

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

Department of Special Needs Education

**Early Childhood Education: Parental Perceptions of Government,
Private and Faith- Based Preschools in Addis Ababa**

By: -Aweke Lemessa

June, 2016

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**This Thesis is submitted to the Department of Special Needs Education in
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Approval of the Board of Examiners

1. Advisor

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

2. Internal examiner

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

3. External examiner

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

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Abbreviations /Acronyms

ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education

ECE- Early Childhood Education

ESDP – Education Sector Development Program

KG- Kindergarten

MoE – Ministry of Education

MoH – Ministry of Health

MoCWA – Ministry of Children and Women Affairs

NGOs – Non Governmental Organization

NPE – ECCEE – National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education of
Ethiopia

SNE – Special Needs Education

Abstract

Parental perceptions play pivotal rule for preschool children education. The purpose of this research was to investigate about preschool education: parental perceptions of government, private and faith- based preschools in Addis Ababa. Based on the purpose of the study, perceived reasons of parents for sending their children to preschools, the perceived benefit of preschool, how parents evaluate the curriculum their children learn and parents of preschooler involved in the preschool setting assessed. To this end, qualitative method was used for the study. Data were gathered from 9 preschool parents. The instrument used was semi- structured interview. The data gathered through in depth- interview transcribed and analyzed. The findings of the study showed that parents perceived to send their children to preschools develop children cognitive ability and prepare them for formal schooling, secondly, parent perceived the benefit of preschool in order to get social development, develop language skill and health and safe environment; thirdly, parent perceived the lesson their children attend in preschools, language and math activities included in the curriculum more preferable; finally parent perceived the involvement of them to preschool education to follow up their children daily activities and involved preschool committee member. Also based on the findings some suggestions have been recommended.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Through organization and industrialization, there has been an evaluation of family systems towards nuclear families and fewer family members. Along with these changes, there has been an increase in working mothers. Because of the changes in family structures, the perception of childrearing has also changed. Conventionally childrearing was a family issue in the past. With this scarcity of child care within the household, the responsibility of child care and education have shifted from the parents to early childhood education and care center (Lee. I, 2006).

Early childhood education (ECE) provision is becoming a growing discipline and has received increased policy attention in many countries during the past years. Equitable access to quality early childhood education is increasingly viewed by policy makers as a way of strengthen the foundation of lifelong learning for all children and supporting the education and social need of family. Countries are increasingly determine to the provision of early childhood education (Cruban, 2009). It should not be forgotten that early childhood education is, first and for most, for children.

Moreover in order to insure the transmission of knowledge and further development from generation to generation, early childhood education is being in a global policy spotlight than ever before indiscriminately in one or the other, from urban to rural and from richest to poorest countries all over the world. Likewise the government of Ethiopian put this hot issues and developmental National policy framework for early childhood care and education (MOE, MOH, and MO CWA, 2010). Stated that “it is during the early years that children learn and acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes quickly with minimal efforts”; however, poverty and other disadvantages can hamper the all-round development of the children. Hence, carefully planned early interventions equitable and equal can have long term positive outcomes for children in all aspects of life (Woodhead, 2009).

Preschool education plays significant role as it helps children in successful completion of primary education. It provides the foundation for all round development and enables the child to understand various issues (Harkness super, 1991). Child at this stage need to be

encouraged to develop positive attitude through child to nature and the child to child interaction education is to be designed carefully to provide wholesome growth and development of children.

Early childhood education experience, according to Barnard, (2001), positively affects later home and school involvement in education. A child who fails to acquire early education may suffer emotionally, socially, intellectually and even physically if he/she trusted in to the primary school without a sustainable early childhood education experience that will give him/her a solid foundation in the primary school. Therefore, for the effective and efficient unlocking and development of a child's latent, abilities and other forms of behavior of positive values in the society in which he/she lives, early childhood education becomes very imminent. This is of utmost importance because researchers on early childhood education experiences have a great impact on all areas of a child's development and had suggested that the first teacher is an extremely important person in the child life.

According to Feeny, Christensen and Maavick, (1987), early childhood education is an asset of immense value in the later academic pursuit of a child and much more lately in life. This early experience exposes the child to all fields which make him/her more apt to learn in the primary level as the confidence in his learning capabilities which he/she acquired from the nursery school is lifted to primary school. This eventually help/aids and facilitates his/her learning. The early childhood education aims at developing the cognitive and affective potential at an early age. (Andersm, 2002), is of a view that when children are exposed to early childhood education, they develop superior communication skills, necessary physical ability and social unit needed in adult life and an increased cognitive and effective educational balance.

Parents play an important role in the early childhood care and education. Parent involvement is linked to children's total learning. The greater parent involvement in children learning positively affects the school performance including higher academic achievement (Yan and Lim, 2002). Parents believe that three to six is the right age for the children to receive per-school education as a child is able to understand things well (Comer, 1991).

In discussing the importance of early years for subsequent development, early childhood is commonly described in terms of critical period. Intellectual development is dramatically growing before children reach age 8. Also in this period, children's potential capacities can develop through acquired environment and stimulation. Thus, children need appropriate stimulation for children (Bloom, 1964, Hunt, 1961, Piaget, 1952). The result of this type of research has had an effect on the perception of early childhood education. The emphasis on early childhood education has grown greater due to the amount of time children spend in these settings. Over the past years, research has confirmed the importance of children's experiences in early childhood education and care (Denton, 2001). During the children critical period, they develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically at an accelerated rate. And quality early childhood education programs promote children healthy and successful growth (children's Defend Fund, 2004).

All children will have access to quality appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school (NEFP, 1999). Following the trend of early childhood education and programs, there has been increasing interest in the quality of early childhood education and care centers. (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 1999), have tracked the influence childhood education and care on development of children from age 3 to second grade between high-quality and poor quality programs in the United States. Children who attended high quality child education and care centers performed better on measures of both cognitive skills (math and language abilities) and social skills (interaction with peer and problems behaviors) in child education and care through the time they entered the school. In addition high quality education and care continued to positively affect children's performance at least through preschool and many cares through the end of second grade. Therefore, parents need to take great consideration in selecting an early childhood education and care center for their children.

Most parents prefer that their children participate in high quality early childhood education and care program (Cryer and Burchind, 1997). Components of quality early childhood education and care can be determined by individuals. (Browne –Millor, 1990), found that parent considered several aspects when they on their children's school, such as staff warmth, good center program, social activities, and physical activities. According to (Cryer and Burchind 1997), early childhood education and care center

parents indicated that, health, safety, and adult child interaction were the most important aspects, and that school curriculum aspects were also very important.

It is known that there can be many benefits for children's in attending in preschool service. At the preschool level, the holistic development of children's most important. The benefit of preschool education emphasis the need for children to build up confidence and socio-emotional development is equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions for life-long learning (Wilson, 2002).

In general early childhood education is the subject of considerable debate and interest among governments and politicians in all part of the world. International organization such as UNICEF and UNESCO are stressing the importance of providing quality early childhood education to all children, not only for those from less advantaged backgrounds but for all children. Their arguments are based up on the increasing evidence that has shown the long term benefit of offering young children education in the early years (AndreyChrtis and Maureen O'Hagun, 2003).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Changing times bring changing needs and changing needs require different services. Of course, the only thing we can be, and always been, certain of change. But some part of our lives change faster than others. For example, the large proportion of mothers entering the work force in the 1990s has occurred, in many countries, without corresponding increases in the provision early childhood education. Changes is societal circumstance, life style and needs, coupled with technological advances and expansion our knowledge base drive the need for early childhood education (Comes, 1995). These changes all influence the perception of parent's preschool children and impact on the educational need of children as out of family case become and more necessary in the early years.

