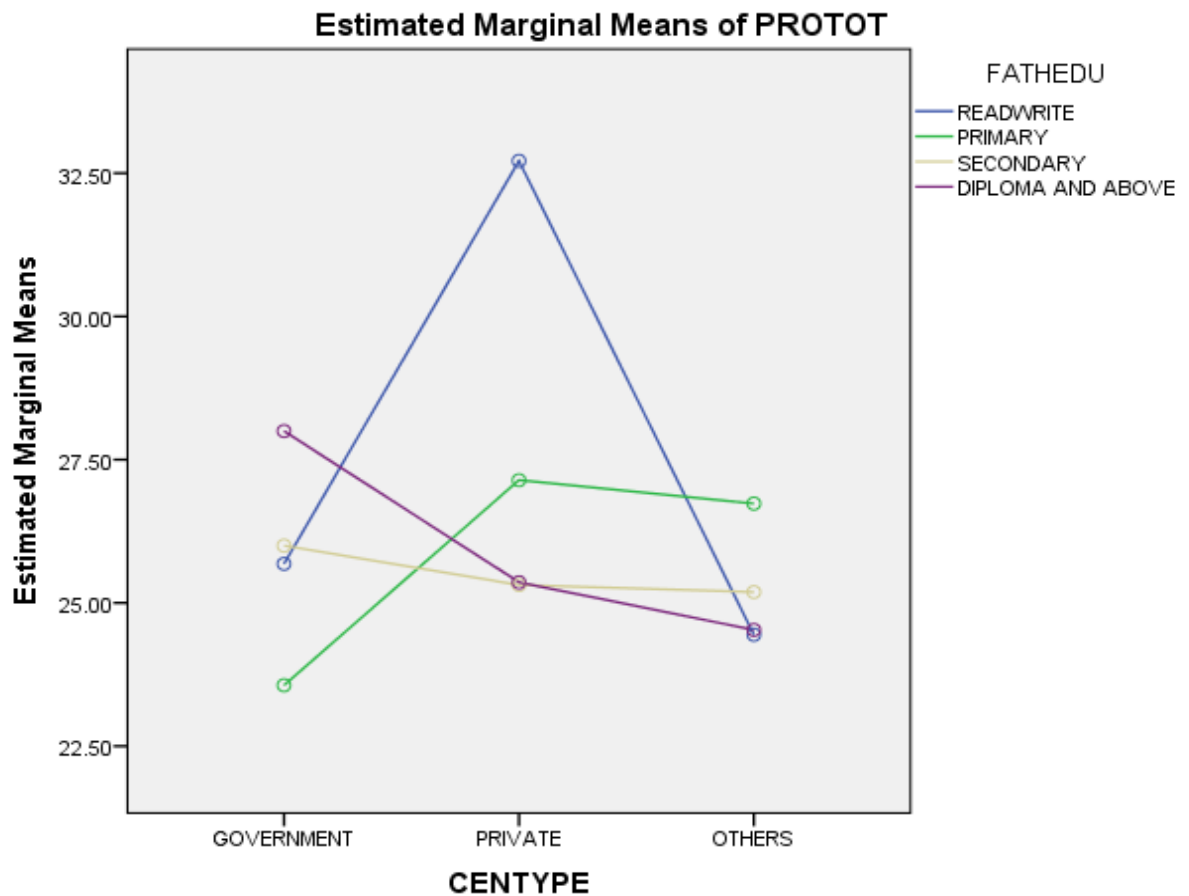


Figure 2: Estimate Marginal Means of prosocial Behavior for Center types and Fathers' Educational Levels

With regard to play skills, marginal mean values were found to be high for children in government center type and whose fathers had diploma and above educational status. However, marginal mean totals were still greater for children in the private centers and whose fathers educational level were in the “read and write” and “primary education level” categories. The curves are still sloping downward for children cared in the faith-charity based center types irrespective of their fathers’ educational level(see figure 3).

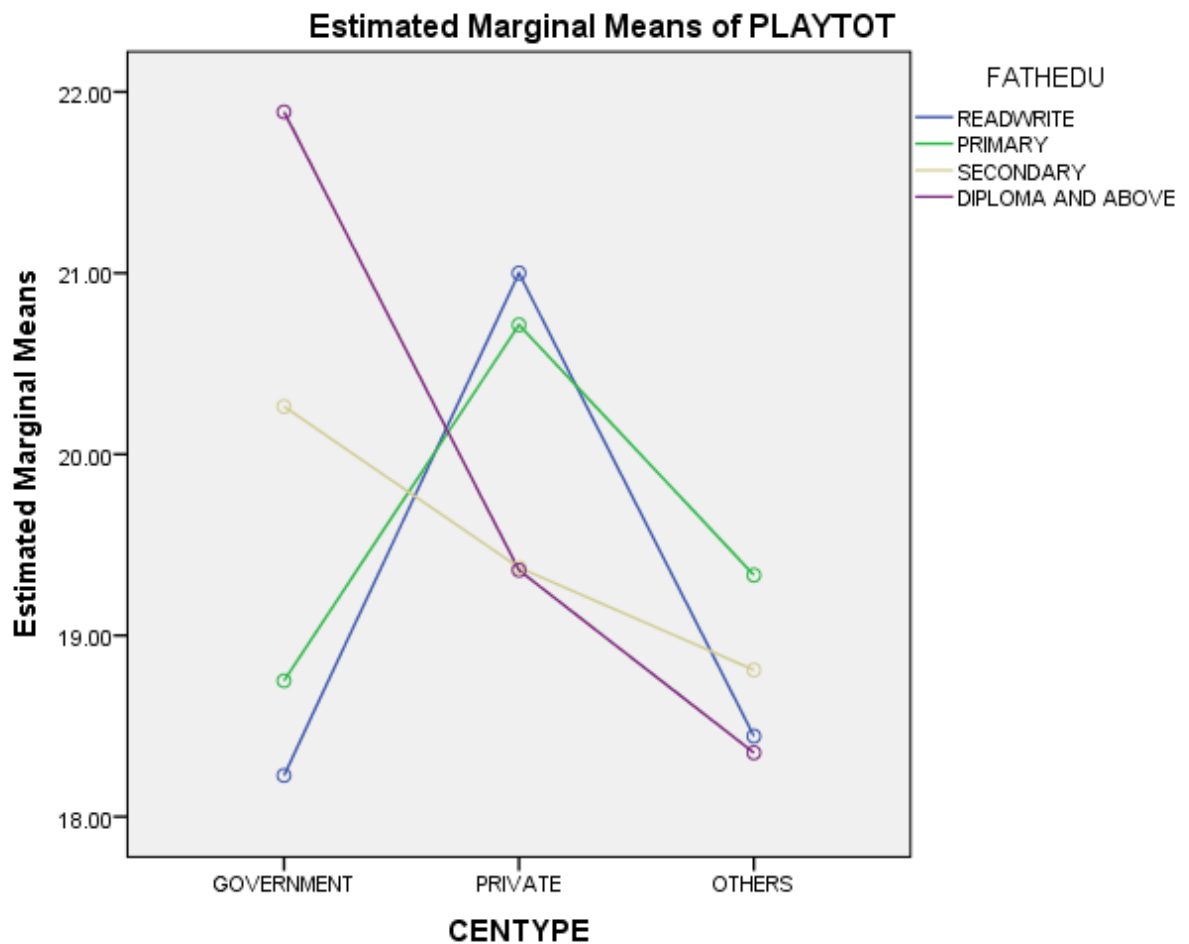


Figure 3: Estimate Marginal Means of Play Skills for Center types and Fathers’ Educational Levels

Estimated marginal mean for the government cared children and whose fathers educational level was diploma and above were still better rated by care givers for their

communication skills. Contrary to this situation children in the government center type and whose fathers had primary education and below seem to be much lower in their communication skills. Variations in terms of communication skills did not seem to differ among children cared in the private and faith-charity based centers in relation to their fathers educational levels (see figure 4). In general the marginal mean plot graphs for the three dependent variables suggest that children's social competence was shaped by the combined effect of center based situations and children's home backgrounds.

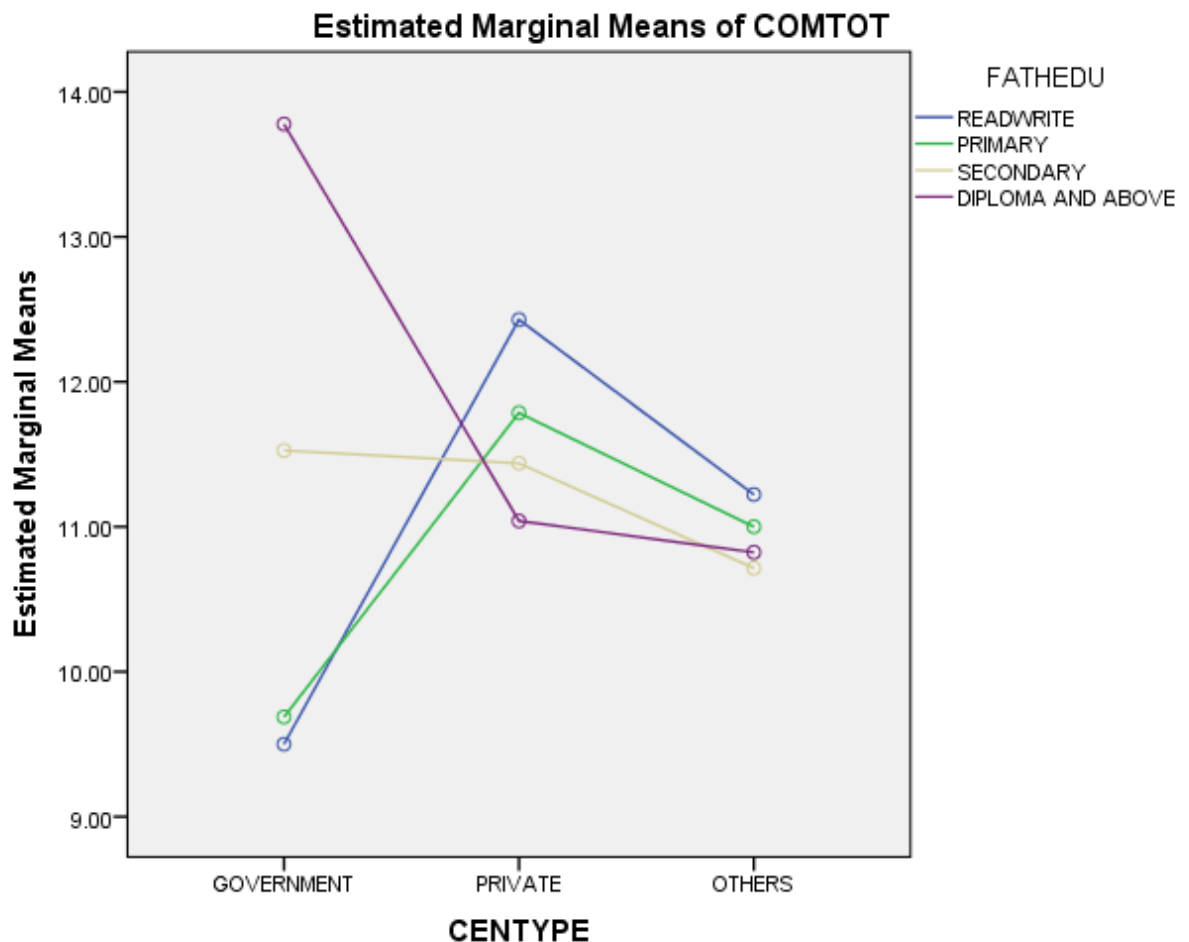


Figure 4: Estimate Marginal Means of Communication Skill for Center types and Fathers' Educational Levels

4.3. The relationship between quality indicators and social competence

A growing literature points the importance of preschool quality indicators in effecting developmental outcomes of preschool children in ECCE centers. Children's gain in academic and social competence could be attributed to variations in the structural and classroom process variables in ECCE centers. The purpose of this section is to investigate the relationship between selected structural and process variables and social competence; a developmental outcome of preschool education program. The analysis attempts to answer the following research question.

- Do structural and process variables such as class size, care giver training in preschool teaching and positive interaction between care givers and children relate to social competence of preschool children as measured by the SCTRS?

The Social Competency Teacher Rating Scale was composed of three categories of items. Cluster one items were used to rate preschool children's prosocial behavior. The second cluster of items was meant to measure children's play skills. The third part rates children's communication skills. The overall instrument was composed of 26 items. Two hundred seventy two preschool children were rated by their respective teachers on the three dimensions of social competence. Each child's score was aggregated from these three measures. The minimum aggregate score was 25 and the maximum was 96.00 with mean value 55.63 and standard deviation 9.68. Visual inspection of data using histograms with normal curve distributions showed that children's overall social competence score was normally distributed (skeweness -0.549 standard error 0.148). Normal P-P Plots of regression standard residual also showed a linear relationship between the observed cumulative

probability and the expected cumulative probability for the Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale total score (see Appendix O).

Two structural variables namely class size and care givers training in early childhood care and education teaching and positive interaction as a process variable taken from the care giver Interaction Scale (CIS) are considered as independent variables. Average class size was found to be 36.72 with standard deviation of 11.67. Mean score for the positive interaction subscale was 3.13 and standard deviation 0.6394. Data pertaining to care givers training in preschool teaching was dichotomized into two: care givers with training and care givers without any formal training in preschool teaching. Minimum and maximum values and mean score for the dependent and independent measures are shown in Table 31.

Table 31: Descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables (N=272)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
Total	25.00	96.00	55.6324	9.67922	-.549	.148	1.082	.294
Prosocial behavior	11.00	60.00	25.5551	4.69245	.621	.148	10.430	.294
Play skill	9.00	24.00	19.2472	3.22171	-.816	.148	.306	.295
Commun. skill	5.00	15.00	10.9410	2.84088	-.369	.148	-.950	.295
Positive.interact.	1.50	4.00	3.1268	.63938	-.673	.148	-.604	.294
Class size	5.00	63.00	36.7243	11.67271	.178	.148	-.172	.294

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were computed between the overall Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale: prosocial behavior, play and, communication skills and the three independent variables. As depicted in Table 32, correlation coefficients reached statistically significant level between care givers training and

children's aggregate score on social competence. This same variable also correlated significantly with the prosocial and communication subscales scores ($r = -0.158, p < 0.05$; $r = -0.189, p < 0.05$; and $r = -0.131, p < 0.05$ respectively). Class size correlated significantly with play and communication skill subscales ($r = -0.143, p < 0.05$; and $r = -0.123, p < 0.05$ respectively). Among the care giver child interaction subscales, the positive interaction subscale is considered for its theoretical and practical importance as measure of quality interaction despite its weak correlation with social competence total score. Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) as measures of multicollinearity between the independent variables were computed and showed that the two indices were found to fall within the acceptable range. Collinearity Statistics of less than 0.25 is considered as indicator of poor tolerance and greater than 4 as indicator of poor variance inflation factor (Cohen, & Cohen, 1985; Tabachnik, & Fidell, 2005). Bivariate correlations between the dependent and independent variables are shown in Table 32.

Table 32: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the dependent and independent variables (N=272)

	Training	Class size	Positive.int.	Total	Prosocial	Play skill	Com. skill
Training		.204**	.020	-.158**	-.189**	-.078	-.131*
Class size			.145*	-.097	-.057	-.143*	-.123*
Positive.int.				.076	.065	.072	.086

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Multiple regressions analysis (MRA) was employed to see the association between the overall measure of children's social competence score and the three indicators of quality in center based situation. Social competence teacher rating score as dependent variable and care givers training status in early child hood care and education teaching, class size, and

positive interaction were taken as independent variables. According to Cohen and Cohen (1985), the most important feature particularly in observational studies is its capacity to assess the unique variances and the regression coefficients associated in the regression model. Multiple correlation coefficient “R” is taken as a measure of association between the dependent variable and an optimal combination of the three independent variables. Table 33 shows results of multiple regression analysis.

Table 33: Model Summary of the regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194 ^a	.037	.027	9.54906

a. Predictors: (Constant), mean of positive interaction, training, class size

b. Dependent Variable: Social competence total score

Table 34: Summary of ANOVA table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	951.757	3	317.252	3.479	.016 ^b
Residual	24437.478	268	91.185		
Total	25389.235	271			

a. Dependent Variable: TOTAL

b. Predictors: (Constant), Positive interaction, training, class size

Omnibus F-test has shown statistical significance indicating how well the model fits to the data in this analysis ($F = 3.479$, ($3, 951.757$, $P < 0.05$)). In Table 28, however, only 4% of the variance in social competence of preschool children's score (Y) is linearly accounted for by the combination of care givers training status in early child hood care and education teaching (X1), class size (X2), and positive interaction (X3). Beta coefficients in Table 35 indicate care givers training status significantly related to the dependent variable and its contribution was found to be significant to the variance in children's social competence score ($t = -2.345$, $p < 0.05$). Results are shown in Table 35.

Table 35: Coefficients for the three independent variables.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	67.036	6.187		10.834	.000					
Training	-6.753	2.880	-.144	-2.345	.020	-.158	-.142	-.141	.958	1.043
Class size	-.067	.051	-.081	-1.314	.190	-.097	-.080	-.079	.939	1.065
Positive interaction.	1.369	.917	.090	1.493	.137	.076	.091	.089	.979	1.021

4.4. Parental perception and understanding of quality early childhood care and education

4.4.1. Introductory remark

A nine-item interview protocol was prepared to collect qualitative data on parents' perception and understanding of quality of preschool education. The items were specifically addressing issues related to reasons for sending children to preschool centers, parental expectation from preschool programs, and parental involvement in the activities of preschool centers, and the contribution of quality care giving in capacitating the preschool child for meeting the demands of primary education. Parental perception of quality care giving and collaboration depends upon their life styles, level of education and economic status. Some parents would like to contribute something in their capacity. Others are minimally involved. Before conducting the interviews consent was established through a letter sent to the participants. This section attempts to answer the following research questions.

- What does quality care giver-child interaction mean to parents?
- To what extent do parents participate in ECCE programs?
- How do parents perceive the transitional role of preschool education in making the child ready for the formal school system?

Data pertaining to parental perceptions and understandings of the quality of preschool education and its role in transiting the preschool child into the formal school system were collected concurrently with the quantitative data. Data collected through interviews and field notes were reduced and classified under the five sub cities, center types and interview questions. Description of parents' behavior, statements, feelings and aspirations, ideas and issues were taken in the form of interview transcripts and coded under each question. Essential features that came out from the interview were analyzed following the steps suggested by Grenewold (2004).

1. Since the general purpose of the interview was to capture the lived experiences of parents, the researcher read the responses and field notes to have a holistic understanding of the phenomenology of the issue.
2. Statements and catching words and phrases that would illuminate the crux of parental perceptions in relation to the care giving processes were identified.
3. The third step taken was to form cluster of non-repetitive words and meanings to surface the essential points. This step is bracketing of the interview content within the ambit of the research questions relevant to this section.
4. The fourth data analysis step taken was to incorporate and assemble the themes and essentials bracketed along the research questions to have a holistic understanding of parental perceptions of preschool education and the role of ECCE in transiting the preschool child into the wider culture of the formal school system.
5. As a final step general summary of all interview data based on common themes that reflect the context was written.

4.4.2. Reasons for sending children to preschool centers

Reasons for sending children to preschool centers vary with respect to parental economic status, educational level, and their philosophy of life. Despite the variations attributed to these background characteristics, parents emphasized the socializing role of preschool centers. A mother in one sub city, for example, understood the reason for sending her daughter to preschool centers in terms of gender disparity between boys and girls in the society. It seems that she had the conviction that education has an emancipation role. To her view, education has the role of narrowing gender inequality. She noted that “I am subjected to inequality because I didn’t have the opportunity to go to school. I don’t want this to be repeated. I don’t want my daughter to experience similar life pattern”.

Some parents perceived the rationale for sending children to preschool centers in terms of child rights. Accordingly, they noted that children are citizens. They have to be educated for the betterment of their life and the society at large. Pre school centers provide the opportunity for children to play with others. Children have the right to play with mates and get modern knowledge.

For low socioeconomic profile parents preschool centers have the role of shading the burden of caring responsibility. Parents whose livelihood heavily rely on petty trade, as daily laborers on construction sites, and maid servants see ECCE centers as protective environment to keep their children safe. For those parents ECCE centers provide custodial service. In not few cases such parents, for example, lock their homes, put their children’s meal outside the door, instruct the children to play around and hurriedly walk to carry out their daily errands. Zero-grade government owned centers, community-based centers and others functioning in residential quarters run by unregistered volunteers charging 5-10 Ethiopian birr for a child

have the role of pacifying such parental tensions. As perceived by some parents, the role of such preschool centers was a custodial one. Yet what is interesting was that the views of these same parents had changed through time as they saw some changes in their children. A quote from a parent substantiates this argument.

If she (referring her daughter) stays at home she will bother me. She does not sit at one place. Now I see change in her. She started reading and counting numbers. I recognized the value of sending children to school. Every child has to join school at age 4. It is when they learn how to read and write they become good citizens. I think it is equivalent to the former church schools. Hence, children should learn. That is why I have sent her to school (A widowed female parent at Kolfe Keraneyo Sub City engaged in petty trade)

4.4.3. Parental expectations of ECCE programs

The next interview question raised was about parental expectations from ECCE programs. Parents were asked about how their children should spend their time and what they should acquire in ECCE centers. Safe and hygienic environment was priority agenda for some parents. More than anything parents highly cherished well being of their children. They underlined that their children be protected and safeguarded from any situation that could bring physical and psychological harm. One of the interviewed parents at Arada Sub City, for example, confirms this.

The most important thing is let my child be safe and come home safely being protected from any harm .Parents usually don't expect much from the centers. The child's development is enhanced when care givers and parents work together to ensure children's well being (parent 2 at Arada Sub City)

Some parents gave due emphasis to the development of literacy and numeric abilities. Accordingly, children's future school success is determined by what is done at preschool centers. Although they had the opinion that children needed to spend considerable time in playing, mastery of basic skills in language and computations were found to be important milestones. A quote from a parent at Kolfe Keranyo Sub City substantiates this assertion.

Mainly learning. I want him to pass much of the time learning basic skills. If they are motivated at this age, it is decisive for their future success. I want him to pass the time being safe, and also learning.

Some parents emphasized the importance of peer interaction. For some parents outdoor activities in ECCE centers are important. A combination of classroom activities and play ground interaction was highly valued by parents. A parent at Gullele Sub City stated that:

I want her to learn and play with her mates. I don't want her to be lonely. If she goes to school every day she learns new things. That is my wish. We want her to spend her time in the center playing, learning basic skills and intermingled with peer groups.

4.4.4. Types of child care services most parents prefer

Parents were interviewed about their preferences of child care services. The choice for services depends on availability, access and parental appraisal of quality in the respective centers. The popular view in the society is that quality care giving can be realized in the private centers. In most cases parental preference is for the private ones. The parameters by which parents gauge the quality of service varies across a host of factors. English language speaking skill, for example, is considered as mark of excellence. Private ECCE centers seem

to be smart in this direction. Some parents ascribed quality service to physical set up and furnishings. Others attributed quality care giving to care givers emotional attachment to children. The following quotes captured from the interview sessions support the above argument.

While she was in the private center she was able to speak English. Her exercise was neat. Now she became lazy. The center is not clean. It has bad smell. I want my child to be safe and reserved from doing evil things. All parents do not have same aspiration. In general I think all parents aspire their children to have better learning experiences. Children in this age group need much support and care. Better facilities should be there for example, toilets, better sanitation (parent 1 from Arada Sub City).

I am doubtful about the quality of service delivered especially with regard to care givers profile. What is important is we parents should take our share. We need to follow-up the progress of our children. Teachers' follow up is very essential. They have to sort out the particularities of problems of the children and provide help accordingly. The problem in some cases is attributed to care givers' behavior. At times they are so reluctant and careless (parent 2 from Arada Sub City).

Earlier it was not customary to send children to pre school centers. The tradition was to send them to faith-based centers (church and koranic schools). Nowadays you find preschool centers in walking distance. There is no problem of access. Care givers stimulate children and play with them. Children nowadays do not complain to go to

these preschool centers. There is strong attachment between the preschool care givers and the children. In church -based centers Yenetas (priests) were harsh and punitive.
(Parent 1 from Gullele sub city)

This same parent disclosed her disappointment on the quality of service delivery in the following way:

One drawback I observed is that at times children come to home getting some kind of bruises on their body. Play grounds in these centers are not good. Peebles, stones and other stumbling materials are found in the play grounds. At times care givers do not supervise them while they play on the sliders. Then they get harm.

Another parent in this same sub city has shared similar meaning of quality service delivery. She noted her aspiration about the type of service for her child in the following way.

One short coming of preschool service delivery is children do not have adequate space to play. At times children hesitate to go to the preschool centers in fear of care givers threatening behavior. Better caring, safe learning and playing environments, clean compound, and affectionate character of care givers are expectations of many parents (parent 2 from Gullele Sub City)

There was a sharp contrast between aspirations of parents whose children are cared and educated in the private versus charity-based preschool centers. The parent whose child was enrolled in the private center had serious concern about the increasing tuition fee. In contrast the mother whose child was enrolled in the charity-based center saw the service delivery in terms of provisions provided by the charity organization. The following two

quotes excerpted from interview transcript at Kolfe Keranyo Sub City substantiates this argument.

Moon light is one of the best schools. My kids' knowledge is beyond my expectations. I don't have any problem with the quality of service. My worry is the increasing school fee, though the phenomenon is reflected in all aspects of life. Cost of living is soaring up. This situation exacerbated school fees. (Parent 1 from Kolfe Keranyo Sub City).

No limitations at all. My son is fed breakfast and lunch freely. I have no words to thank the organization. Even teachers don't verbally punish children except seldom reprimand and advice (parent 2 from Kolfe Keranyo Sub City)

4.4.5. Parental perception of children's readiness to meet the demands of the formal school system

Preschool centers play a transitional role. They bridge the two Microsystems; home and school. A child is capacitated with basic learning and life skills at ECCE centers before entering the complex system of primary schooling. It is with this understanding that parents send their children to preschools. Whether or not these centers have achieved this mission of smooth transition of the preschool child depends on the child's mastery of basic skills that facilitate the upcoming task. Parental satisfaction and disappointment on service delivery are partly nested on the extent to which these centers achieved their bridging role.

