



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
"THE PRACTICES OF NEBAB BET (SCHOOL OF READING) IN DIMA
GIORGIS AMHARA REGION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESCHOOL
PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIA."

BY

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Wubie Andargie entitled: Orthodox Church Nebab Bet Education and Its Implications to Secular Preschool Programs in Ethiopia: A Case Study at Dima Nebab Bet, Amhara Region

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ACRONYM	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF TABLE CONTENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the study	1
1.2. Statement of problem	2
1.3. Significance of the study	3
1.4. Delimitation of the study	4
1.5. Limitations of the Study	4
1.6. Organization of the Study	4
1.7. Operational Definitions	5
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
INTRODUCTION	7
2.1. Structure of EOTC Education	7
2.1.1. Faculty of Reading (Nebab Bet)	7
2.1.2. Zema Bet Education (School of Music)	10
2.1.3. Qene Bet Education (School of Poetry)	11
2.1.4. Metsahaf Bet Education (School of Interpretation)	12
2.2. Nebaba Bet textbooks and instructional materials	13
2.2.1. The <i>Fidel</i> Chart	14
2.2.2. A-bu-gi-da	14

2.2.3. <i>Melikte Yohannes</i> (the Apostle John's First Epistle)	14
2.2.5. Mezmure Dawit (the Psalms of David)	15
2.3. Instructional and assessment strategies used in EOTC schools	15
2.3.1. Early reading instructions in the House of Reading	15
2.3.2. Assessment strategies	18
2.3.3. Instructional techniques	18
2.4. Teaching Practice	19
2.4.1. One-to-One Tutoring	20
2.5. Integration of indigenous knowledge to ECCE.....	20
CHAPTER THREE	23
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	23
INTRODUCTION	23
3.1. Research Approach and Design	23
3.2. Research Settings	23
3.3. Research Participants	24
3.4. Data Collection Techniques	25
3.4.1. Observation.....	25
3.4.2. Interview	25
3.5. Data collection procedure.....	26
3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	26
3.7. Ethical Considerations.....	27
CHAPTER FOUR.....	29
INTRODUCTION	29
4.1. Demographics of the Participants	30
4.2. Teacher selection, deployment and capacity building	31

4.3. Pedagogical strategies	32
4.3.1. Subjects.....	32
4.3.2. Teaching method	32
4.3.3. Discipline method.....	33
4.3.4. Handling of variations in academic performance.....	33
4.3.5. Assessment method	33
4.3.6. Promotion	34
4.4. The school community's interactions	34
CHAPTER FIVE	36
IMPLICATIONS	36
INTRODUCTION	36
5.1. Teacher selection, deployment and capacity building	36
5.2. Pedagogical strategies	37
5.2.1. Subjects.....	37
5.2.2. Teaching method	38
5.2.3. Discipline method.....	39
5.2.4. Assessment	40
5.2.5. Promotion	41
5.2.6. Academic treatment.....	42
5.3. Interaction of school community	43
CHAPTER SIX.....	45
SUMMERY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	45
INTRODUCTION	45
6.1. Summery	45
6.2. Conclusion.....	45

6.3. Recommendations	46
6.4. Recommendation for further research.....	47
7.REFERENCES	48
8, APPENDICE.....	56

ACRONYM

ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	Early Childhood education
EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
MOE	Ministry Of Education
MOH	Ministry Of Health
MOWA	Ministry Of Woman and Affairs

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 map of the study area.....	40
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LIST OF TABLE CONTENTS

Table 1. Profiles of Research Participants.....	45
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate the practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, specifically Nebab Bet (instruction, assessment, promotion procedures and teacher selection), in order to draw implications for secular preschool programs. The study utilized a qualitative case study design and collected data from purposively selected participants, including church fathers, Yeneta teachers, and students. Thematic qualitative analysis of data collected through interviews and observations analysis revealed the following key findings: (a) enrollment is primarily based on the student's interest with no other selection criteria; (b) teachers utilize peer coaching and oral teaching as primary methods, with discipline incorporating both rewards and punishments; (c) assessment includes interviews and continuous observation to ensure content mastery for promotion; and (d) teacher selection is based on capability and wisdom as determined by religious authorities. Overall, the study identified lessons for secular preschool programs, including clarity of purpose, self-contained teacher assignment modes, student involvement in learning facilitation, continuous assessment, and competency-based promotion. Additionally, the study highlights the need for further research and ongoing sharing of experiences in this area.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the study's background, problem statement, research questions, significance, scope, limitations, and definitions of key terms.

Background of the study

Ethiopia's religious church education system comprises four stages: *Nebab Bet* (reading school), *Zema Bet* (music school), *Qene Bet* (poetry school), and *Qedasse Bet* (liturgy school). This study focuses on *Nebab Bet*, the first stage for religious education. Here, students typically starting around age 4, learn the Ethiopian alphabet (Fidel) and its 33 characters, along with the six families of each, resulting in a total of 231 symbols (Hable Sellassie & Tamerat, 1970). They also acquire basic reading, writing, math skills, and discipline.

Nebab Bet utilizes the *Abugida* alphabet system. Students learn this system alongside Fidel, where each consonant character has additional strokes representing different vowels. This approach facilitates the combination of vowels and consonants, promoting faster reading development (Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 2007). Ethiopian numerals are also taught alongside the *Abugida* script.

Historically, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church played a crucial role in education, offering mass literacy and government positions until the 20th century (Hable Sellassie & Tamerat, 1970). Church schools served as guardians of tradition, ensuring cultural practices endured for future generations. Children often began attending church services around this age in the middle Ages (Pankhurst, 1992).

However, current Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs in Ethiopia face challenges regarding relevance and cultural sensitivity (Demeke, 2007; Tirussew, 2007). Studies have questioned their effectiveness in terms of language, cultural appropriateness, and developmental suitability. Makgoba et al. (1999) suggest that overlooking African indigenous knowledge systems hinders knowledge creation. Education plays a vital role in addressing these concerns.

Evidence suggests that both Muslim and Christian schools have contributed to Ethiopia's formal and non-formal education systems, as well as religious theology. However, the historical

significance of traditional church schools like *Nebab Bet* has often been undervalued (Mulualem et al., 2022).

Teka and Belay (2015) highlight the well-organized, methodical, integrated, inclusive, and economical teaching methods in *Nebab Bet* schools. Their study explored a traditional reading school in the Amhara Region and found these methods to be effective. This research suggests *Nebab Bet's* methods hold promise for improving preschool programs in Ethiopia and promoting early childhood literacy development.

This study aims to delve deeper into the specific methods and techniques used in *Nebab Bet*. By understanding these methods, we can explore their potential for informing and improving current ECCE programs, ultimately contributing to better literacy outcomes for young Ethiopian children.

1.2. Statement of problem

The integration of religious education practices is not taken into consideration by Ethiopia's current Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system, which could impede the creation of a curriculum that is culturally appropriate. This disregard for traditional teaching methods, including religious practices, stems from a historical separation between religious and secular education. The existing ECCE system heavily relies on imported curricula, overlooking the rich cultural heritage and traditions of Ethiopia (Tirussew et al., 2007; Demeke, 2007). This lack of connection between education and cultural context impacts the social and cultural relevance of children's educational experiences (Tessema, 2012).

Furthermore, the shortage of qualified educators and resources for teaching local languages and incorporating indigenous stories and values further exacerbates the gap (Alem, 2007, Habtamu, 1996). The marginalization of religious institutions and the emphasis on external resources over local knowledge have perpetuated a lack of continuity and independence between traditional and modern approaches to education (Seida, 2019, Belay, 2020). This has led to the devaluation of practices found in institutions like *Nebab Bet* schools and a disconnect between education and cultural heritage.

Integrating religious education practices from institutions like *Nebab Bet* schools could offer valuable insights for enriching the secular ECCE system. By recognizing and incorporating indigenous teachings, practices, and values, the government can create a more inclusive and

culturally relevant ECCE curriculum that addresses the cognitive, social, and cultural needs of Ethiopian children.

Through research and collaboration with religious institutions and educators, it is possible to bridge the gap between traditional and modern approaches. This can create a balanced and culturally responsive ECCE system that acknowledges the value of indigenous knowledge and traditions. Ultimately, integrating religious practices and cultural elements into formal education can lead to a more holistic and meaningful learning experience for Ethiopian children, fostering their cognitive development and enhancing *the* quality of early childhood education in the country.

Thus, the main goal of this study was to find applicable lessons for formal early childhood education in Ethiopia from the educational practices of the *Nebab Bet* Orthodox Church. The study specifically aimed to address the following research questions:

1, What are the lessons for secular preschool education in Dima *Nebab Bet*?

1.1, What teaching and learning methods are used in Dima *Nebab Bet* Education?

1.2, What are the assessment and promotion strategies in Orthodox Church Dima *Nebab Bet* education?

1.3, What do teacher selection, deployment, and capacity building look like in Dima *Nebab Bet*?

1.3. Significance of the study

This study provides an essential, empirically grounded understanding of Ethiopian church *Nebab Bet* education and practices. Teachers, curriculum developers, educators, and religious scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the methods and content used in *Nebab Bet* church education. The results of this study can specifically assist academics, policymakers, and practitioners of contemporary secular education in several ways.

- **Culturally Responsive Curriculum Development:** By examining some *Nebab Bet* practices, educators can identify "some best pedagogical strategies" that can be adapted to make contemporary secular education more culturally responsive to the socio-cultural needs of Ethiopia's preschool education system. This could involve incorporating elements like peer coaching or student involvement in learning facilitation.

- **Indigenous Knowledge and Practices Research:** This study can inspire further research on the potential of indigenous knowledge and practices within the Ethiopian education system.

Furthermore, the study aimed to support state agencies, particularly the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus, by:

- **Promoting Indigenous Religious Approaches:** The findings can inform the implementation of indigenous religious approaches within the framework of early childhood education.

1.4. Delimitation of the study

This research focused on Ethiopian Orthodox Church educational practices at the *Nebab Bet* level, specifically teaching and learning strategies, subjects covered. It also examined teacher selection (deployment and capacity building) and assessment and promotion techniques used at *Nebab Bet*. The geographical scope of the study was limited to one specific Dima *Nebab Bet* school, located at St. Giworgis Monastery in the East Gojjam Administrative Zone of the Amhara Regional State.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

This study focused on core practices of *Nebab Bet* education at a single location, St. Giworgis Monastery in Dima. While this provided an in-depth look at the school's methods, it limits the generalizability of the findings to other *Nebab Bet* institutions. Additionally, the research primarily employed interviews with *Yeneta* and church fathers. While this approach provided valuable insights, it may not fully capture the perspectives of student parents.

The prevailing security situation in the country also presented logistical challenges in terms of extended data collection. Finally, the study did not explore student background or parental involvement in detail due to the need to maintain a manageable research scope. These areas could be valuable for future research.

1.6. Organization of the Study

There were six sections in the study. After the background, problem statement, research questions, significance, delimitation, and limitations of the study are covered in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature. The study's methodology and research design are covered in Chapter 3. The results were presented, analyzed, and discussed in Chapter 4, and their

implications for pre-secular education were explored in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 provides a concise summary of the study's results and conclusions, along with pertinent recommendations.