The early years are critical in laying the foundation for children to develop to their full potential and to be successful in school and later life (Kotlus 1996). So preschool education play significant role as it helps children in successful completion of primary education and enables the children to understand various issues.

The preschool education is the foundation for all development of preschool learners. Sending them to preschool is the responsibility of parents. This responsibility greatly depends up on parental perception. Even though, the study of parental perception about preschool education is very crucial, the researcher did not get any research paper written by local researcher, but internationally there are a number of research papers written by the issue of parental perception but which are different from what I am studying now. So this paper will be the first research paper by this area in locally.

Parents have different perception about their children to send preschool education. These parental perceptions formed by number of factors over the period of time. Those factors which shape parents perceptions are demographic that is age, gender, educational background and socio economical states (Bowman, 2003). This indicates that parental perception play pivotal role in the life of children during and after the education.

So the perception of parents about early childhood education in the context of this research covers programs that cater service for children age 4-6 years enrolled in government, private and faith based preschool settings. The education and training policy (1994), and the national policy framework (2010) have indicated that early childhood education program must be comprehensive in its nature addressing the holistic development of children in the domains of cognitive, affective and socio-emotional developments. According to the national policy framework for early childhood care and education (2010) documents one of the major goals of the preschool program is to enable children to acquire basic skills such as pre-reading, pre-writing, counting, arithmetic, esthetic and social competency as a strategy to make them ready for formal school.

In light of the above argument and growing demand for the sector at large in terms of recognizing the contribution of early childhood education for later development of children, in necessitates undertaking research to explore the different dimension of parental perception in the context of preschool education settings. In general the major purpose of this study showed the early childhood education: parental perception of Government, private and faith based preschool in Addis Ababa Gullel sub city s. In order to achieve its objectives the study attempted to seek possible solution for the following basic questions:-

1. What are the perceived reasons of parents to send their children to preschool?
2. What are the perceived benefits of preschool education for children?
3. How do parents evaluate the curriculum their children experienced?
4. Are parents of preschoolers involved in the education of their children?

1.3. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explain early childhood education: parental perception of Government, private and faith based preschools in Addis Ababa. To this end, it has the following specific objectives:-

- To describe the perceived reason of parents send their children preschool.
- To examine the perceived benefit of preschool education.
- To identify the curriculum of preschool children experienced.
- To identify parental involvement in the education of preschoolers.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study focused on the early childhood education: parental perception of Government, private and faith-based preschool. Doing this kind of study will have the following significance.

- Create awareness for parents to have a better understanding about preschool education.
- Inform teachers, directors and other educator to parents the purpose of send their children to preschool education.
- Inform teachers and directors to parents expect benefits from preschool education
- Inform teachers, directors and other educators to parents the importance of involvement in preschool education
- It may help other educators and researchers for further research in area.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on parental perception about preschool education. Even though there are many aspects of perception, this study focused only the perceived reason of parents send their children, the perceived benefit, the curriculum their children

experienced and parents involved in preschool education. The study was delimited to three preschool settings in Gulele sub city Addis Ababa. These include Atse Libine Dingl , St.Merry and Bilatena academy preschools.

1.6. Limitation

The serious limitation for this research was problem of getting recent and up-to-date books which are directly related to the topic.

1.7. Operational Definition

Early childhood education: is educational program for children who reach his/her age 4 to 6 to learn and develop language skills, math, social interaction, aesthetic and physical activities.

Preschool: - places of education for preschooler enroll to learn language, math, social interaction, aesthetic and physical education from age 4 to 6.

Parental perception: - belief or attitudes of parents about early childhood education benefit, curriculum and involvement in preschool.

Curriculum: -is an educational Plan for preschool learner intended to design teach language, math, social interaction, Aesthetic and physical activates through play

Parental involvement: - physically occur at preschool to maximizing educational goal of preschooler in terms of follow up children homework, participate in the parent meeting and participate as a committee member in the preschool.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The study is organized in five chapters and hence, the first chapter deals with the introduction, statement of the problem along with research questions, general objective of the study, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study and operational definition and organization of the study. Chapter two provides the related literature reviewed while the third chapter presents the research design and methodology. Chapter four deal with the analysis and interpretation of the data. The fifth chapters addressed the summary and conclusions finally possible recommendations forwards.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.1. The history of Preschool Education

Education is believed to have an extensive history, and the development of educational theory and practice extends from Greek Philosophers, such as Socrates (469-398B.C), Plato (425-347B.C) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C), through the Roman Empire, into the Middle Ages, the renaissance, and on the more recent centuries (Feem et.al., 1987).

Nevertheless, early childhood education as a distinct discipline had its beginning with Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) as in nineteenth century began. It can be said that early childhood education is a new field, though it has old roots. The past philosophers, writer and educators suggested many of the significant aspects and practices found in today's preschools.

To begin with, Plato and Aristotle speculated the importance of beginning education for young children. Both saw human beings as essentially good, emphasized the development of mind and body, and suggested that children ought to be directed to learning by what amuses their mind to discover with accuracy their unique natural skill. However, up to the end of middle ages, children were regarded as small adults and given no special consideration or treatment (Feeney et.al, 1987).

Martin Luther (1483-1546), the religious reform of the renaissance period advocated that school should develop the intellectual, religious, physical, emotional and social qualities of children. John Amos Comenius(1592-1670)also stressed the importance of teaching children while they are young's and advocated learning by doing and may have been the first to advocated learning through play. He also realized that improved education resulted in improved social relations. In his view children should teach by observation and doing and by use rather them precept; discipline for children should be mild. (Lambert, 1960; Faster and Headly, 1958; Feemy et.al., 1987).

In 1693, by John Locke words as he wrote some though concerning education which emphasized “natural methods of teaching” instead of the strict discipline advocated by the theologians of the day.

Lack advocated that “playing and childish actions are to be left perfectly free and unrestrained (Christs & Boultwond, 1953). He urged parents and educators to use gentle kindness and soft words of admonition, to recognize the importance of play in children’s learning and to treat each child as an individual. In was vital, according to lock to observe the uniqueness of every child and then, based on those observations, to select teaching strategies most suited to that particular child.

About the middle of the seventeenth century, Rousseau’s influence, on the philosophy of education began. Initially, he followed Lack’s though about education but exposure to the idea of others who moved in the circles of philosophy and politics led him to become more reflective and develop innovative educational idea of his own.

In 1762, with the publication of Emile, Rousseau’s ideas came into the public eye. He... viewed humans as essentially good with a natural Curiosity. He felt that as a distinct and unique part of humans, childhood should be valued for itself and recognized as different from adult hood (Butt, 1978). Rousseau’s agreed with lock that children had unique ways of seeing; hearing and thinking that separated them from the way adults saw, heard and thought. Rousseau’s maintained that children should be provided with an education that was meaningful and personal to the young learners. Not only must educators take this into account, but they must also pay heed to the difference of sex, age and individuality in each child.

Rousseau (1772- 1778) gave special attention to the concept of childhood education. He felt that childhood is a unique time when a child should not be considered as a small adult- filled with original sin. Instead the child has to be seen as a natural being in his or her own right who need complete freedom to grow and develop. He was most concerned with helping the child to develop naturally, to unfold, and blossom to the greatest extent possible. According to Rousseau, the best education for the child is education which least hampered the development of pupils natural ways. To him the

natural impulses of the child were good; thus, express rather than repression were a fundamental tenet of education (Lambert, 1960; Austin, 1976; Feemey et.al, 1978).

