



Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

**Factors Influencing the Implementation of Learning Through Play in
Preprimary School Classrooms and its Contribution to Children's Learning
in Gog Woreda of Gambella, Regional State**

By:

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DECLARATION

I declare that Factors Influencing the Implementation of Learning Through Play in Preprimary Classroom and its Contribution to Children's Learning in Gog Woreda in Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia is my own work and that all the sources that I have cited have been indicated in the reference section.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ECCE:	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE:	Early Childhood Education
FGDS:	Focus Group Discussions
EFA:	Education for All
FDRE:	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
MOE:	Ministry of Education
AAU:	Addis Ababa University
ECCD:	Early childhood Care and Development
CEBS:	College of Education and Behavioral Studies
AWCRC:	African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child
SNNPRS:	Southern Nations Nationalities and People Regional States
LEGO:	Leg Godt

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate factors influencing the implementation of learning through play in preprimary school classroom and its contribution to children's learning in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda in Gambella, Ethiopia. Qualitative design was employed. Three governmental preprimary schools were selected through purposive sampling technique. And all teachers who taught in preprimary school classrooms were also selected purposively as the participants of this study. Data collection tools were interviews, Focus Group discussion and observations. To analyze the data, thematic analysis method was employed and the major themes emerged were: Activity for enjoyment, Physical and Social Activities, Recreational with less purpose and Teacher's uncertainty and Preprimary classroom accessibility and Quality. The findings revealed that majority of teachers have less knowledge of teaching in ECCE center. The findings also showed that absence of teachers training in ECCE and lack of enough and relevant play materials for children added to lack of time allocation to classroom play activities were the prominent factors impeding the implementation of learning through play and its contribution to children's learning. In order to improve the current challenges and practices of learning through play in preprimary school classrooms. The following measures need to be carried out in the studied area in Gog Woreda of Gambella in Anywaa Zone: qualified teachers in ECCE have key role in supporting early childhood learning. Therefore, to conceptualize and integrate learning through play in preprimary school classrooms, preprimary school teachers need appropriate training and qualifications. Like professionals in any field, early childhood educators develop their skills through training.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Early childhood is an important period, in which children take important steps in social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive developmental areas. Likewise, play is a part of the preschool education institutes' daily routine and inseparable part of the activities as they play an important part in the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children (Giren, 2016). Numerous studies have identified play as the leading activity in accelerating young children's cognitive, emotional and social development (Mirts, 2014; Giren, 2016; Wenner, 2009; Brock, Dodds, & Olusoga, 2013).

Play has long been valued by early childhood education communities and increasingly regarded as integral to high quality provision and practice (Moyles, 2005; Wood & Attfield, 2005; Wood, 2007). However, the definition of play has been difficult to describe because of its complexity in its nature (Stegelin, 2005; Moyles, 2005).

Sturges, (2003); Brewer, (2004); and Moyles, (2005) allow us to understand the complex nature of children's play. They described play as the essential venue in which children interact within their environment through varied situations including people and materials; play allows children to make meaning of their world. It has been established that in early childhood, play is the essential venue in which children interact within their environment including, situations, materials and peers - all of which add to the construction of meaning of their world (Mirts, 2014).

Regardless of the difficulty faced by many researchers to come up with one accepted definition of play, there appeared to be broad agreement among theorists coming from multidisciplinary perspectives that play makes an important contribution to children development. Play has always been viewed as beneficial to the learning and development of the child (Sutton, 2008).

Many researchers mentioned the benefits and the contribution of play to children's development. Both Piaget and Vygotsky in Bokony, Partrick & Fortney (2009) emphasize the skills development that occurs through play. Berk, (1994), Marbina, Church & Tayler (2011) their studies also shows the contribution of play in many ways. They found that play stimulates

children's brain, fosters creativity, problem solving, reasoning, social knowledge and language skills. Learning through play supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills in an integrated approach, while also cultivating children's social, emotional, physical and creative skills (Wenner, 2009).

Play is a legitimate right of childhood, representing a crucial aspect of children's physical, intellectual and social development. It helps children learn and build skills that lay the foundation for learning to read and write (Peter, Smith, & Goldsmith, 2013).

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child articulated the importance of play for every child that children have the right to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child.

At this juncture, it should be noted that the above introduction focus on the contribution of play linked to caregivers and early childhood teachers as they take on the intermediary roles to nurture children's play, setting the stage and providing the environments to harvest these benefits. Researchers have stressed the importance of teachers' roles in providing children with a quality educational setting (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Play is crucial for better normal physical, social, emotional and cognitive development in early childhood age. It makes children better adjusted, smarter and less stressed (Wenner, 2009). Play has also been identified as of great importance in education and development of children specifically in western discourse. Play has been linked to the development of various early skills that are essential in preparing children to learn Berk, (2002), Bredekamp, (2004) Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, & Roskos, (2015) in Kejo, (2017). Despite all these facts, play is sometimes contrasted with work and characterized as a type of activity which is essentially unimportant, trivial and lacking in any serious purpose. As such, it is seen as something that children do because they are immature, and as something they will grow out of as they become adults. (Whitebread, Basilio, Kuvalja & Verma, 2012)

Many international organizations such as UN through its agencies have been providing technical and assistant for the promotion of early childhood education and suitable environment in early childhood centers especially in line with the Framework of education For All and Millennium Development Goals. Promoting learning through play is also one of the approaches of these international bodies UNCRC (1989), MOE, (2005), Woodhead (2009) and UNESCO (2008).

However, Promoting learning through play in early childhood education comes with huge challenges in many developing countries particularly, in a country such as Ethiopia where teachers put high value on formal academic learning. Many studies discovered that the international ECCE advocated policy reforms have not been put into effect in the context of Ethiopian's ECCE and early childhood teachers were found to be not implementing learning through play in preprimary school classrooms UNESCO (2012). The implementation of play also seems challenging in different countries (Langston, 2013; Hyvonen & Kangas, 2007). Some scholars believe that these difficulties are encountered due to the misperceptions of what learning through play truly means (Ebrahim, 2014) Some studies showed that the challenges of teaching through play it can be due to absence of suitable space for play , lack of knowledge and skills required to implement learning through play in classrooms, the pressure from school administrators and parent chose direct instructional methods to teach and lack of enough play

based resources are the main reasons minimizing play based learning in preschools (Phajane, 2019) and (Puteh & Ali, 2013).

The Ethiopian national Policy Framework for ECCE also articulated the importance of play based pedagogy as one of the appropriate methods to accelerate the learning experience in all children's developmental domains (MOE, 2010). However, many findings on early childhood Education in Ethiopia showed that most ECCE centers lack good quality and the absence of learning through play in preprimary school was also evidence. The evidence was found to be in connection with insufficient trained preprimary school teacher/caregivers, lack of effective monitoring of ECCE across the country and absence of appropriate play materials Belay Tefera(2015), and Fantahun Admas(2016) .

Hence, learning through play must be conceptualized to reflect the holistic development of the child as well as the moral needs of the child. Therefore, based on the research evidences, the researcher believed that all these gaps can only be bridged by conducting a scientific research on the factors influencing the implementation of learning through play in preprimary school.

1.3. Research Questions

This study was intended to answer the following questions:

1. How learning through play is conceptualized?
2. Do preprimary school teachers need to utilize learning through play in their classrooms?
3. How do preprimary school teachers implement play in their classrooms?
4. What do preprimary schools see as the challenge and benefit of play based pedagogy?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate teachers' understanding of learning through play whether they use it in their preprimary school classrooms and its contribution to children's learning in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda in Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Not all educators have an understanding and appreciation of research (Creswell, 2012). For some, research may seem like something that is important only for faculty members in colleges and universities. Although it is true that college and university faculty members value and conduct research, personnel in other educational settings also read and use research, such as school psychologists, principals, school board members, adult educators, college administrators, and graduate students.

The findings from this study, may inform ECCE policy maker about the factors influencing the implementation of early childhood play in selected preschool settings in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda in Gambella. The information obtained from this study was to maximize teachers' awareness about their roles in implementing children's play in their preschool settings. This Study was considered to benefit children when their teachers allocate enough time for play rather than allowing them to engage only in writing and reading activities. Likewise the results of this study may enlighten pre-school teachers and administrators on various techniques used to elevate the implementation of learning through play in preschools.

1.6. Definition of Important Variables

Learning through play: learning through play means children learn something while at play if they are given playful learning activities in and out of the classrooms.

Preprimary School: in Ethiopia, the term preprimary is generic term which includes: KG or preschool education (for 4 to 6 years), O-class (for 5 to 6 years), school readiness program attached to public primary schools, and Child- to- child services 5 to 6 years-non-formal, child-lead, school readiness programs.

1.7. Delimitation of the Study

There are various areas in early childhood care and education which need to be researched but this study focus on the factors influencing the implementation of learning through play in preprimary Classroom and its Contribution to Children Education the main focus was only given to play as a medium of instruction only. Play at home or for other purpose was not included in this study. The Study does not include the private preschools in the study. The study was only confined to selected governmental preprimary schools in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda. The

Implementation of play in preschool classroom and its contribution to children's education in other Woreda preschools in Gambella regional State were beyond the scope of this study.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations and one of the limitations was the fact that this research was not supported with quantitative method of analysis. While the researcher still believes that qualitative research was the appropriate choice for this study, qualitative tools like interview, should have been supported with questionnaire or other research gathering tools. More credibility could be given to this study if combined with quantitative research. For example, statistical analysis may offer more concrete evidence to strengthen the data found using qualitative tools. Another drawback of this study is that much of the literature review was collected from foreigners' works due to the absence of enough homemade materials with main focus on learning through play. But it does not mean that there are no researches conducted on early childhood education, there are many of them but their focus are on early childhood education not on play. Another point is the qualitative research study in nature is not fit for generalization so the results of this study will not represent factors influencing the implementation of play in Gambella in general. The issue of covid-19 is not something to be taken lightly, due to covid-19 the researcher did interview the participants many times; the interview was carried out only on one bases. The schools lock down interrupted the data collection for a while.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

According to Moletsane (2004), a literature review familiarizes the researcher with latest developments in the area of research and related topics. Therefore, this chapter presence, play and development, children's holistic skills, importance types of play, children right to play, benefits of play, factors influencing learning through play, guideline for implementation of learning through play, the overview of ECCE and play worldwide and the brief history of the modern preschool in Ethiopia.

