

**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**School of Psychology**

**The Role of Classroom Environment on Students' Academic  
Performance: The Case of Kindergarten Students in International  
Community School of Addis Ababa**

**By: Tsige Abu**

**March, 2021**

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own and declare that this thesis is my original work, done under the supervision of Dr. Sileshi Zeleke , and that all sources used for the work have been acknowledged.

Submitted by:

Tsige Abu

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Signature

Date

Approved by

Dr.Sileshi Zeleke

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor

Signature

Date

**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**  
**School of Psychology**

**The Role of Classroom Environment on Students' Academic  
Performance: The Case of Kindergarten Students in International  
Community School of Addis Ababa**

**By: Tsige Abu**

**Approval of Board of Examiners**

**Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Internal Examiner:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**External Examiner:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my advisor, Dr.Sileshi Zeleke, for his constructive comments and valuable supports as well as directions throughout the research work, without his guidance and persistent help this thesis would have not been possible.

I am also indebted to extend my gratitude to the International Community School of Addis Ababa administrators, who provide the necessary support during the data collection process.

My gratitude should also go to individuals who provide me professional support in commenting the instrument, editing and reading the paper.

Finally, I would like to thank my families, friends and all the people around me for their moral support and encouragements while I am doing the thesis.

## Table of Content

Acknowledgment .....	I
Table of Content.....	II
Acronyms/ Abbreviations .....	V
Abstract .....	VI
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3 Research Questions .....	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study .....	5
1.4.1 General Objective .....	5
1.4.2 Specific Objectives .....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	6
1.6 Definition of Terms .....	7
1.7. Scope of the Study.....	7
1.8. Limitations of the Study.....	8
CHAPTER TWO .....	9
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	9
2.1 Classroom environment; its meaning and role in the learning process.....	9
2.2 Classroom Behavior and Academic Achievement .....	14
2.3 Teachers Perception and Academic Achievement.....	16
2.4 Promoting a Positive Learning Environment .....	17

2.5	Reward and Reinforcement.....	19
2.5.1	Perceptions of Motivation .....	20
2.6	Effectiveness of Classroom Environments .....	21
CHAPTER THREE .....		24
METHODOLOGY .....		24
3.1	Introduction.....	24
3.2	Research Design.....	24
3.3	Descriptions of the Study Setting.....	25
3.4	Sampling Design.....	28
3.5	Data collection methods and Procedure.....	28
3.6	Data Analysis.....	31
3.7	Ethical Considerations.....	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....		33
RESULTS.....		33
4.1.	Introduction .....	33
4.2.	Classroom Observation Results .....	33
4.2.1.	Emotional Support Domain Dimension Results .....	33
4.2.2.	Classroom Organization Domain Results.....	37
4.2.3.	Instructional Support Domain Results .....	39
4.2.4.	The Domain Level Analysis Results.....	42
4.3.	The Interview Results.....	44
4.3.1.	The Classroom Environment Facilitates the Learning Process .....	44
4.3.2.	The General Interactions in the Classrooms and Classroom Environment .....	45

4.3.3. Student-Student Interaction.....	46
4.3.4. Student-Teacher interaction .....	47
4.3.5. Teacher-Teacher Interactions .....	47
4.4. Discussions.....	48
4.4.1 The Classroom Environment Facilitates the Learning Process and Learning Outcomes .....	48
4.4.2 The Role of Teacher and Students Interaction for the Learning Process and Outcome	51
CHAPTER FIVE .....	53
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....	53
5.1 Conclusion.....	53
5.2 Recommendation.....	54
REFERENCES .....	56
Appendices.....	59

**Key words: Classroom Environment, Academic Performance, International Community School, Kindergarten Students**

## **Acronyms/ Abbreviations**

CLASS: Class Assessment Scoring System

ICS: International Community School

PLC: professional Learning Community

PYP: Primary Learning Program

## **Abstract**

The primary objective of this study was to assess the role of classroom environment on students' academic performance of kindergarten students in International Community School of Addis Ababa. In doing so, observation checklist and structured interview were used to collect the data. Four kindergarten classrooms were selected for the observation process and interview has been made with the classroom teachers and elementary school specialists. The results of the study were presented and analyzed qualitatively under different themes. In addition, the analysis was made at three levels, beginning from indicator level, dimension level and finally at domain level. The main finding of the study showed that most classroom were characterized by strong and positive relationship. Furthermore, the result reveled that teachers were provided unreserved support for students to understand concepts and linking them with their life situations, generate new ideas as well as enrich their vocabulary by using new words in each classroom during the observation period and create a comfortable classroom environment based on the students need.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

According to the ICS (International Community School) of Addis Ababa manual 2017, International Community school of Addis Ababa, is an independent comprehensive school that teaches students of all nationalities in early childhood through grade 12 and is in Addis Ababa Nifas Silk Lafto Sub city around 'Bisrate Gebreal'. The school was founded first as American community school in the 1978-79. Academic facilities on the ICS main campus include 50 middle and high school classrooms, two computer labs and five science labs, as well as separate elementary and secondary school libraries. There are 30 regular elementary classrooms on the main campus with eight classrooms and a multipurpose room for middle and high school languages, advisory groups and other classes with all the early childhood play spaces in the school compound.

The classroom emphasizes both social and academic learning, including a classroom that provides interest areas, displays of student work, and a mix of whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction in which children exercise social and emotional skills through greeting, conversing, and solving problems (Battistich, 1991). Battistich also argued that some schools use various techniques such as modeling, role playing, teacher reinforcement, reminders, and redirection in order to foster students' achievement and their social skills, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.

The key in the classroom environment is, teachers need to continuously monitor the student for him or her to be aware of any difficulties the student is having. Understanding the child's

problem, fear, or confusion will give the teacher a better understanding the child's learning difficulties. Once the teacher becomes aware of the problems, he or she will have more patience with the student, thus making the child feel secure or less confused when learning is taking place in the classroom. The communication between the student and the teacher serves as a connection between the two, which provides a better atmosphere for a classroom environment (Vernon, 2001).

Also, according to Liberante, classroom environment can be manifested through teachers showing their pleasure and enjoyment of students, teacher's willingness to support and help students, to reflect on their thinking as well as learning skills, the ability of the teachers to identify and demonstrate each of their student's background (Liberante, 2012). It is known that, teachers who are in a classroom everyday have experienced one time or another student who are disruptive and/or find learning boring. Teachers understand that if this behavior continues in the classroom and if they do nothing to prevent this from happening, the outcome proves to be disastrous for both teachers and students in classroom (Davide, 2000). In addition, student participation in the development and enforcement of classroom rules a choice time, during which children can direct their own learning in both individual and cooperative group activities (Battistich, 1991).

Therefore, teachers who can understand their students learning behavior and meeting a positive classroom environment are being effective in their academic work discipline. Since, understanding these needs allow the students and teachers to see the reason behind their certain behaviors in the classroom environment, this research, therefore, aimed to investigate the roles of classroom environment on student's academic performance.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Vernon, academic achievement and student behavior are influenced by the classroom environment, by the quality of the teacher, and by the student-teacher relationships (Vernon, 2001). Creating a positive classroom environment is a concern that all teachers face. When students exhibit disruptive behavior in the classroom teachers find it difficult to carry on with instruction (Junec, 1996). Teachers today still have trouble controlling their classes because they do not have enough skills and know-how to create a positive classroom management. Disruptive classroom behavior can also lead to teacher job stress. This could lead to students becoming disinterested and unmotivated in school. A positive classroom environment helps keep the class in order, still a difficult goal for teachers to achieve (Junec, 1996).

