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**PRACTICES OF ISLAMIC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND
IMPLICATIONS TO SECULAR EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY AT, ROBIT
QURAN BET, KOMBOLCHA ZONE.**

BY

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by **Seida Ahmedi** entitled Practices of Islamic Early Childhood Education and implication for secular education: The case of Robit Quran Bet Kombolcha Zone. It was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Early Childhood Care and Education) complies with the regulations of the University.

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Abbreviations

- **PBUH** – Peace and blessing be upon him.
- **RA** – Radiyellahu Anihum.
- **ECCE** – Early Childhood Care and Education.
- **ECDE** – Early Childhood Development and Education.
- **MOE** – Minister of Education.
- **MOH** – Minister of Health.
- **MOWA** – Minister of Woman Affairs

- **ESPD** - Education sector development program.
- **UNICEF** – United Nation children’s fund.
- **UNESCO** – united nation education, science and culture organization.

Abstract

In Ethiopia, there is a long history and rich culture in rearing and educating a child. This indigenized ECE is begun with the introduction of the two religions, Islam and Christian, to the country. Even though, modern ECCE in Ethiopia is established in 1989, it has problems of accessibility, affordability, relevance and quality. In order to have quality, ECCE indigenizing education is neither an option nor a luxury to be postponed. However, one of the obstacles to the use of indigenous knowledge in ECE is the lack of contemporary research and documentation of local child rearing practices. Hence understanding this gap, the study was intended to describe the practice of Muslims early childhood education, at rural area of Kombolcha zone, Robit Quran Bet. The objective of the study was, to learn implications that are cost effective, doable and relevant and developmentally as well as culturally appropriate. It was designed to answer the question on the focused area of learning, classroom organization and the pedagogical strategies used in the class to achieve the objective of the Quran Bet. The main data collection instrument was observation supported by interview with key participants and textbook analysis in order to increase the quality of the data. The result of the finding revealed that in the school, education was offered in a pedagogical design and approach that is supported by developmental and educational theories. Furthermore, the school has implication from its real life experience that has to be integrated to enrich the secular ECE in terms of quality, accessibility relevance and culturally and developmentally appropriate.

Key words - ECCE, indigenous knowledge, integration, Quran Bet, Islamic education, priest school

Chapter one - Introduction

1.1. Background

In human development, early years are important for the later development of a child. Early experiences of children affect their long-term cognitive and social development(MOE, MOH, MOWA, 2010). Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) refers to the range of process and mechanism that sustain support and aid the holistic development of the child age 8 and below(UNESCO, 2002). Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is also crucial for ensuring children prepared for Primary Education, and can lead to increased enrolment, reduced incidence of drop out and repetition, particularly for girls(MoE, 2018).

In Ethiopia there is a long history with a rich culture in rearing and educating a child. This indigenized early childhood education is rooted in religious movements. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church education began with the introduction of Christianity as early as the 4th C. that initiated preschoolers to learn basic literacy(Pankhurst, 1995). This was followed by the first Hijrah / migration of Muslims to Ethiopia in the 7th C. resulting in the opening of Quranic schools that teach early Arabic reading to Muslim children in the country(Derebssa, 2006).

The first secular preschool is established in 1898, split the rural-urban early childhood education that was introducing externally and form a new and foreign perspective. Since 1898, ECCE went through a lengthy process of developments; however, it is still the most neglected area of education and shows limitations in terms of accessibility, quality, equity, and relevance(MOE, MOH, MOWA, 2010). As an example,

- The access to ECE was negligible compared to the number of children eligible for the service. With enrolment rate of 44% in 2017/18, academic year indicating that access is still a challenge to early childhood education as millions are still out of this program.(MoE, 2018)

- This gross enrolment rate shows high regional variation, Afar and Ethiopia-Somali perform the worst, with GER of just 14.3% and 4.5% respectively. Addis Ababa is the only region performing above 93.6% GER in pre-primary education. Between urban and rural areas as well as among regions provision.(MoE, 2018)
- The curriculum and the method are considered as developmentally inappropriate(Fantahun, 2016). The classroom is far removed from modern pedagogy because practices are too often focused on teaching the children formal/academic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic(Tirussew, 2007).
- Curriculum also lacks similarity and coherence between the modalities(G/Egziabher, 2014). Lack government involvement in resource allocation and budgeting, lack of cooperation among ministers, and lack of professionalism(Belay, 2018).
- Surprisingly, Ethiopian ECCE also lacks the preparation of children for formal education. A study done by Abreha by the title Quality of Early Years (EYE) education in Ethiopia: a meta-analysis (Abraha, 2018) indicate that quality of education at the early grades is limited to the extent falling to identify letters, words, and numbers.

From the above results, one can conclude that Ethiopian ECCE neither stimulate nor prepare the child for formal education. Furthermore, it has problems of accessibility, affordability, relevance and sensitivity to cultural context(Demeke, 2007). In addition to this, a number of researchers have generally questioned ECCE provision in Ethiopia not only in terms of access but also in terms of linguistic, socio-cultural, and developmental relevance(Tirussew, 2007). Therefore, in order to have quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services, program, conceptions, design, and delivery need to be indigenized so that it can be more relevant, purposive and sustainable. Indigenous schooling is the norm rather than the exception in some of the poorest nations of the world, like Ethiopia.

Because indigenous schools unquestionably cost a small fraction of what a government school would cost for an equivalent number of hours of teaching on a per-pupil basis, it is

culturally appropriate, accessible for the whole community without any difference in socio-economical status and urban-rural division. In addition to this, according to (Teka and Belay, 2015) a study done on early childhood priest school, indicate that the teaching and learning activities are highly organized, systematic, integrated, inclusive, cost-effective and reflective of many of the principles of modern pedagogy.

Even though there is no research done on specific contraptions of Muslims early childhood education in Ethiopia, evidence indicates that both Muslims and Church school had a parallel function in the establishment and expansion of non-formal school system and theology of the religion.

Nevertheless, the early childhood Muslims schools with huge accumulated heritages have been neglected, their contribution underestimated. The insufficient literary productions of the legacy and the issues of relevance and quality, especially on Muslims early childhood education, motivated the researcher to engage in this study. Therefore, the study tried to investigate the practices of Muslims Early childhood education and identify implications to secular early childhood education with the aim of improving accessibility, relevance and quality of preschool education in Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Early childhood education in Ethiopia had a longer presence (since 1989), However, it has problems of accessibility, affordability, relevance and quality. In order to have quality ECCE indigenizing education is neither an option nor a luxury that can be postponed. According to Maaza (1966) cited in Muhddin, the only way out to developing countries like Ethiopia is to anchor modernization in the traditional value and belief of Ethiopian people (Muhddin, 2010). Despite the undue politicization of the exercise that it would block the development of internationalism and unity in an era of globalization, it remains obvious that one cannot globalize before being indigenized.

Nevertheless, this anchoring modernization in traditional values is not researched. Ethiopian ECCE has a historical lack of continuity, complementarities and independency between the indigenous and secular educations. The two remained divorced and turned

out to be mutually exclusive. In fact the former appearing to replace of latter. Obviously, Ethiopian Minister of Education standards does not give recognition to indigenized traditional schools. The standard rather than marginalizing the indigenized resource it led to valuating the external(language, culture, education) and what was local was taken as traditional, less useful, and what was imported was modern (more useful) and to modernize was to detach from the tradition.

It appears that studies on the issue had limited depth to invite for the synthesis of the two cultural educations – the indigenous and the foreign ones. The process of adoption the system of western education was means that served for the colonization the non-colonized through the dissolution of the traditional educational institutions. That is why national education and development policymakers hardly achieve the balance between the imported cultures and the local culture. They developed a policy of that throw away its own indigenous experience rather than modernizing the traditional education system(Amare, 1998).

One example of indigenous schools in Ethiopia is the Islamic schools. This indigenous Islamic education start in Ethiopia as early as the 7th c resulting in the opening of Qur'anic schools that teach early Arabic reading to muslin children. Therefore, Islamic schools provide the most important example of indigenous education in Ethiopia. According to (Wagner D. A., 1998)This Islamic school system remain relatively static over many centuries and continue on having implication to the secular education system.

For young children, Islamic, Quranic, education is somewhat different from "intermediate" or "advanced" schools. Since children are quite young i.e. less than 7 years, they often attend school for only a morning or late afternoon session, it focuses on memorizing sacred texts and emphasized in rote learning. Therefore, these younger children have little knowledge of reading or writing. Children use script board (luh) to begin teaching the Arabic alphabet and simple words(LOTFI, 1980). Which help them to develop writing skill.

There are studies indicating that these early Islamic childhood schools stimulate their development in all aspects. A study done in south Morocco village indicates that

generally traditional Qur'anic education plays a significant role in terms of its influence on the cognitive life of children(Houstsones, 1994). The Islamic Early childhood education also helps the children for the preparation for formal education, a study done in Pakistan find that children who attend mosque schools score better on tests of literacy than those who do not(Dana Joel & Rachel, 2015). Another study done in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania)find out that attaining Madrasa resource center preschools has a stronger impact on children's development in nurturing cognitive development in terms of academic skills and non-verbal reasoning than attendance at a non- Madrasa resource center preschools (Peter, 2008)

Even though there is no research done on Islamic Early childhood education in Ethiopia, a research done on priest school in Ethiopia indicate the similar finding. The priest school indicate that these schools follow approaches and methods, and create profiles that would make transitioning to and learning in formal education successful and highlight how these schools can be revitalized(Belay and Belay, 2017)

From the above, one can conclude that in order to have quality ECCE the government has to integrate important elements from culture and practices like Islamic school experience. However, one of the obstacles to the use of indigenous knowledge in early childhood policy making, programming, and implementation in Africa is the lack of contemporary research and documentation of local child rearing practices, traditions, norms, and beliefs(Shafer, 2004). Understanding this gap and believing to draw up some lesson to the secular education system hoping that will contribute to achieve the educational goals of the country, the researcher get motivated to do the research on practices of Islamic early childhood education. Therefore, this research tries to identify best practices from Islamic early childhood education, find out some implication to secular ECCE from Robit Quran Bet, Kalu woreda, Kombolcha zone.

1.3 Research questions

This research intended to describe the practices of Islamic early childhood education to learn implication for current problem of secular ECCE. In the course of relating the

practices of Islamic early childhood education, the study will try to answer the following main research question.

1. What is the nature of the Islamic ECE?
2. What are the focus areas of learning and the curriculum?
3. How the classroom is organized?
4. What are the main pedagogical strategies and techniques used?
5. What are the implications to secular ECE?

1.4 Significance of the study

The process of studying Islamic ECE practices and implications has the following importance:

1. To enhance the relevance of secular ECCE
2. To enhance the quality of secular ECCE.
3. To inform policy makers and teacher educators to come up with evaluating policy, curriculum and pedagogical issues to reform the system.
4. To initiate studies on indigenous knowledge and practices.

1.5. Delimitation of the study

The study was delimited only to assessing the educational practices of Islamic early childhood education in Robit Quran Bet. This was so to investigate in detail the practices for the purpose of understanding the nature, theories and implications for the secular ECE. Though some level of variation may be observed between settings, the researcher was of the opinion that the basic norms of religious education are usually similar and depth (rather than scope) is more important to uncover lessons and implications of the practices.

1.6 Limitation of the study

The research has some limitations. The availability of 'O' class in the region decline number of centers for Muslims Early childhood education, the researcher face difficulties

in finding ideal Islamic ECE centers. Furthermore, the availability of secular education and modern telecom infrastructure it is feared that, there might some values that the Islamic ECE borrowed from the secular school.

1.7 Organization of the study

Six chapters were used to organize this research. The first chapter includes the introductory part of the research. The intensive review of literatures was organized and presented under chapter Two. The Third chapter discusses about the research design and Chapter Four presents the finding of the study. The fifth chapter contains the implications. And the last chapter contain the conclusion and recommendation part the study.

1.8. Operational definition

- **Islamic education** - refers to the basic teachings of Islam based on its basic curricular sources (the Qur'an and Hadith) as instructed both in the rural and urban Islamic schools. The term Islamic education was used interchangeably with the terms Muslim education and traditional or indigenous education.
- **The Qur'an**: is the Muslims' religious Holy Book. There is only one official copy throughout the world starting from the 7th century. The Qur'an has 114 Chapters. It contains a total of 6,236 verses in Arabic that are divided in 30 parts
- **Sunnah (Hadith)**: is the communications, narrations, words or sayings of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his companions. As a term, it denotes the record of whatever the Prophet and Messenger Mohammed said, did, or tacitly approved. Despite the slight difference between the terms Sunnah and Hadith linguistically by the religious scholars, the two terms have almost similar meaning. The two terms are used alternatively
- **Early Childhood** - The period of a young child between the ages of 4 to 6 years old.
- **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** - ECCE in this research refers to educational services provided for children age 4 to 6 both on governmental and

non-governmental preschools. The term ECCE and ECE were used interchangeably.