Johann Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), a Swiss educator who was influenced by romantic philosophers including Rousseau's, devoted his life to the education of children particularly for the orphaned and the poor. He believed that education should be based on the natural development of children and that every child was capable of learning. He rejected the practice of simple memorization and advocated sensory exploration and observation as the bases of child learning. He was also concerned with teaching human relationships; his aim was to awaken a feeling of brotherhood make children affectionate, just and considerate (Lambert, 1960; Feeney et, al., 1987).

Robert Owen (1772-1858), an English social philosopher, and controversial reformer was a disciple of Pestalozzi. He established schools to improve the lives of children who from the age of six worked long hours in the mills alongside their parents. Own believed that education, starting with the very young, together with an environment that allowed people to live by the principle of mutual consideration, could transform the nature of people and society. He did not believe in pressuring and punishing children to learn; rather he showed children the negative consequences of their action. Sensory learning, stories and visitors from the community were included in the school program in an attempt to make school relevant and interesting (Feeneyet.el, 1987).

Many of the practices originated in own school can still be found in today's early childhood programs. They include pride of time which the children choose for their activities, emphasis on a warm, nurturing and non-punitive teachers, and the use of spontaneous play, singing and dancing as features of the education of children under the age of six (Lambert, 1960; Feeney et, al 1987).

Feiederc Froebel (1782 – 1852) of German parentage became convinced that the most needed reform in education is concern for young children. Froebel opened a school for little children in which play, games, songs, talking, painting, gardening, modeling, weaving, looking at pictures and listening to stories were important features. Moreover, all these were intended to foster inventiveness and skill development. He called this school kindergarten (Literally children's garden), because he believed that

educating children is similar to cultivating plants. Moreover, the name is still used for children of four to six. Froebel gave emphasis to the idea that education comes chiefly from doing and because he recognized the value of play as an educational force in the lives of children; play and games become prominent features of his kindergarten (Foster and Heady, 1959; Lambert, 1960). Besides establishing the kindergarten, he set up an institute to train young women to become kindergarten teachers (Feeney et.al., 1987).

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) has had great influence in the education of young children. Unlike Froebel, she saw no value in play. She did recognize, however, the need for children to participate in the work of the school. Children worked by themselves with materials designed by her in such a way that children could see their own errors and made their own corrections. The teachers played the role a guide and were ready to give assistance when needed (Lambert, 1960). She also highly emphasized that early childhood is the richest and extremely valuable period which ought to be utilized by education in every possible way, and warned that the waste of this period of life cannot be compensated (Cllermont, 1973).

Montessori's emphasis, however, was on the child's assumption of responsibility, because to her there was no freedom without independence. She wished to see children become increasingly independent of the teacher moreover, she emphasized on the need to recognize difference in children and the need to adapt work to the individual; and the role of the school in improving the community and the need for working closely with parents. She also believed that children could learn best through their own direct sensory experience of the world (Foster and Headley, 1959; Lambert, 1960; Feeney et.al. 1987).

Round the same times as Montessori's was working with children in Italy, Johan Dewey was acknowledging changes in children that were, he contended, brought about the Industrial Revolution children were no longer involved in the process of 'making' goods. They were presented with manufactures items of which they had little or no idea of the process that had occurred in the manufacturing of such items. Hence he argued, school must change to meet the change needs of the children. No longer were teachers must effective when the stood before the children and lectured, encouraging

rote learning of facts. Children must 'learn by doing' and teachers should be guides, questioning actions and encouraging problems solving.

Dewey Believed, as did Rousseau, that education should be compatible with the natural and individual growth of children. Children would learn and develop through the experience of interacting with the environment and not necessarily by following the educational enters of an adult (Brance, 1978)

Clearly, the work of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori and Dewey had powerful impact on the nature of early year's education in the first half of the twentieth century. They laid the foundation and provided imputes for twentieth century educators to continue focusing research on theory of child develop.

2.2. Historical Development of Preschool Education and its Current Status in Ethiopia

Education in Ethiopia changed tremendously since late 19th century because the government has made an attempt to improve children's education. When formal education started in Ethiopia during the fourth century, Christianity was the recognized religion. For many years the church controlled all education. Muslim communities also have Quran schools in Mosque in similar way. The Ethiopian church had the longest history of church education that had involved preschool age children (Demissie, 1996).

The concept of early childhood care and education dates back to the 17th by Ethiopia philosophers Zer'aYa'aqob and his walda Haywat (Sumner, 1986 in UNESCO II CBA, 2010) while others associated its development to religious education given to children at the age of four in which children learnt alphabet in church service in the medieval Ethiopia (Ibid).

In Ethiopia, the concept of preschool education in the modern sense is a recent phenomenon in the 20th century. The first modern preschool was established in 1908 Dire Dawa city for the children of foreign mainly French consultants who were helping to build the first railroad in the country (Sumner, 1986).

Since then the provision of preschool education, mainly for children from rich families started to Addis Ababa in attachment with the existing schools such as English school, German school, Lycee Gebremariam and the like. But later in 1963 E.C, provision of preschool began as a community service in the major towns of the country under the ministry of national development and social affairs (Gebreegziabher, 2014).

The year 1974 was a turning point in the history of early childhood education in Ethiopia that resulted in an establishment of an independent commission called “Ethiopian children’s commission” in 1981 with a task of caring and educating Ethiopian children. To begin its job with the mission, a manual for kindergarten in Ethiopia was produced by the commission for the first time in 1982 (Demeke, 2007). Furthermore the commission accomplished the work of advocacy and sensitization to stakeholders by preparing different seminars and workshops on health, nutrition and other related issues of children including those with special needs (national children commission, 1982 in Demeke, 2007).

Following the socialist revolution of 1974, preschool education become part of national educational policy and then curriculum was developed for the first time (Gebreegziabhar, 2014). As a result, the increased involvement of women in economic activities, the need for the facilities to care and education for preschool children became increase. The need resulted in the establishment of preschool education and care.

Generally, the early childhood care and development program in Ethiopia cover the period from birth to the first six years of development. Children usually begin to go to traditional Priest orthodox schools at the age four. This long standing practice seems to be in fact these days even with the advent of modern early childhood education establishments (Tirussew, et. al 1995).

This progress, however, was short-lived with the change in government in 1991, most programs initiated in the previous regime halted. The established kindergartens in towns and cities, however, have continued to the function to date, with the name “Mewal Hitsanat”, which means kindergarten (Demeke, 2007).

In spite of a short lived declination in number of kindergarten and its involvement from 1990 to 1992“it began to boost itself starting from adoption of the new education and training policy in 1994 which recognized kindergarten education as a very important

element in the early childhood and for the preparation of formal schooling, (MoE, 1994) which actually left the program to the private sector, faith based and for nongovernmental organizations in giving access to children.

In Ethiopia ‘pre-primary schools’, ‘kindergartens’; and ‘pre-schools’ are different names for education of children before age 7, the age for primary school entry (Demeke, 2007).

The pre-primary education includes kindergartens, “O” class and child to child programs. This level normally involves children of age 4-6 enrolled in the pre-primary education. Non-governmental organization such as communities, private institutions, and faith based organizations are the predominant operators of kindergartens.

The government of Ethiopia introduced “O” class and child to child programs in the education system in the past few years. The government is also involved in developing curriculum, training teachers, and providing supervisory support.

The enrolment of pre-school education is increasing every year through under reporting remains a persistent issue in the preschool program of the pre-primary education the annual abstract of education satisfies of ministry of education (MoE, 2011).

2.3. Reasons of Parents send their Children to Preschool

Preschool is important for children’s development; after all the children do a lot more than play there. In preschool education children are given important tools for later life. So many parents choose to send their children to preschool. These are good reasons.