She was far better while she was in the private center. Now I don't think she is better prepared to cope with the demands of primary schooling. I am not sure whether or not this situation is due to the teachers or her parents. She is better prepared in

reading English and translating English words to Amharic. She is not good in numeric (parent 1 Arada Sub City)

Two parents from Gullele and Kolfe Keranyo seemed to be satisfied by the status of their children enrolled in private preschools. Two quotes taken from the interview transcription support this argument.

My daughter is well prepared to meet the demands of primary education. She outsmart children attending in grade one and two in government schools. She should have gone to grade one this year (parent from Gullele Sub City)

More than my expectation. I could not tell you how my kids speak English. Their mathematics competency is high. It is interesting. If they were in government schools I am sure they could not spell even their names. They have already achieved the basics (parent 1 from Kolfe Keranyo Sub City)

My second child is in grade 2. Abel is a KG student. But he excels his elder brother enrolled in government school. I wish my two other sons learn there. The KG education given there prepares well for grade one (parent 2 from Kolfe Keranyo Sub City).

An interviewee from another sub city recognized the transitional role of preschool education from a different perspective. He weighed the importance of preschool education in terms of promoting independence and resolving the conflict that could arise from two different Microsystems. He asserted that preschool education is a means for children's intellectual development. It is a place where they could get ready to meet the demands of primary schooling. It is a place where the child practices independence; tries to resolve the

problem of separation anxiety which he may encounter in grade one. In grade one he could be emotionally stable wouldn't think of his home and parents.

4.4.6. The extent of parental involvement in the activities of the ECCE centers

The two way flow of information between the home environment and ECCE centers is essential for the child's development. The medium of information exchange between the two microsystems in the context of ECCE setting have different forms and structure. Communication letters, home visits, semester-based conferences, student performance transcripts, signatures of parents on children's exercise books, care giver-parent exchange of information while children are dropped and picked, and end of academic year summative evaluations are avenues in maintaining network between ECCE centers and parents. The effectiveness of each of these medium of communications rested upon the choices made by parents and initiatives taken by the centers to facilitate the linkage.

I try my best. However, in most cases my participation is minimal. This is because I am so busy. I was not able to attend many of the meetings convened by the center. Though I had many ideas in my mind, I was not able to share them. However, when I was asked to contribute something in material form, I never hesitate to do so (parent 2 Arada Sub City).

For some parents what matters was not the communication, the link, or the meeting; rather the output of the networking. The reciprocation between the two microsystems founded on support and mutual understanding was the essence of the relationships between ECCE centers and parents. The preschool centers are expected to take the initiative and play vanguard role in the process. A comment by one of the interviewees is worth mentioning.

We are invited to participate in meetings. However, the center does not pay attention to suggestions forwarded by parents. My daughter, for example, experienced physical injury while she was playing. Two three times her hands and legs were bruised. I reported the case to the center management. As a parent I suggested that the problem could be ameliorated by making the play grounds conducive to children. This can be realized by the collaboration between the center and parents (parent from Gullele Sub City).

Preschool-home environment linkage has a positive impact on children's development. Children largely benefit from this support and helping relationship. Deficiencies can be easily identified and solutions maintained. A progress made by a preschool child is an exemplary of the consequence of this positive relationship between ECCE centers and parents.

Frequently we communicate with care givers and the center. For example if the child does not meet the requirements, we discuss with care givers and try to find out solution for the problem. For example if he is not working his assignment, we check that. When he performs well we appraise, reward him and take him to recreation centers. And at times I take the initiative and communicate the problem to the teachers. There is symbiotic relationship. Jointly we support each other to support the child (parent 2 Gullele Sub City).

Failure to maintain a close collaboration between ECCE centers and parents was partly attributed to lack of commitment of parents. Some parents admitted that the reason for the loose connection between the two settings was partly explained by parents' inconsistent

behavior to play their roles. A statement by one of the interviewees at Kolfe Keranyo Sub City confirms this argument.

Usually the school takes the initiative in this relationship. It encourages parents to communicate to them. Every semester they invite us for meetings. However, I hardly attend meetings due to work load. If there is lack of parental participation, it is my problem not the center's. I was called two times for my child's unruly behavior. And I was communicated once for the child's failure to do his homework. There is a meeting of all parents. They ask for comments and inform us about new regulations. I like their management.

4.4.7. What children tell parents about their experiences in ECCE centers

Parents were interviewed to reflect their views about what their children tell them regarding care givers overall behavior. They were also asked to reflect the impression they formed about the overall profiles of care givers behavior based on their frequent encounters. It was possible to generalize that parents have formed positive images about care givers. The affection, intimacy, smile, the hugs, encouragements, admirations and a lot of other care giver behaviors impressed parents. A parent from Gullele Sub City, for example, described care giver's behavior as follows:

Care givers are blessed and humble. They call children by their names. They show strong affection to all children without exception. All children, without exception, seemed adorable in the eyes of care givers. A case in point is, teachers address and call kids name flatteringly. For instance: a kid named Solomon is addressed as Solomonye [literally, my Solomon]. They also make frequent communications with parents. For example, at one time my daughter had frequent conflict with other

children. I was communicated to discuss the issue. We found simple panacea to the problem.

Children quote their care givers. They imitate to use care givers words and statements. They mimic care givers dressing style, walking style, gesturing. They developed the tendency to interpret events in the preschool and home environment from the perspective of care givers profile. Care givers are models of preschool children. Another parent from Gullele Sub City described to what extent her daughter had been influenced by care givers behavior and the extent to which her daughter used care giver's wordings to shape the relationship between herself and members of the family as follows.

Children now days are different. She rehearses what she learnt, heard, saw and experienced in the center. She says "Today Miss showed this or that kind of play. She taught us this and that. Today Miss dressed this way. Today miss was angry with me. She warned me". At home she sings dances and rehearses her daily experiences. When a member of the family, for example, shows undesirable behavior she criticizes. She quotes the care giver and says "Oh. Miss said lying is bad. We should not lie. Liars are lazy children" (parent 2 from Gullele Sub City)

A parent from Kolfe Keranyo Sub City shared similar feelings. A transcript from the interview has shown the strong bond maintained between care givers and children during the interaction process.

I believe it is quite good. Children love the care givers very much. My kids have no complaint. The care givers are their reference points for all types of knowledge, good or bad behavior. They usually say Miss said "this is bad" They consider them like their second mothers. I am highly satisfied in the relation children have with

care givers. They never feel tired while caring and educating. They love the children just like their own children. I must be lucky when sending my children to the preschool centers (a parent from Kolfe Keranyo Sub City).

4.4.8. Summary of interview data based on common themes

- The major reasons for sending children to ECCE centers were to socialize children, as part of advocating child rights, to find protective environment, and to shade the burden of parenting role and responsibilities.
- Parental expectations from ECCE programs were hygienic and safe environment for their children, maintain synergy between ECCE centers and home environment, acquisition of basic skills in language and computation and provision of outdoor activities.
- Types of services parents' prefer to get from ECCE centers were proficiency in spoken English, , furnishings such as toilets and drinking water, affection from care givers, non-punitive behavior of care givers, conducive play ground, reasonable tuition fee, and feeding program for children from low socio economic families.
- Parental perception of school readiness was explained in terms of acquisition of basic learning and life skills, English language skill, the potential to act independently, and emotional development to accommodate duties and responsibilities in primary schooling.
- Medium of parental involvement in the activities of ECCE centers are diverse. However, preferences were mainly based on access and the extent to which the modality suits ones own lifestyles. Workload, supportive and helping relationship between ECCE centers and home, commitment to collaborate for the best interests of

children, willingness to accept constructive comments were major factors attributed to parental involvement in ECCE activities.

- Children share their ECCE experiences with family members. Overall parents had formed positive impression about ECCE practices from this experience sharing between children and family members. Care givers positive behavior, children's attempt to mimic care givers dressing, walking and gesturing styles were experiences by which children communicate with their family members and ways by which parental perceptions of ECCE programs are influenced.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The general objective of this research was to describe and explain the contexts that shaped the caring and educational roles of early childhood care and education centers in transiting the preschool child to the wider culture of schooling in Addis Ababa City Administration with emphasis to the analysis of quality of care giver-child interaction , parental perceptions and its relationship to outcome variable in the area of social development. The research further attempted to investigate the relationship between center and home-based variables and quality of the care giving process and social competence of preschool children. The analyses showed the significance of center-based variables in mediating the overall quality of care giving in early childhood care and education centers in the study area .In this section an attempt has been made to interpret and explain the complex interactive relationships between the contexts under which interactions are taking place in relation to care givers and children's behavior. Issues highlighted in the analyses are discussed in the lime light of current literature in the area and contexts prevailing in the Ethiopian context.

The chapter is segmented into three major parts. Section one deals with matters related to quality of care giver child interaction and how certain center based variables came to implicate the reciprocating relationship between the preschool teachers and children via the preschool physical and social environment. The second part of the discussion attempts to explain the relationship between quality indicators of early childhood care and education program and outcome variables in the social development domain. The last section focuses on in exploring and describing parental perception of quality care giving and their

understanding of the role of ECCE centers in transiting the preschool child to the wider culture of the formal school system.

5.1. Quality of care giver child interactions

MANOVA results indicated that class size and caregivers' teaching experience as indicators of structural quality did not have statistically significant main effects on caregiver child interaction as measured by the CIS scale in the ECCE centers. However, when they are combined a significant portion of the variance in the four dependent variables namely positive interaction, punitiveness, detachment and permissiveness is accounted for by the interaction of class size and care givers experience.

Data showed that preschool teaching is not prestigious job. Care givers who joined the job were either jobless or those who were unable to pursue to the second phase of secondary education or failed to join the tertiary level education. Although the majority of the care givers passed through preschool teacher training they had less than one year of training. Some of the younger care givers in the sampled schools had as little as three months training. About 4% of the care givers in the sampled preschool centers were bare-foot teachers without any formal training on preschool teaching. This same problem haunted many ECD programs in the African context particularly in the SSA context. Ngware (2004:233) ,for example, stated that “One of the main issues facing ECD teacher training is the low academic qualification of the teachers joining the training”. As early as the 1960's and 70's Primary and Preschool Teacher Training Department in MoE was responsible for the training of preschool teachers. The 1960's and 70's were golden decades for the expansion of kindergarten education in the country. The flourishing of kindergartens in kebeles and cooperatives supported by governments in the the socialist camp especially by

the Democratic Republic of Germany during the Derge regime can be taken as a turning point in the history of preschool education in Ethiopia. Right after the overthrow of the Derge regime MoE was restructured and the department responsible for the training of kindergarten teachers was relinquished leaving no particular organ in the ministry to take care of preschool teachers' training. As a matter of fact the private kindergarten teacher trainings mushroomed in the capital and regional cities. It was very recently that a centralized curriculum was put in place and regulatory mechanisms devised to monitor the exercises of these private training centers. Variations in training period and wide gaps in trainees profile at entry and exit levels could be attributed to lack of centralized regulatory and supporting mechanism in the ministry. Currently as far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned no private institution has the mandate to train preschool teachers. Observation data documented in the preschool centers shows shortage and high turnover of preschool teachers that could be attributed to the discontinuity of the training. The upcoming undergraduate and graduate ECCE programs to be launched in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Addis Ababa University are expected to make a practical impact in mitigating the problem of skilled manpower in the sector and make Ethiopian children beneficiaries of all advantages they are entitled in child right conventions. The launching of the program opens a window of hope to address ECCE issues in a better way in terms of capacity-building programs and influencing policy formulations. The launching of the program will also enable to tap the abundant and rich indigenous knowledge of child care and socialization process extensively practiced in many parts of the nation and promotes research in the area of child development.

The issue of space as it relates to ECCE is coined with the concept of place attachment in the literature of environmental psychology. Sense of belongingness an

individual forms about a particular place is an emotional attachment he/she creates with that particular environment. Hence, space in the classroom or outside the classroom has important bearing on children's development in ECCE centers. Clark (2005, cited in Read, 2007) notes that children perceive ECCE centers as their world, and very much a landscape of play and discovery. The fact that children spend most of their time in these centers creates a sense of strong emotional bond with the centers.

Both the interior and exterior parts of the classrooms should be therefore designed from the outset in such a way that they stimulate children's cognitive and social development. Day (1990 cited in Read, 2007) suggested that creating a building that is meaningful to the soul requires integrating a variety of critical design elements including: (a) natural materials appropriate for the site; (b) forms and shapes that relate to or contrast with the surroundings; (c) a threshold between the exterior and interior; (d) vegetation; (e) spatial variety, and (f) sunlight.

Many of the observed centers, however, do not meet the minimum requirements in terms of design and set up to promote children's cognitive and social development. As indicated earlier the private ECCE centers in most cases were built for residential purposes and now changed to ECCE centers with limited space both internally and externally. They do not meet the standard. Since the content of preschool curriculum is an amalgam of indoor and outdoor activities, it is in rare case we encounter conducive physical environment that support care givers and children's outdoor activities. Except few ECCE centers, it is difficult to find adequate space that entertain meal time and nap time breaks and to perform dramatic plays despite the fact that some classrooms had subject related corners to stimulate children's cognitive and social development.

The impact of the physical environment on care giver-child interaction and on the overall activities of care givers and children has been emphasized by several researchers (Miller, 1996). Miller (1996) pointed out the need for considering the effect of space on care givers and children's behavior prior to the start of EECE programs. ESSA (1992) contends that the early childhood environment should support the development of children. A developmentally appropriate ECCE program calls for configuring the physical environment to be age appropriate. An age appropriate environment takes into account the shaping of the physical environment for effective interaction between care givers and children as well as among children. Space constraint impedes access to learning and teaching materials .Miller (1996) noted that for effective interaction between care givers and children and among children, one has to look for space and the equipment available in the environment one teaches. .

Data captured during classroom observations suggested that in small sized classrooms with child-sized furniture care givers were seen configuring and reconfiguring the sitting arrangement of children to suit different purposes and promote easy flow of interactions in multiple directions. It was observed that all children were facing the same direction at one time and through rotating the chairs they face each other. This opportunity helped children to have eye- to- eye contact with each other. The situation brought the different stimulating objects and materials on the four sides of the walls to the perspective of children. Moreover, it helped the care givers to move in between the rows to address specific problems of individual children. This situation, however, was exception rather than being the rule. Many of the classrooms observed had fixed sitting arrangements that resemble the situation in the primary schools. This situation did not lend easy flow of interaction in multiple routes.

Rather it forced both care givers and children to behave in a predetermined pattern. In many classrooms observed, for example, children's drawings, pictures and objects were posted and placed on the rear walls and tables. This situation largely reduced the stimulating effect of the materials and impeded the development of children's imagination to be gained from associating what the teacher was saying with the contents of these objects and drawings. As Miller (1996) commented these cluttered spaces did not allow the care giver and children to have thinking space. One possible explanation for lack of individual support and care givers confinement to the front side of the classrooms could be the effect of cluttered spaces. In some centers, for example, children's lunch boxes and bottles were put in separate rooms or storage rooms. In classrooms where lunch boxes were put in the learning environment it aggravated the space limitation problem and reduced the opportunity for quality interaction.

A wide open space does not necessarily mean that it promotes care giver child interaction. In classrooms where there was ample physical space care givers were not seen in designing cooperative projects to enhance social development of children. Ineffectively used open space at times may impinge some kind of problem. As stated by Miller (1996) "A wide space might invite a spontaneous game of football. Some children might avoid a large open area while others might just pile on top of each other in the center of it" (P.56). Care givers' permissive behavior exemplified in the form of non-interference to disturbances, lack of close supervision, watching children but not actually making any meaningful interaction, little or no appropriate measures taken to control the misbehaving children, and reluctantly observing children climbing on tables, kneeling on the floor and scribbling on the wall unnoticed by the care givers can all be attributed to ineffective usage of space in the classrooms. The Zero-grade classrooms functioning in the premises of primary schools do

not have developmentally appropriate spaces for preschool children. In fact these classrooms have enough spaces. However, location of doors, windows, the outdoor surfaces and the fact that these same outdoor spaces are used by first and second cycle students made them developmentally inappropriate for preschool children.

Setting up of certain interest areas and corners in some ECCE classrooms could be taken as mark of developmentally appropriate approach. However, in preschool centers where the space was cluttered the situation did not allow such practices. Furthermore, mere formation of interest areas does not make the interaction easy, productive and developmentally appropriate. According to Miller (1996) the space in the classroom must allow for and promote a flow of activity. Interest areas should be set up in such a way that each activity does not inhibit the flow of another activity. Although data showed that the existing space in some of the classrooms became a bottle neck for effective care giver child interaction and child-environment interactions, it was possible to explicate that care givers have made maximum attempt to rearrange the space as much as humanly to make the classroom interactive. The problem of cluttered and unused spaces in the classroom partly suggests that many of the classrooms were not originally designed to be child friendly ECCE environment.

Devotion time episodes were exceptions. The use of space to perform different activities that enhance children's cognitive, social and emotional developments was well put into practice and inherently embedded in the movement and dance care givers and children perform during flag ceremonies. Open spaces allowed care givers and children to interact to the maximum thereby extending children's imagination and creativity. The lively bodily movements that resemble dancing which took place every morning during flag ceremonies

were not haphazard and wild. In those open spaces, children would jump and hop but yet with an orderly, patterned and balanced manner. In the open space, before and/or after flag ceremonies, children and care givers count out numbers, sing child oriented songs and play music, with extreme loud voices which could be heard far beyond the school compound. At that particular moment the entire setting seems a kind of chaotic scenario, however, for the performers and curious observers the phenomenon indeed was much appealing to ears and cheering up the soul. What is more interesting was that the group songs accompanied by lively physical movements were fundamentally educative. For instance human body parts, names of animals, plants, and - the immediate environment were repeatedly called and rehearsed. Basic scientific concepts embodied within the songs echoed with the end objective of stabilizing the essences in the minds of the children.

Moreover, children for example echoed like wild and/or domestic animals. At times they would flipped their hands mimicking flying birds. This kind of pretension was not only physical movement but also a mental activity. Such activities were exploited as a means by which the preschool teachers could make a link between the curriculum and children's experiences. The dance and movements were primarily meant to fulfill certain goals set in the curriculum materials. As noted by Lorenzo-Lasa, Ideishi & Ideishi (2007) , preschool movement and dance programming brings a multi-layered experience to children of all abilities and can also reinforce math and logic concepts through rhythm and patterns of beat and tempo . Physical exercises that start with warm up exercise and progressively mounting into complex cognitive and social dimensions such as awareness about body organs, counting and rhythm, language and emotional expression are avenues by which children can interact with their environment in an entertaining way.

Piaget's constructivist theory (Miller, 1996) emphasizes the importance of environmental exploration for children to construct cognitive schemas. Young children in the early childhood years, who are in the preoperational period according to Piaget's stages of development, learn through reciprocities with their social milieu and physical environment. It is through self initiated interaction with the environment that their imagination and thinking develops. ECCE programs need to provide with ample and diverse opportunities for children to share their lived experiences to peers and care givers.

In the African context the acculturation of the child which Pence and Nesamenang (2008) termed as "indigenous pedagogy" is based not on instruction but participatory self-education process. This can be achieved through "guided participation" as noted by (Rogoff et al., cited in Vogler, Crivello and Woodhead ,2008) from care givers and peers. In this view, children contribute to the construction of their developmental niches through their own expectations and through their interaction with their caregivers. Nesamenang and LO-UH(2010) advised not to be desperate in "destroying too abruptly the traditional background of the African child which is still the best guarantee of the child's welfare and education"(p.393).

The concept of developmentally appropriate early childhood care and education gets meaning in the Ethiopian culture in its consistency with the view that children have socially constructed potentials that can be demonstrated in self-generated activities and learning. According to Cushner(1990) cited in Gardner and Kosmitzki(2008 :67) "The responsibility for learning falls mainly on the learner, making it rather personal"

Although care givers in the observed centers seemed to be highly affectionate and sensitive to children's needs, they failed in helping children to construct their schema of knowledge. Verbal communication was seen to be the overwhelming discourse in the interaction process. It is true that children can learn through observation and modeling of

care givers. But such kind of learning by no means guarantees children's learning. The chalk-talk method does not give equal opportunity for the child to be involved in the same way as the discovery oriented, hands-on process method. According to Miller (1996) "What a child does, a child learns. The more often a child engages in an experience, the more the learning is cemented. This is one reason why children love to repeat the same activity" (p.18).

Many of the care givers assume that knowledge is something that is poured into the child's mind. Many of the care givers assumed that knowledge is not something that is constructed by the child or something the child has to construct for her or himself. Many of the observed classrooms either lacked interactive materials or they didn't make use of the existing materials effectively and efficiently. Materials for tactile play such as water, sand, clay, as suggested by the Montessori approach were missing in the centers. Except sliders, Merry Go Round, and Swinging, other equipments that enhance gross motor development were not in place. Games and puzzles that trigger children's thinking and fine motor activities were not found as part and parcel of the preschool environment. This situation indeed seemed to limit the scope and quality of care giver child interaction and made the process to take place in monotonous and repetitive pattern.

The observation demonstrated that care givers tended to expect children to be highly loyal and obedient regardless of time and space. In many instances the interactions were bracketed by 'do's and don'ts'. Care givers' punitive behavior such as placing high value on obedience, for example, saying 'don't talk', 'cross your hands on your chest', 'Hands on chest' and the 'don't move' orders could be considered as all lack of proper scheduling of activities and lack of knowledge about the meaning of developmentally appropriate care giver child interaction. Unfortunately many of the care givers assumed quieter classes and

quieter children as signs of discipline and desirable behavior. As commented by Miller (1996), such care givers assume that good care giving is making the classroom quiet and enforce children confined to their seats. Care givers were seen appreciating children while showing docile behavior. For many of the care givers punitiveness would connote physical punishment. Disregarding the child's interest, not recognizing the child's efforts were all conceived by care givers as if they didn't entail negative impact or repercussion on children's development. The concept of developmentally appropriate care giver child interaction, however, presupposes the avoidance of care givers' behavior that threatens the child's ego. In strict sense ignoring the child's intentions and interests or not reciprocating to cues elicited from the child can be considered as punitive behavior. According to Miller (1996):

Developmentally appropriate practice prescribes that adults may never engage in the neglect of children; scream at children in anger; inflict physical or emotional pain; criticize a child's person or family by ridiculing, blaming, teasing, insulting, name calling, threatening, or using frightening or humiliating punishment. Adults should not laugh at children's behavior, nor discuss it among themselves in the presence of children or non-teaching adults. Adults should nurture, care, praise, support, guide, redirect, and discuss things with children (Miller, 1996, p.15).

Positive interaction is not limited to emotional attachment. It is not limited to showing feeling of warmth, sincerity, enjoyment and patience to children. Positive interactions engulfs care givers behavior such as provision of choices, facilitate opportunities for self-development, encourage children to exhibit prosocial behavior, and provide the opportunity to work in small groups. Miller (1996) characterizes the preschool teachers personal and professional qualities in the following paragraph.

The early childhood educator is the key to integrated curriculum because of his or her role as an observer, facilitator, organizer, and innovator. Since this person is the one to develop, implement, and evaluate what occurs in his or her own classroom, this educator is in the right place at the right time in order to see what is and what is not working. Success in the classroom according to this approach is measured by observing the following in the children: involvement, productivity, enthusiasm, self-esteem, social skills, literacy development, both oral and written communication skills, problem-solving skills, and independence in a social and learner sense (p.84)

A typical classroom in the observed ECCE centers was characterized by highly structured and didactically reduced activities into smaller units. Daily and weekly plans showed that the care giver child interactions were taking place along these didactic elements planned early at the beginning of the semester. Scheduling the flow of daily, weekly, monthly activities were merely taken as good sign of practice. It always served them as guideline to approach the holistic development of children in a balanced manner. However, what determines is the quality of the activity and the extent to which children's interests are served as a result of the plan. Rigidly sticking to the schedules does not pay much to promote care giver child interactions for positive experiences of children. According to Miller (1996) sticking to a schedule to make sure that everything gets done indicates that the teacher in the classroom really does not understand child development or classroom management. According to Miller (1996) the focus of a developmentally appropriate curriculum is:

Children learn through interaction with children, materials, and adults. In developmentally appropriate curriculum, children learn through direct experiences

not by learning about persons, places, and things from someone always telling them about them. In a developmentally appropriate environment, children learn science, social studies, language arts, and math through reading books and listening to stories, engaging in sensory experiences, participating in cooking experiences, being involved with art activities, taking part in dramatic play, using manipulative, taking field trips, building, creating, and sharing all of these experiences with their peers and the adults in their classrooms(p.14)

Classroom observations showed that the type and quality of interaction between care givers and children was limited to the development of numeric and literacy abilities with little or no attention to other aspects of development such as prosocial behavior and communication skills. The collective life style typical to the Ethiopian culture is exemplified in a number of ways. The sharing attitude, religious and cultural festive, the caring network right from pregnancy to the birth and growth of the infant are platforms in which the child exercises togetherness. In fact except in rare cases, care givers were found to be highly affectionate, caring and loving which was often reciprocated by children. The ECCE curriculum, however, requires not only imparting knowledge and skills to children but holistic approach in all aspects of developmental milestones of the age group. In addition to ensuring quality care giving, the curriculum emphasizes practicing early stimulation and learning through the use of play, learning materials and active learning methods such as exploration, experimentation, observation and discussions in multiple ways with children and among children themselves to enhance school readiness. Extreme adherence to the cognitive outcomes at the expense of other developmental domains can be attributed to care givers lack

of adequate training and knowledge on the importance of holistic approach to early childhood care and education program.