2.2. Play and Development

Play is the work of the child (Montessori, Cited in Winnie, 2016) play activities are essential to healthy development of children. The activities engaged in by children both stimulate and influence the pattern of the connections made between the nerve cells. This process influences the development of fine and gross motor skills, language, socialization, personal awareness, emotional well-being, creativity, problem solving and learning ability. The most important role that play has is that it helps children to be active, make choices and practice actions to mastery. They should experience with a wide variety of content (art, music, science, math, social relations) because each is important for the development of a complex and integrated brain. Play that links sensory-motor, cognitive, and social-emotional experiences provides an ideal setting for brain development. She further argued that, the essential dimensions of play include voluntary, enjoyable, purposeful and spontaneous, creativity using problem solving and thwarting emotional problems.

Coolahan (2000) states that play are integral to the academic environment. It ensures social and emotional development of children as well as their cognitive development. It has been shown to help children adjust to the school setting and enhance children's learning readiness, learning behaviors, and problem solving skills. further argues that social emotional learning is best integrated with academic learning; it is concerning if some of the forces that enhance children's ability to learn are elevated at the expense of others. Play and unscheduled time that

allow for peer interactions are important components of social emotional learning (Elis &Arnold, 2006).

2.3. Children's Holistic Skills

The broad set of holistic skills associated with learning through play is defined by the LEGO Foundation (2017) as:

Emotional skills understand, manage and express emotions by building self-awareness and handling impulses, as well as staying motivated and confident in the face of difficulties

Cognitive skills concentration, problem solving, and flexible thinking by learning to tackle complex tasks and building effective strategies to identify solutions

Physical skills being physically active, understanding movement and space through practicing sensory-motor skills, developing spatial understanding and nurturing an active and healthy body

Social skills collaborate, communicate and understand other people's perspectives through sharing ideas, negotiating rules and building empathy

Creative skills coming up with ideas, expressing them and transforming them into reality by creating associations, symbolizing and representing ideas and providing meaningful experiences for others.

2.4. Important Types of Play in Child's Development

Gander, Mary and Harry (1981) Found that there are different types of play in child's development but only these six types of play are included in this literature review:

1. Unoccupied Play

Unoccupied play refers to activity when a child actually isn't playing at all. He may be engaged in seemingly random movements, with no objective. Despite appearances, this definitely is play and sets the stage for future play exploration.

2. Solitary (Independent) Play

Solitary play is just what it sounds like when your child plays alone. This type of play is important because it teaches a child how to keep child entertained, eventually setting the path to being self-sufficient. Any child can play independently, but this type of play is the most common

in younger children around ages 2 or 3. At that age, they are still pretty self-centered and lack good communication skills. If a child is on the shy side and doesn't know his playmates well, he may prefer this type of play.

3. Onlooker Play

Onlooker play is when a child simply observes other children playing and doesn't partake in the action. It's common for younger children who are working on their developing vocabulary. Don't worry if your little one is behaving this way. It could be that the child feels shy, needs to learn the rules, or maybe is the youngest and wants just to take a step back for a while.

4. Parallel Play

Put two 3-year-olds in a room together and this is what you are likely to see: the two children having fun, playing side by side in their own little world. It doesn't mean that they don't like one another, they are just engaging in parallel play. Despite having little social contact between playmates, children who parallel play actually learn quite a bit from one another like taking turns and other social niceties. Even though it appears they aren't paying attention to each other, they truly are and often mimic the other one's behavior. As such, this type of play is viewed as an important bridge to the later stages of play.

5. Associative Play

Slightly different from parallel play, associative play also features children playing separately from one another. But in this mode of play, they are involved with what the others are doing think children building a city with blocks. As they build their individual buildings, they are talking to one another and engaging each other. This is an important stage of play because it helps little ones develop a whole host of skills socialization (what should we build now?) and problem solving (how can we make this city bigger?), cooperation (if we work together we can make our city even better) and language development (learning what to say to get their messages across to one another). Through associative play is how children begin to make real friendships.

6. Cooperative Play

Cooperative play is where all the stages come together and children truly start playing together. It is common in older preschoolers or in younger preschoolers who have older siblings or have been around a lot of children). Cooperative play uses all of the social skills your child has been

working on and puts them into action. Whether they are building a puzzle together, playing a board game, or enjoying an outdoor group game, cooperative play sets the stage for future interactions as your child matures into an adult.

2.5. Children Right to Play

ARTICLE 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) state that:

- 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.*
- 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity (UNCRC, 1989. P. 10)*

Children have a right to play and to participate fully in cultural and artistic life (Thornton & Talbot, 2014) Article 36 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia affirms the rights of all persons including men, women and children alike (FDRE, 1995).

2.6. Benefits of Play

The benefits of play are complex and indirect. Play contributes to the development of a diverse array of capacities in the young child. From ages 2.5 until age 5, social dramatic play and make believe play emerges and evolves (Berk, 1994). As the child ages, the play also changes. The interactions begin to last longer, they show more involvement, and tend to interact with a variety of peers and become more cooperative. Children who are involved in social dramatic experiences are more advanced in general intellectual development, as well as an enhanced ability to understand the feelings of others (Berk, 1994). The list of benefits of make believe play is extensive. The known benefits include strengthened mental abilities, improved memory, as well as promotes language and storytelling skills. In addition, make believe play allows the child to expand their vocabulary. Make believe play also allows children an opportunity to reason through seemingly impossible situations, which enhances their problem solving skills and allows them to gain confidence in their decision-making skills. All of these benefits combined have

proven to lead to higher test scores compared to children who did not participate in make believe play experiences (Berk, 1994).

2.7. Factors influencing learning through play

Bodrova and Leong (2007), suggested guidelines for implementing learning through play have been discussed above. Now factors that influence the implementation of learning through play will be discussed; Preschool teachers' acknowledgement of through play; preschool teacher education program; preschool teacher reminiscences and current experiences with play; playful learning environment; competent teachers:

2.7.1. Acknowledging the importance of learning through play

Many researchers clearly stated the importance of play and learning through play for children and they mentioned that, play is important in children's lives, because play is the way for children to learn (Erahim, 2014). It has been recorded that when children do not play, as is happening more and more often, they can become depressed or shows other signs of illness (Almon, 2004). Learning through play might be implemented better if teachers attach more meaning to the value of play as "the meaning and values regarding play" (Kieff & Casbergue, 2000). The importance of play is stressed by philosophers, psychologists and educationalists like Pestalozzi, Froebel, Vygotsky, and Piaget. These influential contributors have shaped the ideas regarding learning through play by claiming that play leads to exploration, discover, development and learning (Brock, Dodds, & Olusoga, 2013).

Even though the importance of children's learning through play is stressed, there seems to be many teachers who follow an academic, teacher- directed approach toward educating children young children (Lau & Chieng, 2010) where teachers are at the center of the learning process. Teachers may not understand how children develop by learning through play (Lau & Cheng, 2010) and this may be due to lack of training.

2.7.2. Preschool Teachers Training

Teachers who did not receive proper training on what learning through play entails will find it hard to understand how it should be implemented (Cheng & Stimpson, 2004, Zhu, 2010). A study done by Zhu (2010) on curriculum implementation challenges revealed that in many instances teachers' education focuses on student teachers' construction of knowledge. This may lead to

problematic implementation of preschool curriculum and play pedagogy. This is also similar to a study done by Van der Aalsvoort, Prakke, Konig and Goorhuish(2010) They found that the way in which teachers are trained and taught at university does not solely impact learning opportunities presented to children. Preschool teachers who offer children playful learning opportunities do so based on knowledge and experience, interpreting learning and development (Van der Aalsvoort et al., 2010).

2.7.3. Preschool Teachers' Experiences of Play

It is a possibility that if teachers are encouraged to think back to the fun times they had as children when they were playing and bubbling with joy and creativity, the blockages causing play to be avoided can be cleared away and creative playful spirit can flow (Almon, 2004).

Similarly, Sanberg and Samuelsson (2003) did a study on how teachers' own experience of play influence their current teaching practices. In their study, preschool teachers recalled that they had more time for play when they were children without interruptions and restrictions caused by having to start new activities. Teachers felt that adult (teachers, parent and caregivers, etc.) have caused the reduced play time for children. Preschool teachers in his study believed the media (television, computer games, social media and magazines) influences children's play and caused them to play.

Moreover, a study done by Horsely and Penn (2014) revealed that preschool teachers' memories and experiences with play impact their understanding of play and how they teach children through play. Horsely and Penn (2014) have tried to address the issue of how to allow offering some suggestions. These suggestions include providing a learning environment that is optimally organized for play. As an example, teachers can postpone tidy-up time by reading. Doing art activities, music and movement or eating snacks outside and letting children continue their play after the interval in order to build on learning experiences which have taken place previously.