2.3.1. Learning Social Behavior

If the child has so far only been exposed to a close family environment, he or she must now learn to deal with an entirely new situation. There are typically 20-25 children in each preschool group. Here, children learn to assimilate of course, fighting and conflict are normal and should be dealt with patiently and constructively. Often, this happens without intervention from the staff, children in preschool develop a feeling for interacting with others and learn social behaviors. This experience complements the child’s home life and promotes his or her emotional and intellectual development.

2.3.2. Promoting Personality Development

Every child has a set role in his or her family. This is important, as it gives children stability and security in their early years. However, it is just as important that they learn other roles and understand their place within a different social structure, preschool offers these opportunities in a safe and supervised environment. In the one or two years that they typically attend preschool, children can become accustomed to and feel part of a new group and new people and further develop their interpersonal skills. Overtime, they assume different rules, take on responsibility and build self-confidence. An important part of this is play time, either spontaneous or guided.

2.3.3. Learning from and with one Another

In preschool, children from different age groups are typically combined into one group. Each child has different talents and abilities; heritage, culture or religions vary as well. These differences serve as important bases for learning. Children do not necessarily learn consciously but through observation, imitation and repetition. Thus, each child learns from his classmates and develops his own knowledge and abilities as well as social skills, which often generates positive emotion.

2.3.4. Targeted Instruction and Development of Basic Skills

In preschool, the teaching staff fosters your child's development in important areas. Perception, language, movement and coordination, thinking, emotion and empathy are developed through play. Trained educators promote learning and play behavior and utilize educational materials, picture books and designated play areas. Many preschool programs include field trips, such as to the Zoo. Study show that these types of activities are very important for fostering positive learning behavior and concentration ability.

2.3.5. Identifying Special Abilities and Needs

Preschool is where special development abilities or deficiencies first noticed. The teachers get to know each child well and able to address his or her specific gifts, strengths and

weakness. This also allows them to obtain professional help-where necessary early on to ensure the child is well – equipped to start elementary school (Kostelink, 2004).

2.4. Benefit of Preschool Education

Early childhood education has received an increased amount attention in the last three decades in the United States and in other countries. There is now a strong consensus on the many benefits of preschool education. Studies have shown that attending a high-quality preschool program not only increases children readiness for preschool, but also cause positive long-term improvements in participant's school performance and social outcomes. Among documented result of preschool education are lower rates of grade retention, increased rates of high school graduation, and less likelihood of being convicted of a crime for both juveniles and adults (Lunch, Robert G., 2004).

According to the education for all, Global monitoring report, 2005, more recently, the driving factor in increasing the demand for early childhood education programs in many developing countries (as industrialized counties just described) is the evidence that these programs lead to enhanced school performance including better school attendance, lower rates of class repetition lower dropout rates, and strong literacy and numeracy skill participation also identified as the best investment for economic growth, with the highest rate of return as a cost effective rout to poverty reduction. The demand also growing as more women are moving away from working in the informal sector (from agriculture to manufacturing and service) and out of un paid family work to wage employment. (Chio, 2002).

Children befit from interacting with peer and adults. The chance to interact with other children is the benefit of preschool children. Interacting with other children means, preschool learner understand how to wait, how to take turn and how to listen other (MoE, 2012).

Preschool is a time for children to expand their love of learning, general knowledge, ability to get along with others, and interest in reasoningout of the world (Taylor, 1949).

Many research evidences have reflected that preschool education has a very positive impact on the social, emotional and intellectual development of young children that lasts well into adulthood (Andresk: and Nichollas, 1997).

(Rudolph and Cohen, 1984) stated that children who built a broad base of understanding at preschool level will be more successful in their elementary school years. However, this holds true when parent and teachers work close together, when the curriculumcomprise subject which are helpful in elementary school, when teachers have provided the integral training and when other essential conditions for effective teaching, learning process are fulfilled. Thus, to make preschool education supportive and that fosters children's latter schooling, the need for facilitate and organize all the desired elements is indispensable.

Preschools education deal with assisting the children to learn to work. Besides, it helps the child to participate with other children of similar ages by means of guided activities such as playing and group interactions. Moreover, it helps the child to acquire the experiences of working and living together through the interplay of group activities. Preschool education is also a preparatory program of teaching children with the task of learning. This enables them to join the elementary school. It also provides children knowledge and skills subsequently leading up to their overall motor development. In addition it helps to enhance the intellectual and language competence of children (Audat, 1979).

ESDP II states that provision of early childhood education plays a positive role on the learning potential of the children. A comprehensive preschool program benefit, focusing on the cognitive as well as physical health needs of the child, enhances its ability to perform and increase the survival rate of the child in the primary school (MoE, 2002).

Research suggests that the benefit of early childhood education to attain the accuracy of the mature brain, the brain needs stimulation in the form of movement and sensory experiences during the early childhood years. (Greanough& Black,1992). Children's movement and activities influence their physical development and opportunities to engage in different types of physical movement are important. In early childhood education involves locomotors movements that develop gross motorskills, non-locomotors movements that develop balance and coordination skills, and manipulative movements that develop fine motor skills and hand eye coordination (Hammet, 1992).

Preschools offer different things to different parents. This can also vary by school facility as well. Some preschools are academically oriented and well offer children a rigorous, but age appropriate curriculum. Some are simply the equivalent of a paid child care or play date facility. Most fall between these extremes. For most parents, preschool offer several different benefits such as it allows children to learn socialization with other kids, it teaches social and emotional skills, teach basic and age appropriate concepts, offers a place to practice parent and child separation, help to develop the ability to express him or herself and ability to appreciate nature and manmade things around them, and to prepare children for their future education.

It is also known that there can be many benefits for children's in attending in preschool education. (Tesson, 2002) benefits of preschool can be very broadranging covering the children social emotional intellectual, language and physical development preschools can offer children the opportunity to develop in each of these areas:-

2.4.1. Social-emotional Development

Social-emotional skills emerge through children experiences in close relationships and the varied activities that occur in relational experience, such as shared conversation, warm nurturance, and guided assistance in learning capacities for sociability, responsibility, and self-control. Social and emotional skills also develop through the shared activities of a developmentally appropriate well – designed preschool environment. In such settings (and at home) and under the guidance of sensitive teachers, young children develop an understanding of other people's feelings and needs, are encouraged to feel empathy and caring, learn to manage their own behavior as responsible group members, and acquire a variety of other capabilities that will be directly relevant to their success in managing the classroom environment of preschool education. They also describe their physical characteristics, behavior and abilities positively, need adult's guidance in managing their attention, feelings and show some efforts at self-control, understanding people's feelings, behaviors and notice diversity and demonstrate concern for the needs of others and people in distress (Thompson, 2005).

2.4.2. Language and Literacy Development

During the preschool years and in depth consideration of children's language and literacy competencies is fundamentally important, need attention to this domain is best understood in the broad context of early learning and development language and literacy learning depends on children's functioning in the other including socio-emotional intellectual and physical development children learn to communities with others using words, phrases and sentences as their language skills development. They also learn how to listen, pre-reading and writing skills, use nonverbal languages in communicating, express themselves using word, communicating with others effectively and develop age appropriate vocabulary and grammar.

2.4.3 Intellectual Development

The preschool period is a time of rapid growth along number of developmental measure, not the least of which is children's thinking abilities, or cognition. Across the time period, children learn to use symbolic thought, the hallmarks of which are language and symbol use, along with advanced pretend play. Children this age show cent ration of thought, meaning their focus is limited to one aspect of situation or object. Memory abilities come on line and children show their own ways of categorizing, reasoning, and problem solving.