According to Vernon, student disruptions will occur frequently in classes that are poorly organized and managed where students are not provided with appropriate and interesting instructional tasks (Vernon, 2001). Teacher is not going to understand every problem for every child in his or her classroom, but will acquire enough information or materials for those students who are struggling with specific tasks. The more the teacher connects or communicates with his or her students, the more likely they will be able to help students learn at a high level and accomplish quickly (Davide, 2000).

Though there are students who have a difficult time in school and according to David, children who are yelled at feel rejected and frightened because some shouts at them. The example above demonstrates the feelings the child has towards the teacher leading to inhibiting the child from learning. The reasons for children to be yelled at vary from teacher to teacher, but shouting should not be the solution for children who find education a difficult process or simply lack of learning experiences, but sometimes teachers find yelling at the child as the only quick

solution (Davide, 2000).

So, those teachers who demonstrate respect towards their students automatically win favor by having active learners in their classroom. The arrogant or offensive teacher will lack these positive qualities due to his or her lack of control over the children. Teachers should assert that they should also be treated with respect and their responsibilities to ensure that students treat each other with kindness (Davide, 2000).

Therefore, this study will try to gather information from students and teachers and observe classrooms to identify approaches in a classroom environment and how students are considering their classroom environment in relation to their academic performance. So, the understanding of these needs can help to foster a positive classroom environment and academic achievement for students. In addition, it should be appreciated that to increase student's academic performance teachers need to help students believe that they can be successful in their academic life.

Accordingly, this research will try to indicate what the issue looks like in International Community School in Addis Ababa. The researcher believed that, elementary schools are the stepping stone for any child's future education and as the issue have its influence on these young students because of the level of their dependency on their family and teachers which directly could be linked to their academic achievement /performance. Although, unorganized classroom environment and disruptive student behavior has been found to be a significant contributor to teacher stress in the classroom environment.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Research questions of the study are the following: -

1. Does the classroom environment facilitate the learning process and its outcomes?
2. What do student- student, student-teacher and teacher-teaching interactions look like?
3. Does the classroom environment facilitate interactions?
4. How does classroom interaction affect the learning process?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to assess the roles of classroom environment on students' academic performance in International Community School of Addis Ababa, kindergarten students.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are the following:

- To examine the roles of classroom environment on the learning process and its outcomes.
- To explore role of students and teachers on the classroom environment.
- To understand the role of teachers interaction on students' academic performance.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is up to the educators and learners to instruct policy makers and the public about what it takes to teach effectively in today's world. Educators have little input in helping to create the kinds of learning environments that allow teachers to practice well and allow children to learn and succeed. In the formal educational system, the classroom environment plays a vital role in the overall performance of the student (Hammond, 2006).

Classroom interaction shapes the behavior, knowledge, skill and future educational achievement of the student. Teachers got a huge responsibility they carrier positive or negative behavior forwards their students; this situation has a big role on the student's classroom environment. If the classroom environment is a normal, one student will show a better emotional and social success in addition to low level of disobedience, better social skills and little dependency. On the other hand, the classroom environment will also affect the teacher in his/her professional career and furthermore in their personal outlook (Hammond, 2006).

This study was described purposeful strategies for students and teachers that a teacher uses to effectively engage students in the learning process. This study was contributing to the field of education by providing teachers and administrators with guidance on roles of the classroom environment. Despite this fact, it's significant to help educators understand the role of the classroom environment on students' academic performance; it also fosters teachers and schools to develop a positive and productive classroom in kindergarten.

## 1.6 Definition of Terms

In this study, the researcher defines the following selected terms: -

- **Classroom Environment:** in this study refers to the social climates, the emotional and the physical aspects of the classrooms.
- **Academic Performance:** Perceived academic level of performance of learners as reported by teachers from documentations of the students day to day learning progress.
- **Emotional Support:** refers to the ways teachers' help children develop warm, supportive relationships, experience enjoyment and excitement about learning, feel comfortable in the classroom, and experience appropriate levels of autonomy or independence as measured by class observation checklist.
- **Classroom Organization:** The structural aspects of how a teacher structures his or her classroom, and expectations for student behavior to the interpersonal and conduct norms that a teacher establishes.
- **Instructional Support:** refers to the ways in which teachers effectively support students' cognitive development and language growth as measured by class observation checklist.

## 1.7. Scope of the Study

The scope or objective of this study is determine and investigating classroom climate and its role on students' achievement in International Community school found in Nifas Silk Laffto sub-city by taking four kindergarten classes.

### **1.8. Limitations of the Study**

One of the major limitation of this study was the researcher did not collect data from student's grade report card, rather the role of classroom environment on students learning was checked using literature findings and the teachers' perception through interview as well as students documented resources because the documentation show the students day to day work and their progress. Therefore, it would be sound if the qualitative observation results of students supported by quantitative data indicating the effect of classroom environment.

Another possible limitation would be the fact that even though the observation protocol describes clearly what is being observed, the researcher was unable to get trainings and trained observers to increase the quality of the observation process and the data generated out of it. However, in addition to conducting the observation process twice, the researcher invested a maximum effort during the observation processes to record the repetition of indicators of each dimension to make specific evaluation of the domains and dimensions to produce relatively comprehensive and sound results.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Classroom environment; its meaning and role in the learning process

The teaching- learning process among others is carried out in the classroom that represents the physical and psychosocial environment. Creating a positive classroom environment is an important aspect of effective teaching. By creating positive classroom environments, teachers are provided the opportunity for better classroom discipline and management. A positive classroom environment is essential in keeping behavior problems to a minimum. It also provides the students with an opportunity to think and behave in a positive manner. Positive classroom environments help to enhance, promote, and encourage students' learning in all academic settings. The classroom environment can be defined in terms of the students' and teachers' shared perceptions in that environment (Fraser & Pickett, 2010). In addition, positive classroom environment has an important role for establishing a successful and effective school year as well as to encourage the students' growth and enhance their ability to learn and to be productive in and out of the classroom.

As a result that there are numerous factors that affect the teaching-learning process in the setting where the learning process takes place, different scholars proposed different measuring instruments and focus on some aspects of the dimensions. Accordingly, Patrick and Ryan (2003) stated that teacher support is vital for students at all grade levels in promoting mutual respect, task related interaction.

Studies that have used these classroom environment measures have supported theoretical arguments for their association with important learning-related outcomes (e.g., Ryan & Patrick,

2001). That is, students who perceive their teacher as promoting support, respect, and task-related interaction, and not making an ability hierarchy among students salient, tend to hold the most positive beliefs about learning and engage in more adaptive learning-related behaviors.

Other studies are also focused on the relative importance of the dimensions of classroom climate and argued that behavior and classroom management are the two variables that have the greatest impact on student learning (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). They continued by saying that behavior management and classroom control are central to stimulating learning and hence, teachers who are effective in managing classroom behavior are also effective in improving students' achievement. Similarly, another scholar pointed out that teachers have used different mechanisms to manage students' behavior and the use of a behavior management system to reward good behavior and effort has been helpful in motivating my students to stay focused and to try their best. Teachers used to post classroom rules on the doors of the classroom and these rules will be informed continuously for students to respect the rules and those students who broke various consequences resulted. Some of the sample classroom rules are; be prepared for class, pay attention, raise your hand to answer a question, do not call out, no talking, follow directions, participate, cooperate and complete and hand in class work as well as homework (Turano, 2005).