2.7.4. Playful Learning Environment

The learning environment should provide children with play materials and equipment and children should receive adequate demonstration in the functioning of learning materials and equipment (Brooker, Blasé & Edwards, 2014). While conducting of a case study Canning (2010) found that sometimes simply changing the position of play equipment make it more dynamic and

flexible for children to use. In order for this to be realized, the learning environment should be structured in a playful way by providing children with appropriate play materials and equipment.

Even though children should be provided with adequate playful learning environment with “access to as many resources as possible” (UNICEF, 2006), there may be schools that cannot provide children with this idealistic environment as these resources (or materials and equipment) may be too expensive for some preschools to buy, because of financial short comings. In a study done by Andiemba, Kemboi and M’mbonne(2013) it was found that many play grounds do not provide children with adequate space or materials to play with.

Supporting learning in a playful learning environment requires teachers to ensure that the environment is safe, secure, inviting and emotionally validating. Teachers’ own beliefs and thinking influence the way in which they structure a playful learning environment, because their thinking lead to action (Bernnet, Wood & Rogers, 1997).

2.7.5. Competent Teachers

To be able to make playful activities available in any given space and to set up an adequate learning environment requires teachers to be competent and creative. The way in which the teacher intervenes is a crucial factor in quality of learning experience by the child (Synod, 2010). The teacher as a knowledgeable person will follow a teaching practice which fosters equality, utilizing every opportunity to understand how children learn through play and promoting “children’s self- esteem, confidence, independence and imagination” through play (Walsh & Pretty,2007). Teachers who believe that children can learn through play will allow each child to have equal learning opportunities. In the process of offering equal learning opportunities the competent teachers will encourage learning and understanding during play and in doing so promote “courage, trust, perseverance, confidence and responsibility” (Excell & Linington, 2008).

In order for teachers to be competent, they need to act reflectively in their teaching practice to ensure that learning through play is taking place as children from teachers’ actions and words (Excell & Linington, 2008). By acting reflectively in their teaching practices, teachers may find new playful ways to enhance children’s learning by focusing on eliminating frustrating, disillusion, and feelings of failure experienced by children during learning (Walsh & Pretty, 2007).

Unfavorable circumstances at home, for example “poor housing infrastructure , lack of access to adequate water, sanitation facilities and poor hygiene contributing to infections and diseases”(Berry et al.,2013), could impact the way children play and this may create barriers to learning. Children who have unfavorable circumstances at home could possible portray exhaustion and can be unmotivated to learn. Teachers’ sufficient knowledge and competency can assist them in identifying children who have unfavorable conditions at homes. After identifying conditions causing obstruction to children’s learning through play, preschool teachers can address the parents of these children. Parent should be informed of any obstruction to children learning due to unfavorable conditions at home (Berry el al, .2013).

2.7.6. Preschool Teachers’ Experiences of Play

It is a possibility that if teachers are encouraged to think back to the fun times they had as children when they were playing and bubbling with joy and creativity, the blockages causing play to be avoided can be cleared away and creative playful spirit can flow (Almon, 2004).

Similarly, Sanberg and Samuelsson (2003) did a study on how teachers’ own experience of play influence their current teaching practices. In their study, preschool teachers recalled that they had more time for play when they were children without interruptions and restrictions caused by having to start new activities. Teachers felt that adult (teachers, parent and caregivers, etc.) have caused the reduced play time for children. Preschool teachers in his study believed the media (television, computer games, social media and magazines) influences children’s play and caused them to play.

Moreover, a study done by Horsely and Penn (2014) revealed that preschool teachers’ memories and experiences with play impact their understanding of play and how they teach children through play. Horsely and Penn (2014) have tried to address the issue of how to allow offering some suggestions. These suggestions include providing a learning environment that is optimally organized for play. As an example, teachers can postpone tidy-up time by reading. Doing art activities, music and movement or eating snacks outside and letting children continue their play after the interval in order to build on learning experiences which have taken place previously.

2.8. Guidelines for Implementing Learning through Play

Offering teachers guidelines towards the implementation of learning through play might provide clarity on why children should learn through play and on how learning through play should take place; possible guidelines for teachers on how to use knowledge, how to assist in children's play, to apply as well as how to plan activities and play spaces are explained below:

2.8.1. Assisting Children's play and helping them to develop knowledge and skill

Based on the implementation of learning through play mentioned above, assisting children's and helping them develop knowledge and skill were viewed by some researchers as ways of implementing play in early childhood care and education and among those researchers were researchers like, Bodrova and Leong (2007) who suggested that preschool teachers use the following to help children develop knowledge and skills through play:

Play Plan (preschool children plan and monitor their development by drawing a plan. This can be a plan for a game they want to play. They then have to act out the plan and see what needs to be modified, changed or rectified).

Learning plans (preschool children and their teachers set learning goals which need to be achieved. It is placed in a box and children can tick off goals that have been achieved and think of new goals they want to reach).

The freeze game (with this activity children exercise self-regulation, children dance to music and are shown a picture of stick figure in specific position. When the music stops they have to mirror the position as illustrated in the picture).

The ideas provided by Bodrova and Leong (2007) are the starting point to use as guidelines for teaching young children to learn through play. It is also important to consider the role of the teacher to encourage children's play by offering ample opportunities for children to play with objects as well as with other children (Heldemann, Hewitt & Hewitt, 2010). During this process, where children are engaging with objects and people, active learning and knowledge construction takes places with which leads to meaningful discoveries, because how you are is as much as what you are learning(Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2003; Ochiogu,2013).

When children are actively learning and constructing knowledge, they become independent decision makers by using play as a tool to build on past experiences, explore new possibilities

and create meaning from these experiences (Bennet, Wood & Rogers, 1997; Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005).

Play is fundamental to young children's learning. Supporting children to learn actively means that preschool teachers should be engaged in a playful learning environment where they are challenged with appropriate playful learning material (McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011).

In relevant to the idea of assisting children's play and helping them develop knowledge and skill the researcher suggested that it is better to revise Vygotsky's theory once again. Vygotsky's theory on importance of facilitative interaction between the child and teacher demonstrated that the teacher may be able to help the child to bridge the gap between what they know and what they do not know and he described this area as the child's "Zone of Proximal Development" (Vygotsky, 1978). He means that the teacher helps the child only if the child is in need of help or where is necessarily.

Moyles (2012), a well-known author of many books on the subject of children's play, has made it clear that teacher involvement in children's play should be well executed by stating that, teachers encourage children to make choices, put their choice into effect and then reflect on why there were things that did not work out. Additionally, Frobose (2008) made the following suggestions on how to assist children in playing:

Interact: The richest play takes place when the adult takes an active role and plays a long side the child, instead of simply providing toys or supervision.

Observe: watch the child closely to determine skill level and favor activities.

Follow: Joint in at the child's level. Let the child be in control and determine the direction of the play.

Be creative: Rediscover the child within yourself. Set aside restricting adult norms. Use toys creatively.

Have fun: Play should be fun for everyone, not frustrating. Do not use the time to test or stretch the child's skills beyond capabilities.

Children are thinkers: Teachers pose age appropriate problems and challenges to children to help them think of as many different solutions as possible. It is important to know the child well in order to match problems to the child's abilities and interest.

Consider age and ability level- Play ability should fit the child. They should be a bit difficult, but not so difficult as to over whelm or frustrate the child. Not all children, even at the same age, think at the same level and not all children have the same interest.

2.9. The Overview of Early Childhood Education and Play World Wide

The importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) is now widely accepted in international research and development policy. There is considerable evidence that targeted early childhood interventions have the potential to mitigate some of the risks to children's learning and development posed by poverty. But in many countries resources are scarce and are mainly concentrated on achieving the Education For All goal of universal primary education. A major challenge is to find ways to develop high-quality ECCE services which are accessible to poorer children and children in rural areas (Young Lives policy Brief, 2012).

Play is not a recent activity but it was something started back in 1800s and as an effort made by Froebel of German. The earliest evidence of the acknowledgement of children learning through play seems to date back to the 1800's with Froebel's invented Kindergarten. Froebel was inspired by his educator, Pestalozzi, who taught him theories of permissive schooling. He however felt that what he learned from Pestalozzi did not quite inspire the foundations which needed to be laid in early learning. Froebel created the word "Kindergarten", meaning infant garden, in 1840 for a play and activity institute he established in 1837. A great emphasis was placed on child as well as games, songs, stories, and arts and crafts which were thought to stimulate children's imaginations and develop their physical and motor skills. It is also mentioned that in the 1800's European mothers educated young children outside of their homes. Infant schools were set up in 1844 in America and other countries to care for children while their parents were working. These schools were usually set up in churches, factories and private homes (Froebel & Heywood cited in Karen, 2015).

In Chinese culture, play is not traditionally associated with learning. However, the 2006 curriculum guide advocated the play-based learning approach, though it was seldom applied in local practice. Moreover, the most recent curriculum policy was created in response to local and

international practical experiences and research findings from other countries and regions (Curriculum Development Council, 2016). The current version of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (Curriculum Development Council, 2006) emphasized the role of play in early learning more than earlier versions of the document have. However, a discrepancy between policy and practice has been identified (Cheng, 2011).