1.7. Operational Definitions

- ***Fidel Bet* vs. Content:** *Fidel Bet* refers to the religious Ethiopian method of teaching the *Ge'ez* script. In this context, content refers to the specific subject matter or information being taught. The operational definition focuses on how the *Fidel Bet* method is used to integrate with and reinforce curriculum content related to the *Ge'ez* script. This includes examining how *Fidel Bet* instruction helps students acquire knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and understanding the *Ge'ez* script within the broader curriculum.
- ***Fidel Bet* vs. Assessment:** *Fidel Bet* involves teaching the *Ge'ez* script, while assessment refers to the evaluation of student learning and progress. The operational definition examines the methods and tools used to assess students' proficiency in the *Ge'ez* script acquired through *Fidel Bet* instruction. This includes the development of assessment criteria, techniques, and instruments specifically designed to measure students' learning outcomes and mastery of the *Ge'ez* script based on their *Fidel Bet* instruction.
- ***Fidel Bet* vs. Pedagogy:** *Fidel Bet* is a religious instructional approach for teaching the *Ge'ez* script, while pedagogy refers to the broader principles and practices of teaching. The operational definition analyzes how *Fidel Bet* method aligns with or differs from modern pedagogical approaches in early childhood education. This includes examining how *Fidel Bet* integrates with contemporary teaching methods like peer coaching or student involvement, and how it promotes active learning and supports students' cognitive and social development.
- ***Fidel Bet* vs. Holistic Issues:** *Fidel Bet* involves teaching the *Ge'ez* script, and holistic issues refer to the broader considerations related to students' overall development and well-being. The operational definition explores how the *Fidel Bet* method addresses and contributes to students' holistic development, including their cognitive, emotional, and social. This includes examining how *Fidel Bet* instruction supports students' cultural identity, language skills, critical thinking, and overall growth as learners.
- ***Fidel Bet* vs. Feasibility Issues:** *Fidel Bet* is a religious method of teaching the *Ge'ez* script, while feasibility issues refer to the practicality, affordability, and sustainability of implementing the method. The operational definition focuses on the challenges and

opportunities related to incorporating the *Fidel Bet* method into early childhood education programs. This includes considering the availability of trained Fidel Bet teachers, necessary resources, support systems, and the potential role of community involvement to effectively implement *Fidel Bet* instruction on a larger scale

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

An attempt was made to gather and methodically arrange relevant literature from various sources in this section in order to make sense of the issues and apply what is already known.

2.1. Structure of EOTC Education

2.1.1. Faculty of Reading (Nebab Bet)

One of the four faculties of church education and the initial level of the traditional schools of EOTC, the *Nebab Bet*, also known as the Reading School or the "House of Reading," is where primary instruction is provided. The foundational or primary level of the church education system is the school of reading (*Nebab Bet*), where children begin their studies of church education (Girma, 1967). As Molla (2022) described the pursuit of several branches of religious education at higher schools began with *Nebab Bet* (the reading school). Each area of higher education requires its students to pass through the *Nebab Bet* (reading school), which provides instruction in the fundamentals of the subject.

It is the original faculty that the EOTC will use to teach religion. Teaching children to read religious texts—virtually all of which are written in Geez at the *Nebab Bet* level—is the primary goal of the *Nebab Bet*. The curricula of *Nebab Bet* include fidelity instruction, reading instruction, simple art, writing, dogmatic teachings, and moral education (Mersha, 2018). The main objective of *Nebab Bet* level church education is to develop students reading abilities of different religious books, build up student's morals, and give Church services. Amharic and Geez are used here as the teaching languages (Desalegn, 2012). Geez and Amharic are currently being used as the teaching languages.

While the *Nebab Bet* may have historical significance within the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) education system, it can be argued that the exclusive focus on religious education at the foundational level may limit the holistic development of students and their preparedness for a diverse and evolving society.

2.1.1.1. Fidel (Alphabets) Instruction

The student learns *Fidel*, or alphabet instruction, in the first level of *Nebab Bet*. The student is expected to master *Fidel* with their alphabets, which consists of a large number of characters (33

in 7 orders of 231 letters of the *Geez* Syllabary). The *Fidel*, a group of *Geez* letters, is the child's first subject of learning (Kefyalew, 1999; Desalegn, 2012; Mersha, 2018). Students at this level can match the sounds and shapes of the alphabet. The Ethiopian numeral system is another subject they study. Children and church teachers (also known as "*Yeneta*") use a range of instructional techniques at this educational level to assist kids in learning fiddles and eventually identify the shape and sound of every letter. Even with individual differences, Mersha (2018) states that this level of instruction takes three months on average.

Overall, the early introduction of *Fidel* and the Ethiopian numeral system in *Nebab Bet* sets a strong academic foundation for students, laying the groundwork for their future educational success. By mastering these fundamental concepts, students are better equipped to advance to more complex learning tasks and develop a solid understanding of the *Geez* language and cultural heritage.

2.1.1.2. Reading Instruction

It is required of students to read multiple religious textbooks at the instructional level. The students will advance to the next level of education, where they will read lessons from religious texts like the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of St. Paul, St. James, and St. Peter, the Gospel of St. John, the praises of *St. Tamara Mariam* (the miracles and wonders of St. Mary), and *Tamara Iyasus* (the miracles of Jesus) (Hable Sellassie and Tamerat, 1970). This is after they have identified every character in the alphabet. The children are expected to read the books all the way through, even if they don't fully grasp the meanings. Once they can distinguish between the letters, they move on to the next exercise, which is called "*Geez*," or the beginning of reading. Here, the students attempt to read the letters as a word by chanting them aloud. For this purpose, the first epistle of St. John is typically used.

The children use different methods to practice reading. First, they speak each letter of the text, which is also known as *Fidel Hawaria* or the First Epistle of St. John, while pointing to each individual letter. *Geez* and Amharic are also being used as the teaching languages. The reading stage includes the study of *Quiter*, *Wured Nebab*, *Nebab*, and *Dawit Medgem*. At the reading level, students are taught to identify each alphabet of the *Geez* letters (which are 231 characters) at the very beginning of church education, and this stage is called *Quiter Nebab*.

Once students have identified how to read the characters that are set horizontally from left to right, they will resort to reading the characters while they are set in a vertical manner, tilting

down from top to bottom, and this style of reading is known as *Wured Nebab*. Students start reading selected words and paragraphs from the Bible at *Nebab*, the third stage in the reading portion. The last stage in the reading level is designed to enable students to fluently read the Psalms of the Psalter through repetition, and this practice is called *Dawit Medegem* (Mersha, 2018).

Overall, the structured reading levels, from *Quiter Nebab* to *Dawit Medegem*, indicate a systematic approach to reading instruction that aims to equip students with the ability to fluently read and understand religious texts. This approach not only builds literacy skills but also reinforces the importance of spiritual and religious education in the development of students within the Ethiopian church education system.

2.1.1.3. Simple Arithmetic

In this stage of instruction, students learn Ethiopian numbers, which are usually integrated with *Fidel* instruction and reading instruction. The purpose of arithmetic instruction is to understand different religious books that have numbers during reading (Molla, 2022).

Students are not only taught basic arithmetic skills but also encouraged to explore the numerical references found in religious texts. By integrating Ethiopian numbers with *Fidel* and reading instruction, educators aim to deepen students' comprehension of religious literature while simultaneously fostering their mathematical abilities.

2.1.1.4. Writing Instruction

At this stage of study, the student practices writing letters identified during formal instruction and the reading stage of instruction. In this stage, the students practice to learn and write the shapes of each letter (Tesfu, 2022)

Furthermore, the emphasis on writing instruction at a later stage highlights the importance of practicing and internalizing the shapes of letters identified during formal instruction. This stage serves as a crucial component in developing students' literacy skills and consolidating their knowledge of the alphabet, further enhancing their ability to engage with written texts.

2.1.1.5. Dogmatic Teaching

At this level of instruction, the student studies the basic OTC dogmatic teaching, or canon (basic principles of OTC). During this session, the student learns about Genesis and God's principles (the Ten Commandments of God, the Six Basic Thoughts, and the Five Major Secrets of God) (Molla, 2022).

Dogmatic teaching and moral education represent key components of the curriculum that focus on instilling religious principles, values, and ethical conduct in students. By delving into the basic tenets of the OTC (Orthodox Tewahedo Church), students are introduced to foundational teachings such as the Ten Commandments and God's principles, which shape their understanding of faith and morality.

2.1.1.6. Moral Education

At the *Nebab Bet* level of church education, moral education is considered one of the major foci of study, and its primary purpose is to cultivate students to be morally ethical and disciplined. To achieve this purpose, students were taught different religious principles, commandments, cultures, and traditions (Moges, 2024).

Moral education, situated at the *Nebab Bet* level, underscores the commitment of the educational system to nurturing students' character and ethical development. By immersing students in a curriculum that encompasses religious principles, commandments, cultures, and traditions, educators aim to cultivate individuals who are not only academically proficient but also morally grounded and ethically disciplined.

Overall, the paragraph highlights the multifaceted nature of church education in Ethiopia, which seeks to provide students with a comprehensive learning experience that encompasses arithmetic, writing, dogmatic teaching, and moral education. Through this integrated approach, students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to navigate both academic and ethical challenges, fostering a well-rounded educational journey that prepares them for intellectual and moral growth.

2.1.2. Zema Bet Education (School of Music)

Zema Bet (music education) is the second subcategory of church education. *Zema* is a well-organized or attractive sound. *Zema* is a differently arranged sound that attracts the human mind. *Zema* includes *wudasie maryam* (praise of St. Mary) in *Aquaquam*. It contains the St. Yared and *Kdasie* compositions. St. Yared created the church *Zema*. "Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido

Church *Zema* was introduced many centuries ago and is said to have been invented by Ethiopian St. Yared in the 6th century" (Mersha, 2018). St. Yared's School of Music is used as the foundation of *Zema Bet* level of church education, and it has made great contributions to the cultural life of the country in the categories of education, literature, and music.

There are three kinds of musical basic melodies by which Yared's hymns are sung: *Geez* (the simplest plain chant, used on regular days), *Ezel* (a slow, dignified, heavy-sounding mood), and *Araray* (the most complicated mood, freer and lighter with musical embellishments; generally linked with fasts and funerals). The three branches of the *Zema Bet* level of education's curriculum are described by Mersha (2018) as follows: (i) the study of *Tsewatwe zema*, which contains *Meraf*, *Tsoma Degewa* (Chant of the Main Fasting), *Degwa* (the primary chant book), *Zimmare* (songs chanted at the conclusion of Eucharist), and *Mewasit* (songs associated with memorial services and funerals); (ii) the study of *Qedasse* and *Satat* and (iii) the study of *Aquaquam* (religious dance and movements in which drums and sistrams are used).

In conclusion, *Zema Bet* education as a vital component of church education in Ethiopia, offering students a unique opportunity to explore and engage with the country's musical legacy. By delving into the teachings of St. Yared and the diverse musical traditions embedded in *Zema*, students not only broaden their musical skills but also deepen their cultural understanding and connection to Ethiopia's artistic and spiritual heritage.

2.1.3. Qene Bet Education (School of Poetry)

The third type of religious education is *Qene Bet*. One of the pillars of learning and church instruction is constructing *Qene* (poetry). Different scholars have proposed various definitions of *Qene*. Abebe (1994), who identified *Qene* as a thinking freedom, He also describes *Qene* as a field of art that expresses the ideas and feelings of human beings in a wonderful language usage and in a poetic style by using gold and wax, which bear deep mystery and fertile creativity. According to him, geez poetry (*Qene*) has a dual sense. He also describes Geez *Qene* as always a new finding essay for spiritual benefit, for philosophized artistic wisdom, and for examining secular aspects. *Geez*, grammar and poetry are both included in its usage.

Qene, also known as "*Sem ena Work*," is a unique style of poetry from Ethiopia that is rich and deep in meaning and demands critical thinking and analysis of the poetry to understand its meaning. *Qene* verse has two levels of meaning: the direct meaning, *Sem*, meaning wax, and the hidden meaning, *work*, meaning gold. *Qene* is a very Ethiopian tradition (Chaillot, 2005). Since

the Bible serves as the foundation for the majority of Saint Yared's works, it may be said that the Bible was the original inspiration for *Qene's* composition. Saint Yared is the creator and founder of *Qene* (Mezemur, 2011). Using the *Sem-ena work* mode, *Qene* must have both a literal and a symbolic meaning. All *Qene* are poems, although not all poetry can be *Qene*. *Qene* is different in that a profound idea can be veiled underneath an everyday idea through the mode of *Sem ena work* (Hailegebrial, 1970)

Qene's curriculum for Bet-level education typically lasts five years of study and covers three main topics: (i) *Kotera (Negera)*, (ii) *Gesessa*, and (iii) *Sewasew (Agebab)* (Grammer) (Mersha, 2018). As Kidanemariam (1980) explains, the student is expected to master constructing *Qene* (poetry), which needs to have two meanings: the surface meaning and the hidden one. The surface meaning of the poem (which is called 'sem,' meaning wax) is what is presumed to be easily understood by anyone who reads or listens to the poem. The hidden meaning of *Qene* (which is known as 'Worq,' meaning gold) is not easily decipherable by the audience without deliberation, and it might take quite some time to figure out the hidden meaning.