According to Pence and Nesamenang(2008) the major impediment to early child development in Africa is failure to blend the cultural heritages into the existing service systems. Like other societies, Ethiopian families have their own way of inculcating values, beliefs and behaviors in the mind of the children. This indigenous pattern of childcare has its own “organizational coherence that is usefully oriented toward purposes different from those of foreign origin” (Nesamenang, 2005b, cited in Pence and Nesammang, 2008:21). In the Ethiopian context, however, parents seem to grade the standard of ECCE centers in terms of the emphasis they give to English language teaching at the expense of all other abilities. Competency is ascribed to children’s ability to converse in English. Richness in English language vocabulary and spelling are seen as marks of competency in learning. Little or no attempt has been observed to indigenize the preschool curriculum. De-emphasizing the traditional values and exclusive adherence to the “western imposed ontology and alien epistemology” Misra &Gergen(1993) might instill not only knowledge dependency but in the long run threaten children’s identity. Lanyasunya and Lesolayia (2001) cited in (Nsamenang,2008:170),advised the necessity of making indigenous approaches compatible “ into the modern situation in terms of child stimulation and play materials, songs, lullabies, [and] poems that are too often ignored or obscured in the effort to respond to donor-identified needs and service development.

In some cases as it has been pointed out in the analyses section, care givers in the newly opened Zero-grade government-owned centers have made a horizontal shift

from the primary school teaching to preschool teaching. This is one possible contributing factor for low quality of care giving in these centers. This argument is consistent with Nyamweya and Mwaura's (1996) assertion about the situation prevailed in Kenya. They stated that

Because primary school teacher training does not include training in early childhood education and the primary school curriculum is not harmonized with that of ECDE, there is a disconnection between primary schooling and ECDE. Many of the observed pre primary classrooms do not make use of child-centered and activity-oriented learning environment (p.234).

During classroom observations it was possible to note that care givers taking too much time to transit children from one activity to another. Interestingly, it was at this prolonged transition period between activities that children start to misbehave. Engaging children in activities and availing diverse experiences would be one possible panacea to reduce misbehaving. According to Crosser (1992, cited in Miller, 1996) "Transitions may be made easier by altering children to the change and capturing their attention through the use of appropriate signals" (P.69). Hence, switching children's attention to interest or ability centers organized in the classroom would enhance effective classroom management and promote positive interaction between care givers and children. The observation demonstrated that much of the interaction between care givers and children was paper-pencil. Nearly all preschools did not use specific equipments (as, for example, suggested by Montessori) to implement the curriculum. Visual orientation and stimulations from real objects as a means to fuel children's cognitive abilities seemed to be not properly understood and practiced by care givers. Miller (1996) calls such materials as open-ended materials. It was suggested that

hand-on manipulative materials that may be put together in many different ways and incorporated into another activity are recommended ways to encourage children to construct their schema by themselves.

In most observed classrooms the interaction seemed to be unidirectional; flowing from care givers to children in non-reciprocating manner. The observation enabled to grasp that those different activities that could create the urge to interact with were not sorted out and sampled as per their developmental levels. Making the interaction multi level and multidimensional promotes social and cognitive developments. Care giver-to -child, child-to-child and child-to-object interactions broaden children's perspective. Miller (1996) further suggests that manipulative materials may be used individually or with peers and this makes them not only manipulative, fine motor materials but adds a social dimension to their use as well. This unidirectional interaction between children and care givers in classrooms does not coincide with the idea that learning is essentially and fundamentally social in its nature. Children's learning is by far shaped by events taking place in the social milieu and to the extent that they take part in this milieu. Availing opportunities by which children could interact in multiple ways promotes to inculcate shared values and perspectives (Henderson,& Attenico, 2007). Bronfenbrener's Bio ecological model is in consistent with this view. Children's learning is understood as an outcome of their interaction with proximal processes. Proximal processes are understood as the engines that fuel children's development through the joint interaction of genetic potentials and the environmental contexts in which development occurs (Henderson, & Attenico, 2007). Hence, these proximal processes in the context of ECCE are nothing other than care givers, objects, learning materials and other children that children encounter in the micro system. In many of the observed classrooms,

however, multi-arrayed interactions are delimited in scope and quality. One possible explanation for this narrow transaction between children and their multilayered environment could be care givers limited definition of learning within the cognitive domain mainly in the area of the development of numeric and literacy abilities than something emerging from their engagement in the environment in multiple ways.

The promising scenario in many of the observed classrooms was that centers didn't seem to be in serious shortage of learning and stimulating materials at least in the Ethiopian context. Many of the classrooms were stacked with wall pictures and other stimulating materials. However, as it has been captured during observation sessions they seemed to be misconstrued as one sign of developmentally appropriate care and education. Miller (1996) pointed out the importance by which the materials are presented to the children; their accessibility and the open-ended way in which the children are engaged to explore and play with the materials as indicators of quality interaction. Miller (1996) presents a scenario where this was not the case . Excerpt taken from the case study report is narrated below.

A parent once shared a story with the director of a preschool program. The parent had a four-year-old child she was eager to have enrolled in the school run by the director. The parent shared that the child had attended another school the previous year that contained so many wonderful materials. While, the mother was impressed with the materials and the precise manner in which they were displayed she was concerned that the materials seemed to remain on the shelves. When the mother asked a teacher why the materials were never out when she came to pick up the child, the teacher told her that they were not used at that time of the day. When the mother had occasion to come to the school to pick the child up at

different times of the day, the materials were always on the shelves and the answers were always the same. The mother began to think that the children rarely used the materials and that there was more concern about the cleanliness and orderliness of the materials rather than how to use the materials to the best advantage (p.67).

Preschool curriculum emphasizes child-centered approach in which individual child interests should not be compromised at the expense of group interests. It emphasizes the need for addressing individual and group interests judiciously and the freedom of every child to construct his/her knowledge under the guidance of care givers. There is a consensus among ECCE practitioners in which an attempt should be made to balance the requirements of building a secure, socially responsive environment where individual and group interests are respected (Tzo, 2007)). Pioneers in child development theory, such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky emphasized the importance of the bidirectional flow of interaction between children and care givers in ECCE centers. The quality of the interaction is measured by the degree to which children are provided with opportunities to explore their environment to construct knowledge. According to Tzo (2007), in a classroom the continued interactive relationship between teacher control and children's freedom exists in different situations in order for the curriculum to holistically encompass both Vygotsky's and Piaget's description of a wide spectrum of children's developmental and learning needs. In almost all observed classrooms it was the care giver who sampled learning activities. The negative repercussion of limiting children to teacher dominated activities and inhibiting them from play activities has been commented by researchers (Miller, 1996). (Miller, 1996) noted that when children make choices, they are on the long road to developing responsibility. Although stage theories

in developmental psychology claim that all children develop along predictable direction and follow similar developmental patterns and time tables, there are considerable variations among children. These variations are accounted for by the experiences they encounter in their micro and macro environments. As it has been shown in the analysis section, children enrolled in ECCE centers vary with respect to parental educational level and center based variables. An important component of quality care giver child interaction is care giver's knowledge and belief systems in appreciating the uniqueness of the individual child.

Data gathered from classroom observations showed that care givers use a number of strategies to appreciate individual performances. It was possible to observe that care givers using different strategies ranging from the use of verbal appraisal to material rewards in recognition of children's unique potentialities. In some of the observed classrooms children's art works and best practices were posted on the wall so that other children and parents could see and appreciate. However, care giver-individual child interactions were found to be minimal. Gross interactions appeared to overwhelm the overall process in the observed classrooms. Non-responsive behavior to the child's cues, inadequate one-to-one, face-to-face, eye-to-eye interactions, and above all inadequate individual support to the needing ones seemed to dominate the interactions. Appreciating the child's uniqueness means to get into the child's inner world and tune the interaction in a way that his/her interests are addressed to enhance development in multiple ways. The traditional teacher child interaction predominantly observed in the primary schools was unwittingly exercised in the ECCE centers. Care givers commonly opted to put all children in one melting pot and attempted to exercise ECCE in more or less similar fashion as practiced in the primary schools.

One possible explanation for such scenario could be care givers lack of knowledge in the area of child psychology. Child development knowledge capacitates care givers to see the unique potentials and limitations in each child. It also enables them to work on these limitation and gaps. Miller (1996) warns the tendency of using one magic prescription that makes all things right for all children.

As observed, care givers dance, sing and play together with children. Rather than telling children to sing, dance or perform a certain activity, care givers presented themselves as a model, for example, showing children how enjoyable the scene at the flag ceremony could be. This was a good sign of positive interaction and close attachment. Miller (1996) noted that teachers should be careful to make children their first priority while they are in the classroom. This means that phone calls, visitors, paper work, need to take back seat during the day. However, some of the care givers in the sampled centers exemplified a sigh of detachment. Data captured during observation showed that care givers showed propensity to allocate substantial time to routine activities than attempting to work on the missing elements in the cognitive and social domains. A substantial amount of time in one particular period was consumed by paper work like correcting children's exercise books. They also opted to spending too much time in one activity, being idle for some time, and being insensitive to children's problem. A critical component of adult-child interaction according to Miller (1996) is care giver's responsibility for supervision of all children at all times. Supervision does not necessarily mean over controlling of children's behavior rather it is recognizing their interests for independence and spending time with them during the course of interaction. Children understand themselves and others when they are involved in a web of interaction with adults and peers. Children who spend most of the time alone miss valuable opportunities

for learning. This does not mean that individual exploration should be discouraged by care givers. Rather the advantage outweighs when children are given the opportunity to explore with supervision and supported by care givers than being left alone with no external stimulation or support.

In some of the observed centers ECCE practices looked to have some kind of religious connotations. The case of ECCE center with Islam orientation at Kolfe Keranyo and a Protestant oriented center at Lideta Sub cities were typical examples. Besides the development of literacy, basic computational skills, language and environmental knowledge, programs were carried out to enhance the development of the preschool child within the traditional, cultural, and religious values of the family and the community. A study of the Madrasa Early Childhood Development Program in Kenya by Mwaura and Mohammed (2008) parallels the situation in the faith-based centers. According to the writers,

A core belief of the Madrasa Early Childhood Development Program is that the role of the preschool is to facilitate the development of healthy personality, skills, and abilities that enable Muslim children to fit creatively in the dynamic world of work while retaining their moral, spiritual, and cultural identity(p.392).

The authors quoted the Koran and stated that during early childhood, there is no gender segregation for children's activities. Observation data at the faith-based ECCE center, however, showed that boys and girls sit in separate rows unlike the practices in the secular preschool centers operating in the study area. Although in Islam it is clearly indicated that early childhood ends at the age 7 and furthermore, children younger than 7 are given many opportunities and encouragement to playing, the interactions seems to be gender-based. Whether or not this approach of gender-based interaction in the classroom could provide

children with better learning opportunities and prepare them to succeed in the upcoming secular primary schools is not evident. In the formal school system there are practices across many cultures in which girls are enrolled in separate schools. Some argue that girls achieve better results and interact confidently when classrooms exclusively serve girls. Whether or not girls and boys should attend classrooms in an inclusive or exclusive setting is a point of argument among educators. The literature seems to be inconclusive in this direction. Despite the controversies, what is important is to define ECCE programs to the best interest of the primary beneficiaries i.e., the children and the extent to which processes are linked to children's growth and development. According to Mwaura and Mohammed (2008) the effectiveness of ECCE program is ultimately gauged by its capacity in providing developmentally appropriate experiences and the change it brings on human product

Early Child Development (ECD) is a comprehensive and a multi-dimensional package embracing different intervention strategies. Variety of approaches and techniques need to be in place to improve family-based child-care practices and build the capacity of communities as a whole to bring change in the holistic development of children. The quality of child focused interventions is measured by the extent to which parents are involved in all programs. Family-level interventions can strengthen parents' capacity to provide safer and stimulating environment for children and sensitize them to work towards the attainment of fuller development. UNICEF supported Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) intervention strategy focuses on improving health, nutrition, education of children in Eastern and Southern Africa Regions (ESAR) to Promote Child Development. Among the 17 Core and 2 Additional ESAR practices, a supportive and enabling environment is one component. The components pertinent to this study include:

- Prevent child abuse and neglect and take action when it does occur;
- Provide care to orphans and vulnerable children;
- Ensure that men, especially fathers, actively participate in the provision of child care and are involved in reproductive health;

The evidence gathered from 18 countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region that implemented the IMCI household and community based interventions showed that wide-scale improvements have been made to reduce childhood deaths and improve the healthy growth and development of many young children in the countries surveyed. The evidence gathered demonstrated that the household and community component of the IMCI strategy improved knowledge, attitudes, and the family and community practices that affect child survival, health, and development (Jitta & Wilczynska-Ketende, 2008). Case reports from Good Neighbors at Lideta Sub City, The Norwegian supported preschool center at Akakai-Kality Sub City, and Wongelawit Mekaneyesus preschool center functioning at Lideta Sub City in this study all recognized the importance of multilevel family based intervention strategies to effect healthy development of children. Early childhood care and education was found to be part and parcel of the overall ECD program. A holistic approach that involves the family, the community and particularly the importance of sustainability of the intervention packages seemed to be effective. The case reports gathered from the three centers suggested that by integrating different intervention packages in child development and well being programs can bring sustainable change in the lives of parents and preschool children.

5.2. Program quality and Social Competence of preschool children

The second part of the discussion attempts to interpret and explain results pertaining to social competence of ECCE children cared and educated in the private, government “Other”(faith and charity-based) center types. The NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate ECCE programs focuses the consideration of curriculum, adult-child interaction, relationship between home and program and developmental outcomes in the area of cognitive, social and emotional milestones. In this research social competence as a mark of program outcome is considered as part and parcel of the overall comprehensive and critical component in the Ethiopian context. This is also emphatically stated in the National Policy Framework and Strategic Guideline and in the preschool curriculum documents.

The analysis has shown that children’s social competence is configured as a function of the combination of home and center-based factors. The home environment coupled with experiences in ECCE centers does give a better picture of the developmental outcomes of preschool children than exclusively looking into the effect of individual factors in the micro developmental niches.

Father’s educational level independently did not have significant effect on the three measures of social competence of preschool children. It is true that Ethiopian mothers do take the lion’s share in the caring process of children. The exclusion of fathers from caring and education of their children has long history in the Ethiopian culture. Child care has been taken as an exclusive right and mandate of mothers. This scenario is not typical to Ethiopia. Saracho, and Spodek (2007), contend that traditionally, researchers disregarded father–child interactions and fathers’ contributions in a family environment. Studies of roles within the family have either examined the mothers’ roles or the process of the married couple’s

decision-making, disregarding fathers' roles. Researchers assume that the fathers' involvement doesn't contribute to children's development. They generally focused on mother-child interactions, family systems, or on the family process in general without acknowledging the roles of fathers. Summary of ethnographic studies conducted in 186 cultures in the 1970's (Richter & Morrell, 2008), for example, have shown that fewer than 5 % percent of the men regularly took care of their preschool children.

According to Saracho, and Spodek(2007),the current concept that fathers are "involved and nurturant," surfaced during the 1930s and early 1940s. At that time, several socio-historical factors emerged, including similarities in birth rates, mothers' participation in the labor force, and increased advocacy of egalitarianism. Recent trends, seemed to challenge the traditional discourse about fathers' role in the development of children. New research studies seem to indicate fathers' important roles in families, which affect young children's lives. Bronstein's study (1984 cited in Saracho, and Spodek, 2007)) of parent-child dyads indicated a number of differences between maternal and paternal behaviors. She found that fathers were more playful and companionable with their children than mothers were, while mothers were better nurturing in terms of providing immediate physical needs.

Recent trends in the Ethiopian context as well show that fathers are becoming increasingly part and parcel of the caring and education of children. An increased number of mothers getting into the labor force and the overall attitudinal change in childrearing practices in the society have led to fathers' active involvement in children's development. These days' Ethiopian fathers look to be less punitive, less authoritarian, and less detached from child rearing practices at home. The fact that fathers lessened role as bread winners in the household economy might have reduced their authoritarian figure in the household and

instead fostered a supporting relationship in the family. This situation could likely promote child-father relationships and promote fathers role in children's competency.

Both Omnibus statistic and Univariate Analysis of Variance showed statistically significant effect of the interaction of center type and fathers educational level. The Univariate Analysis of the effect of center type showed significant effect on children's prosocial behavior. Further, pair wise comparisons between the three center types showed that children in the private centers and whose fathers read and write had greater mean scores in the prosocial subscale compared to children enrolled in government and faith or charity-based centers. When estimated marginal means for the three center types were compared with the four levels of father education, the changes were distinct favoring children in the private centers. In other words children enrolled in government centers and whose fathers had basic literacy tend to show better prosocial behavior as rated by their care givers.

Interestingly, marginal means for the play and communication skill subscale scores of children enrolled in government owned centers and whose fathers have diploma and above educational level were found to be significantly different from children's score enrolled in the private and faith based centers. Interestingly, across the three measures of the social competence teacher rating scales, marginal means for the social competence of preschool children tend to be lower as one considers children in the faith or charity based ECCE centers.

A general impression that could be derived from the analysis of the interaction effect of center type and fathers' educational level is that children enrolled in faith or charity based centers seem to be less competent across the three measures of social competence. Figures 2,

3, and 4 have shown a sharp fall in the marginal mean scores for this category along the four levels of fathers' educational levels.

Despite some variations, children enrolled in the private centers seem to hold consistent position in terms of the estimated marginal means regardless of their fathers' educational levels.

5.3. Parental perception and understanding of the role of ECCE centers in transiting preschool children to the formal school system

The household composition hypothesis takes into account the household characteristics as explanatory variables in understanding child development. Education of parents, children's relationship to household members, economic status of parents and other household factors have been found important factors in the explanation of parental relationship with ECCE centers. In this section the relative importance of these household factors that shaped the perception and understanding of parents in relation to quality of ECCE program are analyzed and interpreted in terms of data obtained from parental interviews.

In the Ethiopian context parental choice and consumption of early childhood care and education services depend on their purchasing power and their social status in the society. At least two types of ECCE services can be identified in the Ethiopian context. Paid child care service provided by the private centers and non-tuition paying scheme implemented by the government, charity and faith-based institutions. In the private centers the fees charged by ECCE programs vary considerably. In some of the private centers the researcher was able to hear 5-6 thousands ETB quoted for a semester per child. In fact one couldn't deny that such centers have different provisions for the children. Centers that employ better trained teachers,

with smaller class sizes accompanied by provision of snacks during break sessions and that provide diverse learning experiences charge high fees. As Glinskaya and Garcia (1999) noted, whether or not the amount of fee charged by ECCE centers could be taken as mark of excellence and quality is subject to argument. In the Ethiopian context fees are not set by MoE or any other government institution in charge of ECCE. It should not be forgotten that there are government-owned and faith-based centers that charge a token amount of fee for the service they deliver. The Zero-grade government preschool centers are entirely free service providers unless and otherwise special arrangements are made to subsidize the salary of the care givers. As a matter of fact this scheme has tremendously increased the Gross Enrollment Ratio at national level.

A cursory visit to these centers attests that in general the services delivered in the centers were below the standard. Almost all centers especially the zero-grade classes were seen functioning under impoverished environments despite care givers attempt to make the environment child friendly. However, who would deny that these same children used to spend their time in much impoverished home environment confined within four walls or abandoned elsewhere until their parents come back home after daily errands to win their daily bread. These days a significant number of household heads in the community both men and women move in pursuit of employment or involve in petty trades to support the family income leaving their children under the custody of neighbors or grandparents. One could say that the launching of the Zero-grade scheme is an opportunity for low income parents. Despite this below average care and education environment in the zero-grade, one could possibly argue that it is much better than keeping children in loneliness. Exposure to early literacy and numeric, peer interaction, exposure to varied experiences and people in the

premises of the primary schools are benefits children can at least accrue from the zero-grade preschool scheme.

This trend is consistent with the household hypotheses as discussed by Glinskaya, and Garcia(1999) in the Kenyan context. Accordingly, “The simulated effect of a policy that would fully subsidize the cost of child care is consistent with the predictions of the theory. Free child care would quadruple the use of ECD facilities by Kenyan households with preschool-age children”(p.382). This unprecedented Gross Enrollment increment of preschool children partly suggests that parents are quite sensitive to the tuition fee they pay for their children. Case studies identified in this research and views of single parents whose livelihoods depend on meager incomes substantiate this argument. Parental choice of preschool centers depends on income, aspirations and the view the society has towards the center types. Despite this assertion, parents with low socio economic status are also longing to send their children to the private ones irrespective of the lived experiences the centers. Parents unanimously opt to ascribe quality to the private center types.

It is unlikely that all parents would respond in a similar way to circumstances in the ECCE centers. As noted in the analysis section, their responses to issues raised interview sessions varied in terms of their economic status and family structure. Work and family responsibilities seemed to be important mediating factors in their relationship to ECCE centers in general and their relationship with care givers in particular. What is important is to what extent ECCE centers are responsive to these variations and tune their program towards maintaining a sustained relationship to place children’s development as top agenda. Sohn, and Wang (2006) conducted an in depth interview with parents to capture their views on the importance of their involvement. All six mothers interviewed reported that they did not feel

they had received sufficient support from the school and the teachers; in particular, they complained about lack of opportunities to communicate with teachers. They also felt the conferences held once or twice a year did not provide enough opportunity to establish partnership. All six mothers regarded the importance of the roles of teachers as highly significant. Their specific expectation, on top of others, was their hope that teachers would treat their children fairly.

One could possibly hypothesize that parents whose children are enrolled in government centers are less likely to participate actively and respond optimally to ECCE center requests compared to parents whose children are enrolled in the private ECCE centers. Single parents, parents whose livelihoods depend on meager resources obtained from unpredictable sources could possibly abstain from meetings convened by ECCE centers. The case report compiled from the center supported by the Norwegian government was a typical example. Let alone to be active partners in the day-to-day activities of ECCE centers, at times they may fail even to discharge their basic parental roles like protecting their children from being exposed to insecure environment. The case of the widowed parent at Kolfe Keranyo Sub City engaged in petty trade substantiates this argument. Miller (1996) suggested alternative way of reaching those parents who lacked the opportunity to attend meetings for some kind of inconvenience.

Sometimes it is difficult for parents to attend these meetings due to work schedules or family commitments. If such a meeting is held, recording the presentation and making it available to parents on a rotating basis would allow the parent who cannot attend to receive the information anyway (p.358).

Sometimes inadequate parental participation could be attributed to absence of reciprocation from the ECC centers. When parents suggest for improvement and their views are not positively recognized by ECCE centers, it might de-motivate parents from being involved in parent-care giver relationships. A case in focus is the response of a parent who suggested the improvisation of outdoor play grounds in collaboration with the ECCE was inadvertently responded. Such discomforting experiences could make them stay away from ECCE events even though they are responsible parents. Physical proximity between ECCE and the child's home could be taken as one possible explanation for low parental involvement. Centers need to show sensitivity to such issues. When a parent has a concern about his/her child, home visits by care givers seem to be a solution. Charity based centers seem to be working in close collaboration with single parents or poor families. Communication letters, progress reports, semester and annual-based meetings might not always serve to promote center-family relationships.

Data obtained from parental interview showed the contribution of bidirectional communication between care givers and parents for children's progress and improvement in certain areas. The interview with a parent was in congruence with what Kunreuther (1970, cited in Miller, 1996) suggested. Accordingly, after mothers have a chance to express their feelings and concerns to others who are willing to listen, they are more relaxed, listen to their children more carefully, become more responsive to their needs, and demonstrate more patience with their children. The link between ECCE centers must transcend from simple partnership and communication to a status of collaboration. Collaboration is a process through which parents and ECCE centers pull all available resources together for the best advantage of children. It does not necessarily mean that parents and ECCE centers need to

have similar views and understanding on all issues. According to Gray (1989, cited in Miller, 1996) collaboration is based on the notion that the more heads put together the more effective the solution. Manning, and Awick, (2006), also noted that true collaboration needs to value each partner and involves an exchange of value among the participants. Drawing the huge potential and available resources in the community to enhance quality program will cement the relationship between families and ECCE centers. Respecting parents suggestions, views, skills, knowledge is a mechanism by which ECCE centers can raise the relationship to the status of collaboration.

The transition from ECCE programs to the formal school system is marked by some sort of family recognition. Graduation of children from kindergartens is celebrated at family and center levels. These culturally embedded ceremonies can be considered as part of the “organized systems of indigenous education” as suggested by Pence and Nesamenang(2008) to symbolize an individual’s movement from one status to another. One could consider this event as rites of passage, a developmental landmark characterized by qualitative transformation resulting from not only competencies in numeric and language abilities but also as part of children’s involvement in home and outside activities that leads to the gradual mastery of cultural tools(Vogler, Crivello and Woodhead ,2008). This passage to a qualitatively new phase is not merely biological completion of one developmental stage rather it is a “social transformation” (Rogoff, 2003; cited in Nsamenang, 2008:140) brought in the individual through active participation in family and social life. Age boundaries may not be sound criteria to confirm the child has successfully completed life tasks of that particular stage. Rather accomplishment of cultural tasks as recognized by the society would

better describe the passage of children to a hierarchically complex system of life in the Ethiopian context.

The process of transition from preschools to primary schools is not clearly delineated issue in the Ethiopian context. In Ethiopia, attending preprimary program (in ECCE centers) is neither compulsory nor a prerequisite for joining primary schools. As indicated in the literature out of 7.3 million children in the age group, it was only negligible number who got the chance to transit to the formal school system via ECCE programs. A large number of children do not have the access to preschool education or ECD services. This scenario attests that some children are transited directly from home environment to primary school environment while others pass through pre primary school programs. Direct transition from home environment to school could be a traumatic situation for many children as well as parents. As Miller (1992) stated, one of the most difficult things parents ever have to do is move their children from the focus and security of their home to the world outside the home, the world of school. For some parents this is a very traumatic decision and process. For some fortunate children who had access to some kind of preschool education, the transition might not be as such problematic. Although the criteria for transiting preschool children to the primary school are not clearly stated, decisions seem to rely on value judgment of care givers and parental assessment of their children's status rather than using objectively verifiable measures.

Findings from the interview indicated, parents' perception of their children's readiness to meet the demands of primary school was mainly determined by their ability to read, write and numeric competency. The same finding revealed that parents aspired their children to be academically and socially competent before they move to the formal school

system. This result seems to be comparable with other studies. McIntyre et al., (2007) assessed parents' experiences and perceptions about children's transition to kindergartens. The researchers identified five top concerns of parents about their children's transition to the kindergarten. The top five concerns parents expressed about their child's transition to kindergarten were: attending a new school (56.1%), compliance/following directions (54.5%), behavior problems (41.7%), academic skills (40.9%), and getting along with peers (40.1%).