This may be attributed to difficulties in teachers' understanding or conceptualization of the theories of play and learning or play-based learning, as well as other factors (e.g., school management, transition issues, parents' concerns and expectations, and cultural expectations and values) (Cheng, 2001). Another reason for the decreased consideration of children's play may be that the provision of early childhood education in Hong Kong has been heavily influenced by market forces (Ho, 2008); in such a highly market driven context, parents play a vital role. Kindergartens have made great efforts to survive in such a competitive context by meeting parental expectations of academic preparation for primary education. For example, many parents desire schools that give their children more assignments than those that allocate more time for play. Therefore, even though teachers may recognize the importance of play, they still hesitate to implement play-based learning because they have to consider the parents' concerns (Wu, 2014), who may regard play and learning as dichotomous and opposites. Recently, the curriculum guide, which was released in 2017, was revised to accommodate to the Free Quality Kindergarten Education (Curriculum Development Council, 2016). Joyful learning through a play approach is outlined in the review of the 2016 Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum. As in previous guides, play is considered an instrument for learning. However, in the forthcoming curriculum policy, free play as a context for learning will be advocated for the first time, which is unprecedented; in particular, free exploration in play has been emphasized. In it, it is suggested that teachers provide not less than 30 minutes per day for free play for the half-day program and 50 minutes for the whole-day program. In practice, free play would involve free-choice activities within a scheduled time frame. Not all children would have the same amount of time to play freely because only those who finish their assigned tasks quickly would have extra time to play (Wu & Rao, 2011). The revised curriculum guide provides a clearer guideline on play arrangement than any of the previous guides. However, it may still be a challenge for practitioners to implement play-based learning, particularly when teachers do not associate play with learning, and they conceive and practice them separately (Rao, 2011).

2.9.1. Theoretical Framework

There are different theories which explain the nature of child development and they includes Erikson, Bowlby, Ainsworth, Piaget, Vygotsky, Skinner, Bandura, Chomsky, Bronfenbrenner, Smilansky, Parten, Rogoff and Foucault (Palmer cited in Nolan & Raban, 2015). The philosophies of these theorists inform and guide educators' work with young children, families, and communities, as they provide conceptual understandings on aspects that otherwise are difficult to comprehend (Nolan & Raban, 2015). From mentioned theories of child development, this study will be guided by the theory of Piaget and Vygotsky.

2.9.2. Theory of Piaget (1896-1980)

A Swiss theorist who has had a great influence on the way we understand children. Piaget believed that children's thinking passed through four separate stages and changed qualitatively in each of these stages. He emphasized the importance of maturation and the provision of a stimulating environment for children to explore. He believed children were active learners.

For Piaget, play has three stages: practice play /symbolic play/games with rules. He believed that these stages followed a particular order but that individual children passed through them at their own rate of development. Piaget's stages have formed the basis of a great deal of play research and continue to be used as a basis for observing and recording children's play (Nolan & Raban, 2015).

In Piaget's view, children were not only recipients of knowledge from adults, but also creators of knowledge. According to Piaget's theory (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000), knowledge is acquired through adaptation – modification of one's own means of interacting with the environment – to fit personal needs. Piaget's work provides a basis for constructionist theories with the belief that “knowledge is constructed and learning occurs when children create products or artifacts”. To Piaget, child learning occurs through independent discovery and the child's own construction of the world through interaction with physical objects (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Piaget believed intellectual development passed through “a series of connected stages, in which some knowledge from an earlier stage is incorporated into the next” (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000). With regard to play, Piaget's (1962) emphasis was on two stages of play: practice play that he related to sensory motor activity, which evolves to symbolic play due to involvement of representational thought. To him (symbolic) play is “an area of activity whose motivation is not adaptation to reality but,

on the contrary, assimilation of reality to the self, without coercions or sanctions” (Piaget & Inhelder, 2000, p. 58). Piaget and Inhelder further argue that imitation in play nevertheless facilitates adaptation through accommodation to new experiences leading to new behaviors. For Piaget therefore, developmental functions of play are immediate.

2.9.3. Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Much of the research on play within developmental psychology has been inspired by the theoretical writings of Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky (1896-1934), is a Russian theorist who died in 1934, since the 1990’s. Vygotsky developed his theories around the same time as Jean Piaget but the main difference was that Vygotsky emphasized the importance of relationships and interactions between children and more knowledgeable peers and adults.

He believed that children’s cognitive understandings were enriched and deepened when they were ‘scaffold’ by parent, teachers or peers (Berk 1996).

Vygotsky’s theorizing about child development differs from Piaget’s with respect to the emphasis Vygotsky placed on the influence of the social cultural context on cognition. Differing from Piaget’s initial ideas, Vygotsky viewed the social context to be the determinant of the cognitive processes leading to child development (Bodrova & Leong, 2007).

Development is described as occurring through the reconstruction of an external activity operation, to an internal one. This transformation from external activity (interaction with social, physical world) to internal activity (internally oriented thought) is called internalization and Vygotsky described it as “a distinguishing feature of human psychology” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Development therefore, according to Vygotsky, depends on interactions one has with other people, and the tools that are provided by the culture in a particular social context.

Vygotsky viewed play as having a major contribution in child development. According to Vygotsky, creation of “pretend play situations” is what distinguishes play from other children’s activities. During play, when it is spontaneous and child-initiated, he argued, children exercise control over their own activity, set themselves appropriate challenges, and so create their own ‘zone of proximal development’ within which learning is most powerfully enhanced. Furthermore, to have the full benefits of play, he pointed out three essential components of play:

“creation of an imaginary situation, taking and acting out roles, and following a set of rules determined by specific roles” (Bodrova & Leong, 2007, p. 129).

Vygotsky further argued that the imaginary situation has rules of behavior (made by the child himself), which a player is obliged to follow. In adherence to these rules, the child learns to act cognitively independently of what he sees. Play, therefore, according to his theory, creates a zone of proximal development as a child’s behavior in play is said to be “above his average age, it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (Vygotsky, 1976, p. 552).

To Vygotsky (1976), play is regarded as a leading activity of the child’s development during the preschool and Kindergarten years. As the young child develops, his actions, which used to be determined by objects seen and experienced, develop to being determined by thought. This transition shows how imagination develops and Vygotsky sees play (through imagination) as providing a transition between the two stages of human perception (being dominated first by object and then by meaning). Therefore, through creation of an imaginary situation, play provides a transitional stage from the merging of meaning with object to the development of abstract thought. Development of abstract thought is the developmental accomplishment typically expected between the ages of 4 and 6 (Bodrova & Leong, 2007).

Both Piaget and Vygotsky emphasize the representation inherent in symbolic (pretend) play, which leads to abstraction. They both make a significant contribution to understanding the relationship between play and literacy mainly because of the relation between the symbolic nature of play and the symbolic nature of literacy (Saracho & Spodek, 2006). Nevertheless, they differ in how they perceive its developmental consequence. For Piaget, play is mainly a mechanism for assimilation by incorporating new experiences into existing thinking. On the other hand, Vygotsky viewed such play as having greater significance for developmental outcomes, mainly the development of understanding in social roles and also, from object meaning separation, the development of abstract representation, a pre-requisite for literacy learning (Saracho & Spodek, 2006).

2.10. Brief History of the Modern Preschool in Ethiopia

The modern preschool was initiated by Menelik in 1908. Menelik II recognized that greatly improved education would be a major requirement for a modern Ethiopia. In line with his aspirations, in 1908 Menelik established the first public school called Menelik II School. Likewise, eight years prior to this first public school, the first modern preschool (kindergarten) was established in Drie Dawa (a town in the eastern part of the Country) for the children of French consultants who were helping build the first railroad in Ethiopia (Demeke cited in Demeke,2006). Pre-School as a general community services began in August 1963 E.C., with few pilot projects established in the major towns of the country under the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs. Foreign nationals mainly Swedish and American Peace Corp Volunteers ran these Centers. When these volunteers left for their country, the program was taken over by Women Village Level Workers who were not specifically trained for pre-school(MNCDSA Cited in Demeke,2006).

Currently children aged 3 to 7 years constitute a large section of the Ethiopian population according to the national census conducted in 2007 by Central Statistics Agency (CSA,2009). Over 16 percent of the then 74 million population, that is, more than 12 million were under this age category and above 10% were in the ages 4 to 6 years. However, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is one of the most neglected areas in Ethiopia. Early childhood education in Ethiopia is not compulsory. Neither has until recently any explicit budget been allotted by the Government towards this subsector (Hoot, Szente & Mebratu Cited in Tassaw & Messle, 2017).