Considering that there are numerous factors that affect the teaching-learning process in the setting where the learning process takes place, different scholars proposed different measuring instruments and focus on some aspects of the dimensions. For example, Ryan and Patrick (2001) noted that students who perceive their teacher as promoting support, respect, and task-related interaction, and not making an ability hierarchy among students salient, tend to hold the most positive beliefs about learning and engage in more adaptive learning-related behaviors.

Other studies are also focused on the relative importance of the dimensions of classroom climate and argued that behavior and classroom management are the two variables that have the greatest impact on student learning (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). They continued by saying that behavior management and classroom control are central to stimulating learning and hence, teachers who are effective in managing classroom behavior are also effective in improving students' achievement. Similarly, another scholar pointed out that teachers have used different mechanisms to manage students' behavior and the use of a behavior management system to reward good behavior and effort has been helpful in motivating my students to stay focused and to try their best. Teachers used to post classroom rules on the doors of the classroom and these rules will be informed continuously for students to respect the rules and those students who broke various consequences resulted. Some of the sample classroom rules are; be prepared for class, pay attention, raise your hand to answer a question, do not call out, no talking, follow directions, participate, cooperate and complete and hand in class work as well as homework (Turano, 2005).

Moreover, favorable classroom atmosphere that provides opportunities for intensive, structured interaction among students helps them to develop competency and become critical thinkers. The interaction between the teacher and the students is an essential part of teaching and learning process. Classroom interaction stimulates the student involvement and fuels student motivation, help the students see the relevance of teachers' topic, and increases participation. The classroom interaction can be between the teacher and the students, which teaches the students to respect their superiors, and the other can be between the student and students that allows the student to learn and understand how to work with partners develops and improves the skills of team work, improves peer relationship (<https://www.kenyaplex.com/>).

A large factor in teacher effectiveness is being able to establish positive relationships with students. A teacher, who cannot communicate with his or her students, will not be effective. Research studies have shown the effects of teacher interactions with learners and found that the degree and frequency of praise, use of classroom time, and the amount of attention given to groups or individuals to have significant positive correlations to a learner's ability to learn (Cano, 2001).

Evidences pinpointed that when students in their classes feel comfortable with their teacher and their surroundings, which enables them to have a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Setting a positive, nonthreatening classroom environment helps build the students' confidence and makes them feel accepted (Turano, 2005). It is further argued that when students feel "at home" in the classroom, then they are "not afraid to express their thoughts or feelings, rather motivated to participate and try their best. They will also feel comfortable enough with one another to ask for help in a classroom with this kind of environment. Similarly, it is explained that when teacher create conducive classroom environment where students feel liked, accepted and respected by the teacher and fellow students, they are more likely work harder, achieve more, and attribute more importance to schoolwork (Schaps, Lewis, & Watson, 1997; as cited in Turano, 2005).

Numerous research findings pointed out that quality teaching and learning occurs within the context of supportive relationships and intentional learning activities and hence high-quality teacher-child interactions are essential for children's social and academic development and learning. These will be the result of a well-organized and managed classroom, social and emotional support, and instructional interactions and materials that stimulate children's thinking and skills. Such interactions involve the back-and-forth exchanges among teachers and children

that occur every moment of the day (The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (2013); children benefit from high-quality instruction and classroom interactions, regardless of language status, race/ethnicity, or special needs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001); children in classrooms with higher CLASS ratings experience greater gains in academic achievement and social skill development during the school year (Howes et al., 2008; Mashburn et al., 2008); classrooms need to have fairly high levels of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization, at or around a score of 5 on the CLASS, to promote positive social development and reduce problem behaviors, as well as children demonstrate greater gains in early academic and language skills (Burchinal et al., 2010).

Moreover, another research findings revealed that classroom interactional components measured by the CLASS are more powerful predictors of children's development and learning than are structural elements of program quality (Mashburn et al., 2008). In addition, teachers perceived to be supportive was strongly associated with their learning goal orientation and task value, whilst student involvement was a strong predictor of self-efficacy in science learning (Velayutham, 2012). Similarly, A friendly classroom develops an environment that creates a desired children's social behavior and develop various skills and positive attitude towards each other in their groups and all members of the class. Their active engagement in the classroom develop and improve language skills, reading skills, listening skills especially during dramatization, numerical skills, acquire general knowledge in various subjects including sciences and their mother tongues (Obaki, 2017).

## **2.2 Classroom Behavior and Academic Achievement**

In the last few decades, research studies have focused on identifying the factors that influence academic achievement. Students' positive behaviors such as compliance with classroom rules and expectations, interest and engagement in class activities, and mastery of subject matter have been associated with student's positive academic outcomes. Poor classroom environment and student negative behaviors such as inattention, distractibility, and withdrawn behaviors have been associated with students' negative academic outcomes (Flynt, 2008).

Children have different strategies for learning and achieving their goals. A few students in a classroom will grasp and learn quickly, but at the same time there will be those who must be repeatedly taught using different techniques for the student to be able to understand the lesson. On the other hand, there are those students who fool around and use school as entertainment. Teaching them becomes difficult, especially if there is no proper communication. Yet, teachers, creating a positive relationship with their students, will not necessarily control of all the disruptive students (Vernon, 2001).

In addition, low reading skills were more common in students displaying conduct problems than in students who displayed no conduct problems. Poor emotional or impulse control measured in kindergarten and first grade were as effective at predicting later academic achievement as intellectual ability. Increased risk for grade retention and special education placement among elementary school students who displayed aggressive behaviors and behavior problems accounted for decreased achievement outcomes, even when controlling for previous levels of achievement (Flynt, 2008).

A teacher and student who have the qualities of good communications, respect in a classroom environment, and show interest in teaching from the point of view of the teacher and learning from a student will establish a positive relationship in the classroom. Positive relationships in the classroom between the student and teacher, involving a setting in the primary grades, which is found second grade to be extremely important for the student to gain a positive attitude for their future education and academic performance (Vernon, 2001).

The teacher needs to understand that in many schools, especially in big cities like Los Angeles, children come from different cultures and backgrounds. A teacher then needs to understand the value of the students' senses of belonging, which can be of greater value and build self-worth for minority students. If the teacher demonstrates an understanding of the student's culture, it will provide a better understanding between the teacher and the student (Davide, 2000).

Learning process, which may in turn increase student motivation to learn and engagement in school and positive behaviors have been associated with an increased ability and willingness to complete classroom projects through motivation from both students and teachers. It is suggested that these positive behaviors contribute to positive academic outcomes because they promote academically oriented behavior, such as intellectual curiosity, active listening and an interest in schoolwork (Stake, 2010). On the contrary, poor and inappropriate social interactions have been associated with present and future achievement outcomes. Positive and socially appropriate student behaviors such as independence, appropriate classroom conduct, compliance with classroom rules, and socially appropriate interactions with peers, contribute to positive academic outcomes. These positive interactions can create a more pleasurable environment conducive to positive student and teacher communications as a result, teachers become more involved in the

students.