Laverick (2008) suggested the need to make the transition process proactive and responsive to the child's interest. He further noted that although the approaches and customs differ from one nation, region, or culture to another, a common denominator is recognizing the collaborative effort between ECC centers and parents is essential element to welcome young children into the formal school system.

Competencies in other developmental areas are not requirements for assessing children's readiness. During observation it was possible to take field notes on this particular issue. If parents suggested that it is for his/her advantage to detain from being transited to the primary school, the child would stay for another academic calendar in that particular level. Regardless of the repercussion it might entail on the psychological well being of the child, parents decide on the detainment. Processes seem judgmental on the part of parents than making informed decisions. Readiness was narrowly defined in terms of numeric and literacy abilities. Competency in the area of literacy and numeric is assumed to make the child competent to cope up the demands of primary school curricula. At times such decision of parents was made by the advice from friends, neighbors, or relatives whose children are in preschools or have already entered the formal school system. As reported by a parent, choice

of primary school was made on the recommendations of acquaintances, preschool settings, and other distal factors. Children are often eager to move on with peer groups while parents want children to develop competency in a manner they aspire. Despite the fact that these children tend to show a sense of autonomy and independence, some parents have an obsessed feeling that their children still are not ready to meet the demands of primary school. Progressive reports on the performance and status of the children can help parents to have a realistic image of their children.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Overview of the chapter

This chapter winds up the research activity by providing major findings and implications drawn from the analysis and interpretations of results. The first section of the chapter begins by recapitulating the research agenda. It starts by rephrasing the research objectives and research questions that led the overall research undertaking, how the research questions have been treated in light of the theoretical arguments and literature in the area. The second section of the chapter deals with the summary of major findings obtained from analysis of data pertaining to each of the research questions in lime light of empirical works conducted elsewhere in the area. The third section of the chapter considers methodological issues such as the psychometric properties of measuring instruments. Furthermore, the section discusses challenges encountered when using these measuring tools and their impact on data collection procedures and steps adopted to attain quality information. Furthermore, the same chapter implicates on the use of mixed research design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and the use of various measuring tools to come up with multiple data types collected from multiple realities. The last section of the chapter deals with conclusions and implications meant for further studies and mechanisms to improve the overall quality process in ECCE centers in the Ethiopian context.

6.2. Recapitulating the research agenda

The overall objective of this research was to investigate care giver child interaction in center based contexts and how this process is related to children's social competence. It further aimed to look into the role of parental relationship with preschool centers in

improving quality service delivery to enhance children's development in the social domain. The research undertaking was anchored along a three pronged areas: care giver child interaction, social competence of preschool children, and parental relationship with preschool centers. More specifically, the research questions that guided the research were (1) What specific classroom and center-based instances are attributed to quality care giver child interaction? (2) What is the status of quality care giver-child interaction in preschool centers as measured by the Care giver Interaction Scale (CIS)? (3) Does the effect of class size differ as a function of care givers' experience on the composite score of the four CIS dependent variables? (4) Do boys and girls in ECCE centers differ in their social competence? (5) Is the pattern of social competence to the three center types the same for fathers' educational level? (6) Do structural and process variables such as class size, care giver training in preschool teaching and positive interaction relate to social competence of preschool children as measured by the SCTRS? (7) What does quality care giver-child interaction mean to parents? (8) How do parents perceive the transitional role of preschool education in making the child ready for the formal school system?

The theoretical discourse that shaped the research was fusion of different developmental theories that articulated the importance of quality care giver child interaction and parental perception for the holistic development of preschool children. Theoretical formulations of the pioneers in child developmental sciences such as Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky, have been used as theoretical discourses in formulating the research questions and in the conceptualization of the research framework. Piaget's constructivist theory of cognitive development and Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding have emphasized the importance of adult child interaction in the early years to shape children's development, and

thus the research made use of both paradigms to shape the research questions, analyze and interpret the respective data. Although both theories follow different approaches to explain the significance of children's adaptation and interaction with their physical and social milieu, I have identified and made use of the perspectives they both share to my ends. For instance, the emphasis they both share in centering children's development within a social context, and the similar stand both have on the significance of peer and adult interaction to promote children's learning, are the two tenets that made up the theoretical foundation of this research. Montessori's philosophy is also a perspective that has been employed in this research. Its emphasis on the importance of providing children with free choice to explore their environment and the role of care givers in the interactive process is worth mentioning concept that has guided quality of ECCE program in this research. Within the Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model of development, children's learning is understood as an outcome of interaction with proximal processes. The child's involvement in this proximal process is the engine that triggers development. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model calls for active transaction between the developing child and persons, objects, symbols, and activities that comprise the Microsystem. The researcher has borrowed concepts from these developmental theories to describe events in ECCE centers and explain the effect of different factors on children's social competence in the child's Microsystems. This eclectically designed approach lent a hand to conceptualize the different phenomena observed in ECCE centers in multiple ways rather than exclusively adhering to a monolithic approach.

By sorting out the essentials of these theories relevant to ECCE center based program, the modality adopted to conceptualize quality was input-process- outcome approach. The input-process-outcome approach is basically in congruence with looking into the

developmental appropriateness of ECCE programs which in turn calls for the consideration of, child-adult interaction, parental perception of facets of quality ECCE and developmental outcome of ECCE program. It was argued that the process aspect of quality is much more important in the current Ethiopian context though structural aspects of ECCE programs have also their powerful influence on children's development in center based contexts. It was along these multiple perspectives that I shaped my understanding and thoughts of the early childhood care and education landscape.

6.3. Summary of the empirical findings

This section attempts to summarize the major findings drawn from data presentation and analysis made in chapter four. The findings are summarized and succinctly put into three major parts addressing quality care giver child interaction, social competence of preschool children, and parental perception and understanding of the role of preschool programs in transiting the preschool child into the formal school culture.

6.3.1. Quality of care giver child interaction.

The first three questions of the research focused on quality of care giver child interaction, and how center-based variables affect the transaction process between care givers and children and among children themselves under multiple settings.

Findings obtained from data analyses have shown that almost little less than half of the classrooms observed were found to fall below the mean value as measures by the Care giver Child Interaction Scale. More specifically the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis demonstrated:

- Quality of care giver child interaction is not a one-dimensional concept. Hence it is influenced by the interaction of factors within the classrooms in ECCE centers.

Results from quantitative data analysis have shown that quality of care giver child interaction has been found significantly affected by the interaction of class size and care givers teaching experience. For instance, MANOVA results showed that 16 % of the generalized variance in the four dependent measures of care giver child interaction was accounted for by the interaction of class size and care givers teaching experience.

- Findings demonstrated that quality of care giver child interaction varied with , time of observation, and contexts under which observations took place.
- Devotion time was not simply a set of acts. Rather, it has been well planned and systematically structured event with clear objective. Flag ceremonies were places where care giver child interactions gradually transcend into complex set of events and movements that promoted children's holistic development in the area of cognitive, affective and social domains.
- Class size, space, arrangement of facilities, physical set up, organization and display of learning and stimulating materials and their contribution to children's development varied from center to center. Although MoE has set standards for ECCE program, centers do not seem to function uniformly within a given framework.
- In some of the observed classrooms, space limitation enforced fixed sitting arrangement, unidirectional eye and body gestures, care giver-centered activity, over indulgence of paper-pencil work, and limited children's movement to interact in multiple ways.
- In almost all cases, classrooms were stuffed by stimulating learning and teaching materials ranging from child-made to teacher-made, from local to industrial products.

However, the materials were not effectively used by care givers and children to the best interests of children.

- With regard to care givers trainings, only 4.4% joined preschool teaching without any training whereas 95.6% with training ranging from three months to one year. The older batch passed through intensive preschool teacher training programs under the auspices of Ministry of Education and other institutions.
- A number of care givers' behaviors in the cognitive domain were not found proper in terms of capacitating children's language and communication skills. During interaction care givers were seen committing a number mistakes such as improper pronunciations, incorrect grammar usage, spelling and conceptual errors.
- Much emphasis was given to the development of numeric and literacy with little or no attention paid to other aspects of development such as prosocial behavior and communication skill. Classroom sessions were didactically structured in a rigid and fixed manner like that of the formal school system limiting the quality and scope of interaction.
- In almost all cases care givers were found to be highly affectionate with a sense of close attachment with children. Physical punishment seemed exception than being a rule to discipline children's' behavior. The traditional view that children should show strict adherence to adults' obligations looked to wither away gradually. Despite such positive attachments, care givers appeared detached, somehow punitive in its wider sense, and permissive in their behavior towards exercising firmness.

6.3.2. Quality of interaction and social competence of preschool children

Major findings related to quality of care giver child interaction and social competences of preschool children were based on data obtained from teacher ratings of preschool children using the Social Competence Teacher Rating Scale developed and pilot tested by the researcher.

- Multivariate test results demonstrated that averaging across center types, there was statistical evidence for a difference between government, private and the 'Others' center types as a function of the combination of preschool children's prosocial behavior, play and communications skill scores.
- Averaging across fathers' educational level, there was statistical evidence for a difference between the different levels of fathers' educational level as a function of the three dependent measures of preschool children's social competence .Eight percent of the generalized variance in the three dependent variables was accounted for by father's educational level. Univariate Analysis of Variance however did not show the effect of this variable on the separate measures of the Social Competence Teacher Rating Scales.
- The interaction of center type by fathers' educational level was found to be statistically significant. Sixteen percent of the generalized variance in the three dependent variables was accounted for by the interaction of center type by father's educational level.
- Univariate Analysis of Variance further confirmed that the interaction effect was so important in explaining children's social competence. The effect off center type by fathers' educational level was statistically significant along the three dependent

variables: prosocial behavior, communication and play skills when considered singularly.

- In an attempt to find out the relationship between selected structural and process variables and the overall measure of children's social competence score, multiple regressions analysis was employed. Social competence teacher rating score as dependent variable and care givers training status in early child hood care and education teaching, class size, and positive interaction were taken as independent variables. Only 4% of the variance in social competence of preschool children's score (Y) was linearly accounted for by the combination of care givers training status in early child hood care and education teaching (X1), class size(X2), and positive interaction (X3). Beta coefficients indicated that care givers training status significantly related to children's social competence score.

6.3.3. Parental perception and understanding on the role of ECCE in transiting preschool children to the formal school system

Parents' perception of the role of preschool centers and quality of relationship with preschool centers varied across center types, parental socio economic status and the provisions availed in these centers. Major findings from analyses of qualitative data include:

- Interview data and case analysis of selected centers demonstrated that Pre-school intervention package that integrated preschool education and parental support made children beneficiaries of programs and enhanced cognitive aspirations and behavioral outcomes. This was particularly the case for children from low income families.

- Many parents perceived the transition of preschool children to the formal school system in terms of children's capacity in the area of literacy and computational skills with little attention to social and emotional developments.
- Centers seemed to use different avenues to reach parents. Communication letters, signature books, school days were means by which parents and ECCE centers communicated to exchange views and information about the progressions made by the children. Semester based conferences between preschool centers and parents appeared inefficient in maintaining mutual support and collaboration between parents and ECCE centers.
- Parents appeared to have a positive image on care givers behavior. Because of the affection they have shown and the relentless effort they made to capacitate children's cognitive abilities, parents seemed to be satisfied by care givers' profile.
- The relationship between parents and ECCE centers was not grounded on sustained goals geared towards the holistic development of children. Rather the framework of the relationship was to targeting the development of children's cognitive elements. The relationship looked to focus on immediate learning outcomes than conceiving the role played by parents in enriching the preschool curriculum to the best interest of children.

6.4. Methodological reflections

Method of inquiry used in the study was mixed research design in which the quantitative and qualitative approaches complemented each other in a way to represent and understand perceptions and realities of the program. Such concurrent data collection and analytical process enabled to triangulate data obtained from indoor-outdoor observations and

interviews conducted with parents. Through the observation check list it was possible to gather quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to quality of care giver child interaction. The social competence measure was part of the instrument by which teachers got the opportunity to rate children along three dimensions to get a holistic picture of children's competencies. Despite the controversies and shortcomings of using rating scales and observational tools to investigate ECCE programs, it was possible to collect thick and rich data that enabled the researcher to achieve and arrive at valid conclusions. The complementary nature of the quantitative and qualitative methods was exemplified by data obtained from multiple sources and realities supporting each other. By triangulating data obtained from different sources via different techniques it was possible to clarify results and interpret them meaningfully. This approach not only helped to come up with converging ideas but also to discover paradoxical findings to open new avenue for further research.

Quality of care giver child interaction and social competence of preschool children have been considered as dependent variables, It was conceived that these two dependent variables could be influenced by a host of factors in the child's home environment and center- based factors. Structural variables, process variables, socio economic factors singularly or interactively could shape the child's developmental outcomes. Hence, factors such as class size, care givers experience, care givers training, center type, parental educational levels were considered in the analysis to examine the way in which they shape children's development in center-based contexts.

The use of standardized instrument developed in alien culture may pose some kind of theoretical and practical limitations on the dependability of the findings. The Child Interaction Scale is a standardized tool developed to make process oriented researches in

center-based contexts. As a researcher, I had to look for other instruments that would assess quality issues in ECCE programs with the intent of weighing the comparative advantages of the instruments employed. I made cost benefit analysis of using the CIS. And later I convinced myself that with some modification the CIS could also be used to solicit dependable data provided that multiple realities and data collection techniques are being used. My decision was judicious. At the end of the day I found out that the instrument served my research agenda. Researching on the social development of children in the Ethiopian context has been rarely attempted especially when it relates to preschool children. After intensive study of the literature, I came up with my own instrument which I presumed would ignite some kind of interest among Ethiopian researchers and practitioners to pursue in the area.

6.5. Implications of the study for improved quality service delivery in ECCE centers

1. In most of the observed classrooms, activities were teacher dominated not interactive and not founded on reciprocities. If at all there existed children's activity, it was entirely mediated by care givers. Environmental exploration, more specifically the opportunity for children to make choices was not in place. Therefore, there is a need for centers to work towards maintaining a balance between child and care giver initiated activities. The leadership of the centers needs to encourage care givers to practice episodes of shared thinking and activity with children to promote quality care giver child interaction.
2. There is strong empirical evidence that supports positive relationship between high proportion of trained teachers in ECCE centers and better cognitive and social development in children. The findings from this research demonstrated that care givers training status in preschool teaching is miscellaneous lacking uniformity. Care givers training ranged from

zero to one year. It is obvious that such disparity in training status could yield substantial difference among preschool children in terms of developmental outcomes and in their readiness to meet the demands of the formal school system. Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau and MoE at large should strongly support the upcoming undergraduate and graduate ECCE programs to be launched at Addis Ababa University, in the College of Education and Behavioral Studies to fill the human capital gap and future demand in the area.

3. When contexts are engaging, responsive and stimulating care giver child interaction moves in emulating way. Flag ceremonies were demonstration niches that witnessed the importance of outdoor activities for holistic development of preschool children. ECCE center leadership should encourage care givers to implement the preschool curricula through play-based activities than exclusively limiting themselves to classrooms within the four walls. There is a need to balance teaching and play through the entire interaction process. Effective child pedagogy is both caring and the provision of diverse learning experiences and play environments.

4. There were significant differences between individual pre-school settings and their impact on children's development. Some settings were more effective than others in promoting positive child outcomes. In line to this, some centers seemed to integrate education with caring to promote better cognitive and social development. There has been disparity among centers in terms of structural and process aspects of ECCE programs. This disparity among ECCE centers made difficult to determine the minimum service quality threshold. Hence there is a need for City Administration Education Bureau to reduce this gap through setting and implementing standard assurance measures.

5. Classroom and out of classroom observations showed that care givers exhibited warm and affectionate relationship with children. Their interest and motivation in caring and educating preschool children was found to be high. However, classroom observations revealed that care givers lacked appropriate knowledge and skills in child pedagogy. This was demonstrated by their emphasis on paper work, the chalk and talk method, and the unidirectional relationship practiced in due course of classroom interactions. Their knowledge and practice of child development theories and principles relevant to ECCE was found to be shallow. This gap should be reduced through initial training and continuous professional development by City Administration Education Bureau and MoE by large.

6. Staffs need to have a good grasp of appropriate child pedagogy to effect children's cognitive and social development. Hence, it is essential for the Ministry at large and City Educational Bureau specifically to ensure that ECCE staffs have ECCE program knowledge as well as know-how and/ or exposure to child psychology.

7. An in-depth case analysis to explore practices that might explain differences between center types in three centers was conducted. By virtue of their unique characteristics in program implementation, individual settings, care givers profile and values attached to the respective centers, important implications can be derived that describe and promote children's development. Hence, City Educational Bureau should facilitate and initiate experience sharing program as a strategy and execute it where best practices can be exchanged among ECCE centers.

8. It has been demonstrated in many research findings that care givers and families need to work in close collaboration to strengthen programs to meet the diverse developmental needs of preschool children. The importance of these relationships must transcend beyond the

traditional framework that underscores care givers importance or dominance to one that is based on reciprocation operating at both ends. Hence, centers should work vigorously towards making parental involvement not a sporadic one but as part and parcel of the overall caring and educating process of children.

9. The trend of ECCE- parent relationship seemed one directional in which the former called upon to discuss child related problems. Instead, on top of communication letters, signature books, and semester-based conferences care givers home visits should be ECCE centers' agenda to establish a sustained relationship. Therefore, ECCE centers need to expend more time and resource to engage parents in their children's learning and encourage them to share curriculum objectives.

10. Data obtained from classroom observation and outdoor activities demonstrated that care givers overtly emphasized the cognitive aspect of children's development. Much emphasis was given to the development of language and computational skills. Minimal or no attention was given to the development of prosocial behavior of children. Findings from this research however, demonstrated that social competence of preschool children was found to vary as a result of the combined effect of center-based variables and home settings. This finding is further demonstration of the importance of maintaining close cooperation and collaboration between centers and parents. Fathers' educational level in combination with center based variable had significant effect on children's social competence. Hence, ECCE centers should encourage fathers to take active role in their children's development. This finding further revealed that there is a possibility of involving male care givers in ECCE centers despite the stereotyped outlook that preschool care giving and education is female's career domain.

11. The study area for this research was Addis Ababa City Administration. Since the study was conducted only in Addis Ababa, it cannot be representative sample of the country's experiences both in terms of structural and process aspects. Addis Ababa City Administration is characterized by high Gross Enrollment Ratio and quality service at least in terms of country contexts. Hence, rigorously designed studies that focus on specific features of the centers and their practices need to be carried out at regional and national levels in the future.

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Appendix A

Part one: Center and Caregiver based Information (Please put a ✓ mark or write the necessary information where necessary)

1. OCL version Information

1.1. OCL CODE _____

1.2. Observer's Name _____

1.3. Observation session

1.3.1. Morning _____ 1.3.2. Afternoon _____

1.3.3. Observation time _____ up to _____

2. Center based Information

2.1. Center Name _____

2.2. Center Type

2.2.1. Government _____

2.2.2. Private _____

2.2.3. Public _____

2.2.4. Faith based _____

3. Classroom based Information

3.1. Section/classroom _____

3.2. Children age category

3.2.1. 4-6 years _____

3.2.2. 5-6 years _____

3.3. Staff-child ratio _____

3.4. Class size _____

4. Care giver information

4.1. Teaching /Care giving Experience _____ (in years)

4.2. Lead teacher general education

4.2.1. Less than high school _____

4.2.2. High school complete _____

4.2.3. College diploma _____

4.2.4. Bachelor's degree _____

4.3. Lead teacher formal training in early child hood care and education

4.3.1. No formal training _____

4.3.2. Certificate _____

4.3.3. Diploma _____

Part two: Caregiver's Interaction Scale (Observation protocol and Instruction attached)

1 = *Not at All true*

2 = *somewhat true*

3 = *Quite a Bit true*

4 = *Very Much true*

Item no	Items(Positive Interaction)	1	2	3	4	SPECIFIC INSTANCES OBSERVED
1	Speaks warmly to the children Tone expresses enjoyment, acceptance, patience, sincerity					
2	Listens attentively when children speak to her Initiates conversation, gives time to respond, reacts					
3	Seems to enjoy the children Basic care, one to one interaction, face to face interaction, appreciation of efforts, asks preferences					
4	When the children misbehave, explains the reason or the rule they are breaking.. Gives clear and concise explanation, sanctions for dangerous behavior					
5	Encourages the children to try new experiences Verbal encouragement, use of specific comments, pose questions and make suggestions, consolidate learning, offers cues, opportunity for exploration					
6	Is enthusiastic about the children's activities and efforts.. Praise attempts, offer encouragement, gives recognition					
7	Pays positive attention to the children as individuals Individual support, gives choices and preferences, opportunity for self choice					
8	Talks to children on a level they can understand Use of simplified language, expands vocabulary, uses appropriate grammar and vocabulary					
9	Encourages children to exhibit prosocial behavior, e.g., sharing, helping. Use positive guidance technique, modeling, encouragement, redirecting behavior, opportunity to work in small groups, storytelling, praises prosocial behavior					
10	When talking to children, kneels, bends or sits at their level to establish better eye contact. Eye contact when children speak, responsive to the child's cues, one to one face interaction					
Item no	Items (Punitiveness)	1	2	3	4	SPECIFIC INSTANCES OBSERVED
11	Is critical of the children Strict adherence to rules, overt control, sensitive to trivial tings					
12	Places high value on obedience Too formalistic, Over scheduled activities, too much activity, teacher dictated activity					
13	Speaks with irritation or hostility to the children.					

Sharp tone, raised voice, verbally abrupt, saying nice things in a negative manner						
14	Threatens children in trying to control them					
Frightening, humiliating, punishing perceived disobedience						
15	Punishes the children without explanation					
Roughness ,unpleasing, intolerable treatment, does not help children to learn rules						
16	Finds fault easily with children					
Criticizes for what children cannot do, humiliates, make feel ashamed of acts (you cannot button your coat, you cannot read/write)						
17	Seems to prohibit many of the things the children want to do.					
Constantly says no, discourages sense of self, foster over dependence, make children feel inadequate						
18	Expects the children to exercise self-control: e.g., to be undisruptive for group provider-led activities, to be able to stand in line calmly.					
Expect to sit for long periods, limited choices, expect accurate completion of activities						
19	Seems unnecessarily harsh when scolding or prohibiting children.					
Children handled urgently, picked in a rough manner, frightening, demeaning						
Item no	Items(Detachment)	1	2	3	4	SPECIFIC INSTANCES OBSERVED
20	Is distant or detached from the children					
Lack of involvement, lack of interest with children’s activities, treating children with indifference, lack of any interaction, unresponsive,						
21	Spends considerable time in activity not involving interaction with the children.					
Children left for long in free play, care giver seemingly busy, talking on the telephone, doing routine tasks, chatting with co-workers						
22	Doesn't seem interested in the children's activities					
Uninvolved in children’s play or exploration, only supervision, fail in promoting children’s learning, much paper and pencil work						
23	Doesn't supervise the children very closely					
Children left unattended, does not follow-up by sight or sound						
Items(Permissiveness)						
24	Exercises little control over the children					
Health and safety procedures overlooked, supervision inadequate, children left unattended						
25	Doesn’t reprimand children when they misbehave					
Unable to respond to misbehavior, un disciplinary behavior ignored						
26	Exercises firmness when necessary					
Clear and concise rules, watches children and steps in						

Part three: From your observation please provide additional information on the following points.

1. Context for the observation,

2. Statements about each classroom,

3. Teachers or caregiver characteristics.

Appendix B

Dear colleagues: Please take time and rate the following items anchored along a three point scale to indicate the extent of their applicability to measure the above four dimensions. Put a ✓ mark to indicate your ratings.

3. Applicable to the dimension
2. Moderately applicable to the dimension
1. Inapplicable to the dimension

N.B. You are expected to rate the appropriateness of the items not the competency of a given child

I appreciate your cooperation

1. Positive orientation to others	1	2	3
The child:			
1.1. Displays friendly behavior to peers			
1.2. Is desperate in taking roles in activities			
1.3. Demonstrates helping relationship with his mates			
1.4. Is flexible in accommodating interest of others			
1.5. Spends time in social interaction of all types of children			
1.6. Engages in cooperative activities(ie., sharing, accepting, affectionate)			
1.7. Shares learning and play materials with peers			
1.8. Peer interaction is brief and spontaneous			
1.9. Does not show appropriate mealtime behavior (e.g., taking food from a peer's plate).			
1.10. Approaches others negatively			
1.11.lacks the capacity to empathize			
1.12.Excahnge information with others appropriately			
1.13. Is usually neglected or rejected by other children			

2.Play skills				
The child:				
2.1.Understands rules in the play				
2.2.Violates rules in play				
2.3.Tends to cheat his play mates in the game				
2.4. Complains about trivial things in play				
2.5. Engages in parallel play (i.e., child and peer are sitting next to each other playing his/her own).				
2.6. Displays negative motor responses to peer in play (e.g. the child bites the peer, tends to harm).				
2.7. Tends to reject peers initiation to play (e.g., a peer asks a child to join in a play activity, child shows rejection behavior).				
2.8. Takes turn fairly in play				
2.9. Negotiates and compromises with peers appropriately in play.				
2.10. Gains access to ongoing group play				
2.11. Is considered by other children as some one they like to play				
3.The ability to regulate emotions				
The child:				
3.1.Regulates his emotions				
3.2.Is easily excited and annoyed in his success and failure				

3.3. Argues logically with peers to resolve conflicts			
3.4. Negotiates on a win-win style to resolve conflicts			
3.5. Does inflict aggressive behavior on self (e.g., self-biting, banging head).			
3.6. Usually copes with rebuffs adequately			
3.7. Displays the capacity for humor			
3.8. Is easily intimidated by unruly behavior of peers			
3.9. Expresses frustration and anger modestly without harming others			
3.10. Expresses wishes and preferences clearly ;gives reasons for actions and positions			
3.11. Is usually in a positive mood.			
3.12. Does seem to be lonely.			
3.13. Is dependent on adults			
3.14. Usually comes to the program willingly.			