- **Kindergarten** - a school that focuses on all-round development of the child (age 4-6) in preparation for formal.
- **Islamic school** - are schools that facilitate the teachings of Quran and Hadith. The term Islamic school and Muslim school are used interchangeably.
- **Quran School** – the first stage of Islamic education that teaches tarbiyyah and the reading of Quran and basic Islamic thoughts for children.
- **Priest school** - is the first stage of the traditional schools, where primary instruction is given. Priest school is also called the Nebab Bet, the Reading School or the “House of Reading”. This school is a one-teacher school, with instruction given by a priest or nonprofessional with church education.
- **Indigenous education** - is the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to Ethiopia. The term Indigenous is used interchangeably with tradition. However, It does not mean that traditional education is backward while the modern education is advanced. It is clear that, there is no education that is backward.
- **Secular education** - is a system of public or private education in countries with a secular government or separation between religion and state. The term secular and modern are used alternatively.

Chapter two - Literature review

In this section, an attempt was made to collect and systematically organize related literature from different sources to clarify issues and use existing knowledge in developing clarity in the conceptualization of the methodology as well as the theories, policies, and practices of preschool education.

2.1 Concept of Islam

Islam is the name of the religion that Muslims follow. People who practice Islam are called Muslims. Literally, Islam means submission. Islam comes from the root Arabic word peace (*salam*). The term Islam, itself does not mean peace, but it implies that one finds peace (*salam*) through submission to the will of God. Muslims believe in one God who created the Universe and has power over everything within it and Allah's greatness is beyond the human imagination. Muslims reflect on God as Allah. The name does not have any plural form or gender difference.

Islam is not named after a person, it is named after the action of submitting to God's commands and will and not a person. Other religions are often named after a person or people. For instance, Christianity is named after Christ, Judaism is named after the tribe of Juda, and Buddhism is named after Buddha. Islam is not named after Muhammad (PBUH) because Islam exists before him. The message of previous Prophets, such as Adam, Abraham, Noah, Jesus, and Moses (PBUH) was to submit (*Islam*) to God. According to Islamic teachings, Moses (Moosa) was given the law (Torah); David (Dawood) was given the Psalms (Zebur); Jesus (Isa) was given the Gospel (Injeel) and Muhammad (570-632), was given the Qur'an. Hence, the message of Islam did not start with the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. It was started with Adam (PBUH) and continued until the last prophet Muhammed (PBUH). All the prophets are slaves of Allah and guide their nation to fulfill his command(Qur'an 6:84-90)

The term Arab is often used interchangeably with Muslim, but this is incorrect. Arab is a race while Islam is a religion. Not all Arabs are Muslim and most Muslims are actually not Arab.

The Purpose of Life from Islamic Perspective is to worship Allah (Qur'an, 51: 56). To worship Allah is to live life according to His commands, not to run away from it. In the real sense of the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In Islam, the concept of "worship" includes performing all acts that are lawful at personal, interpersonal and at larger social levels. For instance, removing harmful things from roads is worship, eating lawful foods is part of worship while eating unlawful foods is sinful. Bringing up decent children by feeding, dressing and educating them well is worship and doing the opposite is sinful and all other major and minor good deeds are all acts of worship in the Muslim culture(Hassen, 2008).

Therefore, up bring and educating a child is worship and if not done properly, in Islamic perspective it becomes a sin. For this reason, Islam as a religion gives more emphasis and focus on early childhood care and education. Because it is one way to worship Allah and entering paradise.

2.2. Child in Islam

According to al-Azhar University publications in collaboration with UNICEF on [Children in Islam](#) (2005) regard children's status as highly valued in Islam and argue that the Islamic tradition has been one of the most progressive traditions in terms of children's rights and their status in the society. In particular, arguments were developed that from its outset, Islamic tradition has highly valued children's rights to education, health, care, and protection, etc(al-azhar universty, 2005). The status of a child in Islam starts from the basement of his life that is from the marriage of his parents.

In Islamic societies, the main purpose of marriage was and still is, procreation, which is an obligatory religious duty. The advent of a child is not only welcomed and considered a blessing, but it is also regarded as essential for strengthening the marriage bond, for the perpetuation of the line of descent, and for enlarging the community of the faithful.

Choosing a righteous wife to be a righteous mother. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "A woman may be married for four reasons: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty, and her religious commitment. Marry the one who is religiously committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper)." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4802; Muslim, 1466). The mother has to know her religious role in rearing and educating of her child, as she is the first school for her child. This is the first step for having a good child, selecting a good teacher.

The care for the child continues on the journey of the child to zygote formation, the Prophet (PBUH) advice the followers saying: make dua / praying before having marital relations with a partner "After that, if Allah decrees that they will have a child, the devil will never be able to harm that child". [al-Bukharee] saying "In the name of Allah, O Allah, keeps us away from the devil, and keep the devil away from that which You may grant us (i.e. Offspring)." When the child is in his mother's womb, the child should get the right amount of nutrition from his mother. Even on the time of infancy, the child should be breastfed for two full years. Allah said in the Quran "Mothers shall breastfeed their children for two whole years, for those who wish to complete the term" (2:233). For this reason, the pregnant and breastfeeding mothers are not obligated to fast the month of Ramadan.

When the child is born the Muslims call to prayer is whispered in both its ears. The parents choose the child's name. On the seventh day after the birth, a ceremony is known as '*Aqiqah*' takes place, during which a sheep is slaughtered and the child's hair is cut and being circumcised if it is a Boy.

2.2.1. Upbringing Education and training of a child in Islam

The parents are responsible for the upbringing and educating the child. So parents must take care of teaching their children the duties of Islam and other virtues that are recommended in Sharee'ah / Islamic law, and worldly matters that they need in order to live a decent life in this world.

The first thing the parents teach for their child is teaching them correct ‘aqeedah (creed), free from shirk (polytheism) and bid'ah (innovation). It starts as early as the child is born, by making Azan and Iqam (calling for daily pray) with a lower voice in his right and left ears respectively. Moreover, making his first word to be said Shehadeh i.e. saying, “I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

The parents should train their children to practice the pillars of Islam. Like the daily praying, fasting the month of Ramadan, giving charity and going to hajj even if they are not obligated. As an example, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Teach the child to pray when he is seven years old, and smack him (lightly) if he does not pray when he is ten." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi). Indicating that there is three years, long period, of training before the child is expecting to perform Salah as an obligation.

The parents should train and practice them Islamic manners in all activities of life, eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping, bathing, going out of the house, entering the house, riding in vehicles, etc., and to have good relation with their environment like with parents, families, friends, relatives, neighbors, even with animals, plants and in all their affairs. The parents should also train their children sportive activities riding, swimming, and archery for both genders. because the prophet (PBUH) says that ‘a strong believer is a better and more beloved than a weak believer.’ (Sahih Muslim)

They should instill in them the attributes of a good man, such as love of sacrifice, putting others first, helping others, chivalry, and generosity. They should keep them away from evil characteristics such as cowardice, stinginess, lack of chivalry, lack of ambition, etc. The parents must also protect their sons and daughters from everything that may bring them close to the hell Fire.

From the above explanation, it is understood that Islam gives high emphasis on the holistic development of a child in all aspects.

Another important matter issue on the rearing of a child is treating children fairly. This right was referred by the Prophet (PBUH): “Fear Allah and treat your children fairly.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 2447; Muslim, 1623). It is not permissible to show preference to females over males and just as it is not permissible to show preference to males over females. The evil consequence between the children is hating one another, and stoking the flames of hatred and enmity between them.

2.2.2 Status of Girls.

Human beings are not created identical but they are created equal. There is no presumption ground in Islam that woman is less important. However, the woman is not a duplicate of the man, and accordingly, there is a difference in rights and responsibilities. This is also true for children, girls, and boys, in the family. To have both boys or/and girls is a blessing from Allah. The parent’s responsibility is upbringing and educating them fairly. In addition to this, in Islam daughters are a great blessing because Allah (SWT) has promised a place in paradise (Jannah) on bringing them up. The prophet Muhammed(PBUH)says that "The one who has 3 daughters or sisters, or 2 daughters or sisters and he brings them up properly and fears Allah(SWT) regarding their rights, then Paradise is made mandatory for him.” In some Hadith, when the Prophet(SAW) mentioned the blessings of bringing up 3 daughters or sisters, somebody asked: “*What if someone has only 1 daughter?*”The Prophet(SAW) mentioned the same prize for him as well, i.e. a place in the paradise. (Abu Dawud) Paradise would never be made mandatory for such people had daughters not been blessings of Allah(SWT).

The Prophet’s relationship with his daughter Fatima is an example. The Prophet respected his daughter to the extent that he visited her frequently, he would stand up for her when he would see her approaching. This is an indicator of the esteemed position of daughters in Islam and how they are not to be disrespected, his eye glowed with Joy, and he would take her in his arms, kiss her warmly, and offer her his own seat.

He (PBUH) also had good relation with his granddaughter Ummah, while he is praying Salah when he made rukoo he would put her down, and then pick when he stood up. Indeed this kind, a tender pattern is an ideal model for humankind. And along with the

Messenger's (PBUH) honoring the daughters with his words, the prophet(PBUH) also gave us a living example in his own actions and behavior.

In Islam when a Girl is born in a family, she becomes a reason for her parents to enter paradise, when she grows up and married a man she completes half of his religion and when she becomes a mother paradise will be under her feet for her children.

Therefore, the position of daughters in Islam is very clear and the encouragement that it gives for her parents to care, and educate her to enter paradise.

2.3.Islamic education

Education bestows knowledge and knowledge remains the ultimate priority in life. For this purpose, Islam emphasizes to acquire knowledge. In fact, the first verse revealed in the Quran says to mankind read, which directly combats illiteracy and encourages seeking knowledge in all fields. On the importance of seeking knowledge the Quran reads: "O ye who believe! When it is said, Make room! In assembles, then make room; Allah will make way for you (hereafter). And when it is said; come up higher! Go up higher; Allah will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge, to high ranks. Allah is informed of what ye do." (al-Qur'an 58:11) The Quran also explains: "He gives wisdom unto whom He will, and he to whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good. But none remember except men of understanding." (al-Qur'an 2:269) Based on the above *ayat*, in the Qur'an 58:11, an educated person is regarded as more honorable than a religious but ignorant person is. In addition, knowledgeable people are given a high status in the eyes of Allah. As mention in ayah 2:269, God will give wisdom (*hikmah*) to those who acquire knowledge. However, education of the Quran should be given the most priority compared to the worldly knowledge since it helps in strengthening the Muslims' faith. In Islam, a Muslim is encouraged to continuously seek knowledge as mentioned by the Prophet "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" (Bukhari). In a Hadith, the Prophet mentioned that seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim. He holds high esteem to those who possess knowledge as mentioned in one of his Hadith, where he stated that a learned person is closer to Allah compared to a

thousand worshippers and those who have knowledge are among the honorable and faithful people (Bukhari).

2.3.1. Nature of Islamic education

Education is a transmission of values and knowledge. It involves teaching, learning, socialization, and enculturation. Islamic education is comprehensive (Shamil), balanced, and it targets personality development, cognizant mindset, patriotism, open-mindedness, intellectual, spiritual and harmonious coexistence. Education in Islam focuses on beneficial knowledge which has a direct influence on the receiver. It molds both the intellectual faculties and character of the individual (Adibah Sulaiman, Ezad Azraai Jamsari and Noorsafuan Che Noh, 2014).

Islamic education is uniquely different from other types of educational theory and practice largely because of the all-encompassing influence of the Quran. The Quran serves as a comprehensive blueprint for both the individual and society and as the primary source of knowledge. (Islam, 2019)

Islam has, from its inception, placed a high premium on education and has enjoyed a long and rich intellectual tradition. Knowledge (*'ilm*) occupies a significant position within Islam. The importance of education is repeatedly emphasized in the Quran with frequent injunctions, such as "God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees" (58:11), "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (20:114), and "As God has taught him, so let him write" (2:282). Such verses provide a forceful stimulus for the Islamic community to strive for education and learning.

According to some scholars, Islamic education is about tarbiyyah Islamiyyah, ta'lim and tahdhib which in turn ensures complete integration and transformation of human life for better. The main sources in this type of education are Qur'an and Hadith. Islamic education connotes the whole life approach and signifies complete integration into man's life. (al-azhar universty, 2005)

Tarbiyah, from the root raba (to increase, to grow, to rear), implies a state of spiritual and ethical nurturing in accordance with the will of God. Tarbiyyah signifies nurturing,

developing, fostering, and rearing. Therefore, this concept should be employed in the early stage of education. While ta'līm, from the root 'alima (to know, to be aware, to perceive, to learn), which is used to denote knowledge being sought or imparted through instruction and teaching. Ta'lim connotes teaching, educating and leaning and it should be focused in the later stage of the learning period. Ta'dīb, from the root aduba (to be cultured, refined, well mannered), suggests a person's development of sound social behavior. Ta'dib also refers to discipline and it covers all levels and aspects of human life regardless of age, stage and period. (Islam, 2019)

For this study, the Islamic education for early childhood which is the tarbiyyah Islamiyyah will be discussed in detail.