Tirussew (2005) reported that the major challenges which are existing in the practices of ECE in Ethiopia include lack of standard curriculum and guideline, lack of culturally relevant story books, an almost non-existent alternative care and education for the large child population in the rural areas, lack of access to preschool education for most children with caretakers characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, and acting prevalent both in and outside of the child's home environment. Similarly, Fantahun (2016) in his study entitled "early childhood education in Ethiopia: present practices and future direction," revealed that the present ECE suffers from lack of quality. But the good thing is that the same writer found that there is still room for quality improvement by taking from the present experience while planning for the

future ECE. Belay& Hawaz (2005), revealed that there is an enabling policy framework but without standards, guides and manuals for caregivers. Lack of professionalism had affected the quality of care rendered in the centers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research Design

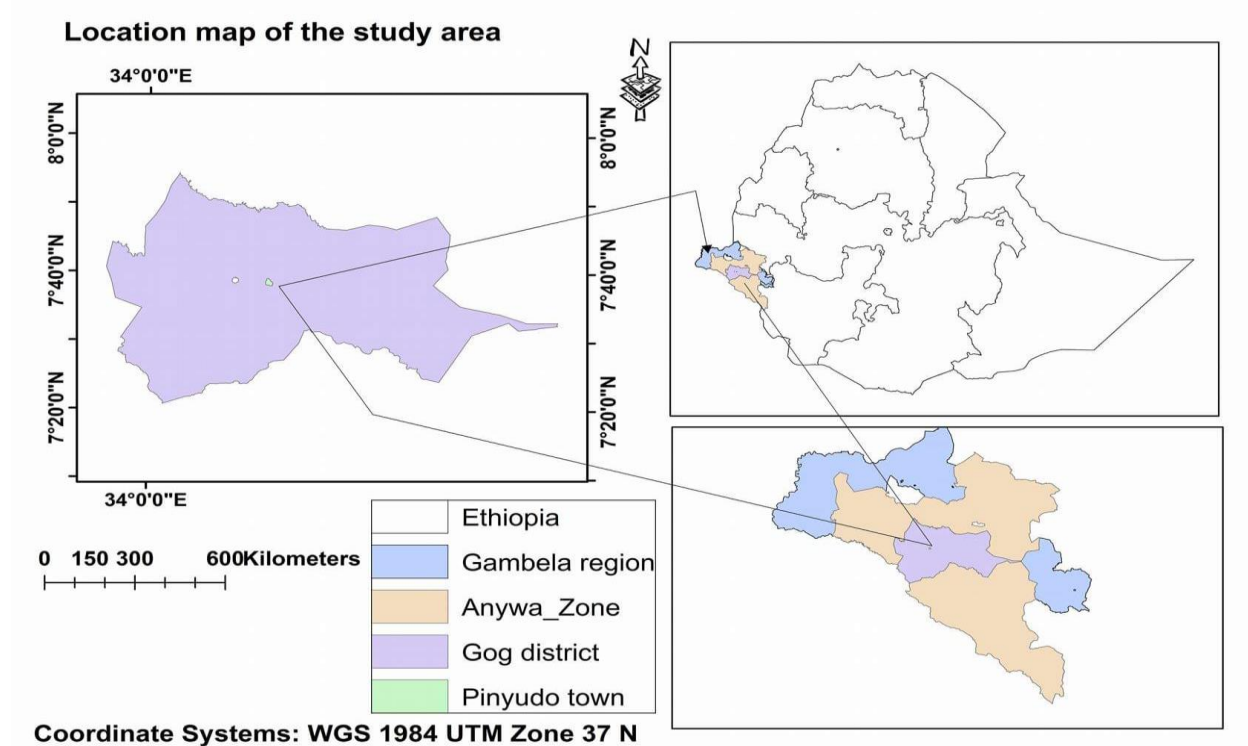
The qualitative approach was employed in this study. The researcher believes that this approach fit this study because the study was set to understand the perceptions that influence the implementation of learning through play from standpoint of the participants. Moreover, the data collected was not based on any statistical measurement. This qualitative approach was used to capture the language preprimary school teachers used to define and relate play based learning to child pedagogy.

3.2. Research Site

This study was conducted in Gog Worada in Anywa Zone in Gambella. Gambella Regional State is one of the 11 regional states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). It is located in the south-western Ethiopian lowlands bordering the Republic of South Sudan from the west, the Oromia Regional State from the north-east and the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) from the south-east. According to UNICEF (2019), currently Gambella regional State has a population of 463,000 people from this, 181,084 is the population of children under 5 (UNICEF, 2019). Gambella Regional State is predominantly inhabited by five indigenous ethnic groups, namely the Anywaa, Nuer, Majang, Opo and Kumo. In addition to these five indigenous ethnic groups, there are other Ethiopians of different ethnic origins in the region who are collectively referred to as “highlanders”.

As it is shown on the map, Gog is one of the Woredas in Gambella Regional State in Anywaa Zone. Gog shares border in the South with Dimma, in the Southwest with the Akobo River which separates it from South Sudan, in the West by Jor, and In the North by Abobo. The major town in Gog Woreda is Pinyudo.

Figure 1 Map of Gog Woreda in Gambela Regional State in Ethiopia.



. Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), this Woreda has a total population of 16,836, of whom 7,751 were men and 9,085 were women; with an area of 3,250.25 square kilometers, Gog has a population density of 5.18, which is greater than the Zone average of 4.83 persons per square kilometer. Reportedly 5,617 or 33.36% are urban inhabitants.

3.3. Participants

There were approximately eight early childhood schools in Pinyudo Town of Gog Woreda. (Kindergartens = 3, and O' classes = 5) which provided access to education for children from 4 to 6 years. Among these, 3 preschools operate under the non-governmental organization whereas, the 5 O'classes schools were owned by the government. Three O'Classes namely, Ageenga, Gilo Bethel and Okedi were purposively selected for this study. Generally, eighteen participants were purposefully selected and participated in the interview and focus group discussions. That's (Male = 3 and Female = 15) were taken as a sample size from these schools. Participants were selected from all governmental schools because this study focus only on governmental preprimary schools and all teachers of preprimary classrooms were believed that

they have direct connection with the process of ECCE pedagogy. The researcher also believed that the available number of the teachers were appropriate for qualitative study and are knowledgeable about the phenomenon of the research interest.

3.4. Data Gathering Instruments

The three data gathering instruments used to collect data include Interview, Observation and Focus Group Discussion. In line with research questions, the researcher prepared Interview guide with 15 set of questions which were mostly semi structured to enable the participants express themselves in depth on play based learning practices in the selected preprimary school settings. The semi-structured interview was conducted on one to one bases in Dha Anywaa or in Anywaa language because most preprimary school teachers in Gog Woreda do not speak English. The aim of interview was to allow the researcher to gain the access to the participants' views on how they conceptualize and use learning through play in their classrooms. The main assumption behind the use of this interview, the researcher believed that individuals have unique and better understanding about what is happening their world and that can be shared through verbal communication. In this regard, the interview supported the researcher to explore the understanding and belief of teachers about the use of learning through play in O'Classes. During interview session the research made an effort to be flexible in asking interview questions to obtain relevant data. Regarding the duration of interview, each interview was between 35 and 40 minutes for each participant and it was conducted in the offices in the preprimary schools. See (Appendix A).

The observation guide with a list of 14 items of questions was used to observe indoor activities. Before entering O'Classes for observations, the researcher spent the first three days building the rapport with the participants and familiarizing himself with O'classes activities programs to know when and how to start the observation. Moreover, building the rapport put the participants at ease with the researcher presence in the classrooms as well as with the use of small camera. For all subject learning activities, each classroom was observed to see the availability and use of learning through play. The observations were conducted for two days for each participating school preprimary school. See (Appendix C).

In regard to this, the researcher also employed FDG guide which consists of 10 set of questions. The typical size of the FDG was 6 participants that are 2 teachers from each school. The target of

the FGD was to check the reliability and consistency of the data collected through interview. See (Appendix B).

3.5. Data Gathering Procedures

An official letter from the Center of Early Childhood Care and Education entitled, 'To Whom It May Concern' was taken. Each school director of the targeted schools was given this letter. The directors addressed the letters to the respective individuals in preprimary schools, and classes. Those individuals cooperated and each participant was communicated. Participants were informed about the objective of the study and were requested to participate in the interview program. Before the data was collected the researcher set time to meet the preschools principals and teachers to discuss and brief them on the objective of the study so that they get information and understanding to help them supply relevant information to the study under investigation. After briefing, the researcher was able to gather data from the participants in the schools.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative Data Analysis was employed because the qualitative analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation situations we are investigating. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Pope, 1995). The present study investigated the factors influencing the implementation of learning through Play as a teaching method in the Preschools in Gog Woreda, Gambella Regional State. Therefore, the data gathered through interview, observation, and FGD were analyzed by applying thematic analysis technique suggested by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clark (2006). Thematic analysis is a good approach to research where the researcher is trying to find out something about people view's opinions, knowledge's experience or values from the set of qualitative data (Braun & Victoria, 2006). The analysis followed the process or steps of Qualitative Data Analysis.

To transcribe the data, the researcher read the data collected from each tools several times and then combine the data from interview, observation and from FGD as well after all, the data was reduced based on the relevant concepts of the study. The data was also interpreted. All data relevant to each potential theme were grouped and the themes were reviewed to check if themes

work to the themes extracted. The themes were named and defined. Finally, the major themes were discussed in light of the available related literature.

3.7. Ethical Issues and Consideration

The ethical issues were respected during data collection; the research stuck to the rules and regulation pertaining to human rights. This was done so as to ensure the rights to privacy and protection of the participants were not violated. In this regard, the permission to conduct research from both participants and the school administrators was asked. Before any attempt made to collect the data, the research objectives and its significance were made clear to all participants. In order to keep the rule of confidentiality, the researcher made a great effort to keep the identities of all the participants confidential. For example, their faces were completely covered. The Participants were told that they were free to withdraw from participating in this study any time any time they wish.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4. Introduction

The general objective of this study was to investigate factors influencing the implementation of learning through play and its contribution to children's learning. The data of this study were collected through qualitative data gathering tools and the tools were interview, FGD and observation. The participants of this study were 18 teachers from this 15 were females and 3 were males.

For this Study the researcher analyzed the data as the research progressed and organized the data in light of the emerged from interview and FGD. Themes were given in relevant to the research questions. As the researcher mentioned in chapter one, this study try to answer the following four research questions: 1.What is the meaning of play to preprimary school teachers? 2. Why do preprimary schools teachers implement play in their classroom? 3. How do preprimary school teachers implement play in their preprimary school classroom? 4. What do preschool teachers see as obstacles to using play as a mean to promote learning?

Table 1: Characteristics of Demographic

Gender	<u>No</u>	%	Qualification	<u>No</u>	%
Female	15	83.3	Diploma	16	88.9
Male	3	16.7	Degree	2	11.1
Total	18	100	Total	18	100

The table above shows that from 18 participants 15 were females and 3 were males. The table also reveals that majority of participants were diploma holders.