In addition, it is reasonable to assume that positive social interactions can contribute to academic achievement independently even when there are diverse learning styles among students. This is true for learning that occurs within groups, such as cooperative learning groups, or when a student must adhere to specific sets of rules or regulations necessary to complete classroom assignments or projects. Amicable behavior encourages classroom learning indirectly by facilitating achievement-oriented behavior and in having positive perceptions by teachers (Stake, 2010).

### **2.3 Teachers Perception and Academic Achievement**

Teacher expectations and perception can produce achievement variations among students during the early years of schooling. The more we believe in the students prior knowledge the better they learn every day. As children progress through elementary, middle and high school, teacher perceptions about student performance and potential can maintain and amplify pre-existing achievement differences. Teacher rating of intelligence scores was a good predictor of grade point average and aptitude scores. Student motivation to learn can be reduced by low teacher expectations (Stake, 2010).

Specific teacher behaviors that are shown towards students, believed to be low-achievers include providing students with general, often insincere praise, providing them with less feedback, interrupting them more often, seating them farther away from the teacher, paying less attention to them, calling on them less often, waiting less time for them to respond to questions, criticizing them more often and smiling at them less often. Moreover, low expectations reinforce the belief that regardless of what is done, it will not make a difference. Teachers who frequently

use negative feedback for low-achieving students are contributing to the belief, on the part of the students, that effort does not influence educational outcomes (Flynt, 2008). Similarly, when teachers were told that randomly selected students had been identified as intellectual late bloomers, teacher behavior changed enough to have a significant effect on student performance, both in the classroom and on achievement tests. The powerful effects of the self-fulfilling prophecy effects of teacher expectations and expectations that teachers have of students are often reflected in the outcome of student achievement. Teachers also adapt their perceptions and interactions with students based on their expectations found that students whom teachers perceived as high achievers received more response opportunities and more positive feedback than classmates perceived as low achievers.

#### **2.4 Promoting a Positive Learning Environment**

Teachers with higher self-efficacy in promoting a positive learning environment promote student motivation and learning. Classroom environment have a role in higher teacher self-efficacy and positive teacher behaviors, attitudes, and interactions with students (Stewart, 2014). Stewart explained further that teachers who are more confident in their ability to get students engaged in learning reported greater use of instructional practices consistent with a mastery goal classroom structure as well as those associated with a performance approach structure. High teaching efficacy to promote a positive learning environment has been associated with less student referrals to special education and the ability to assist the development of positive interpersonal relationships among students. Teacher efficacy plays a role in shaping students' attitudes toward school, the subject matter being taught, and even the teacher

According to Stewart, various approaches have been taken to understand teacher self-efficacy. Most of studies reviewed revealed that among the various approaches, three components of self-efficacy have been highlighted, including fostering instruction, classroom management and discipline, and promoting a positive learning environment (Stewart, 2014). However, not all three components are always examined in tandem. An examination of these three components will allow for a more comprehensive approach of teacher self-efficacy with activities that occur daily within the classroom context.

The relationship between environment and students' outcomes, as well as reflecting on the importance of the environment to learning the model developed by Moos emphasizes the relevance of physical setting, as part of the environmental system to students outcomes. Moos states that architecture and physical design can influence psychological states and social behavior. (Moos,1979)

The importance of school buildings and classroom spaces for teachers' and students' practice had been ignored for many years (Martin, 2002) Most teachers do not think about their school and their classrooms as a built environment for teaching and learning teachers and students were able to communicate the school buildings and classrooms they desired. If we thought about better conditions for teaching and learning in our schools and classrooms, we would writing about schools for the future, outlines the main aspects for positive educational quality of the learning environment', such as, color scheme, form design, lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation, acoustics and noise, furniture, and equipment. Her work also corresponds to Steele's (1973) findings which state that physical settings serve a number of basic functions (see the next section) the physical environment can influence the way teachers and students feel, think and behave.

Physical security is a precondition that must be satisfied, at least to some extent, before the environment can serve students' and teachers' other, higher-level needs. Additionally, psychological security is also an important precondition; that is, the feeling that school and classrooms are safe and good, comfortable places to be. Pleasure: Equally important is the fact that teachers and students find their classrooms attractive and pleasing. Some educational studies demonstrate that an aesthetically pleasing environment can influence behavior: attractive classrooms have a positive effect on attendance and feeling of group cohesion (Horowitz and Otto, 1973).

Teaching is necessarily interactive and people-centered. This interaction is frequently mediated by equipment and materials and teachers adapt their teaching to supplies and equipment available. In traditional classrooms, teachers have only limited space for their movement and their interaction with their students. As illustrated by Müller (2008)

## **2.5 Reward and Reinforcement**

According to Sagavadevan, reinforcement strengthens a behavior, while reward may or may not strengthen a behavior. Reinforcement can be further categorized as positive or negative, positive reinforcement as the contingent presentation of a stimulus, immediately following a response that increases the future rate and/or probability of the response (Sagavadevan, 2012). The student then would be positively reinforced if he or she was given an incentive such as praise, which led to an increase in the behavior being praised; if the praise was given based on the occurrence of the specific desired or requested behavior; and if it was given immediately upon completing of the desired behavior. Negative reinforcement on the other hand is defined as the contingent removal of an adverse stimulus, immediately following a response that increases

the future rate and/ or probability of the response. The student would then be negatively reinforced if he or she were faced with an unpleasant stimulus such as punishment (Sagavadevan, 2012).

Behavior modification continues to play a major role in special education. It is used to create effective teaching methods and to control problematic behaviors such as not complying with school and/or classroom rules. It is also used to improve inappropriate social behaviors including temper tantrums, interrupting, and difficulty sharing. Furthermore, behavior modification is used to improve functional skills deficits pertaining to personal hygiene and toileting, promoting self-management, and training teachers (Miltenberger, 2008).

The majority of school-based disciplinary referrals comprise of behaviors that are disruptive and distinctive in nature rather than behaviors that are considered to be more severe (Wright-Galla, Higbee, Reagan, & Davey, 2006). Decreasing disruptive behaviors is extremely important because this is often the primary reason students are placed in special education settings outside the general education classroom. In order for teachers to shape their classroom environment, they need to manage and change their students' inappropriate behaviors by implementing consequences (Mather & Goldstein, 2001). It is important for teachers to establish a classroom environment where all students feel safe, comfortable, and welcome. Creating a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to encourage children's learning and prevent problem behaviors from occurring

### **2.5.1 Perceptions of Motivation**

According to Sanders, with positive relationship between teaching style and student performance, student achievement is prompted based on the student's perception of their teachers

(Sanders, 2006). It is argued that students whose teachers are interested in their development and growth with having high student's performance levels. The first and most important tool to assisting an individual to succeed is the attitude we should have to the student's success. He also states that; teacher quality is the single most accurate indicator of a student's performance in school. Educators need to educate, yet expectations tend to have a greater impact than what is taught. In fact, efficacy and perhaps even empathy may have a greater impact on a child's success than a teacher's mastery of the content (Sanders, 2006).

Effectively managed classroom has high rate of student engagement in academic tasks and procedure, and low level of disruption and other inappropriate behavior. While his conception is logically defensible by various of the teachers role in mentioning an orderly and appropriate environment for learning. It also has imperial support (Pulis and Caldwell, 1982)

According to (Allwright and Bailly, 1991) classroom interaction will go on between and among teachers and students in order to gain insights and increase our understanding of classroom learning and teaching providing feedback to them. Respect between teacher and student with both feeling enthusiastic when learning and teaching. Having established a positive relationship with students will encourage students to seek education and be enthusiastic and to be in school. Also, remembering our favorite teacher will be recognized because they had at least in one way or another the qualities (Mike, 2000).