2.3.2. Childhood education in Islam

In Islam, the term 'child' refers to a person who has not reached puberty or *baligh*. Before children reach an age of baligh, they go through a stage of *pre-mumayyiz* and a stage of *mumayyiz*. *Pre-mumayyiz* stage begins from the moment a child is born until the age of seven. During that period, a child is incapable of differentiating the good from the bad and cannot comprehend the consequence of an action as well as does not have the capacity to understand. At this stage of age, a child is called one who has yet to be *mumayyiz* (Adibah Sulaiman, Ezad Azraai Jamsari and Noorsafuan Che Noh, 2014). *The mumayyiz* stage will begin when the child reaches seven or eight years of age. At that age, a different level of capability can be seen depending on the child's own self. A child who has reached the *tamyiz* thinking level is called a *mumayyiz* child. When children reach the age of baligh, they are considered to have thinking capability and be able to make a reasonable decision on an important matter concerning them.

Pre-mumayyiz stage, Early years of the child's life are the best and most important periods to build up the aspects of faith in the child and instill the creed of *Tawheed* (Islamic Monotheism) and knowing Allah, the Almighty. Therefore, the first thing is to recite the *Adhaan* [Muslim call to Prayer] in the child's ear at its birth. Both the words and the meaning of *Adhaan* find their way to the mind of the child. Besides the *Adhan*, the Prophet (PBUH) has laid down that children should be taught good manners from

their childhood.” Due to the importance of this period in the child’s life in terms of learning the bases of faith; the Prophet (PBUH) ordered Muslims to make “La ilaahaila Allah (None is truly worthy of worship but Allah)” to be the first word to be heard by the children to speak.

Importance of attaching children to the Noble Quran from a tender age which should take place at a very young age, once the child starts speaking. This is the golden period for memorization, learning and maximizing the psychological impact of what the child learns and memorizes. That is why the prophet (PBUH) advised parents to train their children the recitation of the Quran. (At-Tabaraani)

For early childhood, Islam focuses on the recitation of the Quran which encompasses both reading and memorization. At early age, only memorization is advised but as the child grows up reading must be thought because Islam emphasizes to acquire knowledge through reading the first verse revealed in the Qur'an says to mankind << Read>>, which directly combats illiteracy and encourages seeking knowledge in all fields. The Qur'an reads: *"Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created, He has created man from a clot, Read! And your Lord is Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen, He has taught man that which he knew not."* (96. 1-5)

In addition to the learning of Quran, giving Tarbiyyah is also compulsory for proper child rearing and growth. Tarbiyyah describes the process of upbringing the children as parents, provide them with the physical, moral, educational, and spiritual needs to help them grow and become useful parties in society. In general, tarbiyyah is defined as "to bring up the child and shape him as an integrated human being including the aspect of belief, health, mental, spiritual, moral and humanity.

From the above one can generalize that Islamic early childhood education is comprehensive and balanced focused on the reading and memorizing of the Quran and molding and shaping of children with *tarbiyyah islamiyyah*.

2.3.3. Islamic educational centers.

The first and the earliest Islamic school was the Mosque; the prophet Muhammad would sit in the mosque and instruct his companions in the sacred texts. The companions would sit around him in a semi-circle (so that no one would sit behind him). The assembly of learners was referred to as the *Mejlis* (council), or more frequently, the *halaqah* (which means learning circle)(Boyle, 2004). *Halaqas* continued to function throughout the expansion of Islam, well into the ninth century. Teachers would associate themselves with a particular mosque and people would travel from all over to study in a particular *halaqah*.

The second form of education center during prophetic times was the *Suffah* School. *Suffah* is a room attached to the mosque in which travelers or homeless people resided. Residents of the *Suffah* studied reading, writing, Muslim law and the memorizing of chapters of the Quran under the tutelage of the prophet himself(Boyle, 2004). In terms of form, since they are quasi-residential, *Suffahs* were precursors of the later *medresas*(boarding schools), where students lived and studied at higher levels (Omar, 1993). As the mosques were not sufficient to house scholars, residence halls were established near the mosques to house students and teachers (Boyle, 2004:12).

After the death of the prophet(PBUH) these practices continued and expanded, as Muslim armies and then traders spread Islam West and South to Africa, East to Asia, and North into Europe. These Quran schools also spread with the spread of Islam. Like the religion they promulgated, these schools intermixed with local institutions and took on the distinctive cultural characteristics of the localities in which they were situated(Wagner D. A., 1989). Furthermore, these Quranic schools are historically significant in terms of the role they played in shaping the development of the Muslim world.

By the tenth century, the mosque turned in to the *madrasa* and by the thirteenth century AD, Islamic universities had been established in Cairo, Tunis and elsewhere, drawing advanced students and teachers from the ever-expanding Islamic community (*Umma*)” (Wagner D. A., 1989)

In the early twenty-first century, Quranic schools (Islamic schools) continue to be vibrant actors in the daily lives of millions of children and communities worldwide, through facilitating the teachings of Quran and Hadith. These schools share a set of historical roots that can be traced back to Arabia and the educational practices of the prophet Mohammed.

In Morocco, for example, approximately 80% of all children attend some form of Islamic schools for a portion of their school years (Wagner D. A., 1989). Islamic education has seen a steady resurgence in Nigeria (Reichmuth, 1993), where many Islamic schools, especially in the North, now compete with public schools because they offer a full range of subjects in addition to the standard religious instruction. UNICEF estimates that 40% of students in Senegal attend Islamic schools. The Quranic schools are often sources of literacy.

2.4. Introduction of Islam to Ethiopia

Islam was introduced to Ethiopia in 615 AD when Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), begun his preach of Islam and got some followers, the Qoreish (the leading tribe of Mecca) began to act violently on the prophet and his followers. They were seized, imprisoned, torched and even some are killed (Muhammad Sani, 1989). In this circumstance, it was no more possible for the followers of prophet Mohammed (PBUH) to live in peace any longer in Mecca; nor a place where the listeners might be exposed to assaults.

The Prophet advised some of his companions to flee as refugees to Abyssinia saying, *“Abyssinia is a truthful country with a just King where no one is mistreated unjustly. Thus go there until Allah gives us our own mechanism to safeguard ourselves”* (Muhammad Sani, 1989). Then, a total of 117 Muslims migrated to Ethiopia twice. In the migration, 16 and 101 individuals participated in the first and second migration respectively (Trimingham, 1976). Therefore, Ethiopia was the first foreign relation case for Islam and the land of the first Hijrah (migration) and because the migration was done twice Ethiopia is also known as DarulHijreini meaning a **country of double migration**.

The chief medium of Islamic expansion of Islam in Ethiopia was through Arab traders, artisans, and adventurers and coming as they did as individuals and not as tribes, they naturally lived in close touch with the natives, adopted their language instead of imposing Arabic, and intermarried with them. And this is the position held by current scholarship on the Islamization process in the region(Trimingham, 1976).

As explained above the expansion of Islamic Ideology in the state is strongly related with the activity of Muslim traders, accompanied by Muslim scholars. Furthermore, it was around the Zawyas (a multi-functional institution which served both as a prayer house and a study center) that the early cultivators of Islam, the first organized and emerging Muslim Communities, began to propagate Islam amongst the people of surrounding villages.

2.4.1. Islamic education in Ethiopia, South Wello

The opening of Islamic educational centers starts with the introduction of Islam to Ethiopia starting from that time the Islamic school is functioning in the community. In Ethiopia, these Islamic schools were given as full time or supplementary for those who attain secular schools or have other responsibilities in the family and community. Unfortunately, due to the marginalization of the traditional school, the number of schools are highly decreasing (Haile, 2007).

The purpose of these Islamic schools was along with the dissemination and preservation of Islamic values is also to cultivate the mind of the Muslim society on the need for preserving and protecting faith, mind, body, property and progeny of all people irrespective of differences in color, religion, race, gender, ethnicity language and social status.(Adibah Sulaiman, Ezad Azraai Jamsari and Noorsafuan Che Noh, 2014)

The centers that provide Islamic education in the region differ from time to time and from place to place. Centers providing Islamic education are listed under(Ali, 2015).

1. Teachers' houses; Students came to teachers(known as Sheikhs) residential area to learn reading Qur'an, writing in Arabic and other basic Islamic teachings from Fiqh

(Islamic Jurisprudence) to Nahw and Tafsir. This teacher could be both within their houses and compounds including under trees.

2. Zawyas (Hut Schools), thatched hut of mud and wood roofed with grass which is common in rural areas. When there are places with no Mesjid around and the teacher hose is not enough to the number of the students, thereby came to the idea of religious education to be centered aroundZawya. These centers are more common in the rural areas
3. Mesjid - gives Islamic education such as reading the Qur'an, teaching Hadith, Tafsir, and even Nahw and Fiqh in the Mesjid after and before the regular daily pray. However, since most of the Students are learn is secular schools, the service is given on part-time basis (after school or during weekends), its quality, as well as quantity, was very less to be compared to the rural Islamic school centers.
4. Madrasas, a school for the study of Islamic religion and thought, especially for the memorization of the Qur'an. They are found in in urban areas and built adjacent to a certain type of modern school.
5. House-to-house education - The religious teacher moves from door to door on fixed times per day in order to teach small children and/or adult men and women based on the request from particular families and sometimes neighbors. This service is offered for those well to do families in urban areas.

2.4.1. Dominant strategies and techniques used in Islamic schools

Studies done on a higher level of education in Ethiopia shows that the schools use the following strategies to achieve their educational objectives.

Multigrade system

The multi-grade system is a practice rooted in the school. The system is being used to give educational services under the direction of one teacher (sheikh) to the one-room learning environment for the different grade level. This system provides an opportunity for lower learners to share the best experiences of their seniors. Furthermore, the interaction permits lower students to get support from the advanced students.(Muhddin, 2010)

The multi-grade instruction of the school permits students to go through the curriculum by offering the required competency. Here, active learners can attend at a time more courses and slow learners revise concepts of their primary education with the lower (even with the lowest) level students.

Peer grouping.

group of students is assigned to study a course together, this is commonly called Sharika in Arabic. Peer groups are arranged in two ways: using the learners' academic status and their ability. For example, the Fiqh school arrange the grouping based on the arrival and entrance of the learners to study similar course materials. This type of peer grouping will last as far as the religious students have got equal pace of learning to master certain course material. If a student is found to be too slow or too fast to master a given course of study, the Sheikh or the student teacher will decide to separate him from the peers and invite him to join another group whose members have got relatively similar pace of learning. He will be left all alone temporarily or permanently, if no group is to be found (Ali, 2015).

Peer tutoring

In a Sharika each group members work together so that they can accomplish their daily lessons and assess the understanding level of their peers. This peer-based tutoring further strengthen a sense of team spirit and responsibility shouldering capacity. (Ali, 2015)

One-to-one tutoring.

Even though the instruction is conducted in a group, there is an opportunity to teach a student alone. A student can be allowed to study on a personal basis from either the student-teacher or the head-teacher whenever he is a newcomer, he has no peers, he does not have the interest to learn with pairs or groups of students due to social or psychological or any other unknown reasons (Ali, 2015).

Peer teaching.

This is a practice in which each student is given both the opportunity and responsibility to teach his own peers. For example, in Fiqh Schools, the instruction is organized in such a way that first peer teaching sessions are conducted. Each student teaches his peer and conversely, each student learns from his peer. Hence, students act as a teacher for a while and as a learner for some other time (Ali, 2015)

Teaching practice.

This session is led by student-teachers. Teaching practice is not only done for the students of the same academic status. Rather, it is practiced in the teaching of other students who are younger than him in academic maturity. A student who is assigned to teach other students on regular basis is called *Amotay*(tutor) i.e. the one who helps others to study the course sometimes through re-teaching but mainly through substituting the formal instruction(Ali, 2015).

The academic competence or subject mastery of a student was measure mostly in his effectiveness to teach lower "grade" attendants. It is also true that here a student-teacher at a lower level has also got another student teacher from a higher level who in turn has got still another student-teacher from the peak of the academic hierarchy. In this manner, those students who are near to graduate from the School are taught only by the head-teacher the Sheikh.ali

Discipline measurements

Ethics-related lessons are offered in the school with the intention of making students disciplined. In addition to this, because the students came to school with their full interest they are less like to misbehave. But if occur they are advised by the Amir and the head teacher. He is ordered to preach from the topic of ethics so that they might act accordingly as the goal of the school is “instruction for action”. But by any means, there is no corporal punishment in the schools(Ibrahim Endashaw, 2012).

Assessment technique

The promotion technique in the Islamic school is the mastery of the content, that is, to assess students' performance on a daily basis, direct and indirect observation. This assessment is done on an ongoing and everyday activity, while the students are answering questions, studying individually and in groups, tutoring others and making comments.

In the assessment, the teacher compares individual student previous performance with his progress to learning outcomes. He does not compare the individual person with others. The assessment is individual oriented. Each of the students is given the chance to go with his/her pace and performance. Thus, the teacher gives support to students as per their ability and interest.(Ibrahim Endashaw, 2012)

Dominant methods used for the mastery of the lesson are (Ali, 2015)

Memorization.

Memorization, in most cases, is used by small children who are not matured enough for reflection, analysis and debating.in adults it is used on the introduce new knowledge to the student that must be memorized especially paragraph from the Quran and sayings of the prophet.