Table 2: Types of participated preprimary schools

No	Name of the school	Classification	No of teachers	Gender		No. of PPS Reg. children	Level
				F	M		
1	Ageenga	Governmental	6	4	1	35	“O” class
2	Gilo Bethel	Governmental	6	4	1	31	“O” Class
3	Okedi	Governmental	6	4	1	33	“O” Class

The above table shows that the schools participated in the study were governmental owned and from each school there was one attached preprimary classrooms with 6 assigned teachers to teach in O’Classes.

4.1. How learning through play is conceptualized?

Preprimary School teachers of Ageenga, Gilo Bethel and Okedi were asked to report on how they understand play. In response to this, almost all participants reported that play is a pleasurable activity for children.

.....“Play is fun, happiness, activity and joy for children. They mentioned that play is what makes children happy and when they play they pass school time easily” (FGD).

Similarly, according to the interview held with six participants at Gilo Bethel preprimary school on how they understand play, majority of the participants reported that, play is fun, happiness, activity for enjoyment.

Physical and social activity also emerged from this study as theme which is one of the meanings given to learning through play by preprimary school teachers. Which also emerged as the result of research question one; what is the meaning of play to preprimary school teachers? In response to this, majority of the respondents from all schools explained that play is connected mainly with physical and social activities which includes activities such as jumping, leaping, crawling, rolling, singing and dancing, running and throwing playing materials which all result in happiness and enjoyment.

APPF3, from Ageenga Preprimary teachers explained play as physical movement and she explain that:

Play is physical activity and movement for pleasurable life. She supported her explanation and mentioned that throwing, running and kicking were the examples of play.

From the same school other respondents reported that, play is something that makes children run, leap, climb a tree or sometimes chase his friend and make easy simple fight with no reason.

OPPF6 state that *“Play is activity engaged in for enjoyment and recreation for children. Play is a group work to make everyone within the group happy”*.

Majority of teachers from Gilo Bethel state that:

Play refers to happy movement for peaceful life through activities. A play is coming together and does something that can make people happy. Play is pleasurable and it attract children to come together for physical movement that involves throwing, kicking, crawling or running with the intension of finding happiness.

Like the other previous two schools, the researcher held the same interview with the same question to ask the Okedi Preprimary School to give their views on how they understand the word play. Majority of the participants state that:

“Play is the skill that children use so often to interact and talk and it has rules to be followed. Play is unity of many children for happiness because play makes children happy. Play is something that brings children together for discussion, dancing, singing or shouting”.

Other respondents reported that play is pleasurable activity for children and it makes children move... jumping, dancing, throwing and kicking or rolling.

4.2. Do preprimary school teachers need to utilize learning through play in their classrooms?

In this part, recreational activities with less purpose emerged from the analysis. The teachers were asked: Why do preprimary schools teachers implement play in their classrooms? In light to this, teachers from the three preprimary schools: Ageenga, Gilo Bethel and Okedi were asked to report the reason why they implement play in their classrooms?

In response to this, majority of teachers responded that they do not use play due to absence of enough playing materials, tight school schedule which permits no enough time for play. GPPF5 from Gilo Bethel School reported that they do not practice play in their classroom

because there is no provision of play for children on the school timetable and also due to absence of enough play materials.

APPF1 reported that:

“...I don’t practice play in my classroom because the time I have is not enough for play. I use the little time for class works and I have to finish the text book units before semester is closed”.

GPP4 argued that *“mmmm....Play is not something to be carried out in the classroom. I used it only outdoor and during break time ...”*

GPPF3 said:

“My children are busy with classwork activities and they have to write down their homework activities.... So I can observe that we have no enough time for classroom play” (FGD).

It emerged from analysis that other teachers who practice play sometimes in their classrooms confirm that:

Play is activity for recreational and social activities. One participant from Ageenga School said that, because children like play and when they play they feel happy. She added that play is something that belong children and mentioned that children enjoy play more than any other activity.

The analysis indicated that:

Play build friendship and makes children familiar with each other. Play attracts children to come to school every day. Play energizes children after they become tired and bored of sitting for much time in a classroom. Play makes children capable of competition for match that involves physical strength.

When the voices of participants were analysis it emerged that:

They implemented play for refreshment that keeps children happy. OPPM1 state “Sometimes, we need to keep children happy”. So play is among the things that makes children happy. According to some respondent’s voices, play helps children to know how to know to play. They went further and explained that children will know about what they play with.

OPPF6 who was a qualified of health and physical education mentioned that play is important for physical development and that happen as the result of continuous physical exercise because it strengthens the muscles of children.

Also the data analysis showed that:

Play develops children social competences because children will be able to interact with one another when playing and creating competitions with other children. This is supported by other teacher's voices who state that:

...Because play is a recreational activity that expose a child to other children through multiple way of playing activities. Plays attract children to come to school every day. In contrary, one participants reported that play supports her teaching because they sometimes read through singing songs with children.

OPPF2 explained that:

They use play because children like it. Play makes children happy play keeps children happy at school for longer hours without being bored easily. Play is daily activities for children.

Play was used for seeking children attentions and recreational activity with no purpose or aim.

GPPF1 started that,

"Ho yes, when I see my children falling asleep and tired, to keep them alert, I make them play" (interview).

4.3. How do preprimary school teachers implement play in their classrooms?

The above theme emerged from the research analysis relevant to research questions which ask; how do preprimary school teachers implement play in their preprimary school classroom? The question was put to enable the researcher see the strategies used by teachers of primary schools in the three schools: Ageenga Gilo, Bethel and Okedi. In response to this, almost all majority of teachers reported that they understand that children like play and play is a daily activity for children. Play also makes a child get along with other children... but they remained uncertain and unclear about how they can incorporate play in their classrooms teaching.

APPM1 said that:

"I don't think I'm using any strategies to implement play due to absence of enough playing materials. I'm not sure whether play is being implemented in my classroom. But when I do personally, I take them outdoor during break time there they will start running around with friends" (Interview).

One participant said *“Nothing I’m doing regarding playing. I only teach them the subject matter. I use chalk and blackboard because there are no available playing materials”* (APPF5).

Lack of training in how to deal with preprimary school classrooms and absence of ECCE professional were observed and emerged to be one of the major problems in in ECCE classrooms.



Picture 1: Ageenga Preprimary classroom in Pinyudo (2021)

As observed, this picture in one way or another supports the most result obtained from classroom observation. According the observation, the researcher observed that the class size was large but occupied by high desks and the classroom sitting arrangement was inappropriate. It is also observed that no interaction between the preprimary school teacher and the children. Teacher was the one mastering everything and the children kept listening that caused many children to be bored and led them to sleep.

It shows that teachers do rely only on chalk board and discussion. It has been observed from this picture that most children were not interested and some turned their face away and others went sleep in the presence of their teacher. This shows that children need something else. Teacher from Ageenga wants children to play because she understands that play develops children’s physical and Social but reported that the classroom sitting arrangement, lack of playing materials, and absence of enough time caused her to rely on teaching from the book only.



Picture 2: Ageenga Preprimary classroom in Pinyudo (2021)

It has been confirmed from observation that the most classrooms are not organized around the interest areas of learning centers and children. It does not allow children to play and explore materials. The desks are even too high for children to reach. The teacher is not providing necessarily guidance. This shows that teachers lack qualifications in dealing with preprimary school classrooms.

One teacher under this study said that:

“I introduce play to children especially if the day lesson mentions play. Other participant mentioned that if the play is mentioned in the textbook, I give children chance to try it after I give them a clear demonstration on how they can play”.

One participant explained that “... *I first give time and arrange space for children to play and copy the character of play from the book then I show them how they can play*”.

4.4. What do preprimary schools see as the challenge and benefit of play based pedagogy?

Lack of related playing materials and time allocation emerged from the major theme as obstacles to use of play in preprimary classrooms. The main question asked was the research question four: What do preschool teachers see as obstacles to using play as a means to promote learning? For teachers to be able to answer question four of the study, all teachers were asked to report what they see as obstacles to using play as a means to promote learning.

In response this, during analysis it emerged that absence of enough playing material and time allocation matters. The analyses result from FGD and observation confirmed that, the school lacks enough time allocation for classroom activities and restricted school timetable made it difficult for teachers to implement play. The majority of teachers believed that play takes much time and if you mix your lessons with play activities you will not be able to finish the units intended to be completed per semester. Also there was no provision of timetable for the three preprimary teaching in all settings. Teachers enter their classrooms randomly.

One interviewee reported that “...mmmmm...Sometimes I do use play in my classroom but the only problem there is no enough time and playing materials that can permit me to do different strategies for play”(APPF6).

One interviewee from Ageenga, explained that:

“Teaching children is a hard work because it is difficult to handle them and there are no enough playing materials. She mentioned that lack of a regular training and teacher’s refreshment and absence of enough playing materials is a problem”.

Both interview and observation analysis confirmed that: The classrooms are large but it is not arranged in a way that can permits classroom play activities. On top of that the absence of available playing materials was observed. Teachers use chalk and blackboard as the only mean of teaching children.



Picture 3: Okedi Preprimary classroom in Pinyudo (2021)

As observed this classroom structure has enough space and children sat on mat rather than sitting on desks. The teacher does not use the room for play as it was also observed, due to absence of playing materials. The teacher relies on chalk board for teaching children. This indicates that children are not allowed to play. She was observed to have no competent to engage the primary school children. Children were also observed to have no option but to stay sitting and listening to their teacher through the lesson.