In conclusion, cultural and intellectual significance of *Qene Bet* within the realm of Ethiopian religious education, showcasing its role as a vehicle for philosophical reflection, artistic creativity, and spiritual enrichment. By immersing students in the intricate world of *Qene* poetry, educators aim to foster critical thinking, linguistic proficiency, and a deep appreciation for Ethiopia's rich poetic tradition, ultimately shaping individuals who can engage thoughtfully with complex literary works and uncover the profound truths concealed within the verses.

2.1.4, Metsahaf Bet Education (School of Interpretation)

The Old and New Testament holy texts as well as works about monastic life were thoroughly studied at this level of education (Milkias, 1976; Pankhurst, 1972). Three important works of Ethiopian history and law were also studied, namely "*Tarique-Negest* (monarchic history), *Kibre-Negast* (Glory of the Kings), and *Fetha-Negest* (laws of the Kings)". The faculty was established in a conventional Jewish school before the birth of Jesus. When Minilik returned from Jerusalem to Ethiopia with a priest, the Holy Books, and the Arks of Zion, Ethiopian schooling at this level officially began. By interpreting and translating the Holy Books from Hebrew to *Geez*, the Jewish priests have spread Christianity throughout Ethiopia. Abune Selama and the Ethiopian St. Yared contributed to the expansion of this faculty. But under the Gonderian dynasty, the faculty

was established in a proper and structured manner. At that time, the number of students was numerous (Hamer, 2002).

Mersha (2018), Chilliot (2002), and Hable Sellassie and Tamerat (1970) all state that the *Metshaft Bet* level of church education's curricula, which covers four disciplines of study, often requires 10 years of study. The first kind is referred to as "*Bluyat*" (Old Testament). The Old Testament's 46 books are examined and discussed. The second branch is the *Haddisat* (New Testament), a specialized school on the commentaries of the 35 books of the Ethiopian New Testament. The teachings of the Church Fathers (*Fetha Negest*) and the calendar calculation (*Bahr hasab*) are also explored in the third branch, *Metshafe Liqawent* and *Abushaker*, which includes studies and remarks on these topics. This branch of literature education (*Metsehaf bet*) is the source of Ethiopia's unique calendar system, which is distinct from the rest of the world.

The final branch of the *Metshafe Menekosat* is the *Menekosat*, the school of commentaries on monastic literature. Through the analysis of diverse individual publications, students in these specialist divisions learn about church history, theology, traditions, and legislation. The commentaries on these teachings don't follow a set of systematic theological or historical categories; rather, they raise, explore, and argue theological, moral, and historical issues as they relate to the interpretation of each sentence or phrase in a text. The pupil is required to memorize every commentary sentence.

In conclusion, the comprehensive and structured nature of *Metshaft Bet* education, underscoring its role in imparting knowledge of religious texts, historical works, and monastic traditions to students in Ethiopia. By delving into diverse disciplines of study and encouraging critical analysis and memorization of key teachings, educators aim to cultivate a deep understanding of Ethiopian cultural heritage, religious practices, and intellectual traditions among students at this advanced level of church education.

2.2. Nebaba Bet textbooks and instructional materials

Church schools frequently struggle with a lack of textbooks and other reading materials, which hinders the creation of a setting rich in literature. This results in inadequate teaching materials and a poorly equipped learning environment. The *Fidel chart*, *A-bu-gi-da*, *Melikte Yonhannes*, *Wegele Yohannis*, and *Mezmure Dawit* for reading practice are the primary literacy teaching resources for religious texts at *Nebab Bet* church education (Tilahun & Melesse, 2022).

2.2.1. The *Fidel* Chart

The first literacy teaching tool is the *Ge'ez Fidel Chart*, a syllabary writing system with 26 basic graphemes with seven forms and diacritical marks. Instead of emphasizing phonemes or individual sounds, the Fidel syllabary uses segmental writing, using consonant-vowel sequences as building blocks, each represented by consonant graphemes with diacritical marks. Using consonants as the main grapheme units, this Ethiopian script is an alphabet-syllabary writing system that requires vocalization but indicates it with diacritical marks placed on these graphemes (Weldemariam et al., 2023).

2.2.2. A-bu-gi-da

The A-bu-gi-da is a different Fidel chart designed for literacy instruction that is intentionally arranged to help students identify particular graphemes. This method seeks to enhance students' phonological awareness and phonics abilities beyond simple memorization by rearranging the graphemes (Chaillot, 2024).

2.2.3. *Melikte Yohannes* (the Apostle John's First Epistle)

For students, *Melikte Yohannes* serves as the foundation for their *Ge'ez* reading adventure. They are exposed to four distinct reading modes here, which will improve their reading skills. Students will gain the ability to identify graphemes within words and accurately pronounce prosodic elements, such as stressed and unstressed syllables, at the word level with the aid of this content. As the child gets older, they concentrate on learning how to pronounce words and sentences correctly, as well as the proper intonation and stress patterns within the same text (Woube, 2024).

2.4. *Wengele Yohannes* (the Gospel of St. John)

Following Melikte Yohannes, Wengele Yohannes is a crucial text used for extra reading exercises that require students to use similar reading strategies but with more practice (Moges, 2024).

2.2.5. Mezmure Dawit (the Psalms of David)

During reading sessions, this spiritual text used by the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian community emphasizes the proper pronunciation of the Ge'ez language, focusing on its segmental and prosodic features. To mark the end of studies at the House of Reading, the Psalms of David are used for more advanced reading exercises (Wobe, 2024).

2.3. Instructional and assessment strategies used in EOTC schools

2.3.1. Early reading instructions in the House of Reading

Beginning with the Fidel Chart, The Reading House (Nebab Bet) uses the Ge'ez alphabet to teach reading. Using a straw, students practise pronouncing each letter aloud. They then repeat the drill slowly at first, then at a medium pace, and conclude with a quick count in the same way. This first lesson accomplishes several goals. First, it aids in the development of print awareness, or the child's comprehension of the conventions and features of written language. In addition, print awareness entails knowing that words on a page correspond to spoken language and that reading should be done from top to bottom and left to right (Adams, 1990).

By teaching kids to identify and label each of the Fidel's individual graphemes, the exercise also attempts to promote alphabet awareness in young learners. Children learn about the symbols in the alphabet through practice and experimentation. Children acquire knowledge of print and written language conventions through learning to write letters, their name, and other words. The goal of this exercise is to help students develop phonological awareness by helping them learn and recognise every sound and syllable in the language. Youngsters can show phonological awareness by counting the syllables in a word or playing with the sounds that make up a word.

A child's ability to hear, identify, control, and make use of the sounds or combinations of sounds found in words is known as phonological awareness. This covers tasks like segmenting words, blending words, and rhyming them. The Qutir method is an oral teaching approach that emphasises learning by counting each grapheme. Essentially, each grapheme is pronounced from left to right, followed by top to bottom, to help the child distinguish between the individual

syllables of the language. Enhancing a child's print, alphabet, and phonological awareness is the primary objective of the Qutir method. These skills are essential to a child's early literacy development and future literacy successes.

A broad range of spoken language skills, including phonemes, syllables, rhymes, and different aspects of speech like intonation, accent, stress, and alliteration, are included in phonological awareness. Merely identifying consonants and vowels in the context of learning the Ge'ez syllabary does not suffice to develop reading fluency. Another set of phonological skills related to reading is the recognition of prosodic features.

The study of rhythm, intonation, stress, and other aspects of speech that support distinct phonological segments is the focus of prosody, a branch of phonology. The ability to read aloud with appropriate rhythm and intonation, which results in an oral reading that sounds genuine and natural, is referred to as prosody in reading. Prosody has been identified by reading scholars as an essential element of reading fluency (Rasinski et al., 2011:293).

The graphemes on the Fidel chart are mixed up in the second stage of the counting method, known as a-bu-gi-da, to make it difficult for the student to identify them based only on their positions. The goal of this grapheme mixing is to dissuade rote learning. In this stage, the child is assisted in differentiating the different graphemes of the Fidel and connecting them to the corresponding spoken sounds or sound combinations through the use of a distinct grapheme chart called a-bu-gi-da. As a result, the second counting stage is devoted to phonics identification.

The relationship between a written language's graphemes and the distinct sounds or syllables of a spoken language is known as phonics. Children who learn phonics comprehend the predictable relationship between spoken sounds or sound combinations and alphabetic units. Reciting rhymes is a common way to teach phonics exercises and skills, which adds an entertaining element to the learning process. Children can practise phonics in a fun way by combining graphemes to create larger written language units through songs and rhymes (Moges, 2024).

The four modes that make up the third stage of reading instruction are: Wurd Nibab (reading with fast rhythmic chanting of each phrase), Maggaz or Net'ela Nibab (reading words with slow rhythmic chanting), and K'um Nibab (reading sentences or larger syntactic structures or chunks quickly and loudly). The development of reading abilities in Ge'ez literacy instruction depends

on these reading styles (Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:647–665) and Haile Gabriel Dagne (2019:186–188).

(a) Reading syllables within words in Ge'ez In the first reading mode, Ge'ez, pupils learn to read by grouping graphemes together in a chanting pattern and reading them as separate syllables. Instructions on reading begin with this syllable-based drill, which frequently concentrates on consonant-vowel combinations such as ha, hu, hi, ha, etc. (Gragg, 1997).

(b) *Net'ela nibab or maggaz* The second reading method, known as maggaz or net'ela nibab, is word-level reading in which pupils put words together using graphemes and recite them slowly and rhythmically. At this point, students practise the same procedure for days or months, and repetition is crucial. Depending on the teacher's style, writing and numerical studies may also start at this point (Paulos Milkias, 1976:80).

(c) *Wurd Nibab* – This is the third reading method. It entails reading passages aloud and becoming proficient in the prosodic elements of the Ge'ez language, like accents, pauses, and stressed and unstressed syllable pronunciation. This stage, which emphasises phrasal-level reading and emphasises proper pronunciation and stress patterns, takes more time and effort to master (Yirga G. Woldeyes, 2017:64).

(d) *Qum Nebab*: This fourth reading style emphasises fast, loud reading at the sentence level and calls for the child to read at a quicker rate without making mistakes. This stage involves practicing with a variety of texts and helping students to become proficient in the intonation patterns (Haile Gabriel, 2019:191).

The Psalms of David are the starting point for the advanced reading exercises in the fourth reading stage, which uses a demanding learning approach to improve the student's reading abilities. The student receives additional texts from the Gospels and other biblical songs before finishing the Nibab-Bet curriculum by being able to read the Psalms of David with proficiency.

The socialization process is another area of emphasis for the School of Reading. During evening sessions, students are exposed to a variety of stories, proverbs, commandments, and customs. Through lectures, debates, and storytelling, the intention is to acquaint students with societal and spiritual ideas. An essential component of education is acculturation to cultural values, religious customs, and spiritual beliefs.

Storytelling and Q&A sessions are common teaching strategies used to communicate significant spiritual and cultural ideas. To help students gain a deeper understanding of the Mystery of the Trinity, for instance, the concept could be taught through a dialogue in which they are asked questions and are then asked to respond (Yirga, 2017:65).

2.3.2. Assessment strategies

The findings of the study indicated that the assessment carried out in EOTC schools is an integral part of the teaching and learning processes. Assessment is one of the integral elements of EOTC education. It is important to provide information on the student's progress, improve the effectiveness of their educational processes, and evaluate the student's achievement and development. The assessment method of teaching is an oral test in all education systems, but in church education, written assessment is very rare (Molla, 2022). It is also useful to measure and give decision on knowledge, understanding, or skills in a specified subject or group of subjects. Teachers can also gather information by giving tests, conducting interviews and monitoring behavior in the process of learning is taking place (Ashenafi, 2012).

The teacher monitors students' progress and provides immediate feedback and corrections; develops appropriate reading and writing skills; emphasizes on repetition and helps to internalize the issue; the blind students study orally. Studying aloud helps students learn during power outages and without access to lamps. It also improves memorization and helps them develop their Amharic reading skills. As a result, students become voracious and quick readers and thoroughly review the daily lessons in groups or on their own.