3.15. Asserts own right and needs appropriately.			
The child:	4. Communication and good manners		
4.1. Uses inappropriate language (eg., verbal communication like threats, insults)			
4.2. Makes conversation with peers			
4.3. Raises hand to communicate with teacher			
4.4. Initiates social interactions with peers using a positive vocal-verbal act (e.g., request to join ongoing activities).			
4.5.Says “Hello” to teachers and peers)			
4.6.Interacts non-verbally with other children with smiles, waves, nods, etc)			
4.7.Talks out of turn in discussion			

If you have comments and suggestions on the items and my choice of dimensions to explain social competence of pre-school children in the Ethiopian context, please provide the information on the space below.

With regards,
Girma Lemma
AAU(IER)

Appendix C

Dear colleagues: Please take time and rate the following items anchored along a three point scale to indicate the extent of their applicability to measure the above four dimensions. Put a ✓ mark to indicate your ratings.

- 1. Inapplicable to the dimension**
- 2. Moderately applicable to the dimension**
- 3. Applicable to the dimension**

N.B. You are expected to rate the appropriateness of the items not the competency of a given child

I appreciate your cooperation

1. Orientation to others	1	2	3
The child:			
1.5. Displays friendly behavior to peers			
1.6. Takes roles in peer activities			
1.7. Demonstrates helping relationship with others			
1.8. Is flexible in accommodating interest of others			
1.5. Spends reasonable amount of time in interacting with peers			
1.6. Participates in cooperative activities			
1.7. Shares learning and play materials with peers			
1.8. Sustains peer interaction for age-appropriate length of time.			

1.9. Shows inappropriate mealtime behavior (e.g., taking food from a peer's plate).			
1.10. Approaches others positively.			
1.11. Responds indifferently to unhappiness of others (lacks feeling of empathy)			
1.12. Is less liked and preferred by other children			
1.13. Shows interest in the world around him			
1.14. Enjoys group activities			
1.15. Acknowledges the rights of others			
1.16. Tends to enjoy center/family-based activities			
2. Play skills			
The child:			
2.1. Understands rules in the play			
2.2. Does not abide to rules in play			
2.3. Tends to deceive his play mates in play			
2.4. Complains about trivial things in play			
2.5. Engages in parallel play (i.e., child and peer are sitting next to each other playing his/her own).			

2.6. Engages in associative play (i.e., children are engaged in a similar play of their own and communicating about it).			
2.7. Displays negative motor responses to peer in play (e.g. the child bites the peer, tends to harm).			
2.8. Tends to reject peers initiation to play (e.g., a peer asks a child to join in a play activity, child shows rejection behavior).			
2.9. Takes turn fairly in play			
2.10. Negotiates with peers appropriately in play.			
2.11.Mixes with peers in an ongoing group play			
2.12.Invited by other children joins them in play			
2.13. Is preferred by other children to be their play mate			
3.The ability to regulate emotions			
The child:			
3.1.Regulates his emotions			
3.2.Is easily excited in his success			

3.2.Is easily annoyed in his failure			
3.3.Compromises with peers to resolve conflicts			
3.4. Displays intense emotional outbursts			
3.5. Does involve in self-injuring acts when feeling negative emotions (e.g., self-biting).			
3.6. Usually copes with negative feelings			
3.7. Displays funny, humorous behavior			
3.16. Is easily disturbed by unruly behavior of others			
3.17. Expresses frustration and anger modestly without harming others			
3.18. Expresses preferences and needs clearly			
3.19. Is usually in a positive mood.			
3.20. Does seem to be lonely.			

3.21. Is overtly dependent on others			
3.22. Usually attends the preschool program willingly.			
3.23. Asserts own needs appropriately.			
4. Communication skill			
4.1. Uses culturally inappropriate language (eg., threats, insults)			
4.2. Communicates freely with strangers to maintain social connectedness			
4.3. Adjusts his speech to fit the status of listeners(sex, age) eg, raises hand to communicate with teacher			
4.4. Initiates conversation (e.g., request to join ongoing activities).			
4.5.Says “Hell” to others(teachers, parents, peers)			
4.8.Interacts non-verbally with others (eg., smiles, waves, nods, etc)			

4.9. Talks out of turn in conversation and discussion

4.10. Maintains sustained conversation

4.11. Tells stories learned from books and others

If you have comments and suggestions on the items and my choice of dimensions to explain social competence of pre-school children in the Ethiopian context, please provide the information on the space below.

With regards,
Girma Lemma
AAU(IER)

Appendix D

Construct definition

The ability to understand and follow rules in play is one component of **social competence** among pre-school age children. Age appropriate social behavior among preschoolers is the capacity to demonstrate positive affect towards peer groups during games that require perspective-taking skills. Regulation of one's emotions and the ability to communicate fairly and clearly to others are also critical for preschool children's success in their relationship to others. The purpose of this checklist is to assess the social competence of kindergarten children along four dimensions in center and home based settings.

Dimension one: Orientation to others

Dimension two: Play skill

Dimension three: Emotion regulation

Dimension four: Communication skill

Dear kindergarten teacher: Please rate the kindergarten child using the items listed below to assess the above four dimensions ie, orientation to others, play skills, ability to regulate emotions, and communication skills. The items are anchored along a five point scale ranging from highly applicable to highly inapplicable. Put a $\checkmark$ mark to indicate to what extent each item is applicable to the kindergarten child.

- 5. Highly applicable
- 4. Applicable
- 3. Moderately applicable
- 2. Inapplicable
- 1. Highly inapplicable

I appreciate your cooperation

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Orientation to others					
The child:					
1.1. Displays friendly behavior to peers(eg., greetings, hugging peers)					
1.2. Takes roles in peer activities					
1.3.Demonstrates helping relationship with others(sharing, using					

comforting words)					
1.4.Is flexible in accommodating interest of others					
1.5. Spends reasonable amount of time in interacting with peers					
1.6. Participates in group activities(shows interest to work with peers)					
1.7. Shares learning and play materials with peers					
1.8. Shows appropriate mealtime behavior (e.g., does not take food from a peer's plate).					
1.9. Approaches others positively.					
1.10. Responds appropriately to problems of others(feeling of empathy)					
1.11. Is liked by other children					
1.12. Smiles and expresses joy when with others					
1.13. Responds appropriately to adults demand					
1.14. Participates in outdoor activities with parents and peers					
2.Play skills					
The child:					
2.1.Understands rules in the play					
2.2.Abides to rules in play					
2.3.Tends to deceive his play mates in play					
2.4. Complains about trivial things in play(eg., repeated accusations)					
2.5. Engages in cooperative play i.e., work on the same project with peers (eg., building a house).					
2.6. Engages in associative play i.e., child is engaged in a similar play of his own and communicates about it(eg., exchange ideas, gives comments and					

suggestions)					
2.7. Tends to cause harm to peers when loses the game(e.g. the child bites play mate).					
2.8. Tends to show preference to solitary play than joining group of children					
2.9. Is good enough in taking turns in play					
2.10. Negotiates with peers appropriately in play.					
2.11.Mixes with peers easily in an ongoing group play(e.g. does not wait in a shy and uncertain way)					
2.12.Invited by other children joins them in play(e.g. does not wait aimlessly)					
2.13. Is preferred by other children to be their play mate					
3.Emotion regulation					
The child:					
3.1.Regulates his feelings					
3.2.Is easily excited in his success					
3.3.Compromises with peers to resolve conflicts					
3.4. Displays intense emotional outbursts					
3.5. Does involve in self-injuring acts when feeling negative emotions (e.g., self-biting).					

3.6. Usually copes with negative feelings					
3.7. Displays funny, humorous behavior					
3.8. Is easily disturbed by unruly behavior of others					
3.9. Is easily annoyed in his failure					
3.10. Expresses frustration and anger modestly without harming others					
3.11. Expresses preferences and needs calmly					
3.12. Is usually in a positive mood.					
3.13. Does seem to be lonely.					
3.14. Is overtly dependent on others(e.g. seeking assistance for toilet needs)					
3.15. Usually attends the preschool program willingly.					
3.16. Asserts own needs appropriately.					
4. Communication skill					
4.1. Uses culturally inappropriate language (eg., threats, insults)					

4.2. Communicates freely with strangers to maintain social connectedness					
4.3. Adjusts his speech to fit the status of listeners(sex, age) eg, raises hand to communicate with teacher					
4.4. Initiates conversation (e.g., poses questions to join ongoing activities).					
4.5.Says “Hello” to others(teachers, parents, peers)					
4.6.Interacts non-verbally with others (eg., smiles, waves, nods, etc)					
4.7.Talks out of turn in conversation and discussion					
4.8.Maintains sustained conversation					
4.9.Tells stories learned from books and others					
Thank you once more again					

With regards,
Girma Lemma
AAU(IER)

Appendix E

I	ሌሎች ሰዎችን አረዳድ	5	4	3	2	1	ምርመራ
1.1	ለአቻዎች የጓደኝነት ስሜት ማሰየት (ለምሳሌ በመጨረሻ ጥፍ ሰላምታ በመስጠት ወይም በማቀፍ)						
1.2	ከአቻዎች ጋር በማኖር መስተጋብር (ለምሳሌ በጨዋታ) ማግኘት						
1.3	በሚዳዳሪት ላይ የተመሰረተ ግንኙነትን ማሰየት (ማክፈል፣ ማዋሰን)						
1.4	ችክ ሣይሉ የሌሎችን ፍላጎት ግምት ወስኖ ማስገባት						
1.5	ከአቻዎች ጋር ለመሆን ከሞላ ጎደል በቂ ጊዜ መቆየት						
1.6	በቡድን እንቅስቃሴ መሳተፍ (አብሮ ለመጫወትም ሆነ የመሰራት ዝንባሌ)						
1.7	የመሠሪያም ሆነ የመጫወቻ ቁሶችን ለአቻዎች ማክፈል						
1.8	የሜዳ ስርዓትን አክብሮ መመገብ (ሳያስፈቅዱ የጉዋደኞችን መባላ፣ ምግብ ማዘረከረክ)						
1.9	ሌሎችን በአወንታዊ መንገድ መቅረብ						
1.10	የሌሎችን ችግር ለመፍታት ርህራሄነት ማሰየት (ችግርን መግራት፣ ማበረታታት)						
1.11	በሌሎች ልጆች መደድ						
1.12	ከሌሎች ጋር ሲኮን የደሰታ፣ የፍንደቃ ስሜት ማሰየት						
1.13	አዋቂዎች ጥያቄ፣ ትእዛዝ አግባብ ያለው ምላሽ መስጠት						
II	የጨታ ክህሎት						
2.1	የጨታ ደንቦችን መረዳት						
2.2	የጨታ ደንቦችን ማክበር ወይም እፍርታም አለመሆን						
2.3	በጨታ ላይ ሌሎችን ማዋገድ፣ ማህለል						
2.4	በጨታ ወቅት በረባ ባልረባው መጫጫ ሰበብ ማበዛት እና በተደጋጋሚ የጨታውን ተካፋዮች መሰብሰብ						
2.5	የጋራ ጥረት በሚጠይቅ የቡድን ጨታ ወስኖ መክፈል						
2.6	እያንዳንዱ አቻ በግል ሲጫወት ሀሳብን መግራት፣ አስተያየት መስጠት						
2.7	ሽንፈትን ባለመቀበል አቻዎች ላይ ጉዳት ማድረስ (መንከስ፣ መሞታት ወዘተ)						
2.8	ከቡድን ጨታ ይልቅ የግል ጨታን መመረጥ						

2.9	ተራን ጠበቆ መጫወት						
2.10	በጨቃ ወቅት ካቻዎች ጋር ተቻችሎ መጫወት						
2.11	አይናፋርነት ወይም ማጫታት ሳይኖር ቀድሞ በተጀመረ የቡድን ጨቃን መቀላቀል						
2.12	ከሌሎች ልጆች በበለጠ ለጓደኝነት የመሠረተ ያለው/ያላት ዕድል						
III	ስሜን መቆጣጠር						
3.1	ልዩነት ወደ ጸብ እንዳያመራ በመቻቻል መቆጣጠር						
3.2	የሞልቃታት ባህርይ ማለት (ለምሳሌ ፍላጎት እስኪሟላ ትግስት በማጣት መቆጣጠር)						
3.3	አሉታዊ ስሜት ሲያጋጥም እራስን መቆጣጠር (ጭቅላትን ማወቅ፣ ራስን በራስ መከላከል ግድግዳ/ጠረጴዛ ላይ በጣ መሰንጠር)						
3.4	አሉታዊ ስሜቶችን ዋጥ መቅረጥ						
3.5	መቆጣጠር፣ ማለቅ ወይም መቆጣጠር						
3.6	ሌሎች በሚሰጡት አገልግሎት ባህርይ በቀላሉ መሰብሰብ						
3.7	በረባ ባልረባው በቀላሉ ሆኖ መሰብሰብ (መለቀስ፣ ማከረፍ)						
3.8	ቁጣንና ንዴትን ሌሎችን በማይጎዳ መልኩ በአግባቡ መግለጽ						
3.9	ፍላጎትን ወይም ምርጫ በርጋታ መግለጽ						
3.10	ብዙሃን ጊዜ ዘና ብሎ መታየት						
3.11	አብዛኛውን ጊዜ የብቸኝነት ስሜት ማለት						
3.12	ከመጠን ባለፈ የሌሎችን ድጋፍ መፈለግ (ለምሳሌ ለእድሜ ተመጣጣኝ ለሆነ ስራ እርዳታ መስጠት)						
3.13	ወደ ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ፕሮግራሙ ለመሄድም ሆነ እዚያው ለመቆየት ፈቃደኝነት ማለት						
IV	የመግባባት ክህሎት						
4.1	ጸያፍና የብልግና ቃላትን መጠቀም (መሳደብ፣ መሳት)						
4.2	መሀበራዊ ቁርኝትን ለመጠበቅ እንግዳ ከሆኑ ሰዎች ጋር በነጻነት መጫወት፣ መግባባት						
4.3	የንግግርን ሁኔታ ከአድሜቶች እድሜ ወይም ጾታ ጋር የማጣጠም ችሎታ (ለምሳሌ መሀበራትን ጥያቄ ለመጠየቅ ዕጅ ማወጣት)						

4.4	ጭመትን የማገጀመር (ርዕስ የመጥጠር) ወይም በጭመት መሀል ጥያቄ መጠየቅ						
-----	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

I	Understanding (conception) of others	5	4	3	2	1	Remark
4.5	የሰላምተኝነት ባህርይ (ለምሳሌ ለሌሎች ሰላምታ መስጠት፣ ለሰላምታም አጻፋ መመለስ)						
4.6	በጭመት ወቅት ተራን ሳይጠበቁ እንደፈለጉ የመናገር ዝንባሌ						
4.7	የሚያወቁትን ታሪክ፣ እውቀት ወይም መረጃ ለሌሎች ማከፈል						
4.8	ከንግግር ባሻገር በምልክት፣ በጥቅሻ፣ በፈገግታ፣ በሰውነት አካል መግባባት						

Appendix F

Interview items for parents

1. Why do you send children to preschool (Kindergartens) centers?(parents)

2. What do you expect them to learn or how should they spend the time there?(parents)
3. What types of child care services do most families prefer?(parents)
4. Do you think that your child is ready to meet the demands of formal school system?(parents)
5. To what extent is your involvement in the activities of the center in which your child is attending?(parents)
6. What is the best way to contact families so that they can have active involvement in the activities of early childhood care and education programs?(parents)
7. What do your children tell you frequently about their day in the centers?(parents)
8. What is your choice for preschool: Does it depend on your ability to pay or the quality of services provided by the centers?(parents)
9. What is your option to send children : private, government, or faith based centers?(parents)

Appendix G

meanofpi				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.50	1	1.4	1.4	1.4

1.80	1	1.4	1.4	2.9
1.90	2	2.9	2.9	5.7
2.00	2	2.9	2.9	8.6
2.10	1	1.4	1.4	10.0
2.20	3	4.3	4.3	14.3
2.30	1	1.4	1.4	15.7
2.40	1	1.4	1.4	17.1
2.50	1	1.4	1.4	18.6
2.60	2	2.9	2.9	21.4
2.70	4	5.7	5.7	27.1
2.80	1	1.4	1.4	28.6
2.90	3	4.3	4.3	32.9
3.00	1	1.4	1.4	34.3
3.10	3	4.3	4.3	38.6
3.20	4	5.7	5.7	44.3
3.30	7	10.0	10.0	54.3
3.40	5	7.1	7.1	61.4
3.50	3	4.3	4.3	65.7
3.60	6	8.6	8.6	74.3
3.70	7	10.0	10.0	84.3
3.80	4	5.7	5.7	90.0
3.90	4	5.7	5.7	95.7
4.00	3	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	70	100.0	100.0	

meanofpu				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.44	1	1.4	1.4	1.4

2.22	1	1.4	1.4	2.9
2.33	1	1.4	1.4	4.3
2.56	1	1.4	1.4	5.7
2.67	1	1.4	1.4	7.1
2.78	3	4.3	4.3	11.4
2.89	2	2.9	2.9	14.3
3.11	1	1.4	1.4	15.7
3.22	4	5.7	5.7	21.4
3.33	6	8.6	8.6	30.0
3.44	3	4.3	4.3	34.3
3.56	7	10.0	10.0	44.3
3.67	8	11.4	11.4	55.7
3.78	5	7.1	7.1	62.9
3.89	6	8.6	8.6	71.4
4.00	20	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	70	100.0	100.0	

meanofde

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.75	4	5.7	5.7	5.7
2.00	7	10.0	10.0	15.7
2.25	6	8.6	8.6	24.3
2.50	4	5.7	5.7	30.0
2.75	4	5.7	5.7	35.7
Valid 3.00	3	4.3	4.3	40.0
3.25	6	8.6	8.6	48.6
3.50	5	7.1	7.1	55.7
3.75	6	8.6	8.6	64.3
4.00	25	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	70	100.0	100.0	

meanofpe

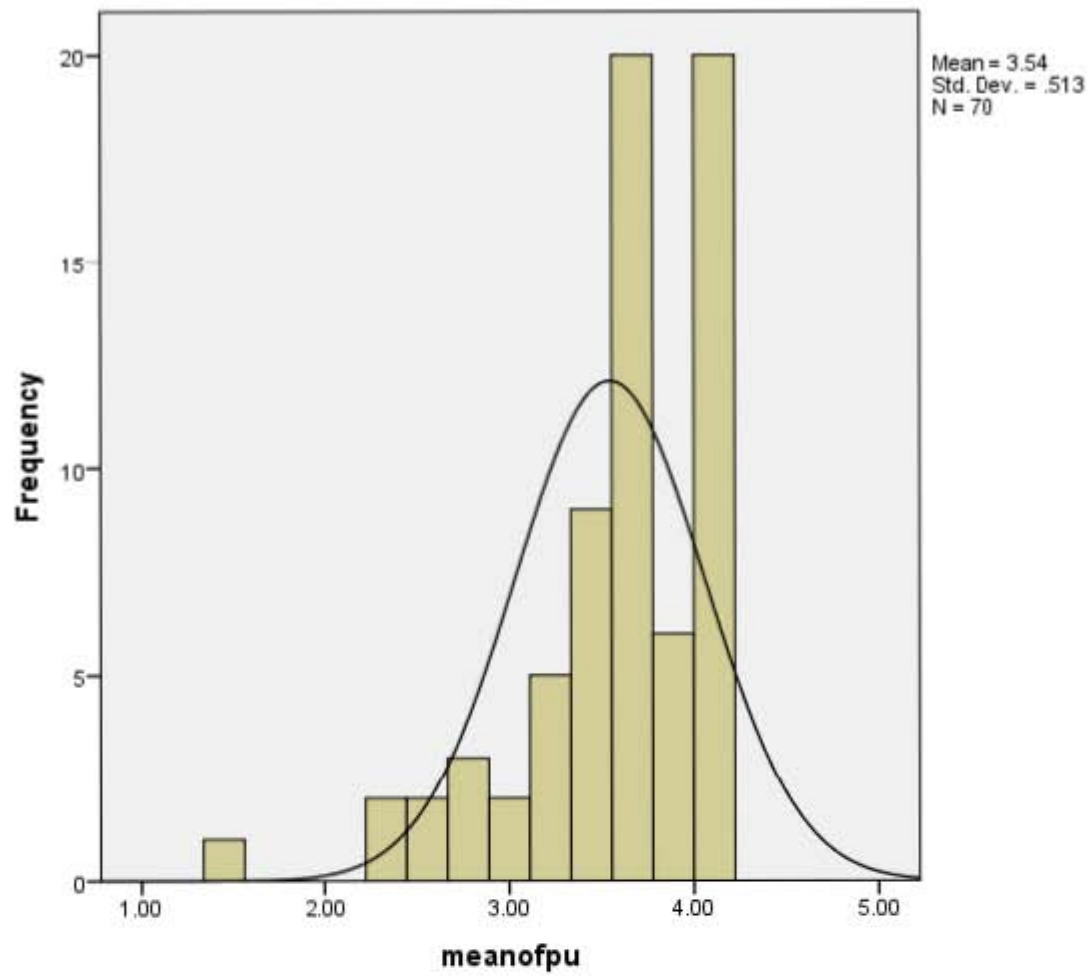
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	1	1.4	1.4	1.4

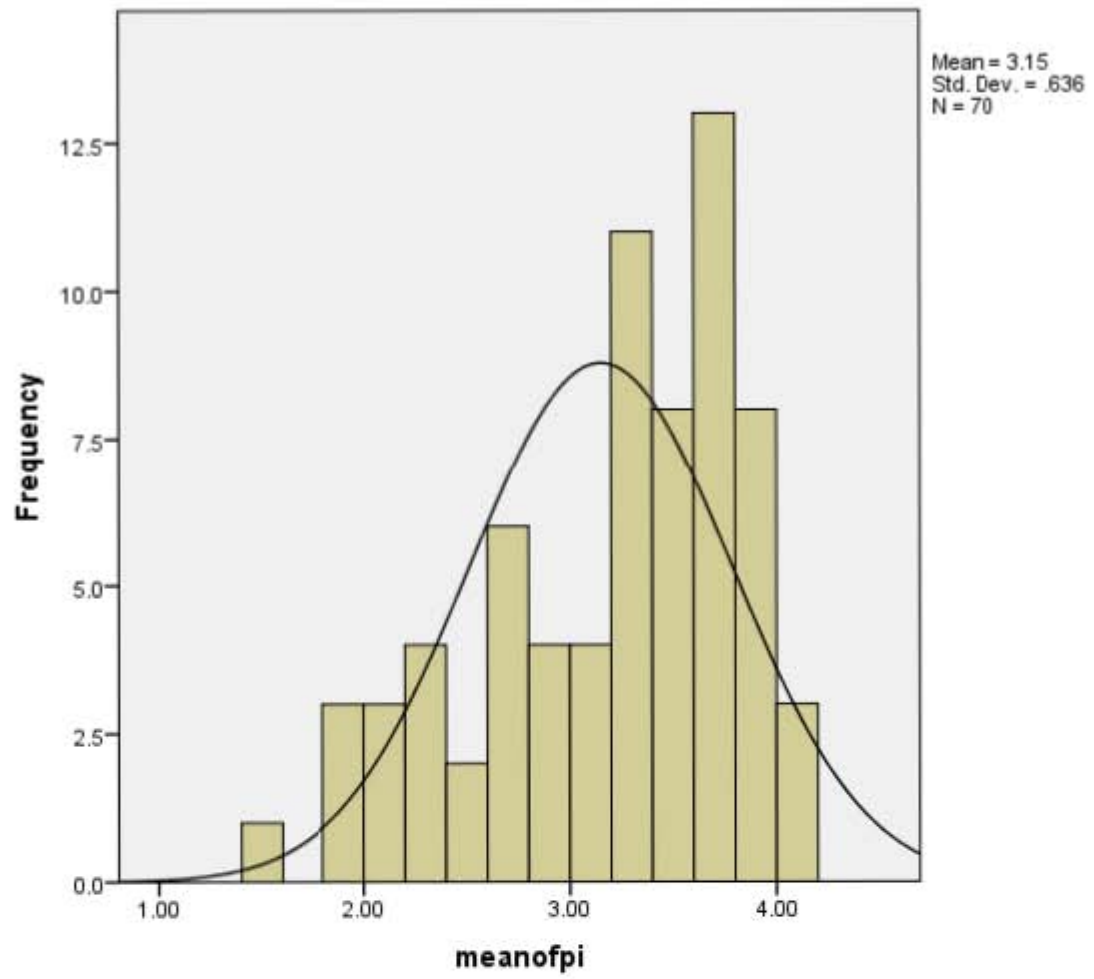
1.33	2	2.9	2.9	4.3
1.67	1	1.4	1.4	5.7
2.00	5	7.1	7.1	12.9
2.33	6	8.6	8.6	21.4
2.67	5	7.1	7.1	28.6
3.00	20	28.6	28.6	57.1
3.33	8	11.4	11.4	68.6
3.67	5	7.1	7.1	75.7
4.00	17	24.3	24.3	100.0
Total	70	100.0	100.0	