Translation and interpretation.

Because the instructional materials used in the Islamic school are written in Arabic, the student has to be able to translate and interpret the text into students mother tongue and/or explaining the meanings of the text by using a simpler version of the concepts for the matured student,

Questioning.

Another dominant method used in the teaching-learning process was the question and answer method. Almost all students dare to ask either the head teacher and/the student-teacher any concept that was not clear. There appears to be nothing left unquestioned starting from simple issues to other metaphysicalquestions

According to Ali (Ali, 2015) Islamic educational curriculum have Organization of contents, strong level of integration, vertical manipulation or repetition of curriculum components i.e. continuity, principle of arranging contents and learning experiences from simple to complex; from a part to whole and most patterns of curriculum organization fall within particular organizations: academic, social reconstruction, humanistic and technological. Furthermore, the above writer also agree that Islamic education is highly relevant in all aspects.as an example he tries to discuss the relevance of cleanness as follow

"I understand that purification is one of the very important issues in Islam since it is one of the fundamental conditions of the validity of many acts of worship such as ablution, taking a ritual bath after having sexual intercourse with one's own spouse, menstruation, postnatal bleeding as well as other Shari'ah rulings (Abdul-Fattah, 2004:3). You might have heard from the mass media about the importance of washing one's face and hands at least twice a day to prevent some infectious diseases such as trachoma. But Islam goes further and "orders Muslims to wash their private parts, faces, hands, and feet at least five times per day" (Informant: Sheikh Ahmed, October 13th, 2011; Sahih Al-Bukhari, 1:142). The prophetic hadith also states, "cleanliness is half of faith [i.e. 50% of faith] (e.g. Sahih Muslim,1:432). The Qur'an also orders Muslims to keep their body and clothes clean (e.g. Qur'an, 5:6; 7:31;74:4).Cleaning the teeth with tooth-stick (or tooth-brush) is also emphasized in the Fiqh and Hadith education. It is also advised for anyone who goes to the toilet to wear shoes. Furthermore, anyone who has eaten something which has got bad smell such as garlic is prevented from joining public gatherings in the mosque (and other social gatherings) in order not to disturb other people. Combing one's hair and 195 beard, cutting the nails, armpit-hair and pubic hair is compulsory in the religion. Cleanliness of the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the finger-nails, toes, and the nose is also mandatory in Islam (Sahih Muslim, 1:495-503; Idris, 2010:44-55). I understand that Islamic education focuses not only on personal health. It also teaches environmental cleanliness by forbidding urinating in water bodies, responding on the call of nature in roadsides, under the shade of trees and other areas used for social gatherings. Many scholars shun away from such practices and advise others to follow their suit. This shows the concern for public health as well (Sahih Muslim. 1:553-555; Idris, 2010:78-79).

2.5. Indigenous early childhood education

Every country has its own unique educational problems to be solved. Developing countries like Ethiopia struggle to provide equal opportunities for education, trying to increase the rate of participation of all citizens in basic education by making this education cost-effective, and relevant to the community. In order to have accessible, equitable, cost-effective, relevant, early childhood education Ethiopian has to anchor to the Indigenous educational system.

Indigenous knowledge is often perceived as historical and ancient practices of the African peoples, which is a problematic perception. The word indigenous has often been used to refer to specific groups of people defined by ancestral territories, collective cultural configuration, and historical locations Indigenous education may be defined as any formalized (that is, culturally codified, recognized, and/or authorized) system of instruction which is not a direct descendant of modern European schooling system (Wagner D. A., 1998). According to Louise Grenier (1998), indigenous knowledge is also defined as "the unique, traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographic area." (Grenier, 1998) Thus, indigenous knowledge is a process of learning and sharing social life, histories, identities, economic, and political practices unique to each cultural group. This reflects the uniqueness of ways that specific societies make meaning of the world and how such forms of knowledge address local problems and solutions that are context specific (Owuor, 2007). For this reason, the indigenous school provided cultural capital in terms of a body of knowledge important for the child's successful functioning in the society as well as for future social status

The challenges facing African states in early childhood policy making, programming, and implementation is the capacity to define their own paradigm of development and the lack of contemporary research and documentation of local child-rearing practices, traditions, norms, and beliefs (Shafer, 2004) (Owuor, 2007)

Ethiopia is a country with a long history of early years indigenous education which is rooted in the religion. The traditional Ethiopian Orthodox Church starting from the 4th c. and Muslim in 7th c. resulting in the opening of priest school and Quran School respectively, following their introduction to Ethiopia (Demeke, 2007)(Pankhurst, 1995). These schools forming one of the oldest continuous systems of education in the country. With the introduction of secular/ modern education, this well furnished, Ethio-centric system of education was detached from its precious legacies and value systems

The Ethiopian ECCE that was introduced with foreign curriculum and professionals in 1898 and went through continuous but gradually expansion in the three regimes (Haileselassie, Derg, and EPRDF) with a similar tone of external orientation in a way sidelining traditional early years education centers.(Belay and Belay, 2017)(Demeke, 2007)

Studies indicate that the secular Ethiopian ECCE neither stimulate the child for future life nor prepare him for formal education. In addition to this, a number of researchers have generally questioned ECCE provision in Ethiopia not only in terms of access and affordability but also in terms of linguistic, socio-cultural, culturally and developmental relevance as well (Demeke, 2007)(Tirussew, 2007).

Ethiopian ECCE has limitations in terms of access, equity, and quality of relevance. As an example, in terms of accessibility Ethiopian ECCE have only 44% coverage of gross enrolment rate. In addition to this, there is a high regional diversity with an enrollment rate of 93.6% in Addis Ababa and 4.5% in Ethiopian Somalia indicating its lack of equitability. The program is not also neither developmentally nor culturally appropriate. It focuses on the teaching of formal education with euro type curriculum and English language as a method of instruction

In the light of the above concerns, it is recommended that there is a critical need to look into more affordable, accessible, culturally sensitive and yet quality programs in addition to revisiting the existing regular preschools and revitalizing the indigenous schools like Quran school priest schools. Because these traditional schools are more affordable, accessible and relevant in terms of development and culturally.

2.6. Integration of indigenous knowledge

Within both formal and non-formal education indigenous knowledge and practices can be integrated with other pedagogical practices. More often, the non-formal and informal arenas see the use of indigenous practices while the formal system does not. Therefore there is a need to integrate these indigenous knowledge in to the formal education, because, traditional community values of raising children, supplemented by best practice ideas on health, nutrition and interactive brain stimulation to better prepare children for basic education.

According to Leautier, cited in Soudée”The indigenous knowledge that should be integrated at the early childhood level begins with use of the mother tongue. One reason is that using a mother tongue tends to better increase literacy rates “(Soudée, 2009). Traditional stories are also important tools to be used in ECCE programs as demonstrated by case-studies conducted by students of the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (Shafer, 2004)). Schafer (2004) summarized findings from Uganda and Lesotho that emphasized the use of local stories as important to cognitive skills development and continuation of indigenous knowledge. also promotes the use of songs, dances, and locally produced toys in ECCE programs in the Gambia.. Local ideas of parenting and children’s roles can and should also influence early education practices.(Pence, 2006)

There are evidence and similarities from other studies of ways to include indigenous knowledge and practice in an early childhood program that also promotes the whole child’s development. Use of mother tongue for interactions, games, storytelling and songs were common ways of transmitting local knowledge across Gambia, Senegal and Mali. Community participation, particularly by grandmothers, mothers and local volunteers, were crucial to the success of the program. From the above explanation it is clear that, there is a need to integrate indigenous knowledge in the curriculum and the pedagogy system to enrich the secular education system

Chapter three - Research methodology

This chapter presents the methodological approaches used in this study including research design, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection tools and procedures, data analysis techniques and quality assurance mechanisms implemented.

3.1. Study Design

This study made use of qualitative descriptive design with a case study strategy. A qualitative research studies behavior as it occurs naturally in fields like in school (classroom session and playgrounds) and examine how people learn about and make sense of themselves and other by systemically describing the situation and phenomena of the classroom and provide information about learning practices of the school (Donald Ary, 2018;Berg, 2001). This was so because the study was aimed at analyzing the practices of Muslims early childhood education to identify relevant issues and strategies to enrich secular education practices in the country . In other words, the study adopted a qualitative descriptive design to describe the nature and practices of Muslims early childhood education practices in one center (Dessie) with the aim of understanding the details uncover possible teaching and learning strategies or techniques, and identifying implications to secular education to enhance relevance, access and equity. t

3.2. Data collecting procedure

As indicated above, the study was conducted in a purposely selected center of Muslims early childhood education center in Dessie. This study area was identified based on relevance to collect relevant information helpful to realize the objectives of the study. In order to select, the research center and the key informants, the researcher made communication and informal discussion with two Quran teachers and two religious leaders on the overall activity of the research and give suggestions on the subject under study from their rich experience. The main points of the preliminary discussion were:

- ✚ The current status of Quran school in the region,
- ✚ Regarding well known Quran schools in the woredas,
- ✚ Regarding individuals who should be included in the interview as key informants.
- ✚ Ethical issues and language difference of the region that the researcher should consider in communicating with the Quran school community and the key participants.

Based on the information collected from the four primary informants, the researcher observed seven Quranic schools, including the selected area, from Dessie and Kombolcha town from March 25-30, 2019 as a pre-study field visit. Thus, Robit Quran Bet from Kallu woreda was selected as a case for the study due to its reach experiences in Muslim early childhood education and data was collected from March 31 – April 11, 2019.

3.3. Data sources

The purpose of this study (clear understanding of the nature of Muslims early childhood education) requires in-depth analysis of data to uncover implications for secular education settings, the researcher designed a descriptive case study in a single selected site. Hence, the data sources for the study were the educational practices of the center, analysis of the textbook and views of key informants in the area.

3.3.1. Research setting South Wollo.

South Wollo is bordered on the south by Semien Shewa and the Oromia Region, on the west by MirabGojjam, on the northwest by Debub Gondar, on the north by Semien Wollo, on the northeast by Afar Region, and on the east by the Oromia Zone and the Argobba special woreda. Amharic is spoken as a first language by 98.65%; the remaining 1.35% spoke all other primary languages reported. 70.89% were Muslims, and 28.8% of the population practiced [Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity](#) **Invalid source specified**.. Thus, the people from this area are labeled “Wolloyye” irrespective of ethnic and religious origin.

The reason for selecting South Wollo for my research site was the existence of Islamic scholars renowned at national and even international level in the region, availability of many Sheiks from different ethnic groups, the existence of madrasas that give Tarbiyyah and teaching of Quran reading and memorization for children starting from the age of 5.

3.3.2. Study area selection and its rationale

Based on the preliminary field visit and the data obtained, Robit Quran School, Kombolcha Zone was selected purposely. The rationales behind Robit Quran School were:

- The school was the most known and accepted by the community.
- The informants in the network (snowball) strategy suggested the school has long time and typical experience in Muslims early childhood education.
- The researcher observed better readiness to provide the necessary information during the preliminary survey of schools.

3.3.3. Participant selection

A combination of purposive sampling and snowball selection technique were employed to identify and approach the informants. At the beginning, the researcher intentionally identified key informants from the research center who had experience in the preschool education. In the course of the research, certain key informants were identified through snowball method to include knowledgeable individuals in the area to enrich the data collected from the center.

Accordingly, one main teacher, four former teachers, three religious leaders, and two parents were included as data sources for the study. Oral and written consent was secured from participants after common understanding reached on describing the purpose and nature of the study. In the presentation of data and analysis, the researcher uses the pseudo names to ensure anonymity of data sources..

3.4. Data collection instruments

For the purpose of collecting data for this study, in classroom observation, and key informant interviews were employed were the main instruments of data collection. Besides, textbook analysis was made to enrich the views of participants and observation results.

3.4.1. Observation

Data collected from observation permits a researcher to observe and understand the natural world of the school. Beginning with the objective of the research the variables, that need to be observed, ascertained and decide on the unit of the settings so that it could be recorded objectively.

This study was done as participant observer until the data collected was saturated and no new information was sparked new insights. It was from March 31 up to April 11, 2019

The researcher collected the data as a teacher so that the children may not be emotionally stressed due to my presence in the classroom. To observe the class as a teacher helps the researcher to interact with the students and teacher enough to establish the rapport about the real practices of Muslims Early childhood Education. It was not difficult to act like a teacher for the researcher because she used to teach reading of Quran for children in Addis Ababa as a voluntary. From this observation, the researcher was able to know about the schooling system, the classroom arrangements, the focused area of teaching, the pedagogical techniques used in the class. In this study, the researcher only takes three photographs of the children after discussing with their parents about the objective of the study. .

3.4.2. Interview

. In this study, the researcher employed an Interview to get information that was not obtained from observation and to understand the experience people they have and meaning they make out of that. This study was conducted in face to face encounter using

an open-ended semi-structured interview to enable respondents to address matters in their own terms and words.

A schedule was prepared in advance before starting the interview. For the purpose of ethical consideration, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study orally and in written form and the interview was voice and video recorded as the convincing of the respondents. All of the ten proposed key informants from the snowball sampling were conducted for the semi-structured open-ended interview.