2.3.3. Instructional techniques

2.3.3.1. Rote learning and memorization

Memorization is the most common and dominant method of teaching in Ethiopian Orthodox church schools. Regarding this issue, Panchrust (1962) stated that the method of teaching is mainly providing an oral lesson, or "*Ye'qal Timihrt*," in a melodious sound (the word), which is performed by recitation and memorization. In every school, whether it is the *Fidel*, *Zema*, *Qene*, or *Metshaf Tirguame* School. In orthodox religious schools, memorization and recitation are the main teaching methods. Haile Gebriel (1970) made the case that the pedagogy of the church was heavily reliant on repetition, memorization, and strict conformity to the teacher's standards in regard to this.

The investigation by Getachew (2021) revealed that church scholars had used active learning techniques at all church school levels. That is, teachers employed peer tutoring, group discussions, brainstorming, independent work, micro-teaching, creative work, critical thinking, active listening, and loud speaking. This demonstrated that the teaching strategies used at the various levels of church education do not solely rely on memorization. Supporting this idea, Ethiopian scholars (Mersha, 2018) argue that church school education is not based on simple memorization except at lower levels.

2.3.3.2. Translation and interpretation

One of the dominant methods used in church education was translation and interpretation. In *Qene* and *Metsehaf Bets*, higher levels of church education frequently employ this form of instruction. As the name indicates, commonly uses translation and interpretation methods of teaching (Molla, 2022).

2.3.3.3. Questioning

Another dominant method used in the teaching-learning process was the question-and-answer method. Almost all students are encouraged to ask the head teacher and/or the student teacher about any concepts that are unclear (Aselefech, 2014).

2.3.3.4. Peer-grouping and peer teaching

Peer grouping is a style of organizing the students to take a course under a certain head teacher and/or student-teacher, while peer teaching is a practice in which each student is given the chance and the duty to instruct his own peers. The instructional process in the EOTC schools is organized in such a way that the first peer teaching sessions are conducted. Each student teaches his peer, and conversely, each student learns from his peer. Hence, students perform a kind of role play wherein a student acts as a teacher for a while and as a learner at other times (Molla, 2022).

2.4. Teaching Practice

Peer teaching, or teaching one's classmates, is a popular practice throughout the EOTC. This session is led by student-teachers. Teaching practice is not done by merely teaching one's peers (as in peer teaching) who are in the same academic status. Rather, it refers to the practice of teaching other students who are younger than him. A tutor, a student who is assigned to teach other students on a regular basis, is the one who helps others study the course, sometimes through re-teaching but mainly through substituting the formal instruction. It is common practice

in all *Gubae Bets* for students to sit in a circular pattern in the open air to learn from a student-teacher who appears to be on teaching practice.

The academic competence or subject mastery of a student was measured mostly by his effectiveness in teaching lower "grade" attendants. The adage "The best way to learn a subject is to teach it" appears to apply in Islamic education. It is imperative to mention here that a student-teacher at a lower level has also got another student-teacher from a higher level, which in turn has got still another student-teacher from the very top of the academic pyramid.

2.4.1. One-to-One Tutoring

In group instruction accounted for the majority of the educational process. It was still possible to instruct a single pupil. Though when a student is a novice, when he lacks peers, or when he lacks interest in learning with pairs or groups of students for social, psychological, or any other unknown reasons, the student-teacher or the head-teacher may let him study on a one-on-one basis. *Nebab Bet* enhances learning in the setting of a cooperative learning environment, which has a good impact on students' interdependence, through the application of pair discussion and group discussion (Molla, 2022).

2.5. Integration of indigenous knowledge to ECCE

Various theories, such as socio-cultural, ecological, developmental niche, and socio-ontological, highlight the importance of social and physical environments in shaping child development, learning, and education. These environments, which can vary spatially and historically, offer different tasks, demands, and interactions that enable individuals to engage with various mechanisms, resources, agents, and tools. As children interact with their environments, they first acquire knowledge through these interactions on the outer psychological plane, before assimilating and internalizing this knowledge on the inner psychological plane, adding their personal perspectives and values to it. Parents and competent peers serve as conduits for cultural transmission, utilizing language as a key tool in this process. (Vygotsky, 1978)

The social and cultural environment that a child interacts with is not random (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Super & Harkness, 1986). Instead, it is organized in a hierarchical way, with different layers of structures that influence the child's development. These structures, known as microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems, build on each other, exposing the child to more complex and diverse contexts, relationships, and networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The child's everyday surroundings, child-rearing practices, and career psychology make up this

structured environment, divided into three interacting subsystems. This arrangement allows the child to be at the center of a unique cultural environment, different from that of other family members.

The developmental niche within African culture emphasizes the importance of values and skills acquired through mutual adaptation between each child and their environment, as highlighted by each of the three subsystems within this niche. This cultural perspective is rooted in the eco-cultural worldview prevalent on the continent, where children actively engage in their own survival, learning, and development. This stands in contrast to Western practices where children primarily receive tender care and attention. Early interactions with parents and siblings play a crucial role in helping children connect with their community and gain local knowledge. (Super & Harkness, 1986; Nsamenang, 1992).

In Ethiopia, the policy documents and implementation standards for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) do not seem to prioritize initiatives that focus on indigenization. Many educational resources, particularly in private institutions, are imported from other countries. Despite having a central curriculum guide, the Ministry of Education appears to mainly adapt existing materials rather than creating local content. There is a lack of effort to incorporate locally produced materials for teaching. In urban areas where English is more prevalent, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis on using local languages, whereas this is less of a concern in rural areas. The physical layout of ECCE centers also reflects these indigenization issues, as they do not accurately represent the characteristics of the local communities. (Belay, 2020)

Since gaining independence, there has been a growing interest in incorporating indigenous knowledge and practices in education across the African continent, which has primarily been influenced by former colonial educational systems. One key aspect of incorporating indigenous knowledge at the early childhood education level is the use of the mother tongue. According to Leutier (2004), using the mother tongue in education is believed to enhance literacy rates among children.

Case studies from students at the Early Childhood Development Virtual University have shown that traditional stories are valuable resources for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs (Schafer, 2004). Research conducted in Uganda and Lesotho, as summarized by Schafer (2004), emphasized the importance of using local stories to enhance cognitive skills and preserve indigenous knowledge. Additionally, Sagnia (2004) advocates for the use of songs,

dances, and locally made toys in ECCE programs in the Gambia. Pence (2004) suggests that early education practices should be influenced by local perceptions of parenting and children's roles.

Social and physical environments significantly influence child development, learning, and education. Theories like socio-cultural, ecological, developmental niche, and socio-ontological emphasize the impact of these environments on individuals. Children acquire knowledge through interactions with their environment, with parents and peers playing a crucial role. The hierarchical organization of the social and cultural environment influences child development through microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. Indigenization in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is essential to preserve indigenous knowledge and cognitive skills.

Children build ideas and concepts of their place in the society, but this was discredited by the policies proposed in the unesco universal education reform plan. Enslin, tjiattas and todd (2009) challenge this western universal education approach, stating: The universalist wishes to export unchanged european conceptions of education, attempting to re-create a bygone english grammar school ethos (competitive and individualistic); a curriculum premised on the western canon, including eurocentric history, moral education that denigrates local custom and is premised on western-enlightenment or christian codes of conduct, and Individualistic learning styles that discourage collaboration and despise indigenous knowledge. Cultures and communities (cole, cole, & lightfoot, 2005; gestwicki, 2013; vygotsky, 1986).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter delves into the research design and methodology employed to investigate the Orthodox Church *Nebab Bet* education system and its potential implications for secular preschool programs in Ethiopia. The study aims to identify valuable practices from *Nebab Bet* schools that could be adapted and integrated into secular preschool curriculums, ultimately promoting culturally relevant and effective learning experiences for young children.

3.1. Research Approach and Design

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of *Nebab Bet* practices and experiences within their natural settings, particularly since limited research exists on this topic (Flick, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research methods are well-suited to studying complex phenomena like educational practices and uncovering rich contextual details.

This study employed a case study design, focusing on the educational experiences of participants within the Dima *Nebab Bet* context. This involved detailed data collection and analysis of teaching approaches, practices, three priests, *Yeneta* (Teacher) and students at the Dima *Nebab Bet* School.

3.2. Research Settings

This study was conducted at the historic Dima Giworgis Monastery, located in the East Gojjam Zone of Ethiopia. Established in the 13th century, the monastery has a long-standing reputation for its excellence in church education, offering a range of programs from lower-level *Nebab Bet* (reading) to higher-level *Qene Bet* (poetry) courses. The selection of this specific setting was based on its well-established *Nebab Bet* program and the presence of experienced instructors who have been providing church education for many years.

Prior to finalizing the research site, a comprehensive review of potential locations was conducted. This review focused on identifying monasteries and churches within a reasonable travel distance that offered well-established *Nebab Bet* programs. This criterion ensured access to a population with relevant educational experience.

Selection of Dima Giworgis Monastery:

Following the initial review, Dima Giworgis Monastery in the East Gojjam Zone emerged as a leading candidate. This selection was based on its reputation for excellence in *Nebab Bet* education, evidenced by factors such as:

- A long history of providing church education (established in the 13th century)
- A well-defined curriculum for *Nebab Bet* instruction
- The presence of experienced instructors with extensive experience in *Nebab Bet* pedagogy

Informal conversations with church leaders and intellectuals at the monastery further confirmed its suitability for the study. Their insights into the *Nebab Bet* program and student experiences provided valuable context for the research.



Figure 1; map of study area

3.3. Research Participants

Purposive sampling was employed to select research participants at Dima Giworgis *Nebab Bet* in East Gojjam Zone. This technique allowed the researcher to identify individuals with specific knowledge and experience relevant to the study's objectives.

The sample included:

- Pritiests: Participating experienced teachers provided insights into curriculum implementation, student interactions, and teaching strategies.
- Present Dima *Nebab Bet* Instructors: A person familiar with the *Nebab Bet* framework. impart knowledge in *Nebab Bet* classrooms.

- **Students:** Students currently enrolled in the *Nebab Bet* program at Dima Giworgis Monastery. Their participation provided valuable perspectives on their learning experiences and interactions with instructors.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

To gain a comprehensive understanding of *Nebab Bet* education and practices, this study employed a multi-method approach utilizing interviews and observations.

3.4.1. Observation

Observation played a crucial role in gaining a comprehensive understanding of *Nebab Bet* classrooms and teaching practices. Through direct observation, the researcher was able to collect rich data from real-world settings and witness interactions between teachers (*Yenetas*) and students firsthand. These observations focused on key areas relevant to the research questions, including:

- **Teaching Methods:** Observations documented specific teaching methods employed by instructors, such as the use of recitation, rote learning, or collaborative activities.
- **Teacher-Student Interactions:** The researcher observed how *Yenetas* interacted with students, including providing instruction, answering questions, and offering guidance.
- **Learning Environment:** Observations student behavior and engagement, and the overall atmosphere during instruction.

The data from these observations were then used to triangulate (compare and verify) findings obtained through interviews and document analysis.

3.4.2. Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a primary means to gather in-depth information about *Nebab Bet* education from various perspectives. The interview guide focused on key research questions, exploring topics such as teaching methods, student experiences, and the overall structure of the *Nebab Bet* program. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences and insights.

All interviews were conducted in Amharic, the native language of the participants, to ensure clear communication and a deeper understanding of their perspectives. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before recording the interviews on audio and video.

3.5. Data collection procedure

The study was carried out in a deliberately chosen Ethiopian Orthodox *Neba Bet* education center (EOTC) located in Dima. This particular EOTC was chosen because it represents a one typical best setting for Orthodox early childhood education in the region, allowing the researcher to gather data that would be generalizable to similar contexts and contribute to achieving the study's goals.