Cognitive development is characterized by the way a child learns, acquires knowledge and interacts with his surrounding environment. Different cognitive skills are acquired as a child meets certain developmental milestones, but a child of any ability will benefit from activities that promote active learning.

Young children are not only growing during early childhood, but they are also growing mentally. Children of this age continue to advance these skills in observing and interacting with the world around them. They also make tremendous leaps in how they process, store, and use information. As mentioned, quantifying cognitive change is a bit tricky.

Children learn to use their mind by developing ideas, solving problems, and expressing themselves. They also make choices and learn in natural way through play, develop their imagination and creativity, pre-math and pre-reading skills and learn difference and similarity.

2.4.4. Physical Development

Children learn to use their bodies in new ways as they grow and develop. Their fine and growth motor skills, and hand in eye coordination are developed, together with self confidence in self-awareness. Fine motor skills are necessary to engage in smaller, more precise movements, normally using the hand and finger. Fine motor skills which require less precision to perform. The term “gross motor” development refers to physical skills that use large movement, normally involving the entire body. They also gain greater control over their body and movement and develop their physical fitness and health and wellbeing.

2.5. Preschool Curriculum

The importance of early years of learning is unquestionable. But the question lies on what children are learning, how they are learning and where they are learning (Christen and Jill, 1999). According to (Muler and McDowell, 1993) quality preschool curriculum reflects organized central themes and integrated areas of development, designed to accommodate a broad range of abilities and personalities; employs sound and consistent assessments and documentation procedures; integrates objectives, methods, materials as well as implemented by teachers those who have training and experiences.

Every early childhood education programs has a certain curriculum. Curriculum is a conjectures concept. Therefore, the definition of curriculum can be interpreted in various ways and depend on what emphasis is placed on or who determines the curriculum. Many scholars have different definitions of curriculum based on their philosophies or points of view.

The common definition of curriculum is all the learning experiences for which the school takes responsibility. Traditional curriculum focuses on subject matter and impels that what is worth knowing and emphasizes that children are actively engaged in the process of deciding their own learning objectives (Brnascombe et al, 2000). The curriculum reflects each elements of the early childhood program, such as children’s activities, teaching methods, and the indoor and outdoor physical environment. A good early childhood curriculum is based on how children develop and learn and consists of a wide range of

concepts, experiences, and materials designed based up on the children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs (Herr, 2004).

In rapidly changing contemporary world it is difficult to precisely decide the nature of experiences that the preschool most provide. However, some preschool educators believe that the content of the curriculum need to be relevant have meaning for the child and wholly child centered (Bruce, 1997).

According to (Hasen and Postel, 1994) the preschool experiences are organized around certain areas of learning like aesthetic and creative, languages, mathematics, social and natural sciences and physical education. (Wilson, 2000). Strengthened the language and literacy experiences of preschool curriculum have a profound and lasting effect on the social and academic lives of preschool children. (Charney, 1997) states that the social science experience of preschool curriculum help the children to develop social attitudes, skills and concepts of good citizenship to participate in a culturally diverse, democratic society and increasingly inter dependent world.

In 2005, the national association for the education of young children (NAEYC) presented the standards and accreditation criteria for early childhood programs. The accredited program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development, in each of the following areas 'social-emotional development'; 'physical development 'language development 'cognitive development' which includes the following subject matter areas: early literacy, early mathematics, 'science'; technology, 'creative expression and appreciation for arts, health and safety. The curriculum rational draws on research and assists teachers in identifying important concepts, skills, and effective methods for fostering children's learning and development.

According to ICDR, 1996 the types of subjects designed in the new education and training policy of Ethiopia to be taught at preschool is four in number. These are play in preschool; language (mother tongue); environmental and labour education; mathematics, aesthetics and physical education. For these subjects tentative syllabus was prepared in Amharic that would be improved through time and expected to be developed when translated in to regional media of instructional language based on the tangible situation of the region.

In general Implementing curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, and comprehensive, likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children, is the aim. The indicators of curriculum effectiveness are the following:

1. Children are active and engaged children need to be cognitively, physically, socially, and artistically.
2. Goals are clear and showed by all curriculum goals are clearly defined, shared, and understood by all 'stakeholders' such as program administrators, teachers and families.
3. Curriculum is evidence based that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for the children who will experience the curriculum.
4. Valued content is learned through investigation, play, and focused, intentional teaching. Children learn by exploring thinking about, and inquiring about all sort of phenomena.
5. Curriculum builds on prior learning and experiences. The content and implementation of the curriculum builds on children's prior individual, age related, and cultural learning is inclusive of children with disabilities, and is supportive of background knowledge gained at home and in the community.
6. Curriculum is comprehensive. The curriculum encompasses critical area of development, including children's physical well-being and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge; and subject matter area.
7. Professional standards validate the curriculum's subject-matter content. When subject specification curricula are adopted they meet the standards of relevant professional organizations.
8. The curriculum is likely to benefit children. Research and other evidence indicate that the curriculum, if implemented intended, will likely have beneficial effect (NAEYC, 2003).

2.6. Parents Communication and Involvement

Parental involvement in preschool is defined as a meaningful, two-way communication involving children academic learning and other school activities. Parents also assisting

their child's learning, Being actively involved in their child's education, and being include as appropriate in decision making serving as full partners in their child's education on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child and the carrying out of other activities (Epstein, 1990).

The idea of parental involvement is not a new concept. For decades, paradigms have shifted with regards to involvement, and in the 21st century, activity parents are considered to be vital components of education.

Educators and parents believe parent involvement is essential in the education of children and leads to academic gains (Barge & Loges, 2003)

The fact of parent involvement refers to the amount of time a parent spends as the school involved in activities. This aspect of present involvement tend to be reactive due to the fact the child's bad behavioral or poor academic work is often the reason the parent become involved (McNeal's, 2001).

Parent involved can come in many forms including assisting with homework, sending and replaying to home-school communications about student progress and involving any school activities. (Bracey, 2001) also state regardless of how parent involvement is defined it is vital to a child's success at school.

Many educators emphasize the participation of parents in preschool education. Research findings have also confirmed that parental involvement enhances the value of program for the child (Butter, 2001). (Eldridge, 2000) cited in (Fitzgerald, 2004) found that when parent and teachers work together in early years settings, the result has positive impact on the child's development and learning. These include; increased achievements, better attendance, an improved attitude to learning and less behavior problems.

In light of this idea (Sadek, 1996) stresses that parents should be recognized and respected as children's first and continuing educator and consulted as partner in any decision making process related to their children's education. In addition (Siegel, 2002) explained that both parents and the school must share common perception and responsibilities about the child mutual involvement, accountability and corporation as well as reciprocal communication systems are very important.

The relation between how and school plays a significant role in creating suitable conditions by identifying the behavior and interests of each child to provide him with the appropriate support and to enable him to learn easily.

Regarding to this idea (Choudhury and Choundhury,2002), reveal that “home and school are the two words for preschool children, when total development take place” home and school must work together for better understanding of each other, guiding the children cooperatively for more improved welfare of the children. The teacher should contact the parents of children to know the child’s interest, needs and motivation. The relation the teacher has with the parents, enable her to create healthy, secure and favorable environment for the child in the preschool. Home school relations are promoted through different ways such as home visits, parent’s interview or individual meetings, parent and teachers meetings.

Parent participation in school programs, materials for parents and parents counseling by preschool teachers, parents participation in school programs with their children. Such participation can be the organization of children festivals on which samples of children’s work can be exhibited in a short program of half hours duration by the children and games for parents, which can entertain both the parents and children. In addition participation school programs can be done through invitation of parents on picnics and outdoor trips prepared by the preschools. In these condition’s many interested parents may lend a helping hand to staff in arranging the transportation or fulfilling any other requirements.