Since an in-depth understanding of human interaction requires near-native fluency in the language of the research participants, the researcher used Amharic and Amharic Arabic mixture expressions during the interview.. The interview was conducted from March 25-30, 2019 (on and off basis).

3.4.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis was also used to strengthen the data obtained through observation and key informants interview. In this study, the document analysis was child textbook 16 chapters and 28 pages of a lesson and 8 pages of the teacher guide.

3.5. Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis of the study started simultaneously with the data gathering process. The output of the gathered data in the form of interview notes, recordings and memos from observation data sources were transcribed, translated, codified, categorized and thematically analyzed.

The data analysis of this research began with transcribing the collected data. The data gathered from the observation were recorded as field notes and were written and summarized immediately after leaving the site. The main observed areas were the classroom sessions that contain the sitting arrangement, the curriculum and the pedagogical strategies of the teaching-learning process. Giving some suggestion and asking questions about the daily finding and tentative interpretation were daily synthesized. When the data collected were saturated the data from the observation was

narrated in descriptive form. The data from the interview were recorded in accordance with the consent of the participants. In order to get the chance of thinking more deeply about the experience for the interviewee and to prepare a more made to measure interview guide for the researcher, a second interview session was administered. After interviewing, the response of participants was transcribed into paper according to their relevance and use for the study.

Since the study output should be presented in English the next step of data analysis was translating the gathered data into the English language. The data collected were coded and labeled into categories. Then followed by thematic data analysis to add strength to the findings to endorse a greater understanding of the case. The final step was the interpretation that involves reflection about the findings and by using induction analytical process to try to draw out implications to the secular early childhood education.

3.6. Quality assurance

The data collected from observation and interview guidelines were peer checked and modified until the last perfection. Moreover, the data collected from the observation, interview and data analysis were triangulated in order to have truthfulness and establish confidence in the findings. In addition, to assist the reader in determining the transferability the researcher tied to use ‘descriptive adequacy’ for reporting of the findings.

The researcher establishes a rapport to the participants and so that the trustworthiness was developed between the two. Moreover, the researcher was reflecting on her journal reflection in order to recognize her own bias and actively seek them out during the process of data analysis.

Chapter Four – Research findings

4.1. General feature of the school

In this section, the researcher try to discuss the findings about the school and the teacher. Furthermore, objective, administration, calendar, daily shifts and daily schedule of the school.

4.1.1. The School

The school observed was Robit Quran bet – a single teacher school. Even though the teacher observed had long years of experience of child teaching, the center was established as Quran Bet in 2007 E.C., when she built her own house and started teaching on regular basis. That is, the school is in the living house of the teacher. It has one big salon, two bedrooms, a toilet, and a big compound. The salon is meant for Quran Bet and the compound is the playground for the children. The school is well known and accepted by the community. The school teaches only the reading of Quran and Tarbiyyah, which is the first and the basic knowledge one should get to shape oneself as Muslim. Therefore, the majority of the students in this school are children and some mothers of the community who intend to read Quran and gain basic Islamic knowledge. The service is provided without any payment.

4.1.2. The teacher:

The teacher is 52 years old and a mother of three children. She gained her religious education through informal process within the community. She has good Quran knowledge and good interaction with the children. Furthermore, as a family, her father was a knowledgeable person especially in the field of Islamic astronomy, her brother, her niece with the age of 72 and her aunt with the age of 100 and above are also Quran teachers. Because of all the above specifics, she is very known and accepted in the community.

4.1.3. The objective of the school

From the interview with the teacher and the founder, it was learned that the objective of the school is to teach the reading and memorizing of the Quran. Furthermore, the school also teaches basic Islamic knowledge in the form of Tarbiyyah for shaping of children's holistic wellbeing by teaching them about life skills and ethical norms. According to the RLA:

“Islam is not only a religion of praying and fasting. It is a way of life which teaches, in addition to praying and fasting, the ethical manner of every aspect of life. For these age group children, they should be shaped and trained the norms of daily life activities so that they practice and develop the right way of life activities and thereby develop as human beings.”

4.1.4. The academic calendar of the school

It was observed (from the school calendar) that the school gives service in all days of the year with the exception of religious holidays like Eid Al-Fetir and Eid Al-Adha, and Friday and month of Ramadan afternoon sessions. Furthermore, there is high number of absence of children on Friday morning, on the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, one week after the 'Eid Al-fetir holiday, four days after the Eid Al-Adha holiday and harvesting time of the year.

4.1.5. Admission to the school

From the interview it with the teacher it was learned that, for the admission of the students, the only requirement is the interest of parents and their child. A student can enroll to and can drop out of the school at any time of the year. According to parent R: *“The children can transfer from one Quran Bet to another at any time of the year because the curriculum and the textbooks are similar in all Quran Bets. The only determinant is the will and interest. When the child changes a school, the teacher assesses her/his level of knowledge and allows him/her to continue the learning process according to her/his level. Therefore as a parent, there is no problem if we want to transfer to another village, at any time of the year, for different reasons.”* This shows that

the Quran bet has flexible school calendar as well as harmonized curriculum that enables children to move from school to school easily.

4.1.6. Shifts of the school

The school has mainly four shifts for all age group of students. The class starts early morning i.e. after Fajir pray from around 6:00 to 9:00 A.M., one-hour breakfast break then from 10:00 to 12:30 A.M., one and half hour lunch break for the teacher, then from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. and from 4:00 to 6:30 P.M. class ends around 6:30, at before Maghrib Pray. There is no rigid schedule for the child to which group to attain but the teacher advise the child to attain with her/his age groups only and if not convenient to the child to attain the class at any time of the day. In addition to this, there is no regid time schedule to finish the class. The teacher might uses her break time for the teaching process. This shows that the school serves many students with multiple shifts and one teacher who works for more than 10 hours a day.

The early morning class is for those who attain their secular education on the afternoon shift, the morning shift for mothers, afternoon shift for those who attain secular education in governmental schools in the morning shift, and the late afternoon shift for all who want to attain. The shift of government schools changes every week for both primary and middle-class students. There is no high school in the area.

For example, on my first week of visiting the schedules and the age group of students was as illustrated in the following table.

Table 1: Daily shifts of the school

No.	Time	Age group	Grade at school
1	6:00 to 9:00 A.M.	Age 10 and above	Grade 5-8
2	10:00 to 12:30 A.M.	Mothers of the children	No restriction
3	2:00 to 4:00 P.M.	Age between 5 and 10	Below and 'O' class itself – grade 4
4	4:00 to 6:30 P.M.	For all age groups	All grades

For this research purpose, the targeted group was the afternoon group between ages 5-10, specifically focused on those subgroups of age 5-7 years. From this point on the word group, indicate this specific sub-group from age 5-7 years.

4.1.7. Daily Schedule of the school

From the observation it was learned that, the daily schedule for the specific subgroup starts around 2:00 P.M. and ends around 4:00 P.M. The daily program divides into two: individual learning and group learning. The first program is on the reading of the Quran, individual learning, and at the last 15 to 30 minutes, the group learning, Tarbiyyah, took place. However, sometimes if the teacher feels it is appropriate the daily schedule may shift and the group learning may take a longer time.

4.2. The Curriculum, the focus area of learning.

From the observation it was understood that, there are two focus areas of learning for this group. They are the learning of reciting the Noble Quran and the Tarbiyyah, shaping of oneself as a Muslim.

The children at this stage are called the beginners or jemari. They learn the reading of Quran and the Tarbiyyah. The Tarbiyyah subject is divided further into themes. It teaches the basic and simple way of Islamic manners and ethics with the help of stories and

poems. There is no rigid difference or division of subjects in the class with the exception of the Quran reading. However, the researcher, for the sake of listing, tries to divide the focus area of learning as themes as follows:

1. Learning of reading Quran
 - 1.1. Arabic letters, sound identification, individual learning and
 - 1.2. Aleqa i.e. learning by a group the perfect way of recitation of the Quran.
2. Tarbiyyah, using poems and stories, encompass the following themes within it.
 - a. Islamic ethics
 - b. Basic Islamic teaching
 - c. General Sirrah \ stories

4.2.1. Learning of the Quran

From the observation, it was learned that, the longer period of the day is left for the teaching of the reading of the Quran. Because for the Muslims reading is the first obligation that they should always have to do. As teacher, S said *“we, Muslims, as a nation are obligated to read and write then learn. The first surah/chapter that was revealed to the prophet Muhammed (PBUH) was surah/chapter Al-‘Alef meaning “The clot” that starts with the word “Read” and continue saying "Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created, He has created man from a clot, Read! And your Lord is Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen, He has taught man that which he knew not.” (96. 1-5). Therefore, we have to teach the children to read and to write for the first and for most, especially the reading of the Quran. If he is able to read he can get the knowledge from the books by his own.”*

From the textbook analysis it was learned that, when the children start learning they start with the identification of the name of the Arabic letter and then followed by the identification of the sounds then connecting these letters making words all with different chapters and different color used for each letters and symbols. As the child finished the reading of words, he then starts reading of sentences and practices some more paragraphs before he goes to the reading of the Quran.

With the interview of key participants, it was learned that, as the child goes through the proses of learning how to read, the child also learns the way of recitation of the Quran from Aleqa session. Aleqa is a group recitation that every child, as a group recite following the recitation of the teacher. The teacher recites the short chapters of the Quran, which all of them with the exception of surah Al-Fatiha, are found in the 30th juz of the Quran. From the interview with the key participants, it was learned that the Quran has special way of recitation. According to teacher O, vision impaired:

“ The Quran is special book with its own special characteristics, one of its special characters is that it has got its own “tertil” or melody, one who can read Arabic cannot read the Quran with its perfect melody or recitation rules. Due to these, the child should learn and practice this special melody. This group of children cannot understand the rules for the melody formation the only solution is to practices the melody by reciting it after the teacher. Therefore, in order to learn the right way of recitation and practices memorization of the Quran, the Aleqah session is very important. Even if the child learns to read Arabic as early as two months, it might take more than a year to finish the 30 juz/ volumes of the Quran with the right tertil / melody.

This Aleqah session also helps them as a base stone for the memorization of the Quran. Because they have already memorized the short chapter, it is easy for them to memorize the longer one. Thus this session is used as orientation for the formal education of reading and memorizing.

From the observation and from the textbook analysis it was observed that, the technique for the identification of letters and sounds was as follows

The number of Arabic letter is 28. The children are expected to know their name with their sequences. Therefore, the child first has to know the name and the sequences as just like a poem and then try to identify each letter by letter. Unfortunately, Arabic letters are very similar to one another, therefore, it is difficult for children to differentiate. The teacher uses another poem to identify and differentiation of the letters by their numbers of dotes and their position.

The poem says:-

“Alifyelew,

Ba ketach and alew,

Ta kelayhuletalew,

Sa kelaysoitalew,..... Until the last letter

Yaketachhuletalew”.

From the interview with key participants it was learned that these songs on identifying and differentiate the letter facilitate the learning of the name of the letters. The other difficulty the teachers face in teaching the name of the letter is the similarity of the sounds that the letters form. These similarities are for those whose are not a native speaker of the language. To solve this problem the teacher repiting the right way of the sound until the child is perfect. This is learned from the interview with teacher S. He said:

"The difficult part of the identification of the Arabic letter is not only the similarities of the shape of the letters but also the similarity of their sound especially for us, as a second language. As an example ص, س and ث and ح, خ dna ه have similar sounds with little difference that seems to sound Se and Ha respectively. Therefore, in order to learn the right sound, the child must repeat it repeatedly next to the teacher until the last perfection."

After identifying and differentiating the name of the letters, the child promotes into the identification of the letter in joint forms because words in Arabic are written in joint forms. In addition, these joint forms have some difference with the single letters. From the textbook analysis it was learned that in teaching the joint form of the letter the text uses different type of colors for each letter. Therefore, the children can differentiate on letter fro another while it is in joint form.

After identifying and differentiating the name of the letters in single and joint forms with their right sounds the child proceeds to the different sound that the letter form with the

addition of Harekah\symbols. For one letter there are at least 11 different sound symbols that are added to differentiate the sounds that the letters make. From these, at least the six are taught by using poems. Saying

Aliffetha A, alifkesra I, alifdemmah U, A I U,

Ba fetha Be, Ba kesra Bi, Ba demmah Bu, Be Bi Bu Until the last letter Ye, Yi, Yu.

In addition, continue with double symbols/hareka

Aliffethateyni an, alifkesrateyni in, alifdemmahteyniun, an in un

Ba fethateyni ben, bakesrateyni bin, bademmahteyni nun, ben bin un..... Until the last letter yen, yin, yun.

The rest chapters are taught without a poem. Because the children are already adapted to the system.

Then the child can now practice making words and sentences then proceed to paragraph reading and at the end of the book the child is promoted with success and after graduating the child is allowed to read the chapter of the Quran starting from the 30th Juz\ volume, small chapters.

4.2.2. Learning of Tarbiyyah

The tarbiyyah subject, further divided into three themes, are the Islamic ethical manner, basic Islamic knowledge and the Sirrah/story.