Picture 4: Gilo Bethel Preprimary classroom in Pinyudo (2021)

Preprimary classrooms are expected to have neat environments and playing materials and other necessary and relevant materials that can enhance children's learning. However, as it was observed, Gilo Bethel doesn't have comfortable learning classrooms for children. The observation showed that there were holes and long poles within the classroom. Also, the classroom observation was observed to have no wall to display children's work, charts, letters, or cultural pictures. The classroom was not safe and not even free from harmful things; it doesn't even allow free movement of both children and teachers themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS

This study was intended to investigate the factors influencing the implementation of learning through play and its contribution to children's learning in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda in Gambella regional State. Activity for enjoyment, physical and social activity, recreational activity with less purpose, teacher's uncertainty about learning through play and related play activity and time allocation emerged from the analyses of this study. In this chapter, the researcher made an attempt to discuss the findings in light of the existing literature in ECCE area. This chapter is arranged into four parts based on the research questions:

5.1. How learning through play is conceptualized?

From the results presented in chapter four of this study, numerous findings emerged and perception of preprimary school teachers toward play was among the key findings. The results revealed that teachers conceptualized play as physical and social activities. That is they understand play to be specifically related to physical and social activities which bring joy to children. According to the finding, teachers have less concern on the importance of play on the other various domains such as cognitive and language. Teachers did not acknowledge the holistic benefits of play. They have little knowledge that play has significance role on the whole child development.

This is not a miracle because up to now no agreeable definition of the play brought forth by researchers. Bergen (2018), Argue that educators and researchers vary in their definition of play so experiences may differ time, amount of adult direction and materials available. Thus what one calls play, may differ from that of other.

Piaget and Vygotsky argued that imaginary or symbolic play is a pure form of play with vital implication for learning and development of children Saracho and Spodek (2006). By imaginary or symbolic play they were referring to play through form of a mental image or concept. That is children can also play by representing something abstract in their cognitive. Also, Brown and Marchant (2002) in their case studies conducted on young children's play reported that play is the chief vehicle for the development of imagination, intelligence, language, social skills and perceptual motor abilities in infants and young children. The researcher grasps that play develops

children holistically that is play enhance children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills.

Montessori confirmed that the most important role that play has is that it helps children to be active, make choices and practice actions to mastery. They should experience with a wide variety of content (art, music, science, math, social relations) because each is important for the development of a complex and integrated brain (Montessori, as Cited in Winnie, 2016). This implies that when children play they should be exposed to many opportunities rather than depending only on physical or social movement. She went further and stated that play that links sensory-motor, cognitive, and social-emotional experiences provides an ideal setting for brain development. She further argued that, the essential dimensions of play include voluntary, enjoyable, purposeful and spontaneous, creativity using problem solving and thwarting emotional problems.

The finding also revealed that play is activity for enjoyment which includes funs, game, singing and drawing and dancing, crawling, rolling, jumping activity. The finding is in agreement with the findings of many researchers for example, Moyles (2005) reported that play is pleasurable activity for children and when children engaged in play they do it because they enjoy what they are doing. This finding also seems be consistent with the study conducted by Wenner (2006) who confirmed that play for better normal physical, social, emotional and cognitive development it makes children better adjusted, smarter and less stressed. Also the finding supports the work of Almon (2004) who clearly stated that the importance of play in children's children life and mentioned that when children do not play, as it is happening more and more often, they can become depressed or shows other signs of illness. The researcher, understands that play has something to do with children health. And if teachers are to keep children at good mood, they should refrain from restricting children from playing.

5.2. Do preprimary school teachers need to utilize learning through play in their classrooms?

The findings show that teachers regarded play as recreational activity with less purpose. Although, United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child in the article 31(1989) states that:

“Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”

It does not mean that play is an activity for enjoyment and recreation only without practical purpose. There are many researchers who consider such thinking as mistaken therefore, this finding is consistent with the study of Whitebread, Basilio, Kuvalja and Verma (2012), who reported that play is sometimes contrasted with work and characterized as a type of activity which is essentially unimportant, trivial and lacking in any serious purpose. As such, it is seen as something that children do because they are immature, and as something they will grow out of as they become adults. However, many studies reveal this view is mistaken. This implies that play is a serious activity for children.

Other studies confirmed that the implementation of play seems challenging in various countries (Langston, 2013; Hyvonen & Kangas, 2007). Difficulties in implementing the pedagogy of play may be because of misperceptions of what learning through play truly means (Barros & Aguiar, 2010; Ebrahim, 2014; Lau & Cheng, 2010). This finding is inconsistent to numerous studies which have identified play as the leading activity in accelerating young children’s cognitive, emotional and social development (Mirts, 2014; Giren, 2016; wenner, 2009; Brock, Dodds, & Olusoga, 2013).

This finding is also inconsistent to the work of Montessori who regarded play as work of the child (Montessori, Cited in Winnie, 2016) play activities are essential to healthy development of children. The activities engaged in by children both stimulate and influence the pattern of the connections made between the nerve cells. This process influences the development of fine and gross motor skills, language, socialization, personal awareness, emotional well-being, creativity, problem solving and learning ability. Giren (2016) mentioned Plays are part of the preschool education institutes’ daily routine and inseparable part of the activities as they play an important part in the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

This finding is also inconsistent with the results of a number of studies conducted overseas. The studies confirmed that play has been linked to the development of children of

various early skills that are essential in preparing children to learn (Berk, 2002; Bredekamp, 2004; Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, & Roskos, 2015 as cited in Kejo, 2017).

This finding is inconsistent to many studies results may be because of different in educational level or the previous study was conducted on teachers with advanced knowledge in ECCE background or perhaps, culture or because much of the literatures were collected out of this country.

5.3. How do preprimary school teachers implement play in their classrooms?

The findings from the interview and focus group discussion of this study indicated, teachers' uncertainty about learning through play and inadequate knowledge on how teachers deal with preprimary school classroom activities were the problem that impeded preprimary school teachers from designing an effective strategy to carryout play to cherish children in their classrooms.

Although majority of preprimary school teachers were observed to have diploma in teaching, those certificates were from different subjects areas not in ECCE. The finding found that majority of primary school did attend neither long nor short term training in ECCE.

This finding is consistent with many study in early childhood education, particularly on play for example, Girma Lemma (2014), put it clearly that early childhood care givers lacked appropriate knowledge and skills in children pedagogy he also found that care givers training in preschool teaching is miscellaneous and lacking uniformity. And this is also consistent with the study of Belay and Hawaz (2005), who reported that lack of professionalism had affected the quality rendered in the centers. This finding is not only consistent with the studies conducted in Ethiopia, it is also consistent with some studies conducted oversea like, Cheng and Stimson (2004) and Zhu (2010), who described that teachers who did not receive proper training on what learning through play entails will find it hard to understand how it should be implemented. Similarly, Trawick – Smith and Dziurgot (2010) found that teachers who did not have strong knowledge about play seemed to provide poor fit interactions with children. Were interaction were demonstrating lack of knowledge about play and inabilities to reflect on child outcomes. Trawick – Smith and Dziurgot(2010), They went further and stated the reverse too, teachers who are able to provide good fit interactions with children during play had previously received some education in play theory and practice during their teacher preparation program. Teachers

who receive such training possess strong knowledge regarding the benefits of play and were able to link play with children's learning outcomes.

However, Van der Aalsvoort, Prakke, Konig and Goorhuish(2010) They found that the way in which teachers are trained and taught at university does not solely impact learning opportunities presented to children. Preschool teachers who offer children playful learning opportunities do so based on knowledge and experience, interpreting learning and development.

The findings from observation and interview also revealed that lack of teachers competent to be one of the hindrances to using play strategies. Teachers have a positive knowledge about play but the study results shows that teachers remain skeptical and uncertain about whether they implemented play in classroom.

This study is consistent with the study of many researchers who studied teachers competent like (Synod, 2010; Walsh & Pretty,2007; and Ecell & Linington, 2008), who suggested that for a teacher to be able to make playful activities available in any given space and to set up an adequate learning environment, he or she requires to be competent and creative. The teacher as a knowledgeable person will follow a teaching practice which fosters equality, utilizing every opportunity to understand how children learn through play and promoting "children's self- esteem, confidence, independence and imagination" through play. It was also suggested that teachers who believe that children can learn through play will allow each child to have equal learning opportunities and the competent teachers will encourage learning and understanding during play and in doing so promote "courage, trust, perseverance, confidence and responsibility.

This finding is also supported by Excell and Linington (2008), who suggested that in order for teachers to be competent, they need to act reflectively in their teaching practice to ensure that learning through play is taking place as children from teachers' actions and words. By acting reflectively in their teaching practices, teachers may find new playful ways to enhance children's learning by focusing on eliminating frustrating, disillusion, and feelings of failure experienced by children during learning.

5.4. What do preprimary schools see as the challenge and benefit of play based pedagogy?

The findings of this study show that the classrooms settings were not set ready for preprimary school children. Classrooms were found to be occupied with high desks. There were absence of enough playing materials and time allocation for play in all classrooms. Time and absence of play materials are the most prominent impeding factors in this study. According the observation, it was not only the absence of playing materials and time, but also the absence of well-designed timetable for preprimary school teaching and learning process was also observed. According to Brooker, Blasé and Edwart(2014), the learning environment should provide children with play materials and equipment and children should receive adequate demonstration in functioning of learning materials and equipment.