## **2.6 Effectiveness of Classroom Environments**

The learning environment and its determinants play a major role in improving activity based teaching and learning in primary school. (Wong and Fraser, 1996). An important determination of student learning is the classroom learning environment. The classroom

environment is more than just the physical space: it is the entire setting for learning. It encompasses the variety of tools and information resources, the interactions, the relationship between and among students and teachers, as well as the expectations and norms for learning. Positive classroom environments are associated by a range of important outcomes for students.

The teaching-learning process cannot take place in a vacuum. In formal education settings, it occurs as a result of interaction among members of the classroom. In classroom settings, elements of the teaching-learning process include: teacher, students, content, learning process and learning situation. The learning situation or learning environment means the conditions in which learning takes place. Each classroom has unique teaching – learning conditions. (Arend, 2007), classes may seem similar from the distance but are different in their procedures and processes. A classroom setting has two major components, namely, physical component and human component. Physical component comprises all the physical objects present in the classroom e.g. black/white board, furniture, lightings, projector, books, computers etc., whereas the human component comprises of individuals i.e., teachers and students in the classroom. It generally involves the nature of interaction of teachers with students and student-student as well. This pattern of interaction generates a particular atmosphere which may be called as learning condition/situation/environment. This aspect is also called the psychosocial environment of the classroom. Most scholars agree that students' academic achievement varies with learning conditions. The importance of Mathematics cannot be denied in this age of science and technology. The teaching and learning process requires a proper attitude and deep thinking from the students in terms of their learning styles, as well as teacher's knowledge and behavior in the classroom. It is often said that a better environment of a class helps during group work and hence improve the learning of the students. The importance of environment was

derived earlier with the help of concept of 'life space' (Randhawa and Lewis ,1976). 'Life space' includes the total psychological field with its entire group of forces, which repels as well as attracts persons in the field. It includes unconscious influence as well as conscious influence, past as well as present influences and has a bearing on the person (including the person as self), is encompassed in the life space, including the behavioral and psychobiological environment with all of its influences, such as positive and negative goals and the barriers restricting movement toward objectives (Moos & Trickett ,1974).

The term classroom learning environment is elaborated by several educationists. (Fraser,1986) considered it shared perception of the students and sometimes of the teachers in that environment. (Walberg,1974) opined that the classroom psychological or social environment refers to the climate or atmosphere of a class as a social group that potentially influences what students learn. The classroom learning environment is a dynamical social system which includes not only teachers' behaviour and teacher - student interaction but student – student as well. (Fraser,1991) explained the concept of classroom environment as: “Classroom learning environment carries a variety of meanings; it generally refers to the total climate, structures, processes, ethos within classrooms which are integral elements affecting student's learning.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains methodologies that the researcher used in gathering data and analysis which are relevant to the researcher. The methodology will include areas such as the location of the study, research design.

#### 3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research is defined as interpretive research investigation, which relies heavily on observers defining and redefining the meanings of what they see and hear (Stake, 2010). Qualitative researchers seek to understand a case to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts. In qualitative research, the researcher provides an opportunity for vicarious experience, using a narrative style of reporting, with rich ingredients for this vicarious experience (Stake, 2010).

In addition, according to Creswell, observation research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real life, contemporary bounded system or cases over time, through detailed, in depth data collection of interview (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research design unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence sources such as documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations beyond what might be available in other types of qualitative methods (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, this study provides a more realistic feel of the world it provides flexible ways of collecting, analyzing, interpreting data and information employed qualitative or descriptive research design with observation and interview to address the research questions.

### **3.3 Descriptions of the Study Setting**

International Community School of Addis Ababa has a different teaching and learning system that other schools in Ethiopia. Media of communication is English from early year through high school. ICS(International Community School of Addis Ababa) have a backup of all teaching files in TEAM google shared drive so everybody has an access to it and each grade level will have an up-to-date links to any other resources. All teachers collaborate with their team everyday to help students learn to the higher level. There are always two teachers sometimes even more in each classroom who collaborate and work together to help the learning process there are also specialist teacher who helps the students who need support. An instructional intervention is given to a student who needs it to help improve things they struggle with.

The International Community School of Addis Ababa serves the educational needs of the international community in Addis Ababa. ICS Addis accepts students who can be successful in the regular academic program. ICS does not discriminate on the basis of religion, ethnic or national origin or gender in its admissions and educational policies. Admission is based upon completed application forms, previous school records. ICS Addis can provide an appropriate education for most students, including non-native English speakers, students with mild to moderate learning disabilities and highly capable students. However, because of the limitations of the local professional support network, ICS is not able to serve the educational needs of those students with more serious mental, physical, emotional or learning disabilities. The campus is also not handicapped accessible. Admission is open to those students who are able to participate successfully in a mainstream class with some specialist support.

There is a group of **leadership team** from each grade level who works together to:

- Create and distribute Continuous Learning Plan(CLP).
- Establish and use clear channels of communication between faculty, staff, families, and students in the event of this CLP being activated.
- Support and coach faculty and students/families shifting to a continuous learning environment.
- Help teachers implement CLP and ensure high-quality learning experiences for all students.
- Plan and run necessary meetings.

### **Office of Learning**

- Support teachers and teams as they design new methods to assess student learning.
- Support teachers and teams in developing strategies to differentiate their instruction.
- Continue development and documentation of ICS curriculum and more.

**Learning Support & STEP Teachers** Help subject or classroom teachers differentiate lessons and activities for the students.

**EAL** (English as Second language) **Teachers** collaborate with co-teachers and provide supplementary learning activities for EAL students, whether in the curriculum or with additional targeted learning needs.

In each unit students get assessed based on their prior knowledge and What do we want all students to **know, understand, and be able to do.**

ICS has its assessment polices and adopted standards for what every students should know and be able to do in each subject area and grade level. These standards set high expectations for ICS learners, teachers and the school. Standards-based assessment guides curriculum and measures a students proficiency. Work with PLC(Professional Learning Committee) teams and colleagues to evaluate data, evidence of learning.

The seating arrangements of the classrooms are very flexible and different depends on the students need so that it can help them to have choices that will allow them to do their best work and become competitive to their academic performance.

### **ICS Missions**

ICS nurture the talents, characters and intellect of all learners, challenging them to be a positive influence and empower them to excel in their world.

### **ICS Vision:**

ICS strive to be our best with Africa and our world. Definition of Learning: At ICS we define learning as an ongoing process in which learners acquire, develop and apply knowledge, skills, and contribute to, an ever changing world. Therefore learning is optimized when it is meaningful, authentic, reflective, collaborative, conceptual, transdisciplinary, active and personalized.