The first theme for these group of age is that Islamic ethics which teach the daily life skills and manners for the children. According to the observation the ethics focus on teaching the child the norms forevery aspect of life. For example, eating manner, bathing manner, sleeping manner, relationship with parents, relatives and neighborsand even with plants, animals and the natural environment of the child at all.

On the researcher visit of the Islamic manners that they were learning was the eating manner. The teacher was giving advice and teaching them the norms of eating by expanding the rule and also showing them the practices. The explanation was on how to wash hands before eating, to eat what is served and not to complain about the food, not to eat too hot or too cold foods, to eat with others in the same plate, to say Bismillah (in the name of Allah) before start eating and what to say if one remember in the middle of eating, to eat with right hand, to eat from their own front, to share special item in the food with others, if possible to finish the food on the plate, if not to leave a food that is enough for others to make them full at least more than 3 spoon and to say Alhamdulillah and wash hands when finished eating.

The second theme that was taught was the basic Islamic knowledge that is learning about the pillars of Islam, Iman, and Ihsan. It was learned from the key participant that learning the basic Islamic teaching at this stage is for the sake of orientation As AH said:

“Even though it is not mandatory to perform the pillars of Islam at this stage they should know them. We do not teach them the details only teach them that every Muslim should pray or perform Salah and when they grow up it will be easier for them to perform it.”

This theme also teaches them pillars of Iman that taught them what they should believe in and know about Allah, Prophets, Angels and Holy books. Generally, it is understood that the aim of these theme is making the child ready for the future obligator practices.

The third theme is the Sirrah, which is the story of the prophets and pious people. From the observation it was learned that this story telling is not only for the sake of story, but it is also for the motivation of the children, since children love hearing stories. As teacher M said:

“I believe that in story telling the children learn so many things within one story. It is the means to cover many aspects in one stage in addition to this because the children love hearing stories I used it as a break.”

It was observed that, the above three themes are all are integrated with one another. For example, on the teaching of the Islamic manner, the teacher taught in the form of the

Sirrah\ story about the practices of daily lives, and on the basic Islamic knowledge was taught with poems and songs called neshidah. The identification of letters and sound are also integrated with numbers and positions.

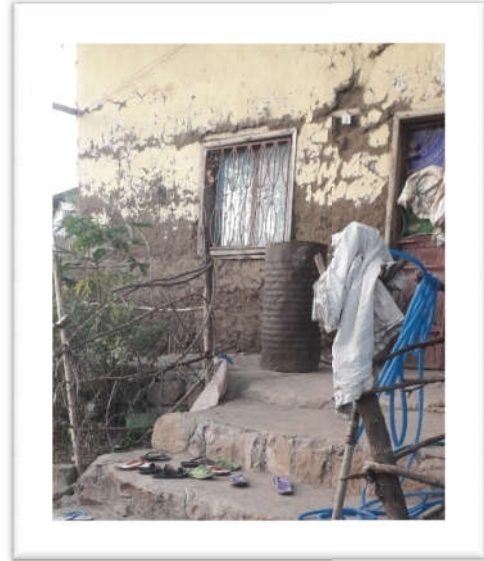
In addition to poems and stories, the teacher also uses drama. For example, on my visit, the children were practicing sleeping and bathing manner. Moreover, students were performing these activities with the form of drama.

In addition to this, the other ethical manner that is done in the daily base in a class like entering and leaving the class, greeting with each other, interaction with one another is assessed every day by the teacher and also by the a classmate. If the child do not performed the right ethical manner in the right way he/she is reminded by the friends. However, surprisingly, on my visit, I did not observe any child who does not practice this Islamic manner at the school. This indicate that how much th children internalize the topic that was coverd because this curriculum is both developmentally and culturally appropriate.

4.3. Classroom organization

4.3.1 Classroom setting –

The school has one big compound, for playing, and one big room made up of wood and mud, for teaching purpose. In the class, there is one small shelf, one small black board, charts on the wall and big carpet for the whole floor. However, the carpet is teared and covered again with plastic carpets here and there. From the observation it was understood that, in the classroom, there is no table and chair, no chalk, no additional books, no modern playing materials like puzzle and toys. However, the children are happy playing in the natural settings of the compound and they are emotionally free because the school is similar in setting with the home environment.



4.3.2. Sitting arrangement

From the field visit, it was observed that, the students sit according to their arrival and wait their turn. While waiting for their turn and after they learned the new lesson, the students are grouped according to their Quranic level and/or their age. As the teacher said M said:

“I know my children very well with their behavior and Quran potential. In this class, the majority of the students are on the reading practices. There are only a few children who read the Quran very well. Therefore, most of the time, I make these children be the group leader/Amir then I assign the others according to their age and level. I prefer to gather the children with their age when I want to give more time to the Tarbiyyah and I want to group them with their Quranic level when I want to give more time to the practices of reading because the elder children really help the younger child to master the lesson. And it is true that this will help the elder child as a revision.”

After the group is assigned the teacher, select students according to their arrival. The number of groups in a class and the number of students in a group varies according to the teacher’s interest and the attending number of students. Three students sit near the teacher at a time. One at each side, the one in front is taking his turn or learning his new lesson from the teacher. The two students who sit on the left and right are waiting for their turns

by revising the previous lesson without any disturbance or talking with others. When one student finishes his lesson then he joins his group and waits by working with his new lesson with those who pass that lesson and also helping those who are below his level. Most students in a class get a chance of tutoring others and are tutored by others. Moreover, one student who sits at the teacher side will take his turn and another student will come and sit on her side. This turn-taking continues until all the children have a turn to learn the new lesson from the teacher. Furthermore, if there is time left the teacher starts second round starting from the slow learners.

The surprising potential of the teacher was, that the teacher observed on the visit was that, she knows the level of all the students and memorizes the textbook from repeated teaching. Moreover, she correct a child from the group when they make mistakes while helping the other. According to teacher M, she said:

"I know all my children with their age and Quranic level. However, to get rid of doubts I make dot the book with pencil. I also know when they make mistakes while helping others. I tell them to make louder noise while helping the other and studying own lesson so that I can hear their voice and correct their mistakes."

All the above indicate the potential of the teacher on grouping, selecting a leader for the group, memorizing the level of the student. Furthermore, the teachers capacity on managing this kind of sitting environment. This type of potential must be shared, from the teachers rich experience, to those who are new for educating the early years

4.3.3. Instructional materials

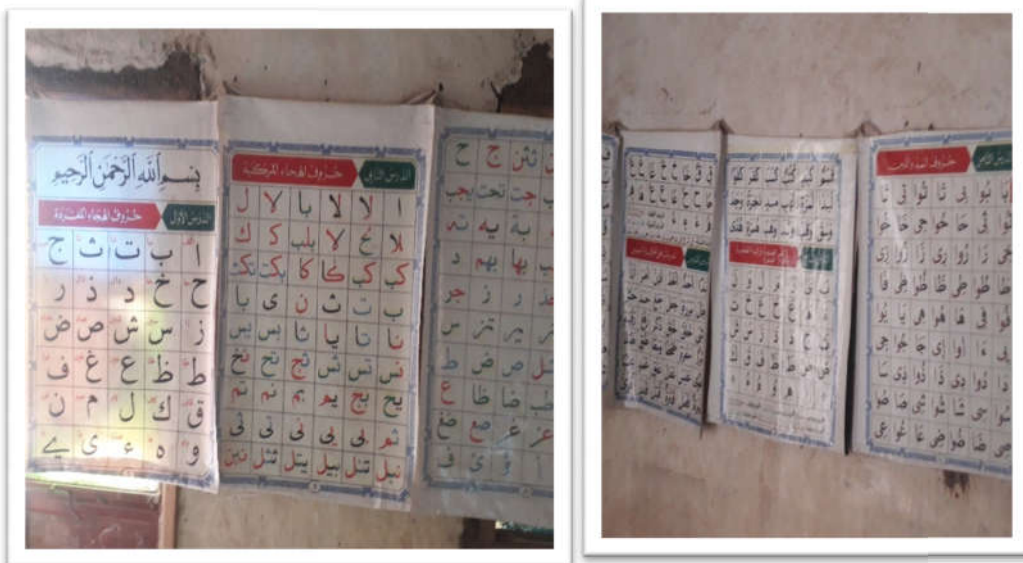
From the textbook analysis, the instructional material in the class was child textbook and the charts of the pages of the book on the wall. The textbook is colorful A5 paper size, which starts with the name of the letters up to the paragraph reading exercise. It has a total of 34 pages, with 28 pages of lessons divided into 16 chapter and 8 pages of the teacher guide. In addition to the teacher guide the each new chapter have a footnote as a reminder for the teacher.

From the interview it was learned that, the textbook is found in any Islamic bookstores and around any Masjid. Furthermore, because the population in the area are with low socioeconomic status the teacher prepared a chart for every page of the textbook so that the child can use the charts or the textbook for the learning process. These charts were prepared by cooperating with the community members. The expense was covered by the parents of the children, former students of the school and community members.

As parent R said on asking her opinion on the participation on the school, *“If we can cooperate with one another we can do thing that seems like a dream. This chart is one example of cooperation. There is saying that says ‘hamsalomi le and sew shekmu le hamsa sew getu’. Even thought preparing these chart seems a dream with cooperation we make it real.”*

The charts help the children to remember the lesson at any time of the classroom. On my visit, a child was saying that, ‘he had reach to the window of the class, the door side of the class to the front wall of the class’. What he want to say was that, because the charts are arranged with their page number starting from the right side of the entrance door to the left side of the class, so the child counts the pages by telling the position of the chart in the class. Furthermore, the chart have advantages especially for those who are unable to buy the textbook and do not bring their own textbook to the school.

It is clear from the above explanation that, the importance of cooperation of stakeholders for the quality of early childhood education.



However, during my visit, there was no activity for the children to develop the skill of writing. Their textbook teaches the children only the reading. **As teacher Y said:**

"Some years ago there was a luh that is a piece of wood that the teacher or the assistant write on it the lesson, and the child uses as a text. In addition to this, after a few years, the child learns how to write the letters on his own. Nevertheless due to the absence of luh, as a medium of instruction, the child cannot write what he reads." Ustath Y finalize his speech by quoting this saying

Manbebintemromestafyemayawiq

Ejochutasrewalendayzezinwerq.

Meaning

Those who learn reading without writing

Are those whose hand are banded no to collect gold."

On my observation, there was no additional instructional material, which the school uses to facilitate the Quran teaching-learning process. In addition, the school does not use any instructional material, for this age group, for the teaching of the additional focused areas, Tarbiyyah.

4.4. The pedagogical strategies

4.4.1. Promotion system

From the observation it was learned that, one child is promoted from one level to another on mastering of the lesson. In addition to this, there are ceremonies for those who reaches specific academic level of the Quran and for those who finish the textbook. As the teacher, M said:

“Making celebration really motivate the children and make them eager to learn. When a child reaches specific Quranic level. The ceremony is done with Kolo or Anebabero or Dabo, nobody is allowed to bring other things except the one from the three. This ceremony is done for three reasons, to motivate the child, to help the child to transit smoothly from level to level and for the others to increase their learning interest. The ceremony is done with the participation of the parents.”

On the observation, there was a ceremony for promotion from one level to another. In the ceremony, the child's mother brings Anebabero. Then the class celebrates graduation in the class with the children. From this, the researcher understands that not only the child who is promoting from one level to another is happy but also the whole class is in the state of joy and happiness for a treat from the graduator and are eager to learn new topics.

4.4.2. Discipline method

On my observation, the teacher uses two types of discipline method, reward, and punishment. The reward for those who behave in a good manner and show a radical change in their performance. The teacher, allow him to sit near to her as a special student, give him a special role in the class, and if possible give him any gift. As the teacher EL, said:

"This age group of children is happy just by little changes, for example, if he sits beside me for one day he will keep his good manner for some days. And on repeating this phenomena he will get used to it and adapt doing it."

In the opposite if some child shows or done an undesirable behavior or activity, from the interview it was learned that, he will be advised by the teacher and the Amir/ leader of the group. If the undesirable behavior continues he is corporally punished by the teacher by snapping his hand with her two fingers. According to teacher M, she said:

“I know that, in Islam, it is not allowed to physically punish the child at this age, but because we as a parent and the students as a child already adapt some form of corporal punishment at home. It is normal to bit them in the class. Even there are parents that want their child to be bitten by the teacher for some undesirable behavior that was observed at home. Unfortunately, there are children who cannot be corrected without corporal punishment and there are also children who do not even show any behavioral improvement with this type of punishment”

On my visit, it was observed that the rewarding system of the school really help the child to keep his behavior and the corporal punishment for the children who show undesired behavior also have helped the child to get rid of undesired behavior for most of the children.

4.4.3. Assessment method

From the observation and interview it was learned that, the assessment technique used in the school is day-to-day and ongoing assessment. For the learning of reading, the assessment was done on question and answer base. If and only if the child can pass to the next on the mastering of the previous lesson. In this technique, the teacher, check the child’s day to day performance and decide how much he can proceed to the next lesson. For example, if the child has a capacity of identifying one letter at a time he will be learning one letter only. If he improves his performance, the teacher will add additional letters for the child to learn at a time. This makes the assessment to be ongoing and on potential of the child. This help the child to go according to his pace.