This finding is consistent with some studies conducted in Ethiopia for example, Tirussew(2005) reported that the major challenges which are existing in practice of ECCE in Ethiopia include lack of guidelines and culturally story books. His finding was later consolidated by the findings of Fantahun (2016) who also reported that the presence ECE suffers from lack of quality. Also UNICEF (2006), mentioned that though children should be provided with adequate playful learning environment with access to as many resources as possible, there may be schools that cannot provide children this idealistic environment as the materials and equipment may be expensive for some preschools, because of short comings.

Also, finding found that play is believed to consume much time than teaching. And this turned teachers to depend heavily on chalk and talking rather than play. The findings also revealed that teachers use the available time to cover their text books before semester ended as it was required by the schools rules. It was also observed that children were overloaded with academic activities like reading, counting, classwork and home activities.

This implies that a big and thick wall is created between formal teaching and play. Play was considered as something different from academic activities. Teachers do not know that not allowing children to play it is like deflating a ball. People play with the ball when it is inflated. But a ball with deflated air will not be used for kicking or through in a normal way. Similarly, children who are not given ample time to play their physical, social, emotional and cognitive will also be jeopardized.

This finding is consistent with the report of (Whitebread et al., 2012) who report that in Italy, France, Poland, UK and Spain the view was that there is a growing tendency to reduce play time in children 's lives, both at school and home, in order to increase time for 'learning' (learning and play are seen as separate concepts). The emphasis is on academic performance, especially in reading and maths.

Lots of studies confirmed that play has been linked to the development of children of various early skills that are essential in preparing children to learn (Berk, 2002; Bredekamp, 2004; Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, & Roskos, 2015 as cited in Kejo, 2017). Also, Wannie(2016) suggested that play helps children to become active and practice mastery of art, music, science maths and social relation which is important for the development of a complex and integrated brain. Also, the result of this study is inconsistent with study conducted on play by several researchers (Giren, 2016; Mirts, 2014; Wenner, 2009; Brock, Doddy & Olusoga, 2013) who reported that play is a part of the preschool education institutes' daily routine and inseparable part of the activities as they play an important part in the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Summary

This study was carried out to address the factors that influence the implementation of play and its contribution to children's learning in classrooms. Therefore, the following research questions were set for investigation:

1. How learning through play is conceptualized?
2. Do preprimary school teachers need to utilize learning through play in their classrooms?
3. How do preprimary school teachers implement play in their classrooms?
4. What do preprimary schools see as the challenge and benefit of play based pedagogy?

There were 8 ECCE centers in Pinyudo town which provide access to education for children from 4 to 6 years. From this, 3 schools were purposely selected. All available preprimary school teachers were included in the study. The total number of the participants was 18 (Males=3 and females=15). The qualitative research instruments, namely interview, FGD and observation were used for data collection. The data was analyzed qualitatively.

More specifically the findings of the present study demonstrated:

- The results revealed that teachers conceptualized play as physical and social activities.
- The finding also revealed that play was understood as an activity for enjoyment which includes fun, game, singing and drawing and dancing, crawling, rolling, jumping activity.
- The result shows that teachers regarded play as recreational activity with less purpose.
- The findings from the interview and focus group discussion of this study indicated, inadequate knowledge on how teachers deal with preprimary school classroom activities was the main problem that impeded preprimary school teachers from designing an effective strategy to carry out play to cherish children in their classrooms.
- Although majority of preprimary school teachers were observed to have diploma in teaching, those certificates were from different subject areas not in ECCE. The finding

found that majority of primary school did attend neither long nor short term training in ECCE

- The findings of this study show that the classrooms settings were not set ready for preprimary school children. There was absence of enough playing materials and time allocation for play in all classrooms.
- Also, finding found that play is believed to consume much time than teaching. And this turned teachers to depend heavily on chalk and talking rather than play. The findings also revealed that teachers use the available time to cover their text books before semester ended as it was required by the schools rules.

6.2. Conclusions

Based on the findings mentioned above one can conclude that: Though play is complex in its definition, its importance to children's general development should not be taken so lightly. Scholars believe that Play is the chief vehicle to children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Play is children activity with serious purpose or objectives to be achieved. Even though the National Policy Framework and Guidelines for ECCE mention the value of play, the majority of preprimary school teachers in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda in Gambella still have problems of how to implement/incorporate play in their classrooms. The study revealed that majority of teachers has less or no knowledge of ECCE. The findings also showed that, absence of teachers training in ECCE, lack of enough and relevant play materials and absence of enough time allocation were the prominent factors impeding the implementation of learning through play in classrooms.

6.3. Recommendations

To repeat, the general objective of this study was to investigate the factors that influence the implementation of learning through play and its contribution to children's learning in preprimary classrooms. The findings of this study are significant because it shows that play was not implemented in preprimary classrooms in the three selected schools under this study. The below recommendations are given in line with the findings and discussions in chapter 4 and 5 respectively. Therefore, the recommendations are as follows:

- Most of teachers do not conceptualize play as part of academic activities, they are not even aware of the importance of play to the early childhood developmental domains such as, physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development. Therefore, the study recommended that Gambella regional educational bureau in collaboration with Gog Woreda educational bureau and other concerned stakeholders should take the initiative to monitor and should make sure that all preprimary schools teachers are implementing learning through play and child pedagogy by organizing an advanced training in ECCE professional development.
- The absence of playing materials and lack of enough time devoted to play was also evident in preprimary classrooms in Pinyudo. Hence, teachers themselves should be trained on indigenous material production. The schools are also recommended to allocate enough play time to ease the exercise of play activities. Preprimary school teachers should also believe in children potential and ability to produce some playing materials for themselves. Generally, each school in Gog woreda is recommended to provide children with play materials and equipment and children should receive adequate demonstration in the functioning of the learning materials and equipment.
- The findings revealed that preprimary school teachers do not plan necessary strategies and different types of play which supposed to be exercised by children in the classrooms. Also, with the exception of play during school break time, play activities is completely restricted from classrooms. Therefore, teachers need to prioritize learning through play and adapt planning and style of teaching for play activities. This can happen only if teachers are given opportunities to attend intensive training in ECCE.

- The findings of this study also showed that the classrooms settings were not set ready for preprimary school children. Preprimary school teachers should be provided with necessarily training pertaining to design and organization of ECCE classrooms.
- Finally, the researcher would also like to recommend two future research to be conducted in the same schools in Pinyudo town of Gog Woreda in Gambella these are:
 - ✓ The scope of this study is also required to be extended to include the perspectives of schools principals, Woreda educational bureau administrators and parents as their perspectives may serve to help in the implementation of early childhood play and reveal the potential gaps and challenges to be addressed by ECCE policy experts
 - ✓ The consideration of children with special needs during learning through play sessions

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guides for preprimary Teachers

This interview is being conducted as part of the study that seeks to investigate learning through play and its implementation and its contribution in your preprimary school in Pinyudo Town. You have signed a consent form, which indicates you consent to this interview. The interview will be recorded to ensure an accurate record of your comments.

Name of the School _____ Date _____
Classroom _____ Time _____

1. What is play?
2. Do you use play as a means of instruction in the class?
3. How do you use play in a typical class/lesson?
4. How do you think play is important? For what?
5. When do you use play?
6. In what ways is play implemented in your classroom?
7. Which strategies or activities do you use to promote play?
8. Any provision of play for children on the timetable in your school?
9. Why do you practice play in your classroom? By doing so, do you think play helps children learn?
10. How much time is devoted for play in your classroom?
11. Are you involved when children play?
12. Have you taken any training on how to teach in early childhood education?
13. Do you think play have contribution to children learning? If so what do you think is the contribution?
14. What support would enable you to implement play?
15. Any obstacles or barriers to play are evident in your classroom

Thank you for the Interview!

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Questions

This Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is being conducted as part of the study that seeks to explore play and its implementation and its contribution in your preprimary school in Pinyudo Town. You have signed a consent form, which indicates you consent to this interview. The discussion will be recorded to ensure an accurate record of your experience.

Name of the school _____ Date _____ Time _____

The following questions will serve as a basis for the focus group discussion:

1. Please share with the group your name, school, and experience teaching.
2. May you share with group your belief about implementing play in your school?
3. In what ways is play implemented in the classroom?
4. Please share experiences that you have had with play-based learning in your classroom.
5. Describe how effective or ineffective that you felt that those learning experiences were.
6. Describe the positive experiences that you've had with Implementing play-based learning in your classroom
7. Tell me about disappointments that you have had with implementing play-based learning into your classroom.
8. What difficulties do you face in implementing play-based learning experiences into your classroom?
9. How does teacher support influence play-based learning experiences?
10. What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of play-based leaning in your classroom?

THANK YOU ALL FOR THE INTERESTING DISCUSSION!

APPENDIX C

Observation Guide

This observation is being conducted as part of the study that seeks to explore play and its implementation and its contribution in preprimary school in Pinyudo Town. What is noticed will be recorded to ensure an accurate record of the school.

Name of the School _____

Classroom _____

Teacher children ratio _____

Date _____

Time _____

1. The organization of the classrooms
2. Classroom activity based on teacher involvement
3. The availability of learning through play
4. Resources available(consideration of the use of locally available materials)
5. Identifying play and non-playing technique
6. Environment(how teacher creates the learning experience using space, indoor and outdoor)
7. Play engagement in school- how children engage in play in school/classroom
8. There are opportunities for frequent and positive child-child and child-adult interactions
9. The environment stimulates children to play, explore, and discover
10. There are opportunities for children to engage in active indoor and outdoor play
11. There is a balance of time for free play and structured activities
12. Present and use of indoor play activities
13. Present and use of outdoor play activities
14. Availability of instructional play materials.

AGEENGA PREPRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM



GILO BETHEL PRIPRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM



OKEDI PREPRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