### **3.4 Sampling Design**

In this qualitative study, the researcher used purposeful sampling for the identification and selection of information rich cases related to the phenomena of interest within a purposive case of interviewing and observing the kindergarten classrooms for the identification and selection of information rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Sample members are selected on the bases of their knowledge, relationship and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedom et al, 2007) A total of four kindergarten classrooms were observed and interviews with different educators (psychologist, PYP(Primary Years Program) coordinator, Special needs support teacher and classroom teachers were made all the interviewee have an experience and background of being a teacher in different classrooms that is why the researcher selected those people to get strong informations. In selecting this case, the reason of the researcher is that, teachers are continuously mentored by the literacy coaches and their instructional practices are observed and critiqued by the school management. The teachers are regular education classroom teachers who have been specially trained in teaching strategies and who can give adequate information for the questions using their experiences.

### **3.5 Data collection methods and Procedure**

Observation and interview were used to collect the required data for the study. The main advantage of personal interviews is that they involve personal and direct contact between interviewers and interviewees (Fisher,2005) as well as The researcher interviewed teachers to have a better understanding and explore research subjects opinions, behavior, experiences and phenomenas. The interview questions were open ended questions so that in depth information will be collected. The researcher also observed the classrooms to get the most accurate information about people, their tasks, their needs and the classroom environment.

**Direct Observation:** The research adapted the Class Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The central purpose of using CLASS was to empower both teacher and their students to improve the quality learning in the classrooms observation instrument (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre ,2008) with minor content and presentation modification. The observation instrument greatly focused on measuring the dynamic teacher-student interactions in the teaching learning process focusing on ten dimensions (Positive climate, Negative climate, Teacher sensitivity, Regard for student perspectives, Behavior management, Productivity, Instructional learning formats, Concept development, Quality of feedback and Language modeling), which are further organized in three domains (Emotional support, Classroom organization, and Instrumental support). Based on this, the first domain, emotional support consists of four dimensions; Positive climate, Negative climate, Teacher sensitivity, and Regard for student perspectives; the second domain, classroom organization includes; Behavior management, Productivity, Instructional learning formats; while the third domain, Instructional support consists of concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. The observation checklist is rated in seven point scales organized in three categories, i.e., low, medium and high. Low includes 1 & 2 ratings that indicates the absences of the attribute; medium includes the ratings of 3,4 & 5, indicating the presence of the attribute in average level during the classroom observation; and high includes the upper ratings of 6 & 7 that indicate the presence of the attribute observed in a higher degree or a greater frequency during the observation periods. Moreover, the researcher also thoroughly recorded the indicators of each dimension when it occurs in the classroom for further enriching the observation results and the result of such effort enabled the researcher identifying the observed attribute in the given ranges.

Regarding the observation procedure, the selected school was asked by supplying the permission letter received from the school of psychology. After securing the permission, the researcher, then after communicating teachers of selected classrooms and agreed to conduct the observation process. The observation was carried out in random classroom periods for the two sessions to observe more natural classrooms and avoid the artificiality of the teachers' performance in the observed classrooms. Moreover, detailed notes and observations were recorded on the observation protocol with the date, time and setting recorded for each observation by taking in to account the role of the classroom environment with regard to the research questions. After the completion of the observation process, the researcher tabulated each of the dimensions and indicators against the three observation levels (low, medium and high) for each of the observation sessions. Based on this, the observed levels of each of the indicators in all dimensions were qualitatively described in three main themes, i.e., the three main domains of the observation checklist. Next to describing the indicators of each domain, an attempt was made to describe the observation at the domain level based on inductive reasoning process. Therefore, when most of the indicators of each dimension were observed in the high range, indicating the prevalence of the given dimension in higher degree or frequency. Moreover, when most of the dimension were observed in the high range (6 & 7), indicating that there is high quality of students-teacher interaction, which in turn, underpins good quality classroom environment in the observed classrooms.

## **Interview**

Semistructured interview protocol was developed by the researcher for data collection for the purpose to generating supporting information to collect open ended data to explore participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic. To elicit more supplementary information and better understandings. The researcher follows up, asking more questions about what is initially observed during the observation sessions. Semi-structured questions guided the line of inquiry and answers were also recorded on the interview protocol with emergent follow up questions. The researcher tried to make sure, and every attempt that was guided by an effort to ask questions in a clear and unbiased manner. The interview results were coded, transcribed and analyzed independently and finally merged with the data generated through the observation process in the discussion section.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The researcher define as the process of arranging the interview transcripts, observation notes, or other non textual materials that the researcher accumulates to increase the understanding of the phenomenon. The researcher prepare and organize the collected datas, gather the notes that was taken during observation and interview documents and other materials. The researcher also review and explore the data that was collected. And also the researcher read the data several times to get familiar with it and start looking for basic observations or patterns.

According to Creswell, qualitative study is unique so the analytical approach. Because qualitative inquiry depends, at every stage, on the current situations, skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer and qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst (Creswell, 2013). So, the collected data were analyzed by finding the

concepts, themes, events, and topical markers.

Finally, after identifying the major theme, and to give meaning to the organized information, the researcher categorized the data in meaningful manner to identify the major theme (ideas, concepts, behavior, and terminologies) to organize them coherently in the way to give meaning and sub categories based on the research question.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues are serious concerns for all qualitative researchers mostly because of the relationships that are developed. My relationship to these study participants began as a fellow teacher and it is the development of a close personal relationship that allowed me to obtain important information. To that end, my interaction with these study participants included opportunities for questions, clarification of process, and with assurance of confidentiality. Therefore, in this study the researcher ensured to the participants no harm (physical or emotional) happened because of the data they reveal about their personal experience, additionally the researcher also kept the confidentiality of personal information that may perceived to have the psychological harm on respondents throughout the process of data collection. Moreover, the researcher tried a lot to obscure any identity markers of the participants during the observation as well as to ensure the ethical standards of the participants. In addition, they were informed their right to get a copy of the study when it is finished.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the data generated through observation checklist(CLASS) were analyzed and interpreted with the detailed recording of events occurred during the observation processes. In addition, the analysis of the observation data was made at three levels, beginning from indicator level, dimension level and then finally at domain level. Two observations were made for each of the grades and in addition to checking based on the observation sessions, the researcher used to record the repetitions of the indicators in the classroom during the observation processes to support the observation checklist results. Moreover, supplementary data were collected through interview and the result was analyzed and presented under different section.

#### 4.2. Classroom Observation Results

##### 4.2.1. Emotional Support Domain Dimension Results

In this section, the observation results of emotional support domain were analyzed based on its different dimensions and behavioral indicators observed in the two observation sessions. From the observation results, most of the indicators or sub-dimensions of positive climate were observed in high range on the observation checklist. In other words, the positive climate behavioral indicators such as relationship, positive affect, positive communication and respect were rated from higher level of medium to high range. That is, the relationship between teachers and students as well as the level of respect between teachers and students in the classroom was found to be in the higher range, indicating that, in Kindergarten 1, very good teacher-student's

relationship and mutual respect was frequently observed in the classroom. It is observed that positive affect indicator was scored to be in medium to high range. This portrays that medium level of positive affect was displayed in the teacher-student interaction and at another time, the interaction was characterized by frequent display of positive affect/emotions. Moreover, the teacher-student classroom interaction was characterized by some positive verbal or physical communication, while at other times frequent physical and verbal communication was observed during their classroom interaction.