Data collections were a multi-step, time-consuming procedure. Firstly, a letter of cooperation was sent from Addis Ababa University College of Educational and Behavioral Studies, Department of ECCE, to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC)'s higher officials located in Enemay Wereda and East Gojjam Zone. The Wereda then forwarded the request to the Dima Church administration for their approval. After receiving permission, the researcher started by observing the *Nebab Bet* section for two days to get a clear understanding of the teaching and learning environment and to develop focused questions for the upcoming interviews.

The next data collection process involved semi-structured interviews. Interviews were prepared for each participant to explore their teaching and learning experiences in the EOTC schools. After obtaining informed consent from all participants, the interviews were conducted following the initial observation period. This approach ensured the participants felt comfortable and familiar with the researcher before the interviews, potentially leading to more relaxed and insightful responses.

Additionally, the researcher could ask follow-up questions during the observation if anything needed clarification. After identifying the research problem and gathering relevant data with a variety of equipment, the researcher classified the data appropriately in order to thoroughly investigate it. The data were translated into English because they were originally collected in Amharic. The person who helped me to translate from Amharic in to English is an English and Amharic teacher with a degree in Amharic Language and Literature (2000 E.C.) and a minor in English. Back translation was also used to ensure accuracy. And they were transcribed and coded in accordance with the themes that emerged from the data because, as stated by (Dornyei, 2007), transcription was the first step in the data analysis process. The transcription is done manually.

3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2002:190-191), data analysis "should occur after the first data are obtained, and the initial analysis should decide the emphasis and tactics employed

in further data gathering." In essence, the methods are informed by the results. Following this approach, data analysis was conducted alongside data collection to guide the process.

Initial Analysis and Coding:

The initial data analysis began during data collection to identify gaps and seek relevant data while still within the research site. The collected data, consisting of observation sources like memos, recordings, and interview notes, underwent transcription, translation (if needed), coding, organization, and thematic analysis. Daily transcription of collected data served as the initial step in this research's data analysis process. Field notes were written and summarized after leaving the observation site, focusing on key areas like curriculum and pedagogical strategies used in the teaching-learning process. Based on daily findings and tentative interpretations, notes and questions were formulated.

Interview Data and Interpretation:

Informed consent was obtained from participants before recording any interview data. Following the interview, participants' responses were recorded on paper based on their relevance and applicability to the research. The final stage involved interpretation, which applied an inductive analytical process and reflection on the results. Thomas (2002) argues that the inductive approach provides a systematic and readily implementable set of procedures for qualitative data analysis, leading to valid and trustworthy conclusions.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), the most important rules for ethical issues in dissertations are as follows: Research participants should never be harmed in any way. Prioritizing the respectful treatment of study participants is crucial. Participants' full consent should be obtained prior to the study starting, and their privacy must be respected. The study data's confidentiality needs to be sufficiently safeguarded. Anonymity must be maintained for both research participants and organizations. It's critical to refrain from lying or inflating the aims and objectives of the research. All research-related communications should be transparent and honest; false information of any kind and biased reporting of source data findings are to be avoided.

Therefore, researchers have an obligation to act morally and professionally, as well as towards study participants, when conducting any kind of study. I obtained informed consent from the

participants, explaining the study's goals, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time. They were assured that the information they provide will be kept confidential. The study's goals were presented to participants before data collection began. The informed consent process also explained the use of tape recordings and photographs to preserve the data's originality, with their explicit permission obtained beforehand. Participants were identified by code rather than by name, guaranteeing anonymity for the researcher as well.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the educational program at Dima EOTC *Nebab Bet* and its implication on secular Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) practices. This chapter outlines the approach used to analyze the collected data and extract meaningful themes.

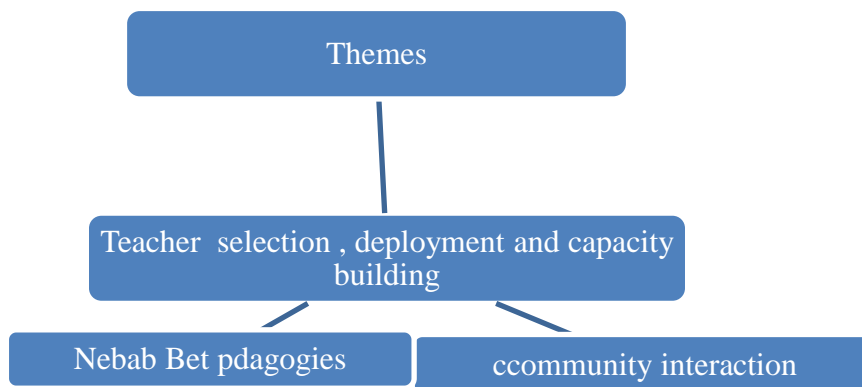
Employing a multi-method approach is essential for a comprehensive analysis. This study utilized interviews and observations, to gather data from diverse perspectives and sources (from teachers, priests and students). This approach enriches the understanding of the program and strengthens the credibility of the findings (Bagele, 2005).

An open coding system was used to categorize and identify recurring patterns within the data. This facilitates the identification of key themes and insights that can inform future research and practices related to secular ECCE.

Results

As indicated in the methodology, analysis was started by studying the nature of the data to identify basic analytical helpful to directly address the study's purpose and research questions.

Based on the research objectives, the collected data is organized into three main themes:



1. Demographic variable- to provide, analysis and findings a context.
2. *Nebab Bet* Pedagogies: This theme delves into the pedagogical approaches used at Dima *Nebab Bet*, encompassing subjects, teaching methods, disciplinary measures and how the

school deals with academic variations among students, assessment strategies, and promotion.

3. Teacher Selection, Deployment, and Capacity Building: This theme examines the processes of teacher selection and placement, along with strategies for enhancing their teaching skills.
4. School Community Interaction: This theme explores the interactions between the *Yeneta*, student and the broader community.

4.1. Demographics of the Participants

Table 1. Profiles of Research Participants

Position in <i>Nebab Bet</i> School	Numbers	Sex	Description
<i>Nebab bet Yeneta</i>	1	Male	<i>Nebab Bet</i> teacher
Experienced <i>Yeneta</i>	3	Male	Priests
Students	5	Male	Co-teacher and representative

A total of nine individuals participated in the study:

- Three experienced *Yeneta* priests
- One *Yeneta* teacher (*Nebab Bet* teacher)
- Five *Nebab Bet* students (co-teachers and representatives)

The three *Yeneta* priests bring a diverse range of knowledge and teaching experience to the study. They likely hold significant positions within the religious hierarchy.

The *Nebab Bet* teacher involved in the instruction has over ten years of experience in the program and is likely a young and energetic educator.

The five selected *Nebab Bet* students interviewed are young boys who also serve as assistant teachers (co-teachers) for the *Yeneta* priests.

Each participant was chosen purposively based on their position and experience, ensuring they were qualified to provide valuable insights into ECCE program.

The interview time was varied between 20 to 45 minutes, allowing participants to share their thoughts and experiences at a comfortable pace. According to the participant's schedule and

convenience, some interviews were conducted over a few days, enabling a more in-depth exploration of their thoughts and feelings. *Yenetas* and students showed enthusiasm to participate in the study. They generously shared their knowledge, understanding, and perspectives on the teaching process, providing valuable insights into the strengths of the current approach. The interviews also provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own learning processes, highlighting areas where they felt supported and challenged.

Theme 1

4.2. Teacher selection, deployment and capacity building

In *Nebab Bet* education, becoming a memehir (teacher) requires a lifetime of study. Those who want to teach in higher education institutions must enrol in the House of Commentaries (House of Books), where they will study church history, theology, law, and other subjects. The title "Memehir," which means "teacher" or "professor" in literal translation, is only granted to an individual who has successfully completed the highest level of education with a focus on one or two disciplines (Moges, 2024).

The respondents were asked how they choose, plan for the deployment of, and develop the capacity of teachers at Dima *Nebab Bet* School in order to determine the general procedures related to teacher selection, deployment, and capacity building.

Yeneta 2: In addition to traditional schooling, the instructor has also obtained his religious education through unofficial and community learning program. This demonstrates their devotion and passion to their work.

Yeneta 3: In my opinion, a competent *Nebab Bet* instructor ought to be knowledgeable about all of the church's doctrines, including *Nebab*, *Zema*, *Qene*, and *Metshaf Bet*. They ought to be able to relate to and mentor the students as well. All of these educational levels were studied by Dima *Nebab Bet* Instructor. He is an excellent teacher and father.

Yeneta added 1: We have a practice of selecting a student to assist the main teacher. This ensures that the values and teachings are passed on effectively even when the main teacher is not present.

Yeneta added 3: *Nebab Bet* teachers are capable educators and loving father figures. In addition to being able to relate to and mentor the students, he is informed about church teachings.

Yeneta added 1: We think that our teacher, Dima *Nebab Bet*, possesses these attributes, which guarantee our students receive the finest education possible.

Theme2:

4.3. Pedagogical strategies

4.3.1. Subjects

The types of subjects taught to students at Dima *Nebab Bet* School were one of the questions posed to the respondents in order to determine the school's overall subjects. Student 1: Our educational program, Dima *Nebab Bet*, has five stages that we progress through. From basic literacy to reading religious texts, it's a comprehensive program.

Student 2: The alphabet and number lesson was incredibly interesting, so I really enjoyed it. We counted and tapped letter shapes using materials like wood or grass.

Student 3: Reading and repeating the texts was difficult during the *Geez Nebab* stage, but it was rewarding once we finally got the hang of it. It was an amazing sensation.

Student 4: What really stuck with me, I think, was realizing the emotional aspects of *Wurd Nebab* and how they relate to church rituals. This reading style has a sadness yet sympathetic tone, which is examined in conjunction with the Geez reading. It is sometimes referred to as a ritual in the church. The most well-known song is sung during the crucifixion on Friday at approximately 11 p.m.

Student 1 added: But what really stood out to me was the moral education aspect of the program. We learned about values like respect for God, honoring elders, humility, and performing good deeds. It's amazing how much of an impact it's had on our lives.

Student 5 added: And then there's *Kum Nebab*, which is an advanced reading level. We learned how to read any book within the same recitation system, which was amazing. It opened up so many new possibilities for us.

4.3.2. Teaching method

Through observational analysis, it was evident that the teachers in the Dima *Nebab Bet* program primarily utilized group/peer learning and oral teaching as their teaching styles. The role of the students in these processes was observed to be significant, with students actively listening, speaking what they have heard, and then being tested on the given topic.

The teachers were noted for their efforts in encouraging student participation in both learning and teaching, with nominal recognition given to students who actively engaged in the processes. For instance, students were named after scholars of the early fathers, such as Gorgoriwos or Hriakos, as a form of acknowledgment for their participation and dedication. Additionally, students were observed revising previously learned content before daily classes, during ritual programs, and holiday ceremonies, demonstrating a commitment to reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of the teachings.

4.3.3. Discipline method

Through observation analysis, at Dima *Nebab Bet*, teachers use a unique approach. When students display bad behavior, they receive guidance using stories from holy books. This method goes beyond just correcting behavior. By weaving religious narratives into discipline, *Nebab Bet* aims to instill not only discipline but also fear of God, self-awareness, positive personalities, resilience, patience, curiosity, and passion for their chosen profession. This shows how religious education at *Nebab Bet* plays a significant role, not only in enhancing knowledge but also in fostering proper ethics and discipline in students. This shows how religious education at *Nebab Bet* plays a significant role, not only in enhancing knowledge but also in fostering proper ethics and discipline in students.

4.3.4. Handling of variations in academic performance

In academic treatment, said during an interview with student *Yeneta* that each student learns at a different pace. We have quick learners, intermediate learners, and learners who require a little more time. At the Dima *Nebab Bet* School, we modify our instruction to fit each student's performance. For example, we have students who excel in their studies quickly. With our system, they can move through the lessons more quickly, which keeps them motivated and engaged.

Students *Yeneta* added: On the other hand, we have students who may need a bit more time to understand the material. That's okay! Our system allows them to complete the lesson at their own pace, which helps build their confidence and reduces frustration. By tailoring our instruction to each student's performance, we're able to meet each student where they are. This approach has been incredibly effective in helping our students reach their full potential.

4.3.5. Assessment method

Through a combination of classroom observation and student interviews, it was revealed that the Dima *Nebab Bet* employs a daily, continuous assessment method focused on reading instruction.