Material for parents in one of the ways through which home-school relations develop by using techniques like sending written diary of the child to his parents, and newsletter for keeping the parents informed about a child development, child rearing practices, new friends in education of young children, new song and stories that will help the parents to guide their children better. Parents counseling by preschool teacher is the process by which preschool teachers advises parents to understand the significance of early intervention in preventing later educational deficits (Ibid).

CHAPTER THREE

Research Method

3.1. Research Design

In this study qualitative research method was used to investigate the perception of parents under study. The qualitative technique was applied to obtain and interpret the information from parents in depth interview. The method was used in order to discuss issues of perception more thoroughly with parents. The goal is to recognize and assess emergent themes and patterns so as to provide a rich and contextualized understanding of preschool education from the parent perspective. This chapter describes briefly the basis for choosing the qualitative study approach for the study in depth interview my data collecting methods.

3.2. Sample and Sampling Techniques

Regarding the sample within the study, Merriam, (1998) asserts that “since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research this non-probability sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research.” Research should locate a group of participants rich in knowledge, had experience, this is “purposive” sampling. Therefore, I locate individuals within the preschool, based on the following attributes:-

- Commitment of time – agree to participate in the study.
- Experience: - parents were selected to get the right and deep information.
- Principal remediation.

Hence, currently there are a total of 66 preschools found in Gullel Sub-city. From these 18 Governments, 36 private, 2 public, 4 charitable organization, and 6 faith based preschools are found. So the study sampled only 3 per schools, one from Government, one from private and one from faith based settings where selected for the study.

3.3. Instrument

In any qualitative study, the primary data collection instrument is the researcher, yet it is also standard procedure of data collection to increase trustworthiness of the data. For this reason in depth-interview was used as a method of data generating instrument.

3.3.1. Interview

Semi – structured interview which is the common type of interview in qualitative social research because this allow the researcher insights into others perception about the phenomenon under the study, it is particularly useful for asserting responds' thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and retrospective account of events (Phillips, 2004). (Merriam, 1998) further explained that “interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feeling or how people interpret the world around them”.

Given the nature of the study, how parents perceive the preschool education is the primary objective. Therefore, interview protocol was prepared to gain a better understanding of the preschool parents' perception. The interviews were done privately to allow the participants the opportunity to speak freely about their experiences and, the interview process also used tape record.

3.4. Data Analysis

According to Merriam, (1998), qualitative data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning and between description and interpretation. She further explained that analysis of collected data is ongoing in qualitative research and begin with data collection simultaneously.

Since the objective of this study is to understand the parents perception of preschool education, the data analysis strategy employed for the study is thematic analysis, which according to Gouge and Medill (2007), focuses on the coding of qualitative data producing clusters of text with similar meaning often searching for the central themes

capturing the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. The data that I collected was transcribed verbatim individual interviews.

In my data analysis I used the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts that I accumulated by reading as well as listening to the tape. Through repeated readings, I was able to find themes and patterns. Specifically, I searched for certain words, phrase or pattern that repeated them as I studied the transcripts. I then began to develop my own theme to put data into categories to help me analyze and sort the data. According to Bogdan and Bikla, (1992) “analysis involves working with data, organizing it, breaking into manageable units and searching for patterns or themes to desire what is important to tell others”. Accordingly I identified four major themes: parents’ reason for send their children, benefit of preschool, parental perception of the curriculum and parental involvement in preschool setting. My analysis of the data, finding, themes and patterns are discussed in chapter four.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

In any research undertaking, researchers are expected to employ high standards of academic rigor and to behave with honesty and integrity. It has been assumed that because qualitative research does not involve physically manipulation as that of the experimental method, and it poses less risk to participants. However, there are areas of ethical and moral concerns that must be addressed in any qualitative research proposal namely assessing harms and benefits (the well-being of research participant) informed consent (ensuring that people understand what it means to participants’ in the study), privacy and confidently (protecting participants identities and the data and cultural sensitively (Papps, 2005). Thus, based on their need, I proposed a set of ethical and moral principles procedures and informed the participant before each in depth interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This chapter focuses on analyzing the data collected and presenting the result. As in the cause in many qualitative research studies, data for my study consisted of individual depth-interview to answer the basic research question. The research questions as stated earlier were:

1. What are the perceived reasons of parents to send their children to preschool?
2. What are the perceived benefits of preschool education for children?
3. How do parents evaluate the curriculum their children experienced?
4. Are parents of preschoolers involved in the education of their children?

Initially the responses to interview with parents in preschool education were examined. The themes mentioned by the informants concerning my research questions were identified. Then, identified theme categorized and thematically analyzed. Here my purpose was to capture broad understanding of the issue of perception in preschool education from participant perspectives.

Data analysis its own procedures according to Bogden and Biklan,(1992) “data analysis is the process of systematically searching the interview transcripts, observation notes, and other field notes that the researcher accumulated”.

My analyses involved with this data, organize into manageable unites to search for themes to find out what was important to report. I searched for certain words, phrases, or patterns that repeated themselves. Then I began to develop categories to help analyze and sort the data. The following themes represent my findings.

Table 4.1.: -Themes and sub themes

No	Themes	Sub-themes
1	Parents' reasons for sending their children to preschool	1.1. For cognitive development 1.2. To full fill the demand of formal school
2	Benefits of preschool	2.1. Develop social interactive 2.2. Language skill development 2.3. health and safe environment
3	Parental expectation of the curriculum for their children education	3.1.Language(English and Amharic) lesson 3.2. Math lesson
4	Parent involvement in preschool	4.1. Follow up children activities. 4.2. Participants in committee member.

Parents were asked to explain their perception send children to preschool education setting. After listening to the parent's response in the course of data collection for the studying, I tried to learn why parents send their children preschool from their perspectives. The table below shows the summery of description and explanation of perception given by the parents.

Table- 4.2. Perceived Reason of Parents to send their Children to Preschool

	Views	Informants
1	Cognitive development	All informant
2	Full fill the demand of formal schooling	All informant

As indicated the above table the same pattern existed in how the pertinent parents informed sending their children in preschool education. All parents participated in this study emphasize the perception of parents send children preschool to develop their knowledge and to full-fill for the demand of formal schooling.

4.2.1. Cognitive Development

Parents with whom I spoke during the data collection reported that preschooler cognitive development is very crucial for over all children development. In preschool years children develop language, Math and attempt to ask how things work and why these occur. These why and how question showed that real desire to reason and solve problem about the courses of events. These cognitive developments come from the contribution of parents and teachers work together. One of the informants, I₃ confirmed that:-

.... During preschool age children's thinking skills are undergoing tremendous change because the mental capacity of the children to catch language and math very high. And, these changes did not come without the effort of parents and teachers. Especially teachers have responsibility for cognitive development of children by giving different activities to improve or develop preschooler language, reasoning, problem solving and memory....

Interview-5 April, 2016

The findings of the study indicate that parents consider send their children preschool for cognitive development especially language (English and Amharic) and Math of the preschooler. Preschooler began to think about how and why things work in the world around them. As part of their social environment, teachers and parental perceptions play an important role for preschooler cognitive development. This finding affirms (Chulhury, 2002) one way for teachers to engage preschoolers thinking skill is through reading children's book that promote aspects of cognitive such as reasoning and problem solving, symbolic play, meta cognitive knowledge and memory and also different play activities that can be used to help preschools children cognitive development.