Regarding the teacher-student interaction at Kindergarten 2, except the positive climate dimension behavioral indicators, relationship, all the remaining behavioral indicators of the dimensions were observed and checked in the high range. In other words, the relationship between teachers and students were found to be in medium and higher range. There was also frequent and good level of respect between teachers and students observed. Similarly, in Kindergarten 2, very good teacher-student's relationship and mutual respect was frequently observed in the classroom. It is observed that positive affect indicator was scored to be in its high range, indicating that high level of positive affect was displayed in the teacher-student interaction during the observation sessions. Moreover, the teacher-student classroom interaction was characterized by very high positive communication, be it verbal or physical. The observation result of Kindergarten 3 showed that except the relationship and positive affect behavioral indicators of positive climate, which are rated in medium to high range, the other dimensions were observed in high range. This explained that there were high level of respect and positive communication in the classroom. Furthermore, for Kindergarten 4 classroom, the observation results described that all the positive climate dimension indicators were observed in high range. This indicates that positive relationships, positive affect, positive communication and respect

were present in high frequency and degree in Kindergarten 4 teacher-students interactions in the classroom. From this, one can say that the presence of these ingredients in high degree enrich the teacher-student interaction in the classroom, which in turn facilitate and reinforce the learning processes.

Concerning the second dimension of emotional support, negative climate, the observation result from Kindergarten 1 through Kindergarten 4 shows that all the behavioral indicators of the dimension were found to be in the low range, except that severity and disrespect behavioral indicators that were observed in medium, and medium to higher range in Kindergarten 2 and Kindergarten 4 respectively. This indicated that the behavioral indicators of negative affect and punitive control were observed in lower range in Kindergarten 1 and Kindergarten 3, indicating that in these classrooms there was no and or less frequent negative emotions as well as no yelling and physical punishments observed during the learning processes. However, in Kindergarten 2 and Kindergarten 4, some low medium and at another time even high range of severe negativity and disrespect between teachers and students were observed in the classroom, for example, one of the student was unable to focus, gets restless and gets extremely lazy on the lesson that was given to the whole class then the teacher had to use strong voices to make him listen and focus which was a kind of right because he was even distracting the other students but in a way, it made him even cry. The teaching assistant had to take him out and deal with him and waited until he gets settled.

With regard to teachers' sensitivity dimension, all of its indicators such as awareness, responsiveness, address problems and students comfort, were observed in high range for all grades during the two sessions. This shows that teachers were consistently aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention and consistently provided effective support and help

in addressing students' problems and concerns. Teachers were good enough to identify the needs and interests as well as problems of their students; consistently responsive to students and matches her/his support to their needs and abilities, and provided effective supports for addressing those needs and problems to facilitate their classroom interaction and learning as well. Finally, students also observed to be comfortable in seeking support from, sharing their ideas with, and responding freely to teachers. Besides, teacher's responsiveness and students comfort were also observed in medium range for Kindergarten 3 classroom, indicating that teachers in this classroom sometimes appears to be less responsive to students needs and students become less comfortable seeking support and expressing their ideas in the classroom. For example, even though teachers know their students very well there are still situations or times that they became less responsive when the students try to act rudely to interrupt the lesson for their own personal need, when the students feels that the education that they are receiving is not valuable, when the kids are aggressive and argumentative, when they are trying to give personal opinions outside of the topic, when they talk about their personal things, when showing an unacceptable behavior, to some inappropriate material use in class, and so on.

The observation result concerning regard for students' perspectives shows that all the behavioral indicators were rated or checked in high range for Kindergarten 2, Kindergarten 3 and Kindergarten 4 classrooms. In other words, teachers were observed to be flexible in their plans, considerate of students' ideas, and organizes instruction around students' interests, provides consistent support for student autonomy and leadership, create many opportunities for students talk and expression as well as allow students freedom of movement and placement during activities.

In general, the evidences portrayed in the preceding sections shows most of the dimensions of the emotional support domain were observed in the higher range, indicating that the teachers in almost all of the classrooms provided higher level of emotional support for their students. In other words, the teacher-student interaction during the learning processes was characterized by high level positive emotions, low level of negative emotions and feelings both from teachers and students; teachers were highly sensitive to students' needs, interests and abilities; and finally, students were encouraged to express their views, ideas and be part of the learning processes by leading learning activities and lessons in all of the grades.

#### **4.2.2. Classroom Organization Domain Results**

The classroom organization is the second domain of the three domains of the observation checklist that measures the quality of student-teacher interaction in the classroom. In this section, the classroom organization domain was analyzed in the dimensions' indicators level observed during the observation sessions for the selected grades including three dimensions such as behavior management, productivity and instructional learning format. At this level, the analysis was made based on the indicators average score of the two observation sessions for all grades.

As explained above, the classroom organization domain has three dimensions, with each consisting of different sub-dimensions and indicators.

Regarding the first dimension, behavior management, almost all the behavioral indicators were found to be in the higher ranges for all the observed grades. That means, in most cases, teachers tried to set clear rules and behavioral expectations and tried to enforce them. For example, to treating others the way they want to be treated, using the ICS ways (they are taking care of yourself, taking care of others and taking care of this place, and by reinforcing positive

behavioral management and by reminding them the learner profile traits (Caring, Courageous, Principled, Communicator, Thinker, Knowledgeable, Inquirer, Open minded, Reflective and Balanced). Moreover, teachers were observed be consistently proactive in monitoring the classroom to prevent problems from developing in Kindergarten 2, 3 and 4. But, in Kindergarten1, they were observed mixing up proactive responses and reactive measures to manage behavioral problems in the classroom. The teachers were also observed to be good enough and evaluated in high range, in effectively redirecting misbehaviors by being attending to signals of misbehavior at its infant stage. Because of this, there were fewer instances of misbehaviors observed in the classroom in all grades.

Similarly, the productivity dimension was exclusively rated using the higher range of the observation checklist in all of the grades. In other words, teachers were found to be effective in maximizing the learning time by managing the classroom activities, providing clear instructions about what and how to do in the classroom, are well prepared in their lessons and material provisions so that they made efficient transitions between activities periods and within lessons as well.

The third dimension, instructional learning format behavioral indicators were also found to be in the higher range in all grades. Moreover, in this dimension teachers were observed to be effective in facilitating students' engagement and participation in classroom activities and lessons through using a variety of modalities (auditory, visual, and movement), and a variety of materials to effectively arose students interest in activities and lessons. Furthermore, the researcher observed and believed that teachers were presenting the objectives in clear behavioral terms during their lesson and effectively communicate to their students. Because of all these, students were attending the class with interest manifested in their classroom participation.

In sum, almost all of the three dimensions were observed to be in the high range, pointing out that the level of productivity, behavior management and instructional learning format indicators in general were frequently present in all of the grades classrooms during the observation periods. This foretells that teachers were frequently observed to be pretty good in managing misbehaviors in the classrooms, helping students to get the maximum learning from each period and tried their best to maintain interest in learning activities for all the grades.

#### **4.2.3. Instructional Support Domain Results**

In this section, the instructional support domain was analyzed in the dimensions' indicators level observed during the observation sessions for the selected four kindergartners, consisting of three dimensions namely concept development, quality of feedback and language modeling and the results were discussed as follows.