This method utilizes a question-and-answer format to gauge student comprehension. Students' progress to the next lesson only after a thorough grasp of the current material is demonstrated. This daily assessment allows the instructor to monitor each student's performance and make informed decisions about their readiness for the following lesson.

Interestingly, student interviews highlighted a positive attitude fostered by this approach. Students reported that encountering difficulties on assessments doesn't lead to discouragement or boredom. They credited their teacher, *Yeneta*, with promoting perseverance through storytelling, emphasizing the message of "never giving up."

4.3.6. Promotion

It was discovered from the observation from Dima *Nebab Bet* that a student advances to the next level after mastering the topic. After completing all the courses, they will award the *Diquna* rank. Various procedures are done when they receive *Diquna*. Among them, fathers bless students by placing their hands on the students' heads; they will accept "*Sga wedemu*". Finally, they received a paper. The students would very happy when the *Diquna* is given.

Theme 3

4.4. The school community's interactions

To identify the overall community interactions at Dima *Nebab Bet* School, the respondents were asked how they express their interaction during lesson and out of lesson in achieving good learning and teaching environment. *Yeneta 1*: The teacher-student relationship here is incredibly special. The teachers have a deep affection and concern for their students, almost like a parent would for their child.

Yeneta 2: The teachers treat every student as if they're their own child. They feel a sense of fatherhood, and the students respond to that with love and respect. It's like the students look up to the teacher as a parent figure.

Yeneta 3: And it's amazing to see how this translates to their behavior. Students who learn with their *Yeneta* are more respectful, obedient, and humble because they see their teachers as authority figures. They also become more diligent in their studies because they know their teachers care about them.

Yeneta 1 added: One of the most striking examples of this is when the teachers take students on outings or trips. They don't separate themselves from the students, just like a mother wouldn't

separate herself from her child. This shows that the teachers truly see their students as children they've given birth to.

Yeneta 2 added: It's a remarkable relationship, and it's clear that the teachers are invested in their students' well-being and education. The students, in turn, respond with love, respect, and dedication to their studies.

Yeneta added 3: It's a truly unique and special environment that fosters strong bonds between teachers and students.

Student 1: I've noticed that we students have a very close relationship with the community. It's like we're part of a big family.

Student 2: our teachers always emphasize the importance of community involvement. For example, when we go on field trips or collect food from the community, we're encouraged to eat together and bond with the people we're helping.

Student 3: And it's not just about helping out, we're also expected to behave responsibly. If we misbehave, we'll get reprimanded. But if we're respectful and courteous, the community is very welcoming. Even when we see elderly people carrying things on the street, we're encouraged to greet them and offer help.

Student 1: During holidays, we have a special tradition where we visit each other's homes in the community. It's a great way to bond with our neighbors and feel like we're part of something bigger than ourselves.

Student 2: And what I love is that we're not just happy or sad, but we share in the community's emotions. We experience their joys and sorrows, which makes us feel like we're truly part of the community.

Student 3: It's like our teachers always say, "You're not just students, and you're part of the community." And I think that's what makes this place so special. We're not just students, we're children of the community, and we're expected to behave as such.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The interesting thing is that religious education focuses on how much they know and what kind of performance they develop; generally, it focuses on their ability. But secular education is based on age; that is, if a student is in the first grade at the age of 7, it is expected there will be a second class next year. The Ethiopian educational system, however, has not taken the reflect on and draw lessons from its own religious best practices. Taking note of this disparity, the study set out to evaluate Dima *Nebab Bet* education curriculum in order to make recommendations for improving the secular ECCE curriculum. In addition to being practical, affordable, and developmentally and culturally appropriate, the researcher attempted to produce lessons. The ideas come not from religious theory but from the actual *Nebab Bet* practice. The research results from the field Dima *Nebab bet* education suggested that the following lessons should be remembered to support the development of a responsive educational system based on local practices.

5.1. Teacher selection, deployment and capacity building

National policy framework (2010) states that credentials, experience, and a sincere desire to work with young children are important considerations when choosing teachers for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs. After being chosen, teachers are assigned to ECCE programs in accordance with their areas of expertise and the particular needs of the communities they work with. In order to guarantee the efficacy of Early Childhood Education (ECCE) programs, teachers are offered opportunities for ongoing capacity building through training and professional development, with the goal of improving their abilities in early childhood education and fostering a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of children.

Here are some Dima *Nebab Bet* implications for the ECCE program:

- Emphasis on nurturing and guidance: The Dima *Nebab Bet* teacher's role as a good father figure to the students suggests that the ECCE program values a nurturing and supportive environment, which is crucial for young children's social and emotional development.

- Importance of subject matter expertise: *Dima Nebab Bet* teachers have expertise in church teachings, including *Nebab*, *Zema*, *Qene*, and *Metshaf*. It implies that the ECCE program places a strong emphasis on teachers having knowledge in ECCE.
- Focus on character development: The *Dima Nebab Bet* teacher's role as a good father figure implies a focus on character development and moral guidance, which are essential for children's social-emotional development and lifelong learning.
- Need for trained and qualified teachers: The emphasis on subject matter expertise implies that the ECCE program requires teachers who are trained and qualified in early childhood education.

Overall, these implications suggest that the ECCE program values a holistic approach to early childhood education, emphasizing not only academic knowledge but also character development, nurturing, and guidance.

5.2. Pedagogical strategies

5.2.1. Subjects

Ethiopia's curricula place a strong emphasis on the holistic development of students, fostering their mental and social-emotional growth in addition to knowledge acquisition. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) is becoming more popular. The curriculum emphasises learning through play, creating an engaging and dynamic atmosphere. Through exploration and discovery, it seeks to enhance a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical abilities (MOE, 2010) (USAID, 2024).

Implications of *Dima Nebab Bet* for ECCE education.

- Structured and organized approach: The classification of subjects and the use of a consistent approach on *Dima Nebab Bet* to teaching help students understand concepts without confusion. This structured approach has implications for core learning, as it enables students to focus on one topic at a time.
- Gradual progression: The *Dima Nebab Bet* lessons progression from easy to hard helps students develop their reading skills gradually. This approach has implications for ECCE education, as it acknowledges the importance of gradual skill development in children.
- Integrated learning: in *Dima Nebab Bet* there is a method of teaching through integration of numbers and letters, is an innovative approach to learning. This integrated learning has

implications for ECCE education, as it recognizes the importance of connecting different skills and concepts.

Overall, these points highlight the unique approach to education in the ECCE program, which emphasizes structure, Gradual progression, and integrated learning. These approaches have implications for ECCE education, emphasizing the importance of gradual skill development, and integrated learning.

5.2.2. Teaching method

The National Policy Framework (2010) states that play-based learning is the main teaching strategy used in Ethiopia's Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs to improve the educational experiences of the young students. For the best learning outcomes, it is imperative that teachers emphasize the use of the mother tongue or local language in their interactions with students (Belay, 2018).

Here are some key takeaways from the *Nebab Bet* that can be incorporated into an ECCE program:

- Dima Nebab Bet offers group and peer learning: Implementing group and peer learning activities in an ECCE program can enhance collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills among young children. Encouraging children to work together in small groups to discuss and share their learning can promote a sense of teamwork and mutual support.
- There is oral instruction and student participation in Dima *Nebb Bet*: Emphasizing oral teaching methods and providing opportunities for children to actively participate in the learning process can enhance their communication skills and confidence. Encouraging children to listen, speak, and share their thoughts can help them develop their language abilities and express themselves effectively.
- Recognition and Naming students are present in Dima *Nebb Bet*: Recognizing and celebrating student participation and achievement in the classroom can boost children's motivation and self-esteem. In an ECCE program, educators can implement nominal recognition strategies such as giving children special titles or names related to their learning achievements.
- There is learning reinforcement and revision in Dima *Nebb Bet*: Incorporating regular revision sessions and opportunities for children to revisit previously learned content can

help reinforce their understanding and retention of key concepts. Integrating revision activities into daily routines, ritual programs, and holiday ceremonies can create a structured and consistent learning environment for young children.

By incorporating these teaching methods and practices inspired by *Nebab Bet* into an ECCE program, educators can create a dynamic and interactive learning experience for young children. By promoting collaboration, active participation, recognition of achievements, and revision of learning, educators can support children's holistic development and learning outcomes in an engaging and culturally enriching setting.

5.2.3. Discipline method

Ethiopian children are frequently disciplined both physically and psychologically, with beatings being the most common method. Regulations that forbid emotional and physical punishment in schools have not been sufficiently implemented, so children continue to receive this kind of discipline. The ineffective implementation of policies and legal codes indicates the need for more significant efforts to protect children from violence and ensure the government fulfills its obligations (Mulatie, 2014).

Experiences

- The use of reward and punishment techniques at Dima *Nebab Bet* aligns with ECCE principles of maintaining a structured learning environment. Balancing discipline and positive reinforcement is essential for motivating students effectively.
- Utilizing stories from holy books for guidance in addressing student behavior fosters moral lessons and self-awareness. This method helps students develop resilience, patience, and positive personalities, contributing to their holistic development.
- The emphasis on fear of God, self-awareness, and positive character traits at *Nebab Bet* is commendable. Religious education plays a vital role in instilling ethical values and discipline in students, enhancing their overall growth.
- Religious education, as observed at *Nebab Bet*, not only imparts knowledge but also nurtures ethical values and discipline in students. Incorporating religious teachings helps students understand moral principles and apply them in their behavior.

- The approach to discipline and moral education at dima *Nebab Bet* reflects a holistic and values-based approach to teaching and learning. By integrating religious teachings and guidance into daily practices, students can develop important character traits and ethical values.

In summary, the discipline method observed at Dima *Nebab Bet*, which includes a combination of reward and punishment techniques, guidance from holy books, and religious education, aligns with ECCE principles by promoting holistic development, social-emotional growth, ethical values, a positive learning environment, and cultural relevance. Teachers can effectively support students' overall development and well-being by connecting these practices with ECCE principles.

5.2.4. Assessment

In Ethiopia, play-based activities, informal assessments, and observation are used in tandem to assess children's development in early childhood education. These techniques are used by educators and carers to track kids' development and pinpoint areas that require assistance. To make sure kids are ready for elementary school, the emphasis is on holistic development, which includes cognitive, social, emotional, and physical components. To effectively support children's learning and development, the Ministry of Education sets guidelines and supervises the assessment process (Tegegnto & Getahun, 2015).

The need for standardized assessment instruments and guidelines to guarantee consistency and accuracy across various settings is one of the challenges facing Ethiopia's early childhood education assessment methods. Finding a balance between formal and informal assessment methods is another difficulty in accurately capturing children's whole development. In the ECCE sector, another major challenge is making sure that assessments are sensitive to the diverse backgrounds of children and families and relevant from a cultural standpoint.

Here are some key points that can be applied to a preschool from Dima *Nebab Bet* assessment system program:

- Performance-based assessment is the foundation of Dima *Nebab Bet* assessment process: Integrate performance-based tasks and projects that allow children to showcase their abilities, creativity, and problem-solving capabilities in authentic contexts.

- Dima *Nebab Bet* employs reflection and feedback in their assessment process: Incorporate feedback mechanisms and reflection activities to empower children to assess their progress, set goals, and cultivate a growth mindset.
- They provide a brief topic for assessment in Dima *Nebab Bet*: Break down assessments into smaller topics, allowing children to gradually build their knowledge and reducing the risk of boredom.
- In Dima *Nebab Bet* student assess based on Understanding: Focus on assessing understanding rather than just grades, which can help reduce emotional stress and promote self-confidence.
- Ongoing Assessment is used in Dima *Nebab Bet*: Implement ongoing assessment methods to evaluate children's progress day by day, rather than quarterly or annually. This can help identify areas where children need additional support and provide targeted interventions.
- Dima *Nebab Bet* does not have grading: Consider adopting a non-graded approach to assessment, which can help reduce competition and promote a sense of equality among children.
- Cultural and Collaborative Assessment: Incorporate cultural and collaborative assessment practices that value diverse perspectives and promote teamwork and communication.