4.2.2 Full-Fill the Demand of Formal Learning

Through the analysis of data I found that to full-fill the demand of formal learning emerged the description given to send preschool education. According to these participants send children to preschool play a transitional role. It bridges the two micro systems home and school. A child is capacitated with basic learning and life skill at ECE settings before entering the complex system of primary schooling .So with this

understanding the parent send their children preschool. In one of such explanation informant 1 said,

..... My child is 6 years old now. He has been attending the last three years in this preschool. By next year he will join to formal/elementary school. I believe that preschool provides a foundation for my son learning both socially and academically that will help him successful when formal school begins....

Interview 8 April, 2016

According to the description above send children preschool is crucial to full-fill the demand of primary school. For these participants preschool enable the preschoolers do well when they enter elementary school. Especially, it is believed that preschool provide a clear vision sense of direction to preschooler. This finding affirms (Landy, 2002) early childhood education can play an essential role for preschool learners for primary school. They are ready for formal schooling.

Table 4.3 Perceived Benefits of Preschool Education for Children

	Views	Informants
1	Developed social interaction	All informant
2	Language skill development	All informant
3	Health and safe environment	All informant

As indicated in the above tables responses of the parents include in the study, the parent perceptions were describing in terms of develop social interaction, language skill development and health and safe environment. Parent perceptions were highly influenced by benefit of children preschool

4.3.1. Develop Social Interaction

From interview held with parents, I come to realize that parent strongly underscore the benefit of preschool to developed children social interaction. They argue that having social interaction determine learning how to wait, how to take turn and how to listen. In line with this explanation one of the informant, I₇ :-

..... My child is comfortable in her home with us. But, she's generally shy out with other or environment not familiar to her. After she has been starting preschool education promote interaction among children and give her perfect opportunity to socialization with each other. Now she is comfortable with her own peer age groups because she sees them as an equal.....

Interview – 10 April, 2016

In the description above, it is evident that this participant gave due attention for social interaction. According to these respondents the benefit of social interactions are critical for preschool learns. This finding affirms (Buch and Ledd, 2001) states that social interactions that take place between peers are positive in nature and successful for children involved. These peer interactions are important because they lead to social and emotional development. Research has shown that children, who can interact successfully with their peers, are more popular, have strong friendships and included more often in classroom activities than children who lack of these skills. The opportunity of social interactions with other is very important for development of all children. Through social interactions, children begin to establish a sense of “self” and to learn what others expect of them. Social interactions for very young children primarily occur within a family, as children grow and develop, they become more and more interested in playing and interacting with other children. When playing with others, children learn appropriate social behaviors, such as sharing, and respecting the property of others.

4.3.2. Language Skill Development

As the response of the parents including in the study show, description given about the benefit of preschool education was in relation to the language skill development. Participants gave more emphasis; the benefit of preschool education is developing children language skills. It is highly influenced by preschool education. Here is an example of excerpt reported during the interview informant 5:-

.....language skill development is crucial to my child to living and learning. It is a right time to him know many words and make practice with his peers and teachers. If he improves language skill means, he can talk with people

with full confidence, share and release feelings and given and obtain information's. So, language skill is important that develop my child understanding and refinement of idea....

Interview – 11 April, 2016

The above response shows that the respondents view the benefit of preschool in terms of language skill development of children's. Listening and communicate skills are increase when they talk with adult and play with other children. So preschools have created such kinds of benefits to preschool learners. This finding affirms (Woodhead, 2009), if children attend in preschool, they will express thought ideas and feelings with increasing confidence and fluency; they talk about their experience, ask questions and follow direction and instruction.

4.3.3. Health and Safe Environment

Parents were asked about the benefit of preschool settings. Health and Safe environment were other benefit for parents. More than anything parents highly cherished well-being of their children. They understand that their children to be health, protected and safe guarded from any situation that could be physical and psychological harm. One of the interviewed parent informant² said:-

.... The most important things are let my child health, be safe and come home safely being protected. Parents usually expect much from the setting. So the teacher and care giver should keep them and to ensure children being protected....

Interview 13 April, 2016

Furthermore, parent explained that the benefit of safe and hygienic environment. If children engage in various types of play and other activities, teachers and care giver keep, guide and teach them the important of personal safety and encourage the children to develop acceptable ways of hygienic opportunities in the course of daily routines, for example, washing hands after messing play and after going to the toilet.

Table 4.4 Parents Evaluate the Curriculum their Children Experienced

No	Views	Informants
1	Language(English & Amharic) lesson	All
2	Math lesson	All

4.4.1. Language (English & Amharic) lesson

In discussing about curriculum design in relation to language development all the informant in depth interview would strongly agree that languages (English & Amharic) are key issue that must be included in preschool education. Based on the curriculum children talk, listened respond stories, poems and songs and engage in role play, using appropriate language to express their feelings. Interview held in informants6 said that:-

..... Children have an access to a wide variety of play activities and encouraged to talk their experiences, idea, feelings and achievement to one another. Also preschool can teach children in the classroom to improve their language skills. To make this the curriculum included the way how to talk, listen, reading and writing in the form of play way.....

Interview- 15 April, 2016

As clearly indicated in description above, the respondent believe that preschool curriculum design based on language development through different play activities is very crucial for early childhood learners. It helps them to improve their language skill.

4.4.2. Math Lesson

It is true that preschools are a place where children learn to develop numeracy ability. This ability is one of the important lessons for children to acquire during preschool education. Early mathematical concepts are crucial for children everyday life. Many mathematical concepts are inherent in play situation and other activities. To identify parent's perceptions about expected curriculum for their children, in depth – interview was conducted with parents. Informant 8 explained that:-

..... Children begin to understand early concepts of size and quantity during preschool time. And they use mathematical language, such as heavy, light, full, empty, long, short, big, little in relevant context. Through talking about daily routines seasonal events, and waiting to take turns, they show awareness of time. Also children solve problems as they play. In the course of their play they sort, order, sequence and count number...

Interview- 19 April, 2016

The report of the participants clearly show that, preschool curriculum design based on develop mathematics ability and concepts of children through different play activities. (Wilson, 2003), confirmed that giving preschooler a solid foundation in early math literacy is critical to their future academic success, not to mention how important it is to their day-to-day functioning. This is especially true giving the increased demands of math curriculum in our preschool today. The purpose of teaching math through play is to make the best possible use of concepts which are important for their future.

Table 4.5. Parents of Preschooler Involved in the Education of their Children

No	Views	Informants
1	Follow up children school activities	All
2	Participate preschool committee member.	I ₁ , I ₂ , I ₃ , I ₅ , I ₆ , I ₉

4.5.1 Follow up Children School Activities

The two ways follow up formation between parents and ECE setting is essential for children's over all development. The involvements of parents to preschool education setting to follow up their children have different forms. For instance, parent help to read the child at home, assisting with homework and participating in parent meeting. These things maintain network between ECE setting and parent's effectiveness. Informant 4 gave the follow accounts:-

I have five years old son attends in the preschool. I follow up his school activities regularly. It is my responsibility to check him because its critical

time for development of cognitive, social and emotional at accelerate rate

.....

Interview- 21 April, 2016

It is clearly indicated that parents do activities that support their children experience learning. It is always helpful parents encourage the children everyday activities.

4.5.2. Participants Committee Members

Concerning the practical contribution of most parents in involve preschool the improvement of ECE. The study identified that many activities that are carried out to improve preschool education. For instance, involving parents to serve preschool in the committee member, regular parent meeting with the school communities to discuss some issue related to children and preschools strong and weak parts. One of the interviewed parents, Informant 9:

..... I have regularly meeting with teacher and sometimes with ECE heads to discuss on the strong and weak part of the child and the school as committee members. In the meeting the progress and weakness of the students and performance of the school was reported and then discussion was held in detail on the issue with the committee members to suggest solution to the students and preschool problems.....