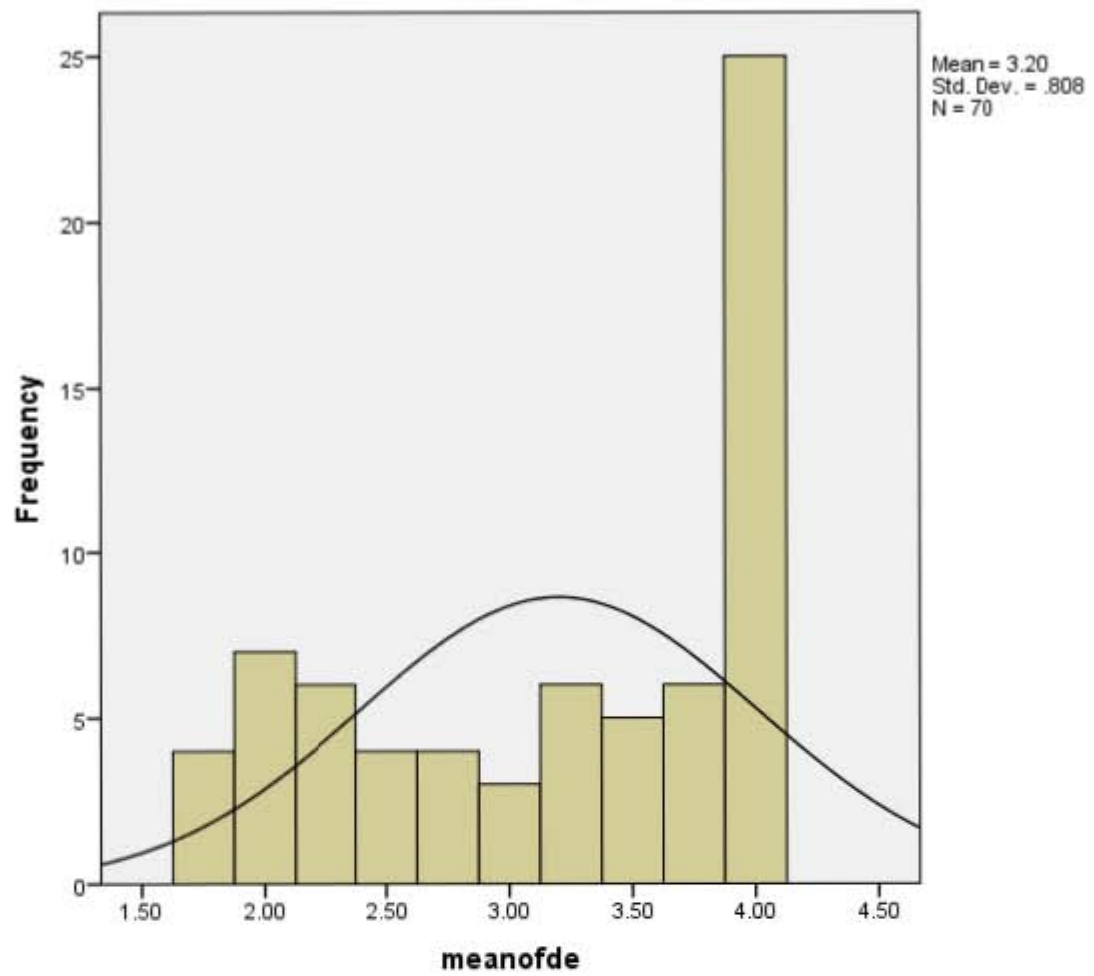
Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
meanofpi	.150	70	.000	.922	70	.000
meanofpu	.187	70	.000	.824	70	.000
meanofde	.196	70	.000	.840	70	.000
meanofpe	.172	70	.000	.913	70	.000

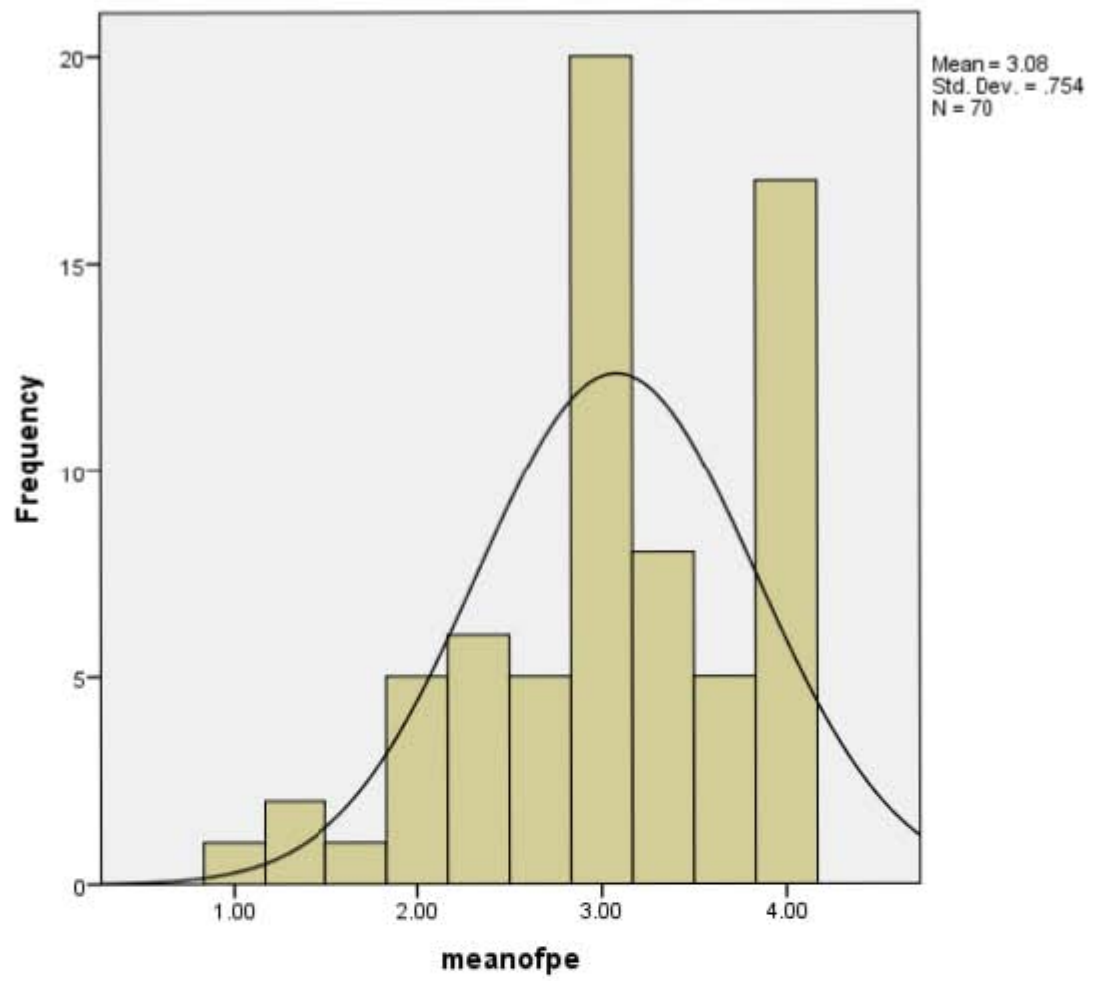
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix-H