For the tarbiyyah subjects. The assessment technique is by observation on mastering the Adab or ethical manners. According to the teacher, H says:

“In the Tarbiyyah subject, we expect children to master and practice the Adab. The teacher always teaches the tarbiyyah the children may or may not master the lesson at once. In order to make the children master the topics, it is not only taught orally but also in the form of drama. The children are expected to practice it in their day-to-day activities. Therefore, as a teacher, I observe his doings and assess him according to that. However, surprisingly the children, special children from good religious background family, already practices the ethics. For example, when entering the class the child must greet the class by saying 'Aselamualeykum' meaning 'peace be upon you' and should enter the class with his right leg, this must be done at school or at home and must be practiced by all Muslims. “

This makes the Quran School be culturally appropriate and relevant to the children of the Muslims community so that they can easily internalize the lesson they have covered.

4.4.4. Treatment of academic performance differences in the school

In the Quran School it was observed that, students get education according to their performance. Children have different academic performance. There are slow learners, intermediate learners, and fast learners. In the Quran bet every child, learn according to his performance. The child learns individually, therefore, the child can move through lessons according to his potential and performance. This system enables the talented child to accelerate and for the slow learn it help them to master the lesson on his own pace.

If a talented student, fails to accelerate this may lead to frustration and if slow, learners are failed to get special support and treatment they might get emotionally stressed and may fail to have self-confidence in the future. According to teacher S:

“The reasons for this academic performance difference might be "the nature of the child which is the first and main reason, religious background of the family, the degree of parental involvement and the presence or absence of elder family member who attends Quran schools have their own contribution for the academic performance of the child.”

4.4.5. Interaction of school community

In the school, there is good interaction between all of the community of the school, which are teacher, student and parents.

A. Interaction between teacher and parents.

It was observed that, there is a high respect for the teacher from parents. Because the some parents also learn at the school, all parents believe in the teacher's potential, have good interaction with the teacher, they always respond to any request of the school with full interest. The teacher do not take any kind of payment from the parents. Nevertheless, when there is a need of budget or human resource for additional activity of the school the parent ready to participate and fulfill the gap. The charts on the wall is one example.

Another example learned from the interviewee is that, the consulting service, the parents consult the teacher for undesirable behavior of the child that was observed at home.

Believing that to get some advice for themselves and some measurement, to be taken, for the child. The involvement of parents on the graduation ceremony is another example of good interaction. At this time, the parents get access to interact with the teacher and also with the students of the class, a friend of her child.

Generally it was observed that, the presence of good interaction helps the parents for increasing the parental involvement, and cooperation teacher and mother for the development of the child in all aspects.

B. Interaction of students with the teacher

On my visit, it was observed that, the interaction of the teacher with the students is like mother and child. The teacher really care and love the children. Because of the sense of motherhood, the teacher treat all the children like her own.

The children also respect and love the teacher like their mother. In addition, because all the children are born and grow in the village and know the status of the teacher in the community, the children show high respect for the teacher advice.

C. Interaction of student with student.

There is time for the students to interact with each other in the class. The grouping system and selection of leader for the group shapes the leader and the follower is like elder and younger child of one family. The interaction between the followers themselves is like friend of the same age. In order to shape the interaction of the students with each other the teacher have some rules. For example, everybody have to submit to the commands of the leader. If the leader do not lead the group correctly the students can complain to the teacher at the end of the class. Bulling and insulting each other is not allowed in the class. With sum of the above reason, the children have good interaction with each other.

4.4.6. Pear relation

Even though the school does not have modern and expensive playgrounds, the children can play at the compound before entering the class and after attaining the class the natural field of the compound. The children do not get tired off in the class due to the absence of high teacher-centered, structured activities. Furthermore, the children get a chance to socialize and play with friends without over disturbing the class and low supervision of the teacher.

It was observed that individual child centered educational system, the grouping system of the school and the availability of Amirs (leaders) system helps the children to get some type of peer relation. The Amir/leaders the responsible person for leading the group and act as assistant teacher and reduce the work load of the teacher. is selecting one student from the group to be the leader and the other to be the follower. The Amir might be selected for different reasons like a higher level of Quran, his age, his behavior, and others. The Amir will change by the main teacher as needed. When there is disagreement with the selected Amir and the children, the last decision is made by the main teacher. As EL states that:

“I always select one Amir for the regulation or supervision of the students, the students must be obedient to the Amir, it is a rule. This is because the Prophet(PBUH) used to say

that 'if there is a group of two or three one must be the leader the others must follow and obey him far as he does not order him to disobey Allah the rule of the religion, otherwise your leader will be Devil.' Due to this saying, I am very cautious for selecting of the Amir."

This leader and follower system help the children to respect one another and misbehavior like bullying and violence are less likely to occur because all the children (follower) are under the supervision and must submit to the authority of the Amir. This makes make the class be culturally and developmentally appropriate.

On my visit, there was also a group work for helping each other on the practice of reading of the Quran. This group work and peer support help them to develop intimacy and to respect the idea of one another.

Chapter Five – Implications

Ethiopia has best experiences **in indigenous and religious education** that could be shared for the rest of the world. However, the Ethiopian education system has failed to look inward and learn from its own best practices of preschool settings. Understanding this gap the purpose of the study was to assess the educational practices **in** the Islamic early childhood educations to draw implication to enrich the secular one. The researcher tried to draw lessons that are affordable, accessible, doable, and culturally and developmentally appropriate. The lessons are from the real practice of the Quran Bet and not from the religious thought. Based on the research findings from the practice of Islam early childhood education, the following lessons seemed worth noting to enhance the effort of building a responsive education system grounded on local practices.

5.1. Implications from the general feature of the school

- ❖ Unlike the secular schools, the Quran Bet has flexible calendar as well as harmonized curriculum that enable children to move from school to school easily. Which will minimize the emotional stress of the child created from changing of curriculum when transferring to another school.
- ❖ The Quran School uses multiple shifts. Using Multiple-shift systems can be highly cost-effective. They can permit substantial financial savings, and do not necessarily cause a decline in quality. Moreover, when introduction of multiple-shift schooling does cause some loss of quality, the benefits of reduced unit costs and of larger enrolments may outweigh the cost implied by the loss of quality.

5.2. Implications from the curriculum and areas of learning.

The school teaches two subjects only. The first is learning reading and the second is shaping of individuals in terms of moral values. Even though the two subjects are not integrated, the themes within the subject are highly integrated. For example,

- ✓ The letter identification is taught with colors, numbers and positions together. This enables children to cover at least three subjects in the secular ECE, i.e. math, science and art. This will lighten the educational load for the child by decreasing the number of subjects and resulting fragmentations. .
- ✓ The Aleqah and the Islamic teachings part helps children as an orientation for the future learning process and thereby enhance child readiness for formal education, in this context, for reading, memorizing of the Quran and teaching his future responsibility as a Muslim. If the secular ECE uses orientation method rather than teaching the real subject with the expectation of passing the exam, it will be more relevant to the child by making children ready for formal education- stimulation and enhancing readiness
- ✓ From the Islamic ethics and manner, the secular schools can learn that, teaching the real life practice is more relevant than teaching the ideal and unseen subject based, foreign curriculum. The children can easily internalize topics that are practiced in the community. From the Islamic Early childhood education we can take a lesson on how to teach culturally appropriate ethical manners and practices
Furthermore, it is better to shape and standardize our own cultures and norms and teach them. For example as an Ethiopia, it is shameful to hear slogan Minister of Health that says, “tenawo be ejo new”, which teaches the Ethiopia adult people when and how to wash hands. This should be taught in the Early years of education. As to the researcher, if we cannot integrate the rich rearing practices of Ethiopian to the secular educational system, we will continue seeing and saying the same slogan in the future.
- ✓ Moreover, the process of teaching and learning in self-contained practice in which a single teacher throughout years that allow the teacher keep track of the development of each child because of adequate familiarity with each and every child. In secular ECE centers especially KGs there is a change of teacher every year and people perceive self-contained as a malpractice of the secular education system. However, as it is evident from the findings of this research, self-contained classroom setup can be considered as one way of organizing classroom to facilitate understanding of learning problems and strengths of each child and act accordingly in supporting

children for a better learning. Otherwise, assigning teachers by subject and changing every time implies forcing a teacher to operate with little knowledge about the development status of each child.

- ✓ Teaching the story of poise people helps the child to have role model that he wants to be in the future. In fact, Ethiopia has long years of rearing a child with stories and poems but there are still some stories and poems that are not age appropriate. As an example, ‘Beza be begaechognateftofilga...’ Which tell the child about ones lost fiancé and on his search her finding her, he fall in love with another woman. At least at this age let them learn what is good and bad not falling in love with the opposite sex.

5.3. Implications from the classroom organization

In this section the researcher, try to indicate some implications on available instructional materials and the seating arrangement in the class.

Availability of materials

- ✓ The preparation of charts from local materials helps the school to solve the problem of lack of instructional materials. The school is using this chart for the students for years. Even though most of the students in the school have, low socio-economic status and everybody could not buy a textbook, the school is able to solve the problem by cooperating with the community. This could be a lesson especially for remote areas with low socio economic status that are not able to deliver one textbook for each student and also helps to increase parental involvement.

Multi grade class

The grouping of the students helps the child in many aspects. This is another implication for the secular education.

- ✓ The multi- grade system is an educational service under the direction of one teacher (ustath) of single class containing two or three grade levels to one-room learning

environment. According to Ethiopian minister of education statistic annual report that accessibility of early childhood education was only 44% with a high variation between rural and urban difference. One of the reason for this was because ECCE centers are left to the private sector which makes the service expensive. One way to improve the enrolment rate and to minimize the urban rural enrollment rate difference is to employ a multigrade system. Because these multi grade schools are educational models for scattered population in both developed and developing countries and also essential in order to provide education at reasonable cost and minimal man power constraints (Thomas, C. and Shaw,C., 1992) In addition to the cost effectiveness of the system multigrade schools have the following advantages for early childhood education. It helps the child to develop social, emotional, and verbal skills and self-esteem; enabling students to learn at their own pace. In addition to this, including students of different ages in one classroom creates a caring environment, as it encourages older students to serve as role models or mentors to help their younger peers. Teachers become more familiar with students and their families, potentially resulting in a strong sense of continuity that could lead to better teacher-parent relationships and increased parent involvement Furthermore, building a caring child-centered and project-based learning environment also improve student attitudes toward school and school work, which results in increased attendance. This multi grade system also smooth transition to primary school.(Ruiting Song, 2007) As cited by (Ruiting Song, 2007)Veenman stated that Multiage classrooms are popular in many countries. In 1995, more than half of the classrooms in the Netherlands, Finland, Portugal, and Western Australia had multiage groupings, and one in seven Canadian classrooms were multiage. In 2004, the Netherlands Antilles federal government required their schools to change from a traditionally graded system to a child-centered and mixed-aged approach. In Canada, multiage groupings are common in childcare centers and preschools(Ruiting Song, 2007). From the above we can understand that, this kind of multi grade school should be portifoied in Ethiopia in both rural and urban area. Because multi grades schools are cost effective and developmentally appropriate. In rural area especially in areas of low enrolment rate areas like Afar and Ethiopia-Somali with GER of just 14.3% and 4.5%

respectively this multiage system is the only way out to increase enrolment rate. This system might be used in the coverage of early childhood education services to the remotest areas or more disadvantaged sections of the population. In addition may help to create opportunities for children in especial need and for girls by expanding schools close to home. All this can be employed by taking real life experience from the indigenous Islamic schools.

5.4. Implication to peer relation of sitting arrangement.

Children in Early childhood education centers will not only grow academically and physically; they also need to grow socially as a member of that community. Children learn how to act and respond to situations in a safe environment with the teacher as a guide. Educators create an environment in which children can learn.

- ✓ The school has child centered, participatory pedagogy, that socialize the child in free play, turn waiting, mentor manatee relation, rather than trapped in teacher centered child work which inhibits child cognitive and emotional skills. In secular preschool, the class is highly structured and full of rules and regulation therefore there is very little time for the socialization of the children with each other. This highly structured and teacher centred class has only very few minutes to socialization and even if they get the chance to do, they are forced to communicate In English language and with the supervision of the teacher for every activity they done. This might cause adult dependency of the children for every activity. To speak in English might cause emotional stress and decline cognitive development due to inability of using mother tongue effect for the expression of feelings. For all these reasons and to the children the in secular schools neither are developmentally nor culturally appropriate.
- ✓ Cooperative learning is a learning method in which the students help each other by creating small mixed groups in the direction of a common goal, the self-confidence of the individuals increases, their communication skills improve, the students most actively participate in the lesson. Cooperative learning is also an effective method to eliminate social adaptation problems, it encourages the children for problem solving,

it makes remembering and comprehending the concepts easier, it provides to transfer and share what's been learnt.