By incorporating these assessment methods into a preschool program, educators can promote a more comprehensive and supportive approach to assessment that focuses on children's growth, development, and well-being.

5.2.5. Promotion

Promotion in Ethiopian ECCE is based on ongoing evaluation and strives for comprehensive development. But inconsistent instruction due to a lack of standards puts kids at risk of being unfairly held back or advanced. For transitions to go smoothly, culturally appropriate promotion guidelines and accurate assessments must be developed (Belay, 2018).

From this promotion method of *Nebab Bet* to Ecce Program, several key experiences were taken:

- Students advance through the Dima *Nebab Bet* levels according to their understanding: Students must have a good understanding of the material before moving to the next class, which implies that secular education should also prioritize understanding over mere passing.

- Rewarding hard work: The promotion process in Dima *Nebab Bet* education emphasizes the importance of hard work and perseverance. Students understand that if they work hard, they will achieve their goals, which can be a valuable lesson for children.
- Promoting motivation: The text implies that the promotion process in Dima *Nebab Bet* education motivates students to learn and improve. This can be achieved in secular education by recognizing and rewarding children's achievements and progress.

Overall, the promotion process in Dima *Nebab Bet* education emphasizes the importance of understanding, hard work, and motivation. By incorporating these elements into secular education, educators can promote a positive and supportive learning environment that encourages children to strive for excellence.

5.2.6. Academic treatment

Personalized learning strategies are used in schools to address student variances in academic performance. These strategies are designed to meet the needs of individual students. More support networks, such as mentoring, counseling, and tutoring, are established to help students improve their academic performance. Schools can modify their teaching strategies and intervention strategies to better support students at varying achievement levels by using data analysis to find trends and patterns in academic performance.

Taking into account that students at Dima *Nebab Bet* School receive education in accordance with their performance experiences, particularly in the preschool program, the following implications and strategies can be considered for providing personalized and tailored education for preschool children:

- Employ Individualized Learning Plans (ELPs) as a Dima *Nebab Bet*: Creating individualized learning plans for each child based on their performance experiences can help cater to their unique strengths, needs, and interests. By identifying each child's learning style, and preferences, teachers can design personalized activities, challenges, and goals to support their development and learning progress in the preschool program.
- Dima *Nebab Bet* use Differentiated Instruction: Implementing differentiated instruction strategies can allow teachers to adapt their teaching methods, materials, and assessments to meet the diverse learning needs of children. By offering varied instructional approaches, grouping options, and assessment methods, teachers can support children

with different performance experiences and ensure that each child receives appropriate support and challenges in the preschool program.

- *Dima Nebab Bet* use Ongoing Assessment and Feedback: Regularly assessing children's progress and providing constructive feedback based on their performance experiences can help teachers track their growth, adjust instructional strategies, and set new learning goals. By using formative assessment techniques, observation, and feedback loops, teachers can support each child's development and continuously monitor their achievements in the preschool program.

By implementing these strategies and considerations, a preschool program can effectively provide personalized and tailored education for children based on their performance experiences, fostering individual growth, engagement, and achievement in early childhood learning.

5.3. Interaction of school community

The national framework (2010) states that by offering necessary services and fostering safe environments, the school community plays a critical role in promoting holistic child development. It defends children's rights, gathers resources, and pushes for the programs that are required to improve their general welfare. Furthermore, the community assists parents with child-rearing, moral and spiritual upbringing, and meeting the needs of underprivileged children in the neighborhood. It oversees and starts programs, assists carers, and fosters children's development in a secure and caring atmosphere through community-based services.

In addition to imparting academic knowledge, teachers also play the role of a parent figure to their students. A teacher's role should extend beyond simply teaching material from books to include assisting students in the development of fundamental character traits. This is accomplished by the teacher modeling good behavior for their students and encouraging them to imitate it through consistent interactions (Girma Amare, 1967:8). With the teacher providing for the students, monitoring their development, and serving as a father figure during their time in school, the teacher-student bond is so strong that it resembles a family. The teacher is able to mentor, support, and advise their students because of this loving relationship.

The interaction of the school community in *Dima Nebab Bet* programs can have a significant impact on the educational experience of young children. Here are some implications:

- In *Dima Nebab Bet* Relationship between Teachers and Children school students have a good relationship with teachers; they are not afraid to ask questions if they don't

understand the lessons. Students have a relationship with a teacher like a mother and father, so they feel like home and reduce the stress on the child for being away from home.

- If students have a good relationship with each other, they develop social interaction skills from an early age. It means that when they start working, they don't have any difficulty in communicating with people and doing their work well.

In ECCE programs, fostering positive relationships between teachers and children can lead to: Increased confidence and willingness to ask questions, reduced stress and anxiety and improved communication and social skills. By promoting a positive school community, ECCE programs can create a supportive and inclusive environment that benefits young children's educational and social development.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMERY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an explanation of the research's summary, conclusions, and recommendations of its findings.

6.1. Summery

This study evaluates the impact of EOC Dima *Nebab Bet* on secular ECCE education. Qualitative research methods were used, with data gathered from primary sources such as observation and interviews. Nine respondents were selected using purposeful sampling, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. The research explores the practices of Dima *Nebab Bet* in Dima Giworgis, Amhara region, and their relevance to preschool programs in Ethiopia. The study seeks to understand how *Nebab Bet* has implications for preschool programs and how its methods can enhance early childhood education in the country. It offers insights into teaching techniques, curriculum, social interactions, and community involvement within *Nebab Bet* and suggests how these practices can be adapted and implemented in other Ethiopian preschools. The findings aim to improve the quality of preschool education in Ethiopia and benefit young children.

6.2. Conclusion

Based on study results, the following conclusion was made:

- The research reveals that Dima *Nebab Bet* education employs group/peer learning and oral teaching methods, where students play a significant role in the learning process. Teachers encourage student participation, provide feedback, and recognize students who actively engage in the learning process. Students also reinforce their knowledge through revising previously learned content during daily classes, ritual programs, and holiday ceremonies
- The study found that Dima *Nebab Bet* education uses a daily, continuous assessment method focused on reading instruction. Students' progress to the next lesson only after demonstrating a thorough grasp of the current material. This approach fosters a positive

attitude in students, who report that encountering difficulties on assessments does not lead to discouragement or boredom.

- The research indicates that becoming a *memehir* (teacher) in *Nebab Bet* education requires a lifetime of study and dedication to the Orthodox Church's teachings. Teachers are selected based on their commitment to the Church's values and their ability to implement them in the classroom. Concerning the development of capacity, the church does not provide training, but its teachers possess experience in both levels of education.

6.3. Recommendations

- The government and all religious schools should start and fund this kind of research on indigenous knowledge because it is significant to Ethiopia and one approach to improve the availability and quality of early childhood education.
- Emphasize culturally responsive teaching: Ensure that teaching materials, activities, and approaches are culturally relevant and reflect the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students in Ethiopia. Incorporate local language, traditions, and values into the curriculum to create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment.
- In preschool education in Ethiopia, it is important to provide a balanced and comprehensive curriculum that addresses the developmental needs and interests of young students.
- Curriculum developers' and designers education policies should include some indigenous knowledge or indigenous educational practices during the development of curriculum. Because the education system of religion is culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate.
- Assessment in preschool education plays a vital role in understanding children's progress, identifying their strengths and areas for improvement, and informing instructional decisions. By using a variety of assessment methods that are child-centered, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate, preschools in Ethiopia can effectively assess children's progress, tailor instruction to meet their individual needs, and support their overall development and learning journey.
- Passing from one level of education to another is an important transition in a child's academic journey. In the context of preschool education in Ethiopia, here are some recommendations for methods to facilitate smooth transitions between levels:

Collaborative Planning: Orientation and Familiarization: Individual Transition Plans: Transition Activities: Parental Involvement: Social-Emotional Support: and Assessment and Evaluation; by implementing these methods and strategies for transitioning children from preschool to primary school in Ethiopia, educators can create a supportive and nurturing environment that ensures a successful and positive start to children's formal education journey.

- Handling academic variation in preschool is important to ensure that every child receives the support and resources they need to thrive and reach their full potential. Here are some recommendations for addressing academic variation in a preschool setting in Ethiopia: differentiated instruction: small group instruction and individualized learning plans: by implementing these recommendations and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment, preschool educators in Ethiopia can effectively address academic variations, promote equity and excellence, and ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed and thrive in their early learning experiences.
- Building strong school-community interactions is essential for creating a supportive and enriching environment for preschool children in Ethiopia.

6.4. Recommendation for further research

The researcher encourages them to invest their time on this area;

- 1, The lifestyle of students; Things like food, clothing, shelter, etc
- 2, What is the result of children studying away from the family? What is the positive effect?
- 3, Classroom material
- 4, Classroom organization and the like.....

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8, APPENDICE

Appendix A

Thesis title: Orthodox Church *Nebab Bet* education and its implications to secular ECCE program in Ethiopia: A case study at Dima *Nebab Bet*, Amhara Region.

A master's thesis in early childhood education, Addis Ababa University

An interview given to the reading house school instructors and the church administrator

Dear Subjects of the Study, The main objective of this research is to collect information in order to investigate Ethiopian Orthodox reading house schools and assess the effects of this practise on children's secular pre-school education. I respectfully ask for your assistance in providing information based on your experience.

1. Personal information

1. Please introduce yourself

Your age: -----

Education Status: -----

Position; -----

Your work experience; -----

2. Interview date: -----

3. Location of the interview: -----

I. The main points of the interview

A/ Regarding the reading school's objectives and subjects

1. Is there a curriculum for reading house education?
2. Where does the curriculum come from?
3. How is the reading education at school structured?
4. How pupils are taught moral and ethical principles?
5. Does the study of morality have a set curriculum?
6. What techniques do you employ while instructing morality?
7. What methods do you employ to evaluate student behavior?
8. What is the main purpose of this reading house? What is the goal of this level?

9. How do students come to this reading house? Is there an entry requirement?
10. How long does reading at home school take?
11. What time will the lesson be given?

B, In terms of instructional strategies and grouping

1. How does the educational process perform at Reading House? What instructional strategies do you employ? The secret to teaching is...
2. What are the students' and teachers' roles? Student's diligence?
3. Does it have a student group? If so, how will they be arranged?
4. Do you present the lesson using any materials? What kinds of tools do you use if you do?
5. How do you encourage your pupils to absorb knowledge and engage in the teaching process? What strategies do you use?
6. How do students help each other during the learning process?
7. How does Reading House handle the diversity of its students during the teaching process?

C, Regarding the promotion and assessment

1. What methods do you use?
2. How much do students participate in the process?
3. What are the criteria for moving from one level to another?
4. How often do they take the assessment? Does he have a schedule?
5. After reaching what level of education, do they move on to another level of education?

D, Regarding teacher selection, deployment, and capacity building.

1. How are kids' teachers chosen?
2. What are the criteria for becoming a teacher?
3. Does a teacher take certain types of training before becoming a teacher? If so, what kind of training?

Appendices B

Thesis title: Orthodox Church *Nebab Bet* education and its implications to secular preschool program in Ethiopia: A case study at Dima *Nebab Bet*, Amhara Region.

A master's thesis in early childhood education, Addis Ababa University

Interview for students

Objective: The purpose of this study is to comprehend *Nebab Bet* early childhood education practices and discover implications for secular early childhood education. As a result, this interview guide has been created to gather information from students. Please be aware that your name will not appear in any part of the report and that the information you provide will only be used for the study's purposes. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to take part.

1, General Information

Name of the center _____

Age _____

Place of birth _____

Date of the interview _____

Place of interview _____

II. Interview questions

1. Would you mind introducing yourself? (Name, duration, religious knowledge)
2. How long have you attended this school?
3. How is the program (yearly, daily schedule?)
4. How does your teacher assess your performance? Have you participated in the assessment?
5. How often do you do an assessment?
6. How do you know when you advance to the next level?
7. Could you explain the difficulties you encounter during the teaching-learning process?
8. If you have additional ideas, suggestions, comments, and questions, you can raise them

Appendices C

Thesis title: Orthodox Church *Nebab Bet* education and its implications to secular preschool program in Ethiopia: A case study at Dima *Nebab Bet*, Amhara Region.