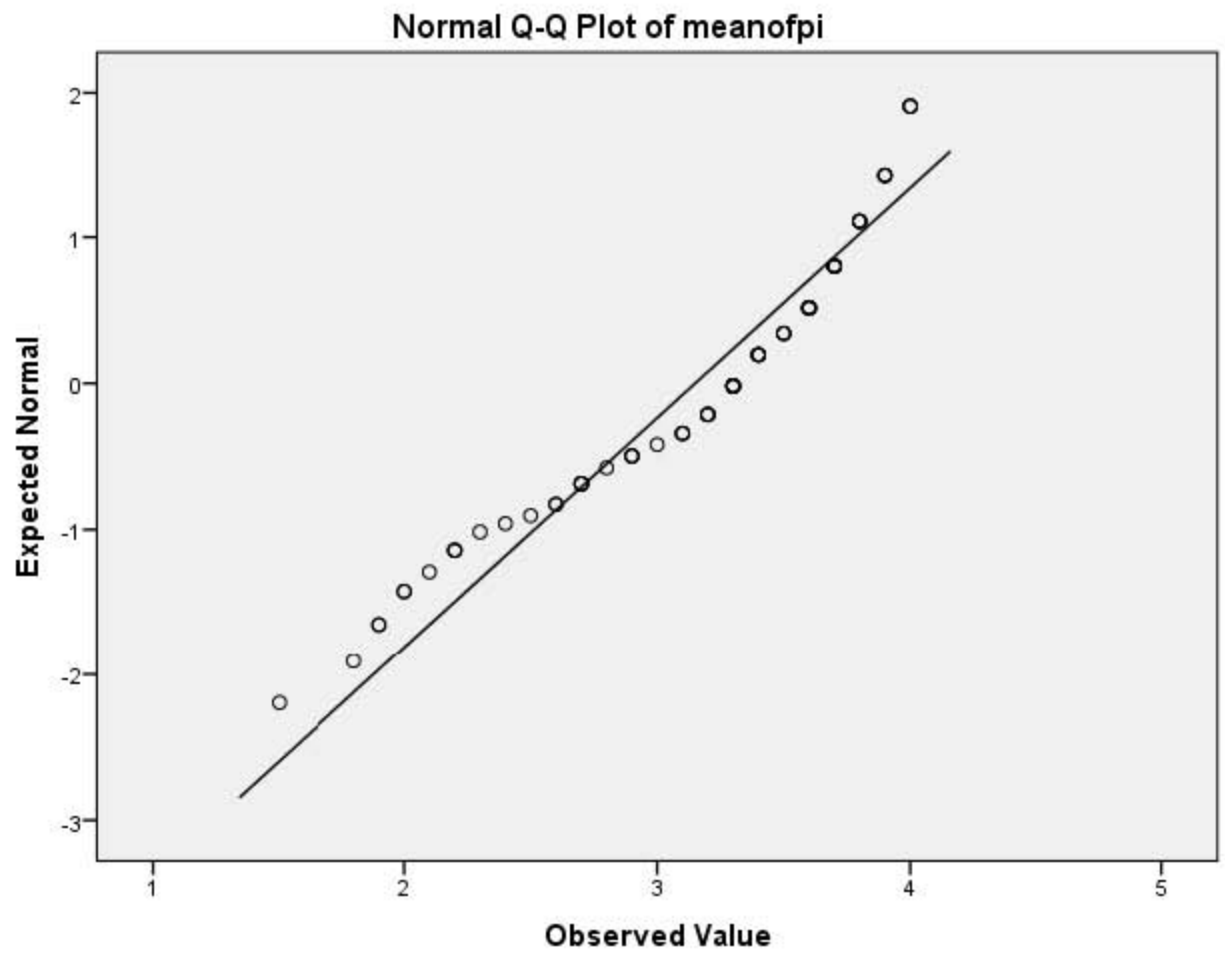


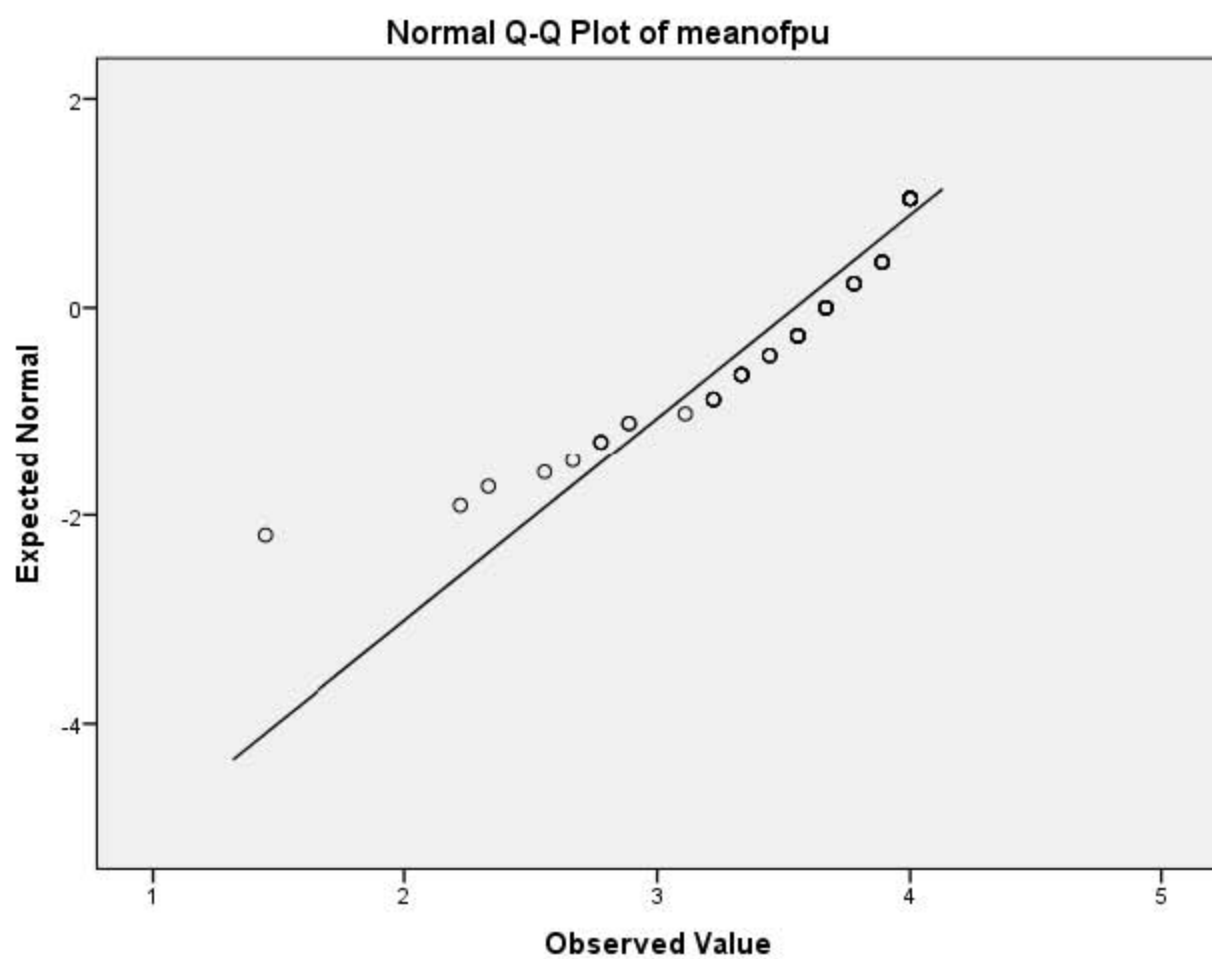


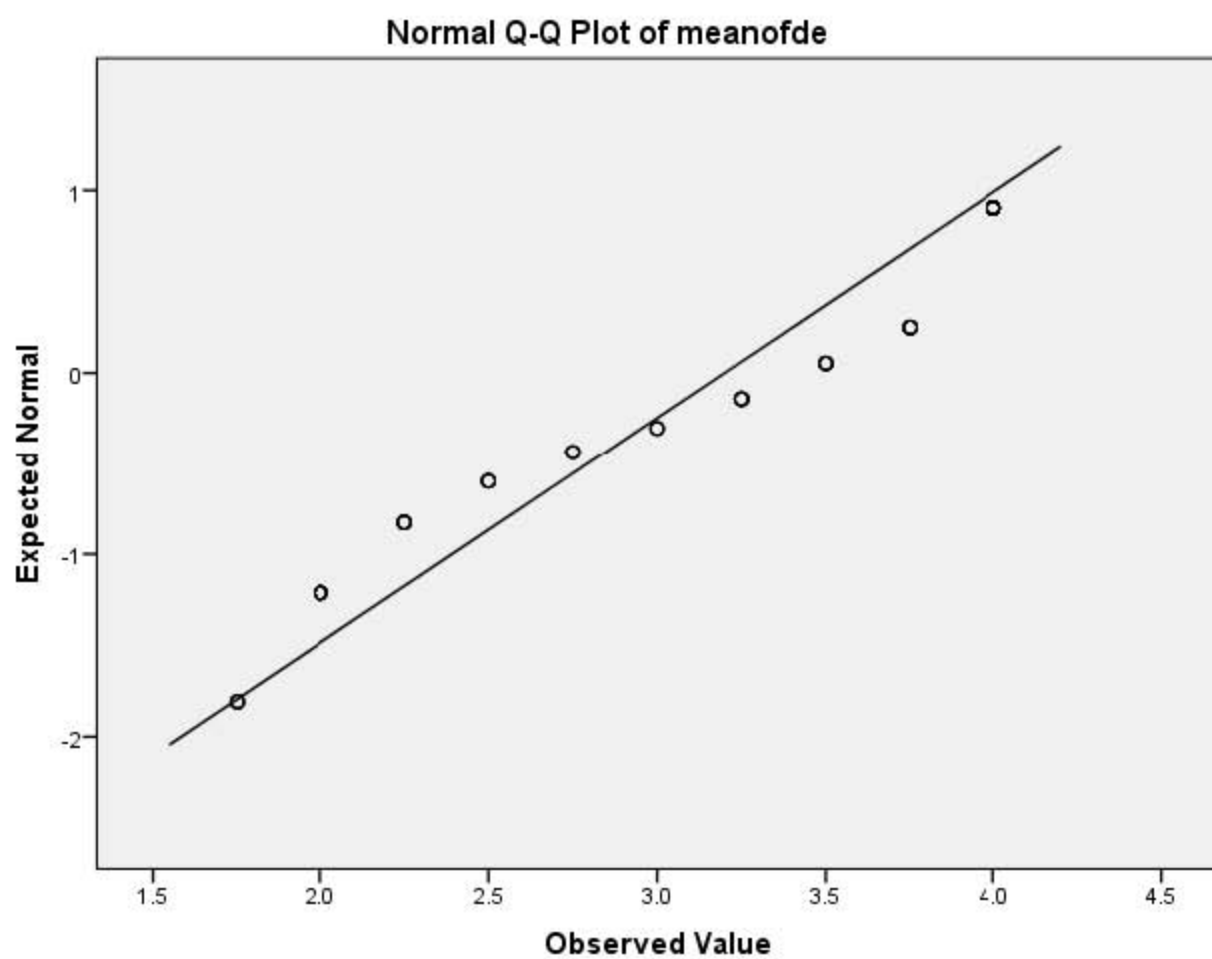


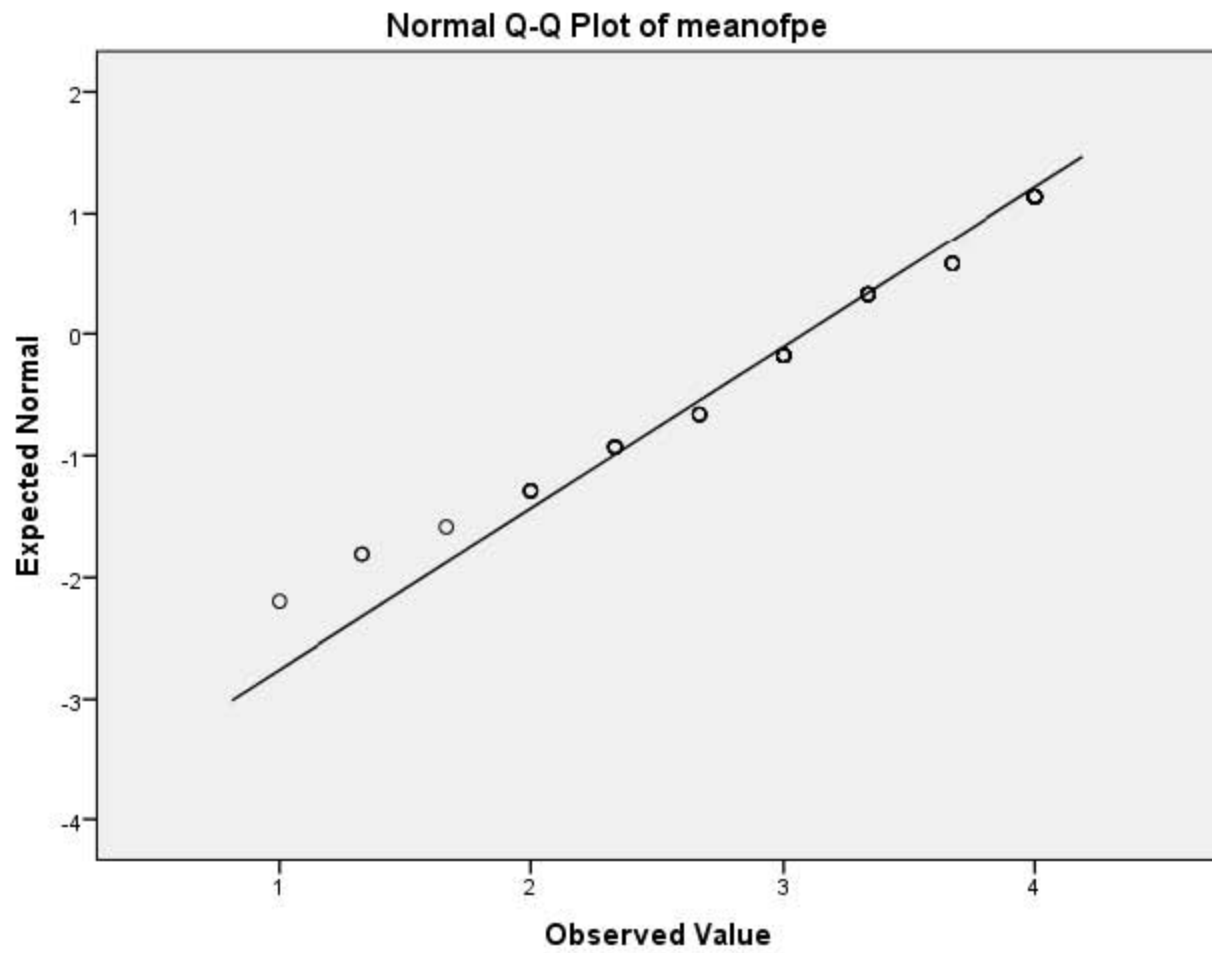


Appendix-
I

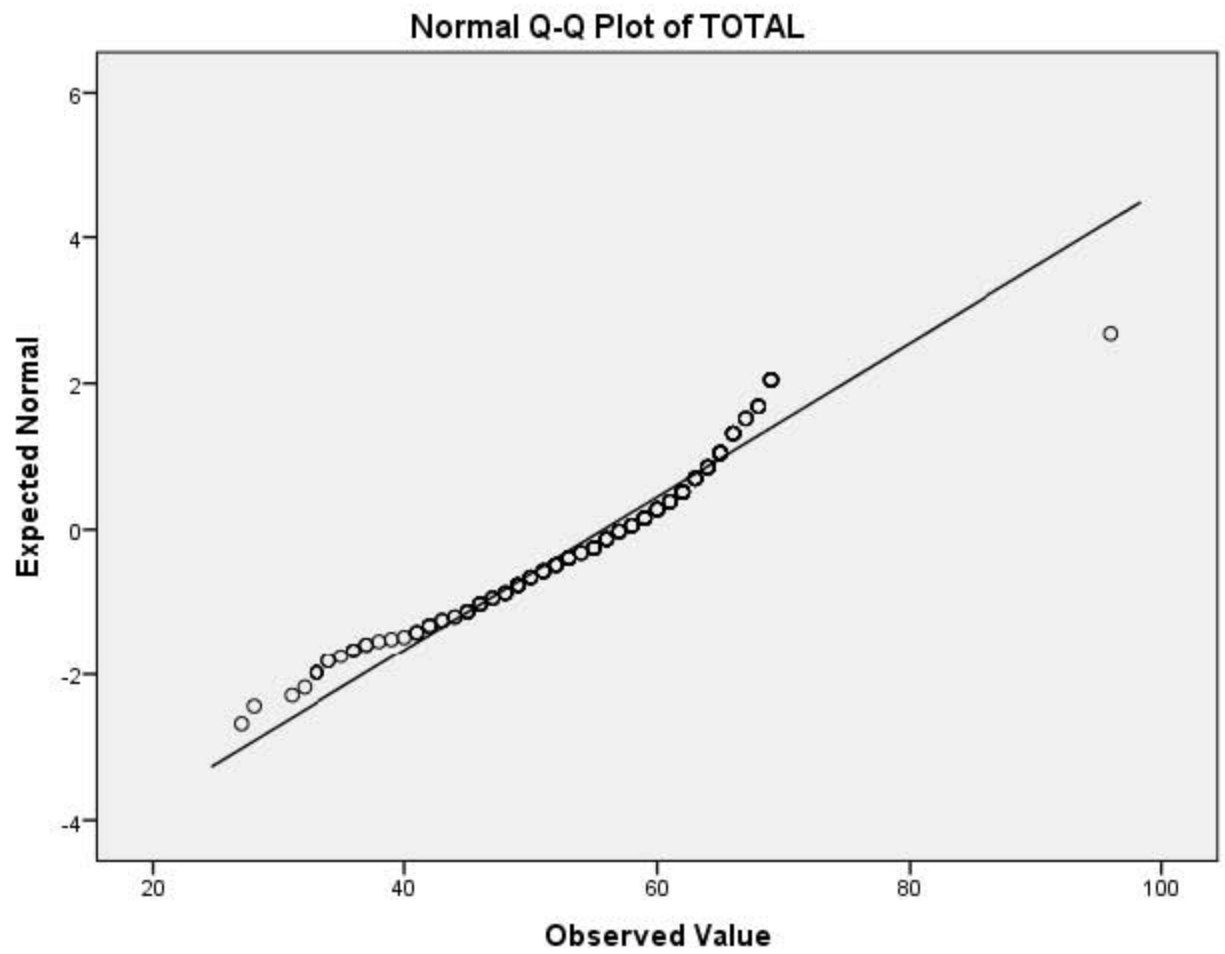


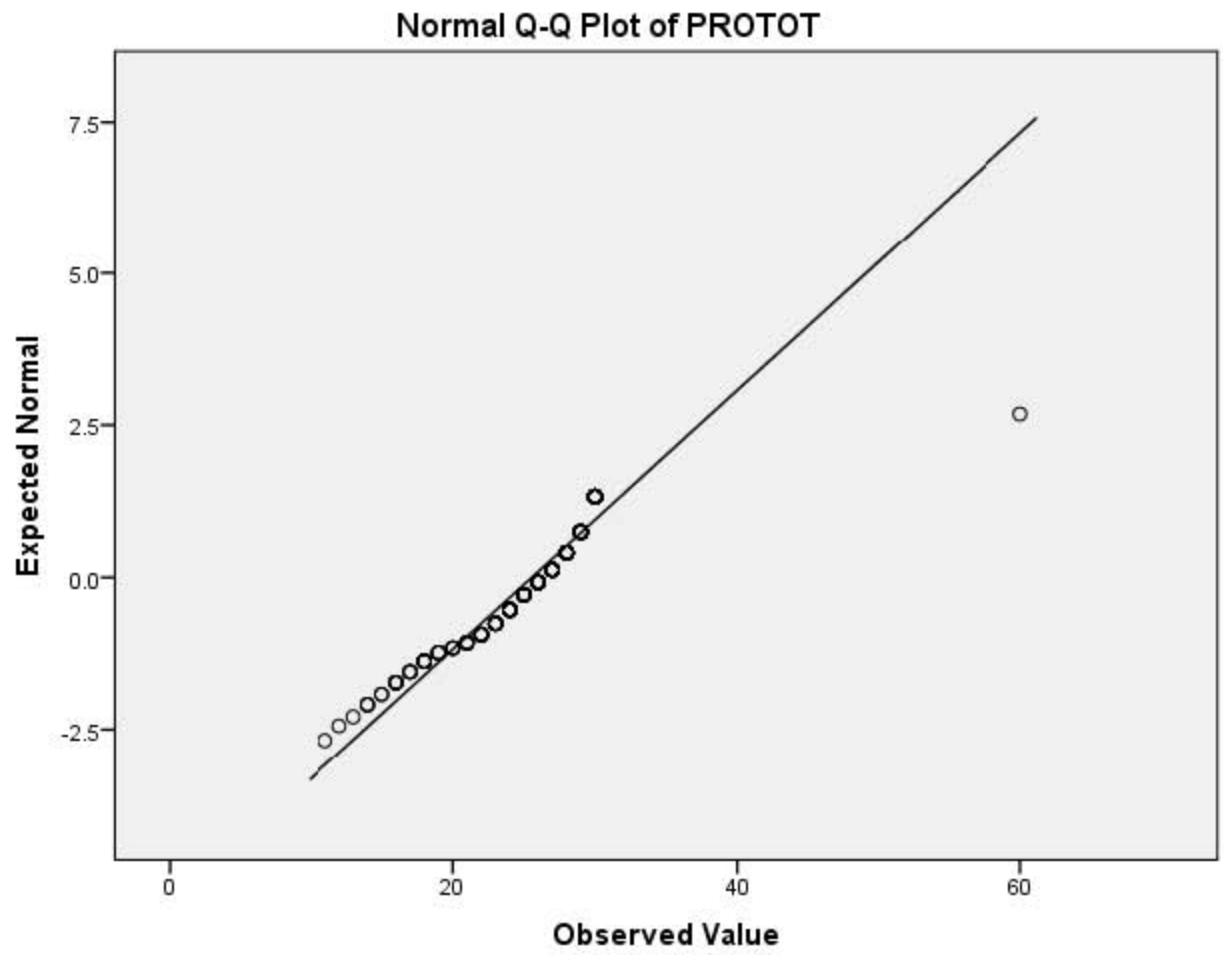


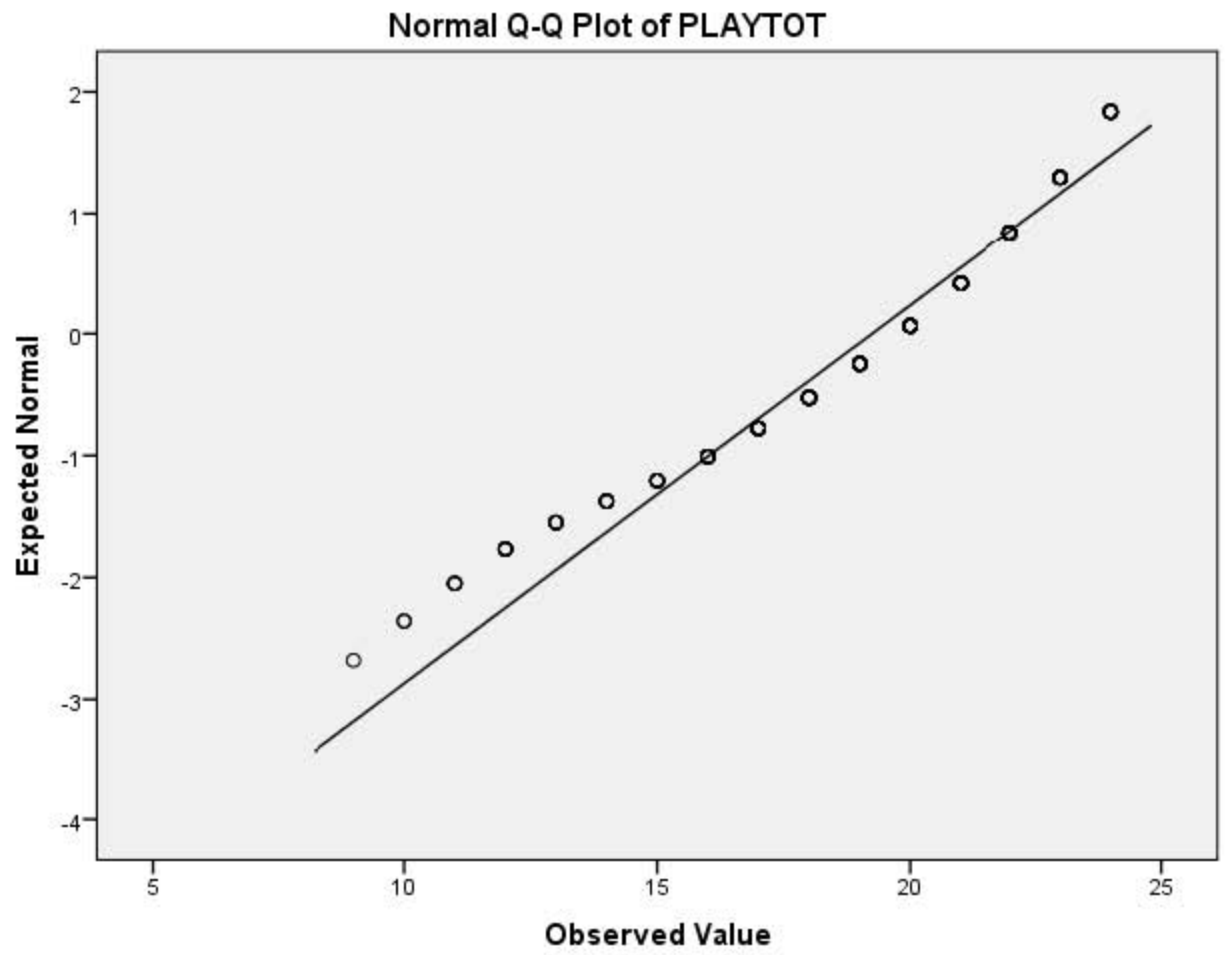


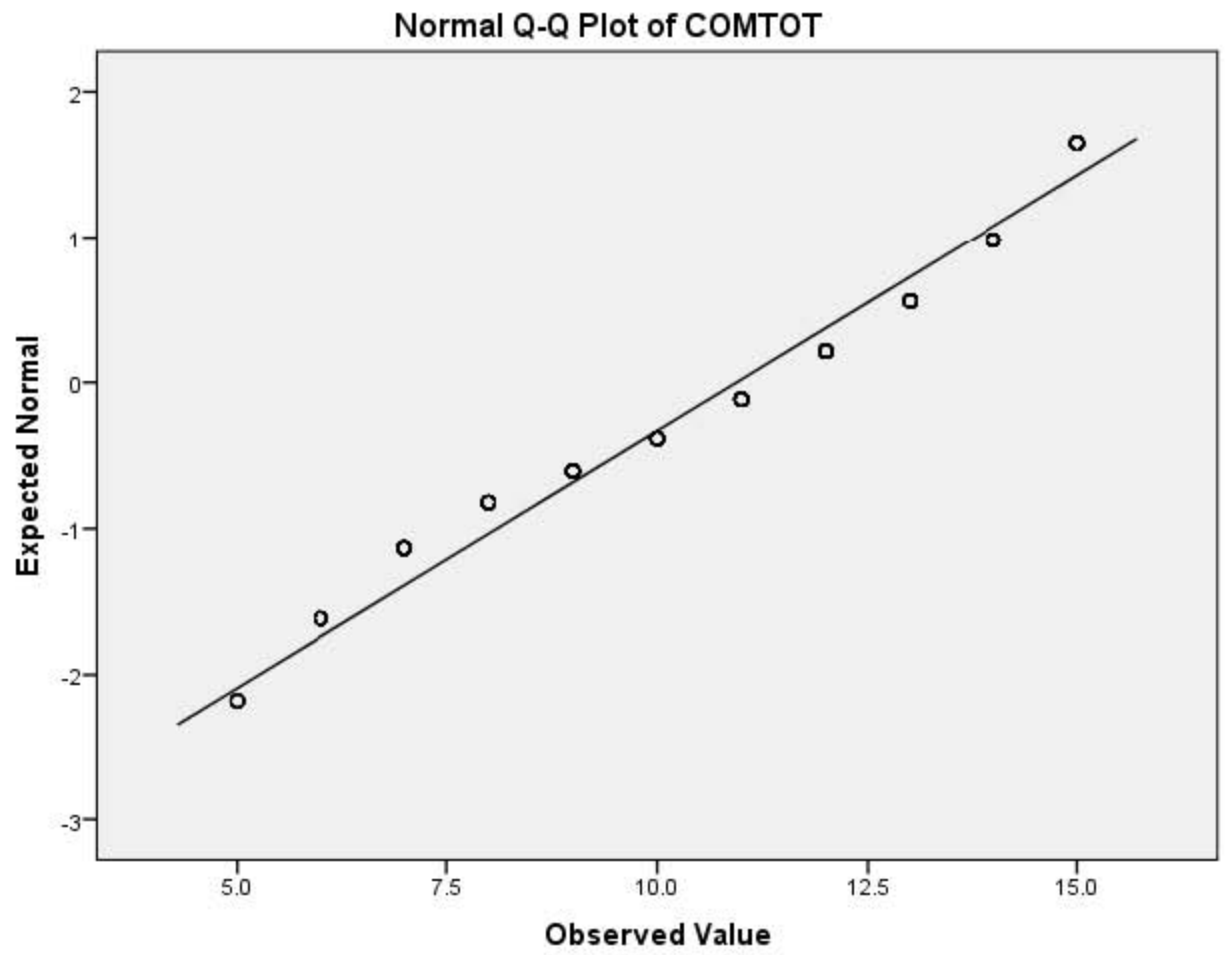


Appendix-
J

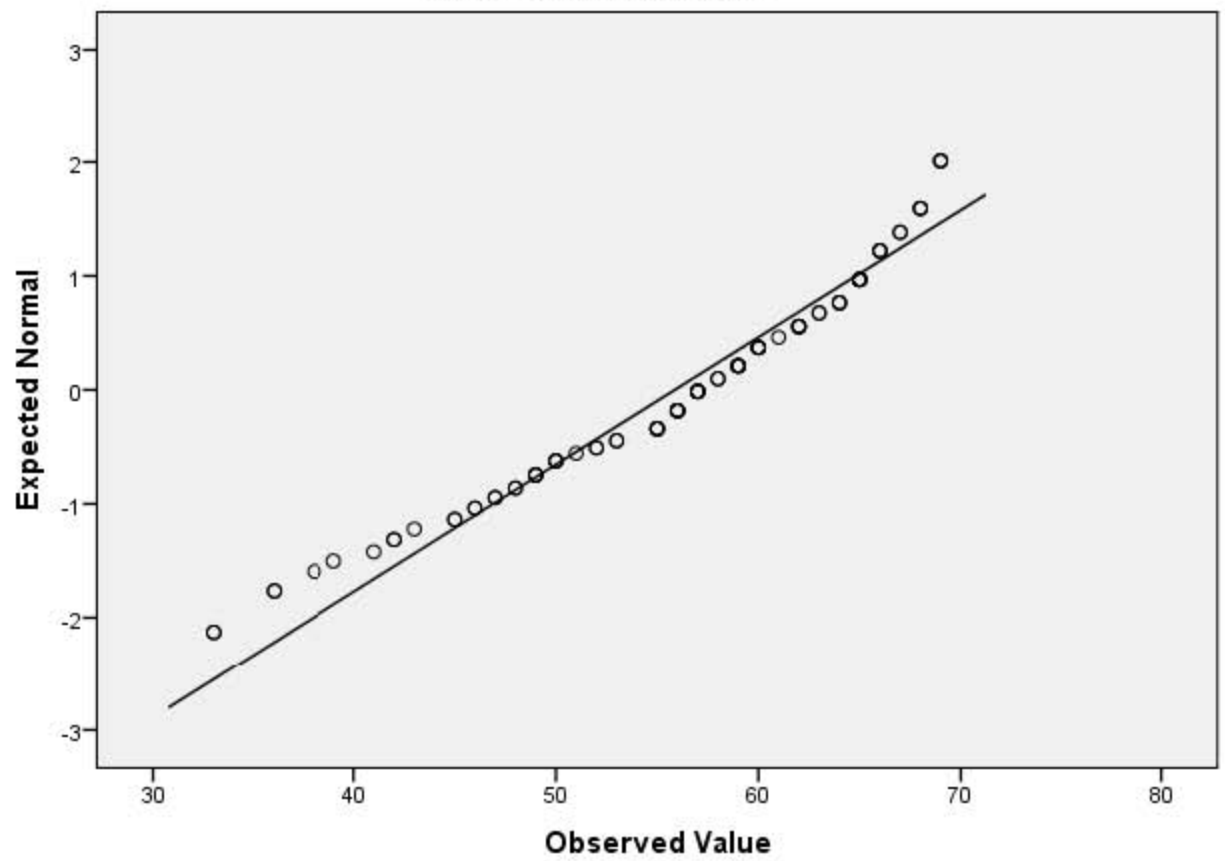


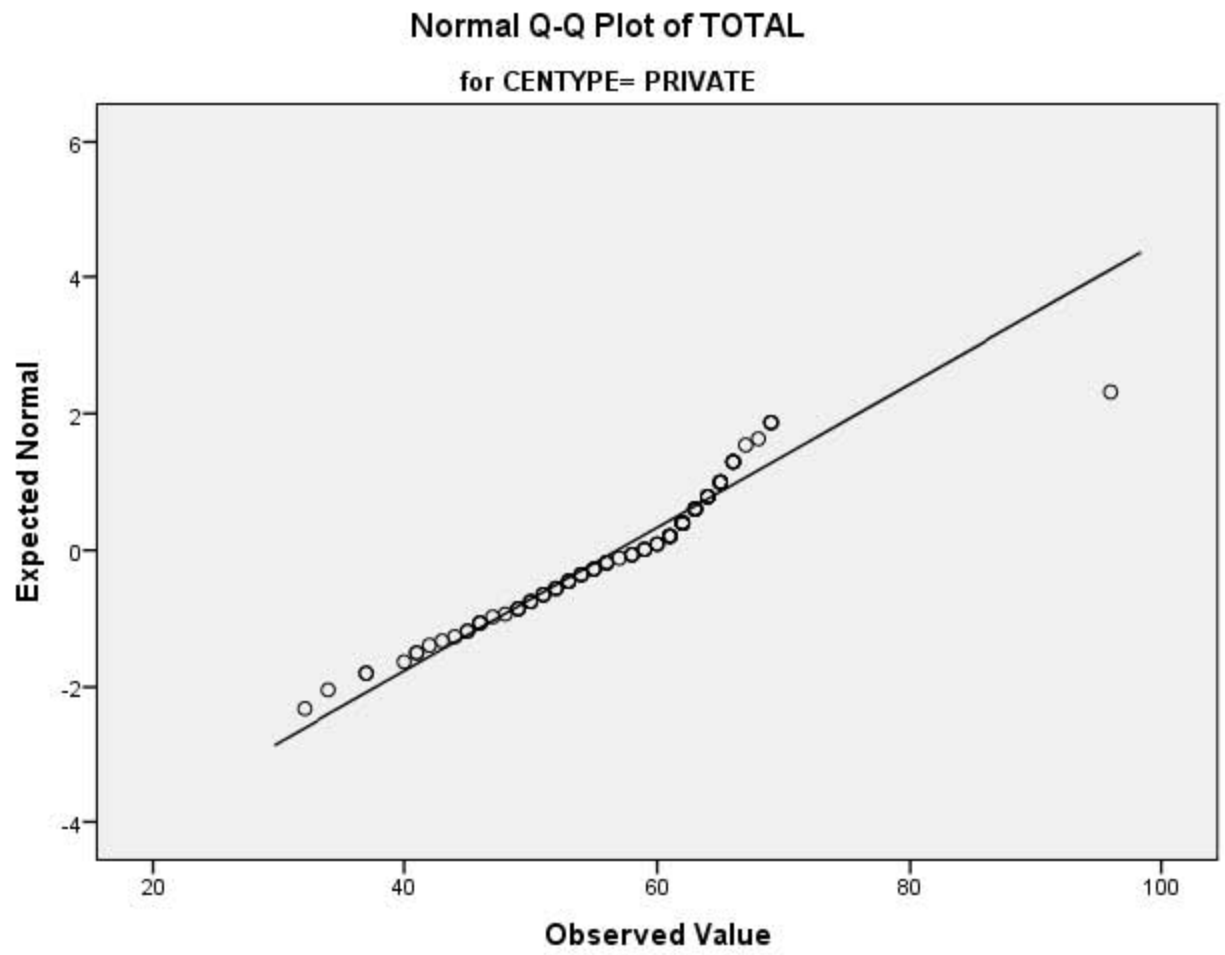






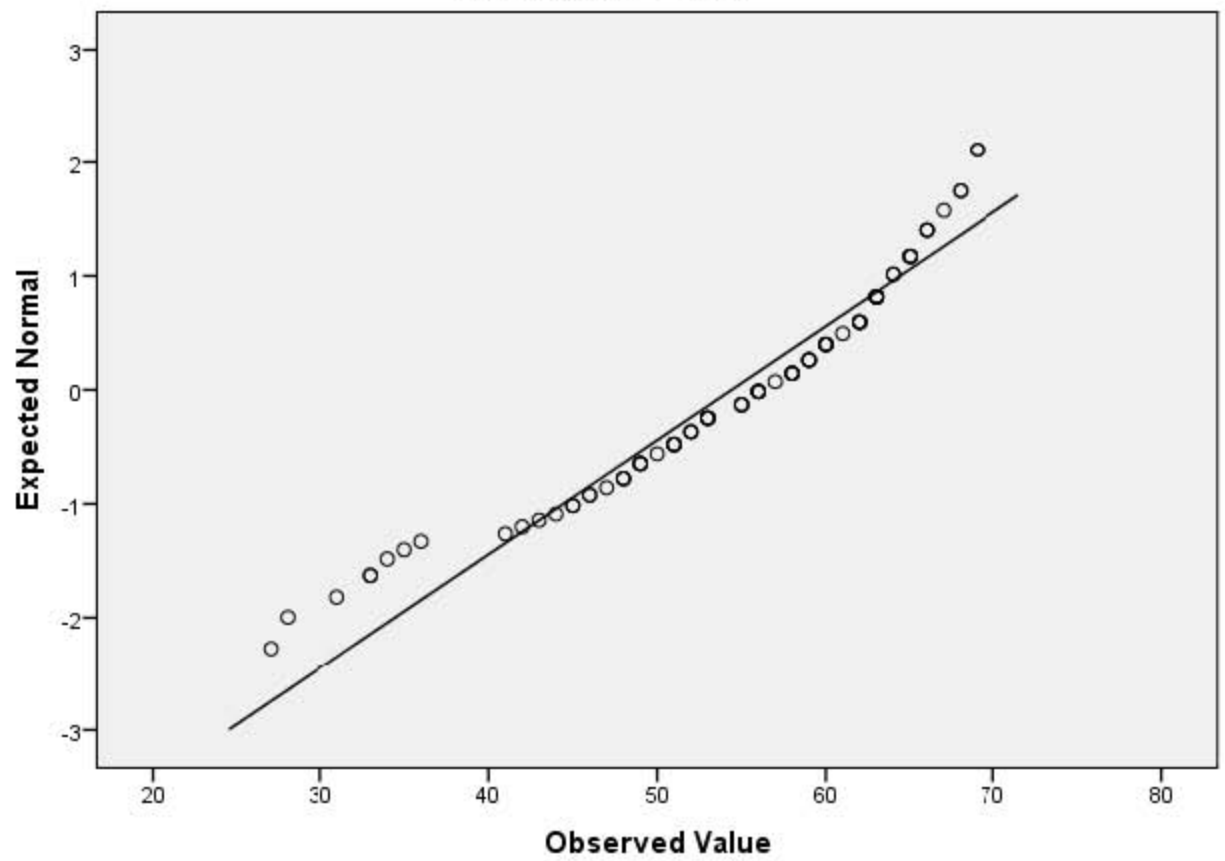
Normal Q-Q Plot of TOTAL
for CENTYPE= GOVERNMENT