- ✓ Secular ECE centers must have a time in the class to have some peer relations. In the Quran, school there is time for the children to socialize through peer support and peer teaching. Because peer teaching for early childhood education has positive effects on intellectual, academic development and is important for a child to develop socially. It also shows that peer-mediated intervention is more successful than adult-mediated intervention in terms of helping children who are struggling either academically or socially; on the other hand, produce more effective and longer lasting results(Hooker, 2014)
- ✓ Ethiopian ECE is implemented in teacher center manner and more focus on the formal education and give less emphasize to socialization and cooperative learning through peer relation. Therefore, for secular ECE it is important to implement peer-teaching strategies that encouraged positive peer interaction as well as provided opportunities for children to grow academically by working with particular materials to increase its quality.
- ✓ This type of pedagogical strategies have implication to child to child modalities. Because these modalities are done from elder child to younger child which has a similarity with the Quran bet grouping strategy. If there is mentor-mentee system activities to run the teaching learning process smoothly and if the class can have one adult supervisor for facilitating and coaching the class and to make decisions for the disagreements.

5.4.Implication to Pedagogical strategy

A. Treatment of academic potential difference

The current grade-based academic standards and high-stakes testing might have solid correlations to curriculum-centered instruction, but by using the same curricula to teach diverse groups of students, they might neglect some students' needs, especially those of high-and low-achievers.(Ruiting Song, 2007) Human beings are different one from the other. This was observed in children either. Every child has different academic

performance. There are fast, intermediate and slow learners. Schools must teach students according to their potential. In the school, students get the education according to their performance. Because every child learn individually, no one is left without understanding the any lesson. Therefore, the child can move through lessons according to his potential and performance. The child is performing with accordance of his pace. No child is forced to master the topic or to wait others until they master. Furthermore, if talented student fail to accelerate they may lead into frustration and if slow learners are failed to get special support and treatment they might get emotionally stressed and may fail to have a self-confidence in the future.

B. Assessment techniques

- ✓ The school uses two type of assessment techniques. Mastering of the lesson for reading and practicing the ethical manner. In this technique, the teacher check the child day-to-day performance. After assessing, the child's level and performance the teacher decide how much he can proceed to the next lesson. This assessment was done on ongoing basis instead of the end of the academic year and is individual oriented.
- ✓ Taking two different assessment techniques for the preparation of formal education and for the stimulation for future life. Rather than assessing all the aspects of development with only paper and pencil at the end of the quarter of the year.
- ✓ Assessment should compare students previous performance with his progress to a learning outcome In secular school, the assessment is done quarterly in one academic year. It is not ongoing therefore it is difficult to assess the day-to-day performance of the child and cannot help to decide how much and how to proceed with the child learning activities. If the child is assessed in ongoing base, he can have better socio emotional status and academic performance.

C. Promotion and graduation

- ✓ In secular schools the graduation ceremony is done only for the preparatory school students which is assumed to help the child for smooth transition process

from preprimary school to the primary school. This only help the child to smooth the transition of change in school compound and in teaching learning style. However, this kind of transitions ceremony does not increase the learning interest of the child. Nevertheless, if the child is motivated for his potential and achievement then the child starts performing an activity for its own sake and derives pleasure from the activity itself. Therefore, the child will be eager to learn the next new chapter by his own pace.

- ✓ The participation of the parents for the ceremony increase parental involvement. The uniformity of the food items that is brought for the graduation helps to create uniformity for all level of Socio-economic statuses.

D. Interaction of school community

- ✓ Interaction of the students between themselves This leader and follower system help the children to respect one another and misbehavior like bullying and violence are less likely to occur because all the children (mentee) are under supervision must submit to the authority of the Amir(mentor). The mentor is very close and friendly to the mentee, therefore, both of them learn to respect each other. This makes make the class to be culturally and developmentally appropriate.
- The interaction of teacher with students also help to create home like environment and decrease the stress on the child for being away from home. Furthermore, early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development and continues to influence social relationships throughout life.
- ✓ The interaction between teacher and parents also help the parents to involve into the learning process. Especially in fund raising, graduation, to on counseling.

Limitation of Robit Quran Bet.

The secular school can learn from the Quran Bet from different aspects of teaching learning process of the school. Nevertheless, there are limitation of the Quran Bet.

- ❖ Even though the teachers have the experience and the interest of teaching small aged children, there is still a gap in the understanding of their needs. If they can

get pieces of training about the psychological needs and the teaching methods, they can add so many excellent ideas for their students in addition to the existing knowledge and methods.

- ❖ There is no studied plan for the overall activity of the school. As a result, every bit of the work in the school is done on the basis of the routines experience of the school and the teacher interest.
- ❖ The teachers have no plan on the teaching of the tarbiyyah subject and this cause a repetition of lessons or uncovered lesson.
- ❖ The students only learn reading of the Arabic text. There is no activity for the children to develop the skill of writing the letters. The activity of reading without writing leads incompleteness of the learning process.
- ❖ In the school, there is an absence of instructional material with the exception of the text. This textbook is not aged appropriate. In fact, it uses different colors for different activities of the chapter. However, it does not use big fonts, does not have any pictures, does not use any means of symbolization and association of letters that facilitate the learning process at this stage. In addition to this, the school does not have any kind of additional instruction material for the children.
- ❖ The presence of corporal punishment is another limitation of the school. This type of punishment must be avoided by any degree from the school. Because neither the religion nor the developmental science theory supports the corporal punishment for these groups.
- ❖ The absence of paper-pencil evaluation system in the school. The children are assessed with direct and indirect observation only. This might lead failed to measure some cognitive domains of the children.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

Ethiopia has a long history of indigenous system of educating a child, however, the development seems to show a sort of discontinuity rather a continuity of experiences with the modern ECE.

The indigenous Muslim early childhood education in Ethiopia, although widely recognized in reality, however, not well researched. Therefore, if due attention is offered various implications that can be derived out to be integrated into secular education can be learned. Furthermore, various scholarly books can be produced by their emphasis on the legacy of the Muslim community as a depository of indigenous Ethiopian Islamic education.

With this understanding, the research was conducted on the practices of Muslims early childhood education. Implications to the secular ECE schools were identified. On the basis of these findings, therefore, the main points are concluded as follows:

- The school have self-contained practices with a single teacher to support continual development. In addition, the school has a flexible school calendar and multi-shift program so that the child can learn at any time that is comfortable for him.
- The two-focused areas of learning support the children for further educational readiness and stimulate the children for different aspects of life. This, in turn, stimulates the children for the proper development of their skill and manner in all aspects like cognitive, emotional and language.
- As an example the Aleqah session and the teaching of basic Islamic thoughts gives the children the orientation and increase their readiness for formal Islamic education

- Teaching of the Islamic ethical norms give the children the stimulation for the long life activities and shapes them to be a culturally and religiously good human being. This theme continues training the child with ethical norms like eating, sleeping, walking, bathing norms, relation with parents, relatives, neighbors, plants, animals and the nature.
- Telling the children age appropriate stories about the pious people help the child to have role models in their life and to differentiate what is good and bad from the content of the story.
- The classroom organization have multi-age groups which are groups according to their age or academic level, that facilitates learning with peers. These multiage classes' increases cost effectiveness and accessibility of the school. There is a time for peer relation and socialization. Because of the school's pedagogical system is individualized and child-centered the children have time to socialization and free play while they are within the group.
- The peer relation helps the child to develop turn-waiting skill and the availability of Amirs helps to develop mentor-mentee relationship between the children, the peer teaching and the peer coaching system also helps to increase the child self-confidence. This in turn encourage cooperative learning and a sense of belongingness.
- The school has a system on the treatment of academic difference. Because the teaching is individualized, the child goes according to his potential and pace. In school, there is no need to repeat lessons and to pass the lesson with little or without understanding the concept.
- No time is wasted on quarterly paper-pencil exams; the child is assessed with the mastering of the lesson and the practice of the ethical norms. Furthermore, this assessment is done to compare the child previous

performance with the new performance not to compare one child with another.

- The child is promoted from one level to another by mastering the lesson. Furthermore, when the child reaches a specific level, that some form of change in teaching style, there is a graduation ceremony, that smoothes the transition and increases the learning interest of the children with increased parental involvement.
- The school has a home-like environment. Counting the school as a home, the teacher as a mother, the students as children, the parents as relatives that have responsibilities for the supporting of the home school. The presence caring of the younger siblings by the elder children helps them to develop a sense of home-like environment. This home like environments helps the child for a smooth transition from home to home like school.

From the above explanation, it is clear that this indigenous Muslim early childhood school stimulate and prepare the child for formal education. Furthermore, has implications to enrich the secular ECE. The implications are in classroom organization, sitting arrangement, focused area of learning, pedagogical techniques such as learning with a group but individual mastering, peer relation for socialization, day-to-day assessment for better performance, graduations for smoothing transition, increased parental involvement and cooperation of stakeholders for the quality and relevance of the program. This knowledge, because is not from the religious thought but the practices, need to be integrated to enrich the secular early childhood education system by having cost-effective, accessible, quality and relevant ECE program.

Recommendations

- For policymakers to review their curriculum and by prioritizing the gaps of the secular education, then integrate the indigenous knowledge that is learned from the practices of Muslims Early Childhood Education, which is cost effective and can increase the quality of the secular school.

- For classroom teacher to get experience sharing programs between secular schoolteachers and indigenous school practices. So that both sides can get the experience of the other.
- To have seminars and training around the lessons learned from the practices of Islamic early childhood education for the teacher and policymakers
- This kind of researches on indigenous knowledge must be initiated and supported by the government, both on priest school and Quran School, because for Ethiopia this is one way to increase the access and quality of ECE.
- This type of researches must be published and documented to be used as a data source.
- This kind of indigenous schools must get government attention for that it can be counted as one type of modality of ECE in order to increase the accessibility.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Thesis title: Practice of Islamic Early Childhood Education and implication to secular education

The case of Kalu Woreda, Robit Quran Bet, Kombolcha Zone.

A thesis for the fulfillment of Master's Degree in ECCE, Addis Ababa University

Interview protocol for teachers, religious leaders and parents

Objective: this study is intended to understand the practices of Quran education for early ages (4-6 years old) to learn implications for secular ECCE. Therefore, this interview guide is prepared to collect data from teachers and relevant religious leaders/ parents regarding the classroom setting, area of learning, nature of instructional process, assessment procedures and so on to be used for the purpose of the study. Please know that the information provided will be used for the purpose of the study only and your name will not be mentioned in any part of the report. Thank you very much for your willingness to take part.

I. General Information

Region _____ Zone _____ Woreda _____

Name of the center _____

Gender of the respondents: _____

Qualification of the respondent: _____

Responsibility: _____

II. Interview questions

1. Would you mind introducing yourself? (Name, age range, educational level, religious knowledge)

2. How long have you been in this school? What are your major responsibilities?
3. What is your opinion about this childhood education center?
4. How is the school contribution to the community?
5. How is your involvement in the center?
6. How are the teachers according to your opinions (knowledge, child management, teaching methodology)?
7. How is the behavioral change of the child after joining this center?
8. How the classroom is managed?
9. How is the program (yearly, daily schedule)?
10. How is the curriculum?
11. How are the teaching techniques and methods of the class?
12. How is the discipline method in the class?
13. How is the treatment for talented and slow learners?
14. How are the assessment techniques in the class?
15. Have you had a formal training to teach? If yes, what level?
16. What are the major challenges of your center in teaching children?
17. Any other additional idea on practice of Islamic education?
18. Who should I visit to learn more about the practice of this Islamic school?

N.B. The focus of the interview varies based on the experience, knowledge and roles of the research participants.

Appendix B

Thesis title: Practice of Islamic Early Childhood Education and implication to secular education

The case of Kalu woreda, Robit Quran Bet, Kombolcha zone.

A thesis for the fulfillment of Master's Degree in ECCE, Addis Ababa University

Guide for observation

1. How the Islamic ECE classroom is organized?
 - a. Classroom settings
 - b. Seating arrangement
 - c. Available materials
2. What are the focus area of learning?
 - a. Theme or subject
 - b. What are the subjects or themes
 - c. Integrated or separated
3. What are the main pedagogical strategies and techniques used?
 - a. Instructional process and strategy
 - b. Cooperative or competitive learning
 - c. Assessment techniques
 - d. Treatment of Potential difference
 - e. Graduation and promotion
 - f. Interaction between of school community(parents, teacher and students)

g.

Appendix C

Information on the key participants.

No	Name of participants	Participate as..	Gender	Age	Experience as a teacher	Additional comment
1	W/ro M	Main teacher	Female	52	>12 years	
2	Ustath S	Former teacher	Male	65	26 years	
3	EL	Former teacher	Female	72	>30 years	The daughter of AH
5	Ustath O	Former Teacher	Male	55	30 years	Vision impaired
6	Ustath Y	Former teacher	Male	85	61 years	Now guide new teacher some methods of teaching
4	AH	Religious leader	Female	>100	Do not remember	The mother of EL
7	Sheikh A	Religious leaders	Male			
8	Sheikh H	Religious leader	Male			
9	W/ro R	Mother of 6 years boy	Female	34		
10	Ato A	Father of six years girl	Male	38		

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university, and that all sources consulted for the thesis have been properly acknowledged.

Name: Seida Ahmedin

Signature _____

Date _____

Approval

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my consent and approval as a thesis advisor

Name: Professor Abreha Asfaw

Signature _____

Date _____