A master's thesis in early childhood education, Addis Ababa University

Observation Guidelines for the Researcher

Gubae Bets Name _____

Date of Observation _____

Start Time _____

End Time _____

Class/Topic _____

Instructional Approaches and Activities

1. The teaching strategies employed by the instructors
2. The involvement of students in the teaching-learning process;
3. The roles of instructors and students;
4. Teacher-student interaction;
5. Students' motivational strategies;
6. Assessment strategies/techniques
7. Interactions between students and teachers

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የትምህርት እና ሥነ-ባህሪ ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ
የቅድመ ልጅ እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ክፍል
ለአብነት ትምህርት ቤት የንባብ ቤት መምህራን የቀረበ ቃለ መጠይቅ

ወደ የዚህ ጥናት ተሳታፊዎች የዚህ ጥናት ዋና አላማ የጥንታዊው የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ የአብነት ትምህርት ቤቶች (የንባብ ቤት ትምህርት ቤቶች) የመማር ማስተማር ሂደት ምን እንደሚመስል ለማጥናት የሚያስችል መረጃዎችን ለመሰብሰብ እና የንባብ የአብነት ትምህርት ቤቶች የመማር ማስተማር ሂደት ለአስኳላ ለሀጻናት ትምህርት ምን እንማራለን የሚለውን ለማመልከት ያለመ ጥናት በመሆኑ እርስዎ የንባብ ቤት የአብነት ትምህርት ቤት በመምህርነት እያገለገሉ ያሉ በመሆኑ በመማር ማስተማሩ ያለዎትን ልምድ መሰረት በማድረግ መረጃ በመስጠት ትብብር እንዲያደርጉ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

I. ግላዊ መረጃ

- 1. እባክዎን እራስዎን ያስተዋወቁ: -----
 እድሜዎ: -----
 የትምህርት ሁኔታ: -----
 የስራ ልምድዎን ; -----
- 2. ቃለ መጠይቁ ቀን:-----
- 3. ቃለ መጠይቁ የተደረገበት ቦታ:-----

II. የቃለ መጠይቁ ዋና ዋና ነጥቦች

ሀ/ . የንባብ ትምህርት ቤቱን ዓላማዎች እና የትምህርት አይነቶችን በተመለከተ

- 1. የንባብ ቤት ትምህርት የራሱ የሆነ ስርአተ ትምህርት አለው ወይ?
- 2. ስርአተ ትምህርቱ ከምን ከምን የተቀዳ ነው?
- 3. የንባብ ቤት ትምህርት በምን መልኩ የተደራጀ ነው?
- 4. የዚህ የንባብ ቤት ዋና ዓላማ ምንድን ነው? የዚህ ደረጃ ግብ ምንድን ነው?
- 5. ተማሪዎች የሞራል እና የስነምግባር ትምህርቶችን እንዴት ይማራሉ?
- 6. የሥነ ምግባር ጥናት የተቀመጠ ሥርዓተ ትምህርት አለው?

7. ተማሪዎች ያልተገባ ባህሪ በሚያሳዩበት ጊዜ እሱን ለማስተካከል ምን ምን ዘዴዎች ይጠቀማሉ?
8. ሥነ ምግባርን በሚያስተምሩበት ጊዜ ምን ዓይነት ዘዴዎችን ይጠቀማሉ?
9. የተማሪን ስነ ምግባር ለመገምገም ምን ዓይነት ዘዴዎች ይጠቀማሉ?

ለ/ የመማር ማስተማር ሂደቱን ፤ የማስተማር ስነ ዘዴ በተመለከተ

1. በንባብ ቤት የመማር ማስተማር ሂደቱ ምን ይመስላል?
2. ትምህርቱን በምን በምን ስነ ዘዴዎች ያቀርባሉ? የማስተማሪያው ምንድን ነው? የመምህሩና የተማሪዎች ሚና? የተማሪዎች ትጋት? ወዘተ
3. ትምህርቱን ሲያቀርቡ መርጃ መሳሪያዎችን ይጠቀማሉ ወይ? ከተጠቀሙስ ምን ምን ዓይነት እቃዎች ይጠቀማሉ ?
4. በመማር ማስተማሩ ሂደት ተማሪዎችዎን እንዴት ያበረታታሉ? ምን ዓይነት ስልቶችን ይጠቀማሉ?
5. እርስዎ ከተማሪዎችዎ ጋር ያለዎት ግንኙነት ምን ይመስላል? ተማሪዎች እርስ በርሳቸው?
6. በንባብ ቤት የተማሪዎች ልዩነት እንዴት ይስተናገዳል?
7. ተማሪዎች በ ቡድን ይደራጃሉ ወይ ? ካለ ምን ዓይነት ቡድን ይሰጠችዋል?
8. ተማሪዎች እርስ በእርስ በክፍል ውስጥ እንዴት ይረዳዳሉ?

ለ/ ከአንዱ ትምህርት ደረጃ ወደ አንዱ የትምህርት ደረጃ ሽግግር እና ፈተና አሰጣጥ በተመለከተ

1. ምን ዓይነት ዘዴዎችን ይጠቀማሉ?
2. ተማሪዎች በሂደቱ ውስጥ ምን ያህል ይሳተፋሉ?
3. ከአንድ ደረጃ ወደ ሌላ ለመሸጋገር መመዘኛዎቹ ምንድን ናቸው? በየ ስንት ጊዜ ፈተና ይሰጣችሁዋል ?
4. ምን የትምህርት ደረጃ ላይ ከደረሱ በኋላ ነው ወይም ምን ካወቁ በኋላ ነው ወደ ሌላኛው የትምህርት ደረጃ የሚዘዋወሩት ?

መ, ስለ መምህራን ምርጫ, ምደባ እና አቅም ግንባታ

1. የልጆች አስተማሪዎች እንዴት ይመረጣሉ?
2. አስተማሪ ለመሆን ምን መመዘኛዎች አሉ?

3. መምህራን አስተማሪዎች ከመሆናቸው በፊት የተወሰነ ዓይነት ሥልጠና ይወስዳሉ ወይ? የሚወስዱ ከሆነ ምን ዓይነት ስልጠና ነው የሚወስዱት?

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የትምህርት እና ሥነ-ባህሪ ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ

የቅድመ ልጅ እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ክፍል

ለአብነት ትምህርት ቤት የንባብ ቤት ተማሪዎች የቀረበ ቃለ መጠይቅ

ለተማሪዎች የቀረበ ቃለ መጠይቅ

ዓላማ:- ወደ የዚህ ጥናት ተሳታፊዎች የዚህ ጥናት ዋና አላማ የጥንታዊው የኢትዮጵያ ኦርቶዶክስ ተዋህዶ የአብነት ትምህርት ቤቶች (የንባብ ቤት ትምህርት ቤቶች) የመማር ማስተማር ሂደት ምን እንደሚመስል ለማጥናት የሚያስችል መረጃዎችን ለመሰብሰብ እና የንባብ የአብነት ትምህርት ቤቶች የመማር ማስተማር ሂደት ለአስኳላ ለህጻናት ትምህርት ምን እንደሚሰጥ የሚለውን ለማመልከት ያለመ ጥናት ነው ። ስለዚህ ይህ የቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ ከተማሪዎች መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ተዘጋጅቷል ። እባክዎን የቀረበው መረጃ ለጥናቱ ዓላማ ብቻ እንደሚውል እና ስምዎ በሪፖርቱ ውስጥ በማንኛውም ክፍል ውስጥ እንደማይጠቀስ ልናረጋግጥልዎ እንወዳለን። ለመሳተፍ ፈቃደኛ ስለሆናችሁ በጣም እናመሰግናለን።

1, አጠቃላይ መረጃ

የማዕከሉ ስም _____

ዕድሜ _____

የተወለደበት ቦታ _____

የቃለ መጠይቁ ቀን _____

የቃለ መጠይቁ ቦታ _____

ቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች

1. ራስዎን ማስተዋወቅ ይፈልጋሉ? (ስም፣ ቆይታ)
2. በዚህ ትምህርት ቤት ምን ያህል ጊዜ ተምረዋል?
3. መርሃ ግብሩ እንዴት ነው (ዓመታዊ፣ ዕለታዊ መርሃ ግብር?)
4. የኔታ ክፍል ውስጥ የሚጠቀሙበትን የመማር ማስተማር ዘዴ ንገረኝ?
5. መምህራችሁ ማወቃችሁን እንዴት ይገመግማሉ? ምን አይነት ዘዴ ይጠቀማሉ?

6. ፈተና በየ ስንት ጊዜ ይሰጣል ?
7. በመማር ማስተማር ሂደት ውስጥ የሚያጋጥሙትን ፈተናዎች ልትነግረኝ ትችላለህ?
8. ተጨማሪ ሃሳቦች፣ ጥቆማዎች፣ አስተያየቶች እና ጥያቄዎች ካሉህ ማንሳት ትችላለህ።

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የትምህርት እና ሥነ-ባህሪ ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ
የቅድመ ልጅ እንክብካቤ እና ትምህርት ክፍል

ለተመራማሪው የምልከታ መመሪያዎች

የጉባኤ ቤት ስም _____

የምልከታ ቀን _____

የመጀመሪያ ጊዜ _____

የመጨረሻ ጊዜ _____

ክፍል/ርዕስ _____

የማስተማሪያ አቀራረቦችን እና እንቅስቃሴዎች

1. በአስተማሪዎች የሚቀሙት የማስተማር ስልቶች;
2. በመማር ማስተማር ሂደት ውስጥ የተማሪዎች ተሳትፎ;
3. የመምህራን እና የተማሪዎች ሚና;
4. የአስተማሪ-ተማሪ መስተጋብር;
5. የተማሪዎች የማበረታቻ ስልቶች;
6. የግምገማ ስልቶች/ቴክኒኮች
7. በተማሪዎች እና በአስተማሪዎች መካከል ያሉ ግንኙነቶች

Appendices D

Alphabets and Geez Numerals

Alphabets ረደል

1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
ሀ	ሁ	ሂ	ሃ	ሄ	ሀ	ሆ
ለ	ሉ	ሊ	ላ	ሌ	ለ	ሎ
ሐ	ሑ	ሒ	ሓ	ሔ	ሐ	ሑ
መ	ሙ	ሚ	ማ	ሚ	ም	ሞ
ሠ	ሡ	ሢ	ሣ	ሤ	ሠ	ሡ
ረ	ሩ	ሪ	ራ	ሪ	ር	ሪ
ሰ	ሱ	ሲ	ሳ	ሴ	ሰ	ሱ
ሸ	ሹ	ሺ	ሻ	ሼ	ሸ	ሹ
ቀ	ቁ	ቂ	ቃ	ቄ	ቀ	ቁ
በ	ቡ	ቢ	ባ	ቤ	በ	ቡ
ተ	ቱ	ቲ	ታ	ቴ	ተ	ቱ
ቸ	ቹ	ቺ	ቻ	ቼ	ቸ	ቹ
ኀ	ኁ	ኂ	ኃ	ኄ	ኀ	ኁ
ኆ	ኇ	ኈ	኉	ነ	ኆ	ኇ
ከ	ኩ	ኲ	ኳ	ኴ	ከ	ኩ
ኸ	ኹ	ኺ	ኻ	ኼ	ኸ	ኹ
ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ	ወ
ዐ	ዑ	ዒ	ዓ	ዔ	ዐ	ዑ
ዘ	ዙ	ዚ	ዛ	ዜ	ዘ	ዙ
የ	ዮ	ዸ	ዹ	ዺ	የ	ዮ
ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ	ደ
ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ	ገ
ጠ	ጡ	ጢ	ጣ	ጤ	ጠ	ጡ
ጪ	ጫ	ጬ	ጭ	ጮ	ጪ	ጫ
ፀ	ፁ	፲	፳	፴	ፀ	ፁ
፶	፷	፸	፹	፺	፶	፷
፼	፽	፾	፿	፻	፼	፽

Geez numerals

፩ ፪ ፫ ፬ ፭ ፮ ፯ ፰ ፱ ፲

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

፳ ፴ ፵ ፶ ፷ ፸ ፹ ፺ ፻

20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

፱፻

10,000