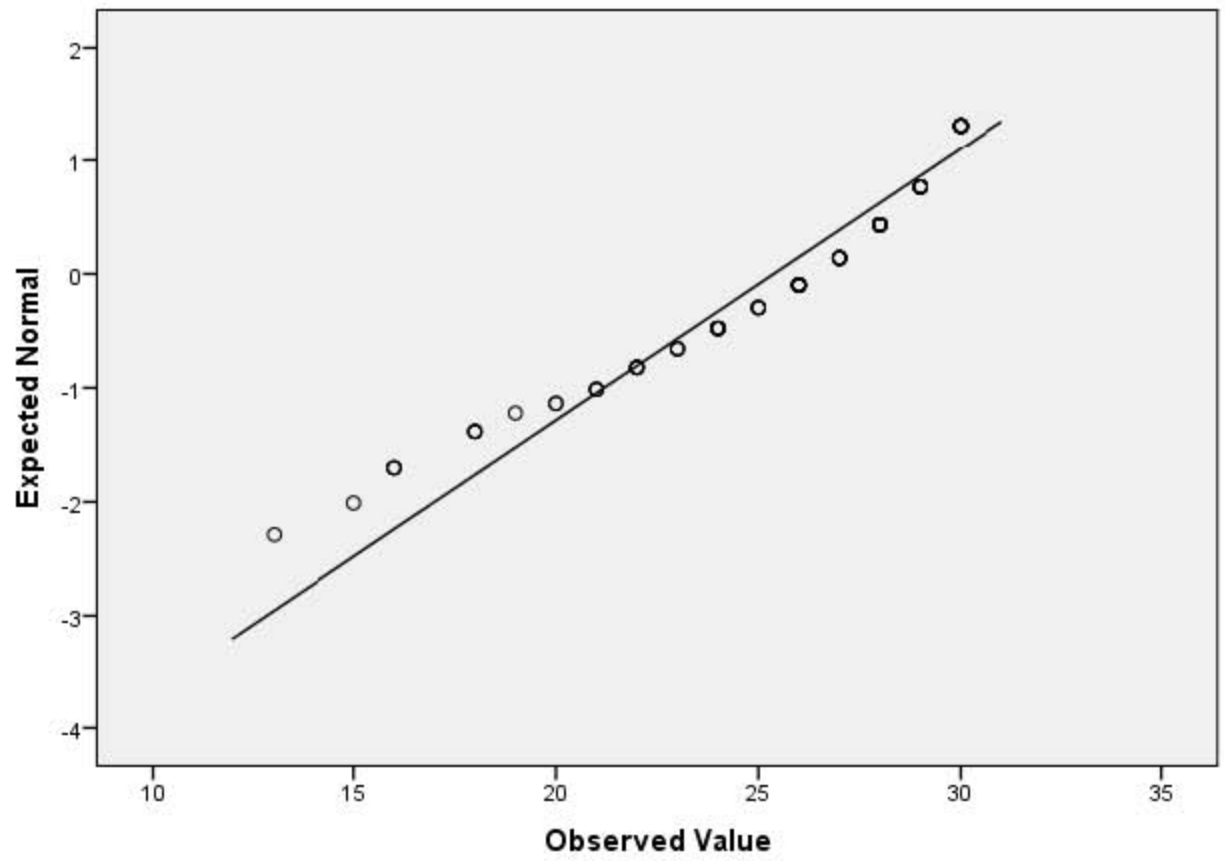


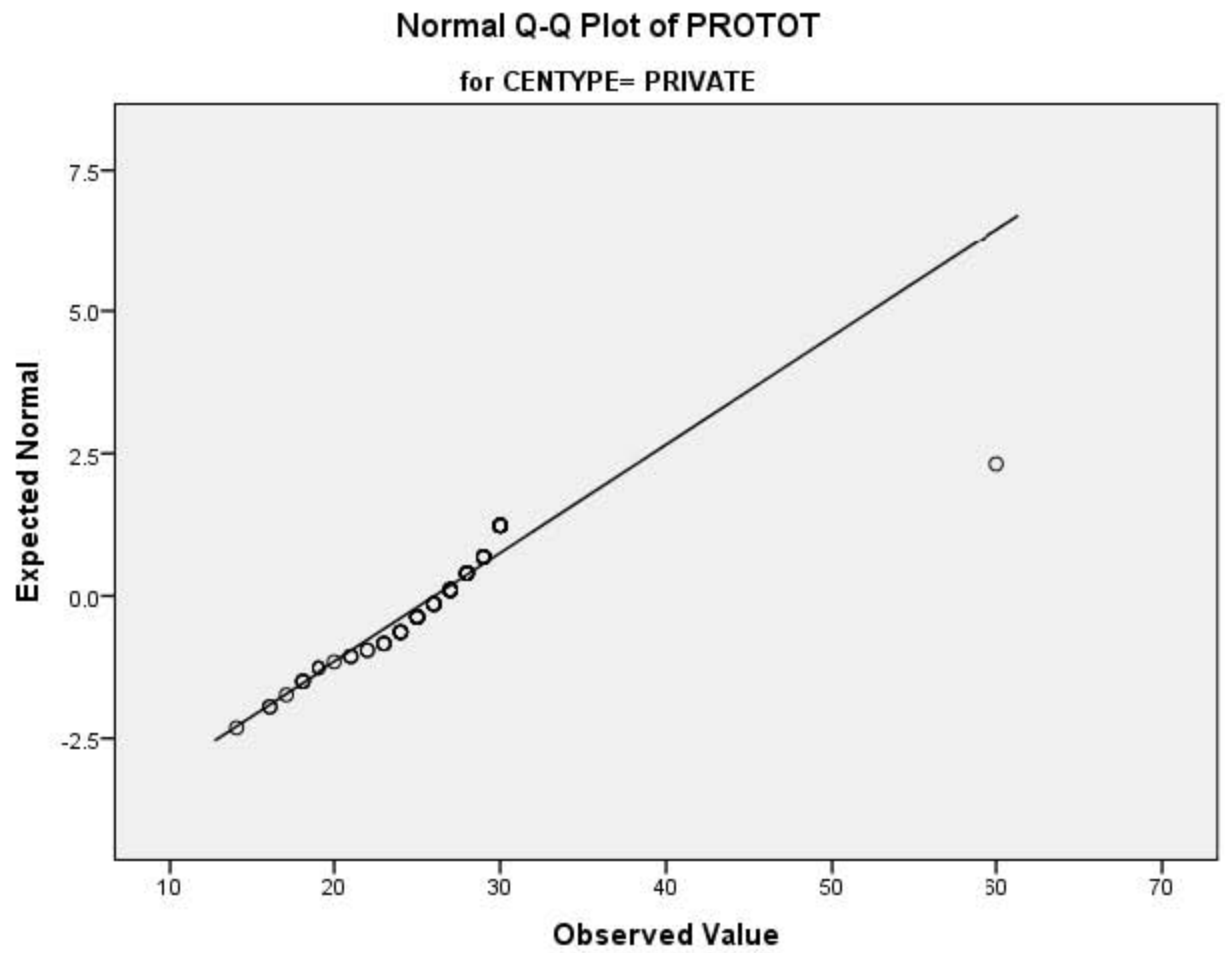
Normal Q-Q Plot of TOTAL

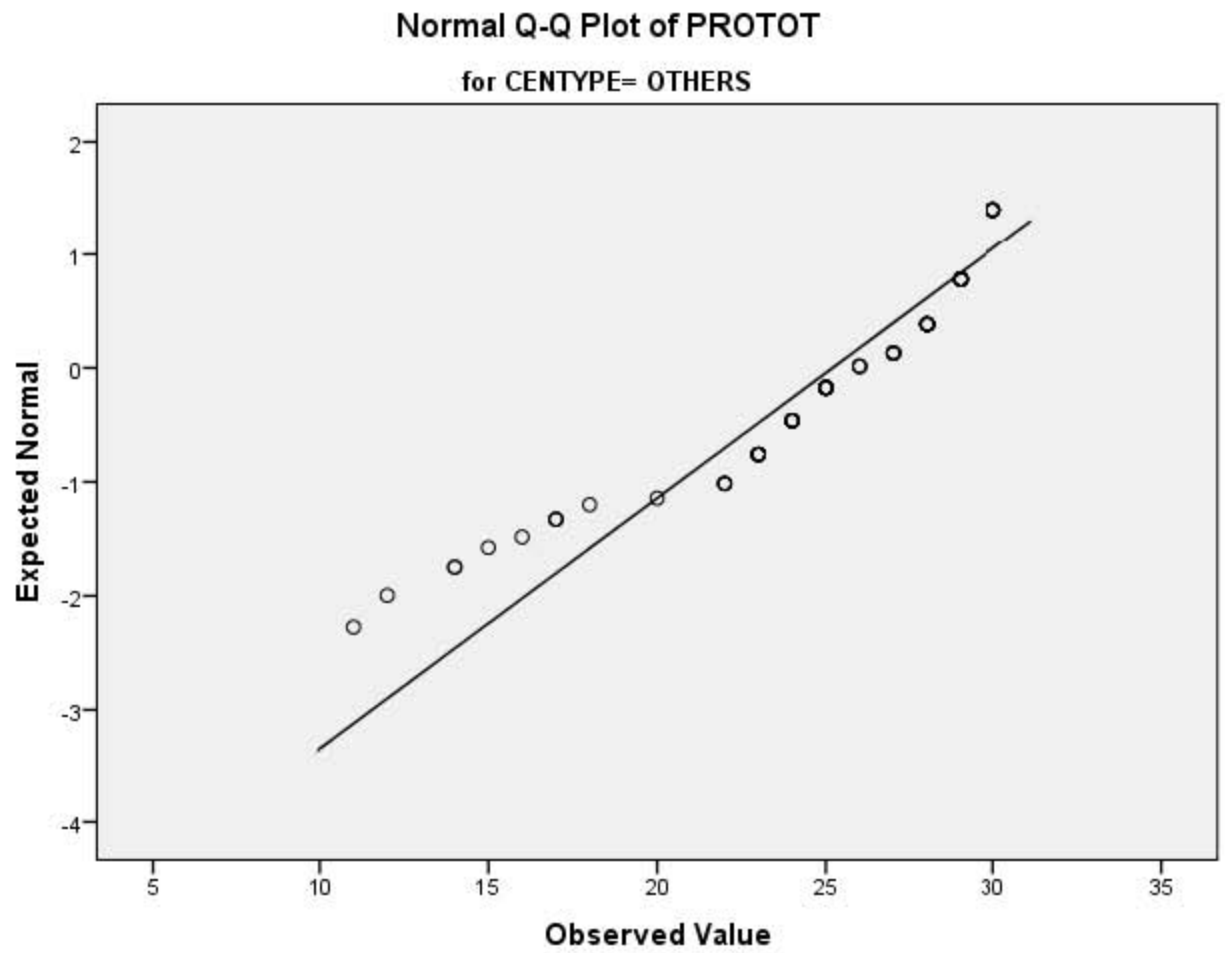
for CENTYPE= OTHERS



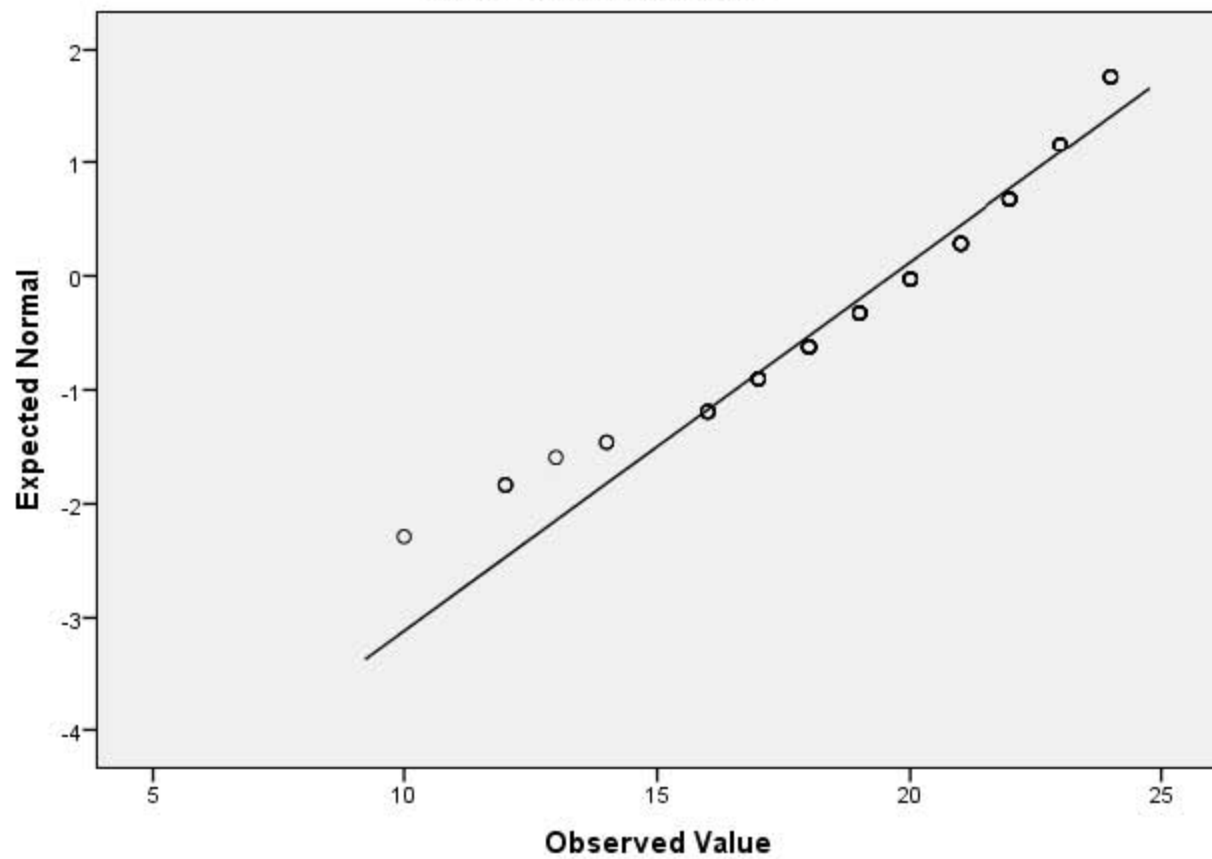
Normal Q-Q Plot of PROTOT
for CENTYPE= GOVERNMENT



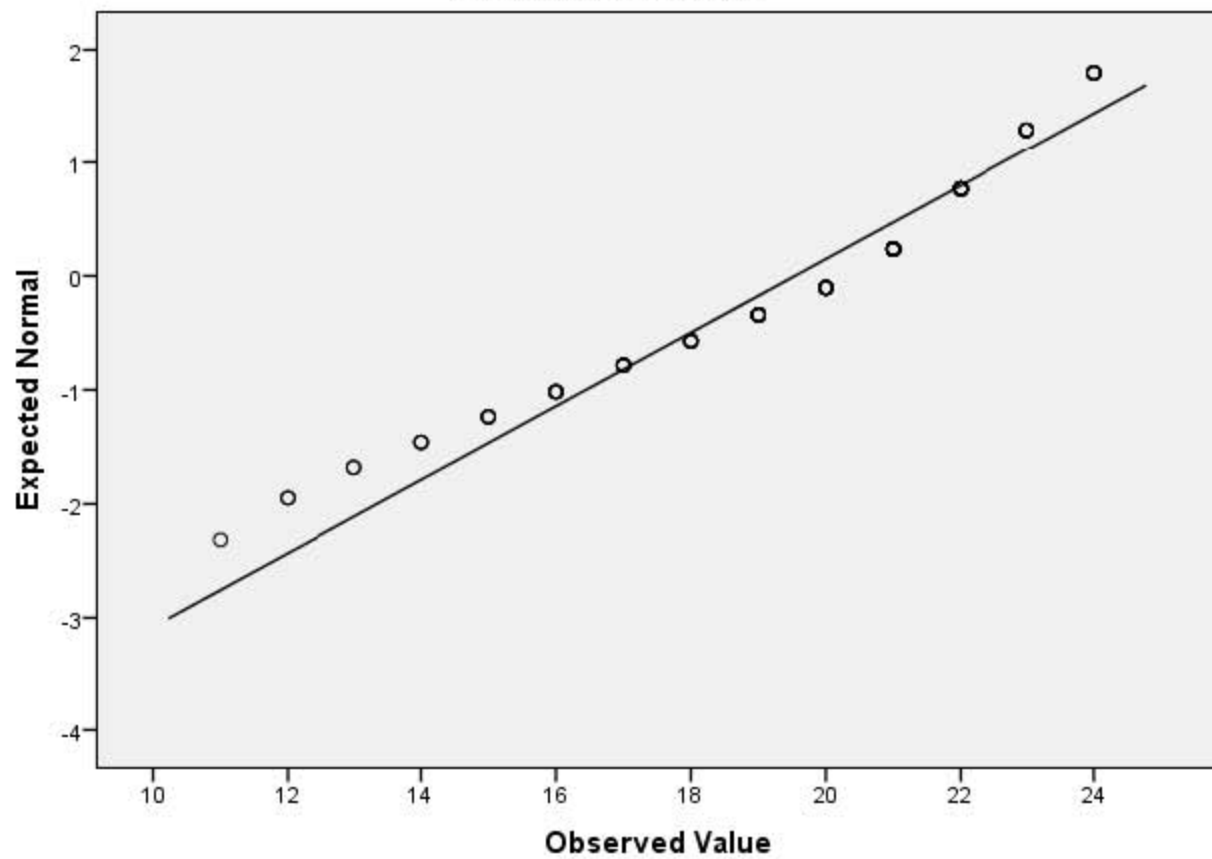


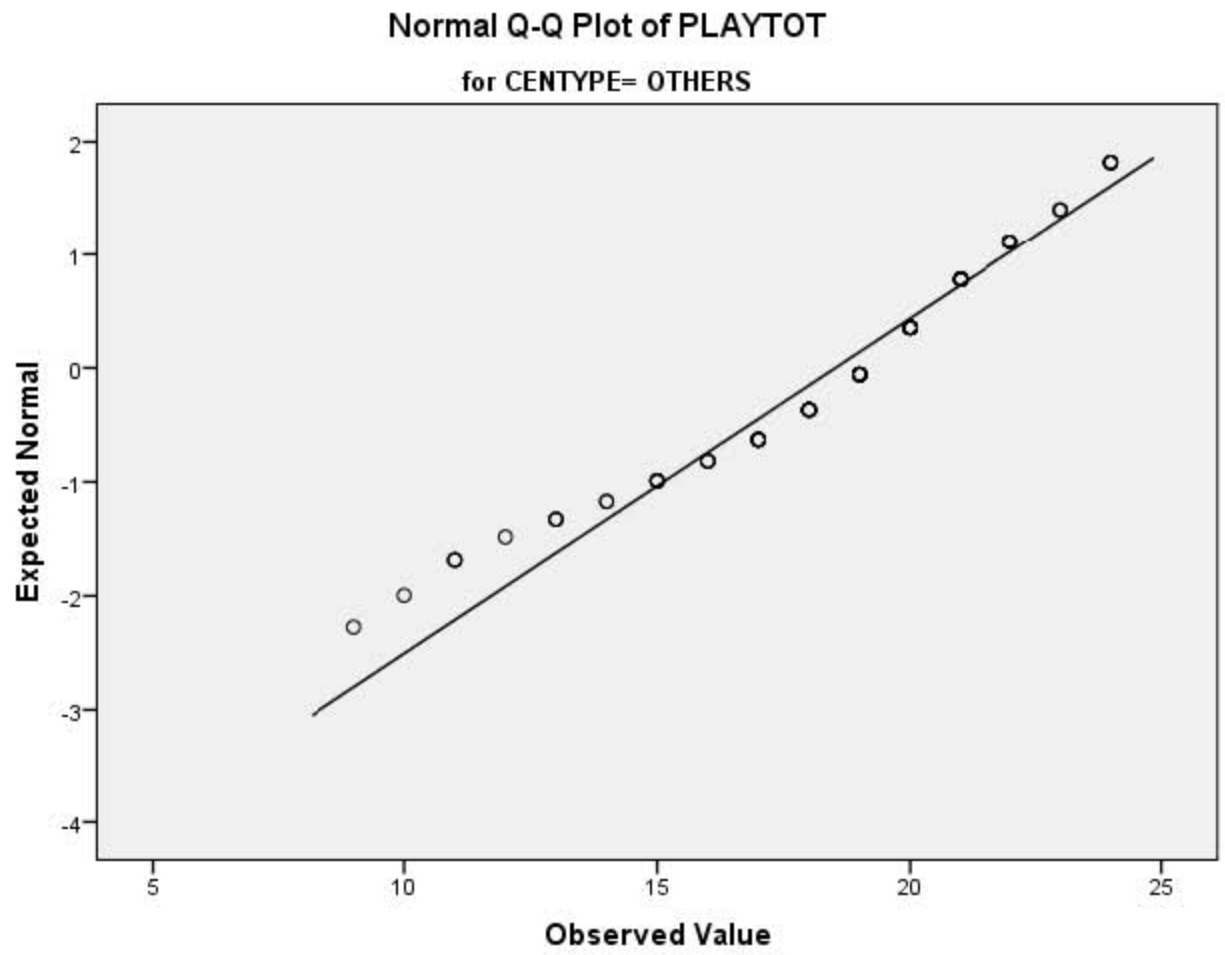


Normal Q-Q Plot of PLAYTOT
for CENTYPE= GOVERNMENT

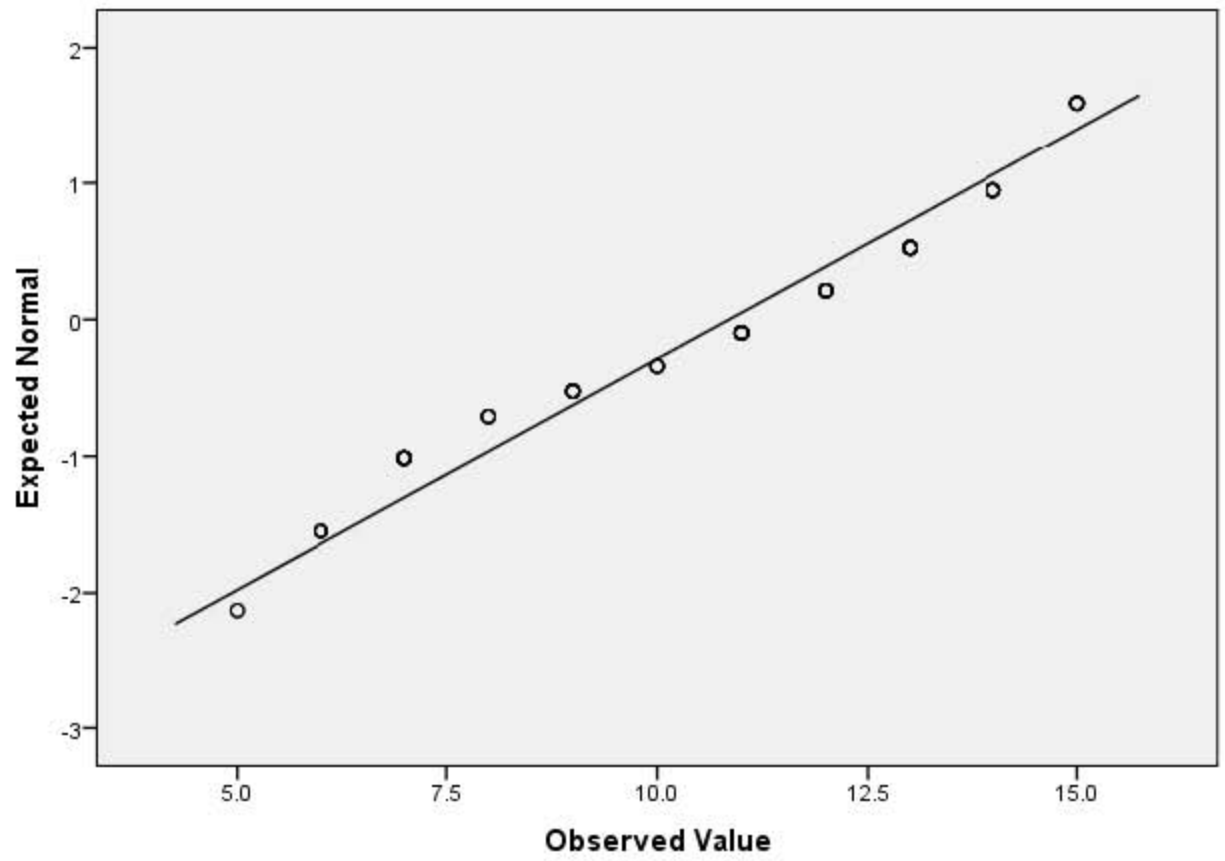


Normal Q-Q Plot of PLAYTOT
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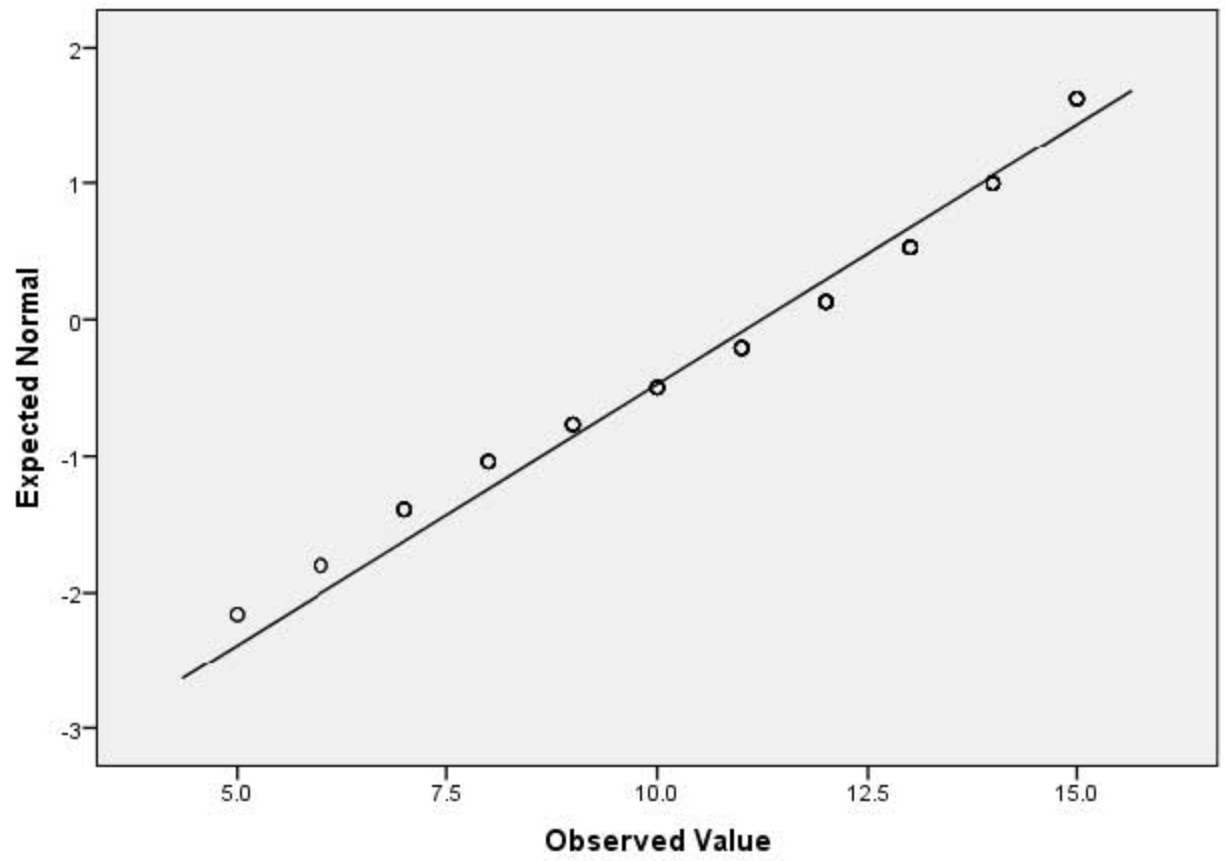


Normal Q-Q Plot of COMTOT
for CENTYPE= GOVERNMENT



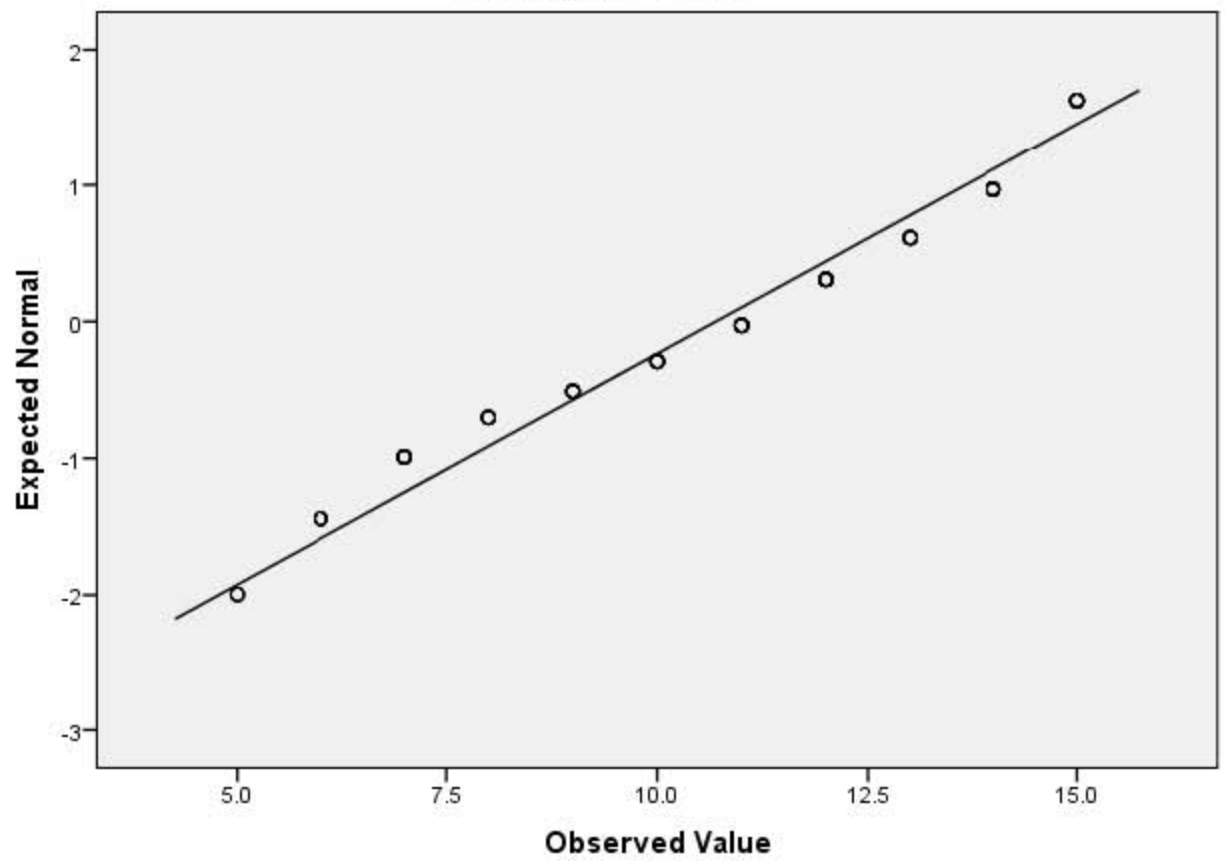
Normal Q-Q Plot of COMTOT

for CENTYPE= PRIVATE



Normal Q-Q Plot of COMTOT

for CENTYPE= OTHERS



Letter of Declaration

I the undersigned graduate student declare that this thesis is my original work and has never been defended in any undergraduate or graduate program of the university. I have also credited accordingly the references I have used in the work.

Name Girma Lemma Fantaye Signature_____

Date_____

I confirm that this dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as university's advisor

Name Belay Teferra(PhD)_____

Title_____

Date _____

Signature_____