Interview – 20 April, 2016

Through analysis of the data I found that parent's involvement regular meeting with the preschool committee members employed the strategy to promote quality of preschool. As participants ECE committee members play crucial role and the meeting create opportunity to discuss on overall problem of preschool education. This indicates that the perception of most parents of ECE committee member has a positive attitude to involvement.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Summary

This study endeavored to explore parent's perception of preschool education with the intention to understand the issue from the parent perspectives. The study employed qualitative study design with the assumption (core belief) that reality is socially constructed by the participants and there are many truths. The research approach was appropriate as I was trying to understand the complexities of the issue under investigation through the lived experiences, perception and perspectives from holistic stand point.

To this end, parents; whole believe are engaged their children preschool education, parents of government preschool setting, private preschool settings and faith based preschool settings in Addis Ababa Gullele sub-city were involved in the study. Data was generated via interview from 9(nine) purposefully selected parents. All 9(nine) parents, were interviewed. The data secured through this technique is thematically analyzed and organized into four themes to answer the research questions, which are:-

1. What are the perceived reasons of parents to send their children to preschool?
2. What are the perceived benefits of preschool education for children?
3. How do parents evaluate the curriculum their children experienced?
4. Are parents of preschooler involved in the education of their children attended?

Most of the data reported is based on the words of my respondents. This was insuring that their voices were not left out in the analysis and to enable readers easily identify the unidentified experiences of the respondents.

To answer the basic questions that available literature was referred and the necessary information was collected through depth – interview. After presentation and analysis of the available data, made the study revealed the following findings:-

1. Parental perception toward send their children preschools were mainly determined by their ability to read, write and numeracy competency before they move formal school system. Based on this the finding of the study showed that the major reason

parents, send their children preschool education were to develop cognitive ability of the children and prepared them for formal school.

2. Early childhood education has myriad benefits including better, more equitable long-term outcomes for children of divergent economic backgrounds. Moreover these preschools help cultivate future work force. Based on this the finding of the data revealed the benefit of preschool education based on parental perception were to develop language skills, health and safe environment of the children and social development of the children.
3. Early childhood curriculum evolves from the needs of children that it can be viewed as being effective in promoting learning and help children achieve social, emotional, linguist, physical and cognitive goals. Based on this the finding of the study showed that parents perceived the curriculum their children attend felt that two activities language and math were the most important area for their children.
4. Parental involvements in the preschool centers are diverse. However, preference were mainly based on access and extent to which the modality suite one's own life style. Supportive and helping relationship between preschool and home, commitment to collaborate for the interest of children. Based on this the finding of this study on parental involvement toward preschool education showed that parent felt the crucial aspect of this sections were follow up homework, share information about the progress made by children and preschool semester based meeting and involvement parents preschool committee member.

5.2. Conclusion

Education is important for development of any nation in long term. This is the only way to survive in today's fast growing age. Providing education to children is responsibility of parents. This responsibility greatly depends up on parents' perception. Their perception shapes children attitude towards education. This study investigates what parents think and expect from preschool settings when they send their children. All parents expect that by send their children preschool education they would increase cognitive development, and prepared children in the latter formal schooling years. All parents have positive perception regarding to the benefit of language skill development and health and safety of preschool educational settings. Parent perceives the curriculum their children attend all of

them agree that language and math activities are very important for their children future and, all parents perceive that involvement of them in preschool education are helpful for children.

5.3. Recommendation

The methodology of this study as well as the finding, promote recommendations relative to the research and implementation of early childhood education settings. The recommendation of further study includes:

1. All parents need their children to know more academic knowledge. But, they did not mention others. Hence, preschool principals and teachers it is important that create awareness of the curriculum and contact with parents and give information about the curriculum and the routine their children attend.
2. Although preschool education has many benefits, the study showed that parents have mentioned few. Thus, the preschool principals and teachers have to tell or inform the children parents about the benefit of preschool as possible.
3. Conduct further research in the area of parental perception in early childhood education more specifically, following this parents into elementary school to see how their perception change over time or remain constant the some as their children grow older.
4. Examine the teacher's perception in the area of preschool education this area that needs further research.

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Appendix A

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

Department of Special Needs Education

“Early childhood education: parental perception of Government, private and faith based preschools in Addis Ababa.”.

Guide for interview

Date _____

Time interview started _____

Time interview end _____

Age _____

Relationship _____

Instruction

My name is Aweke Lemessa I am graduate student of Addis Ababa University. As part of my program requirements, I must complete, thesis for graduation. I have chosen to study parental perception regarding to preschool education with the intention to understand perception from parent's perspective. Your cooperation by participating in this study would be greatly appreciated.

This interview guide is presented to you to generate pertinent data concerning your perception about early childhood education. In doing so I gave due attention to the ethical concern what would develop trust on the part of the participants. Accordingly, the following ethical concern what would develop trust on the part of the participants. Accordingly, the following ethical consideration is presented to the research participant before the actual discussion.

Participant agreement

I understood that by participating in this study, I am giving my informed consent as participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have a right to withdraw from participation during the study will be responded with no prejudice.

Note:- questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researcher.

Interview

1. What is the reason send your children preschool? Could you explain it?
2. What is the benefit of preschool? Could you explain it?
3. What kind of benefit your children get from preschool?
4. What kinds of curriculum wish to attend your children in the preschool?
5. How, as a parent is your involvement in the preschool?
6. Do you think that your involvement helps your child and the preschool?
In terms of what? Could you explain?
7. In general what is your contribution the preschool?

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የሰነ ቴምህርት እና

የባህሪ ጥናት የልዩ ፍላጎት ቴምህርት ክፍል

ቃለመጠይቅ

1. ልጅዎን ወደ መዋለ ህጻናት የላኩበት ምክንያት ምንድን ነው? ሊያብራሩልኝ ይችላሉ?
2. የመዋለ ህጻናት ጥቅሙ ምንድን ነው? ሊያብራሩልኝ ይችላሉ?
3. ልጅዎ ከመዋለ ህጻናት ምን ጥቅም ያገኛል ይላሉ?
4. ልጅዎ በመዋለ ህጻናት ውስጥ ምን አይነት ቴምህርቶችን ቢከታተል/ብትከታተል ይፈልጋሉ?
5. እንደ ወላጅነትዎ በመዋለ ህጻናት ውስጥ ያንቱ ተሳትፎ እንዴት ነው?
6. ያንቱ ተሳትፎ ልጅዎን እና መዋለ ህጻናቱን ይረዳል ብለው ያስባሉ? በምን አይነት መንገድ? ሊያብራሩልኝ ይችላሉ?
7. በአጠቃላይ ያንቱ አስተዋጽኦ በመዋለ ህጻናት ውስጥ ምንድን ነው?

Appendix 2

Participant demographic information

Participant	sex	qualification	Date of interview
I ₁	F	certificate	5 – A -2016
I ₂	F	certificate	8 – A- 2016
I ₃	F	certificate	10– A- 2016
I ₄	F	grade 10	11-A-2016
I ₅	F	Diploma	13-A-2016
I ₆	F	certificate	15– A- 2016
I ₇	F	Diploma	19-A-2016
I ₈	F	Degree	20-A-216
I ₉	F	Diploma	21-A-2016

Key: - I = informant

A = April

Declaration

I, the under signed, declared that this thesis is my original work and that all the sources of materials used for the thesis have properly been acknowledged.

Name: Aweke Lemessa

Signature_____

Date_____

This thesis has been submitted for examination with approval as university advisor.

Name: Fantahun Admas (Dr.)

Signature_____

Date_____