Regarding concept development, the observation result disclosed that most of its indicators were observed in the higher range for all kindergartens, except Kindergarten1, where they were mostly rated in the medium range. Moreover, the concept development indicators were observed in a progressively increasing level from Kindergarten1 to Kindergarten4 classrooms. In other words, concept development behavioral indicators were observed in the lower range for Kindergarten1; but in the higher part of the medium range for Kindergarten2 to the higher part of the high range for Kindergarten3 and Kindergarten4. To further explain these results, teachers were provided classroom activities, like discussion that elicit and promote students reasoning and analyzing abilities by presenting "WH" questions and different problems especially for Kindergarten 2, Kindergarten3 and Kindergarten4 classrooms. Moreover, through the process, students were given opportunities to generate new ideas in solving problems and challenges. The researcher also observed that these students have reasonably good abilities in connecting

concepts and tried to relate some of this with their family conditions. For example, I observed that when the teacher talks about the different kind of feelings that people could have specifically by mentioning like the feeling worries, one student said that “My mom worried about me getting sunburn from playing on the playground without my hat on” and he shared how he solved the problem with his mom by brainstorming different ideas and the student made a connection with the lesson that was given. However, the teacher’s effort in triggering students reasoning and analysis, connecting concepts and relating lessons with student’s previous knowledge as well as with the practical life experience and in creating opportunities for children to generate new ideas and explore their world were found to be less frequent and rated in medium range for kindergarten 1.

Moreover, the quality of feedback dimension was observed to be in the high range for almost all of the kindergartens. This means that teachers in all observed grade classrooms were consistently spent time providing the necessary assistance especially for those who presumed to have problems in the lessons and activities, tried to persistently give feedback for their students, pose questions to make them explore and be inquisitive, provide adequate explanation and clarification during the class lessons. On top of these, they frequently encourage their students to do more and provide reinforcements for their good attempts, for example, by giving time for the students to bring stuff that they like to share with others. They call it as “Show and Tell”, Use the real-world materials to teach them, make ready all the necessary materials to support their primary knowledge, prepare field trips that related with their units of inquiry

Finally, regarding language modeling, three indicators were observed in high range for Kindergarten1 and the other two indicators were rated in the medium range. However, for the other kindergartens, language modeling was observed in the high range. This shows that the

conversation between students and teachers in the observed classes were frequent and there was also a considerable opportunity for peer conversation in cases of group work, class works, and question and answer as well as when children were given chances to present something for the classes and roleplaying occasions. Moreover, teachers of the observed classes were used to ask both open end and closed ended questions for their students. In most cases, they usually used open ended questions at the end of their class when they want to check their students understanding of the lessons presented and the contents covered. Moreover, the teachers were also often repeating students' answers and then expanded upon it by relating the responses to the desired answer. However, on another time the frequency of this effort becomes smaller. Ample opportunities were also given for students to describe and report what they have learned, and the teachers also explain the whole processes, including the possible remarks in students leaning. Through the process, students were encouraged to improve their language through increasing their vocabularies by relating new words with what they know and using it in day to day life.

In general, most of the instructional support domain dimensions, such as concept development, quality of feedback and language modeling were observed to be in higher frequency during the observation for all observed kindergartens, except that concept development was observed to be in medium range for Kindergarten1. In other words, teachers worked high to provide quality of feedback through the teaching learning processes by providing appropriate support, information and reinforcement for students. Moreover, they encourage students to make frequent conversations with teachers and students, explore new vocabularies and use in their conversation as well as teachers pose both open-ended and closed ended questions in the classroom to prompt student's language development. However, as compared to other dimensions, concept development was observed to be in low range, showing that the

teachers' effort to upgrade analysis and reasoning abilities through providing relevant activities, encouraging students to generate their own ideas, linking concepts with each other and with the real world observed to have some limitations in grade 1 as compared to other grades. This result makes the observation result of the instructional support domain to be in high range for all observed grades except Kindergarten1.

#### **4.2.4. The Domain Level Analysis Results**

In this section, the observed data were analyzed in terms of domains of the observation checklist based on the indicators and dimensions observed. Based on this, emotional support domain has four dimensions and four indicators for each with a total of sixteen indicators. Positive climate as the first dimension, its indicators such as relationship, positive affect, positive communication and respect were observed to be high for almost all kindergartens. Whereas negative climate indicators were observed to have mixed result, in that negative affect and severe negativity were rate as high in all kindergartens except KG 2, which was observed in low range. Punitive control was low consistently across all the observed classes except high in KG 2. Moreover, the disrespect dimension indicators were observed in low range for all classrooms except high in KG4, and the severe negativity dimension indicators were observed in low range for KG1 and in the high range for the rest of the classes. Finally, the teacher sensitivity and regard for students' perspectives dimensions' indicators were observed mostly in higher range for all kindergartens. In general, most of the emotional support domain dimensions were observed in high range through inductive reasoning, except negative climate, where its indicators were observed as low, medium and low range for different classes. This could be at least due to three reasons; one, that students are young enough and just starting new environment which could be a possible source of discomfort, second, teachers may be struggling the long-standing traditions of

corporal and verbal punishment and reflected in their effort to control students' misbehavior, and the third may be due to teachers' burnout and the demanding nature of managing such classroom environment.

Classroom organization is the second domain of the observation checklist that contains three dimensions such as behavioral management, productivity and instructional learning formats and twelve indicators, four for each. The observation result revealed that almost all of the indicators of the three dimensions were observed in the high range of the checklist for almost all of the observed classrooms. This result in turn explained that the three dimensions were prevalent in higher frequency in such classrooms during the observation sessions, that ultimately pointed out that the classroom organization or management domain was reflected in these classrooms in high degree or frequency

Finally, instructional support is the third domain, which includes three dimensions, namely, concept development, language modeling and quality of feedback, and fourteen indicators under these dimensions. The observation result indicated almost all of the indicators of the three dimensions were observed to be in the high range for all of the observed classrooms. Only one of the language modeling dimension indicators, namely 'using open-ended questions' was rated in medium range for kindergarten 1, 3 & 4. In general, this result underpinned that instructional support domain was frequently observed during the data collection process in the target classrooms.

Overall, the three domains were more or less reflected in the target classrooms in considerably high degree, indicating the prevalence of good quality teacher-student interactions in the learning processes of the observed classrooms.

### **4.3. The Interview Results**

Interview was scheduled with teachers of the target classes to answer some of the basic questions like the teacher-teacher interaction, the role of classroom environment for the learning process and for students learning, etc. and the results were presented in different headings below.

#### **4.3.1. The Classroom Environment Facilitates the Learning Process**

In this section, an open-ended question was posed to the interviewees to explore their perception as an educator who can foresee the result of their effort (what do you think is the role of classroom environment for the learning process?). Based on this, the interviewee responded ‘yes’ and continued explaining by saying that most of the learning processes are carried out in the classroom and hence the quality of classroom atmosphere, be it conducive or not, highly and directly affects the learners, the teachers, and the learning process itself. If teachers managed to create conducive learning environment in the classroom, this can facilitate the interaction between teachers and students, further lubricate the teaching–learning processes. They said, on the contrary, if teachers failed to create such favorable classroom climate, the teaching-learning process will be tough and teachers cannot even step forward teaching for the sake of just covering the portions. Because, the communication process will be restrained, students lose appetite in the process and may be disruptive since they are not learning from the process.

Interviewees A further described the importance of classroom environment by saying “the learning process can be affected by so many factors, but I feel that the quality classroom environment is the most important and the most difficult to create specially in lower grades like at kindergarten level”. Similarly, by capitalizing on the importance of creating good classroom environment. Interviewee B explained that the quality of classroom environment is very crucial especially in kindergarten classrooms; otherwise it will be very difficult to teach kindergarten

students managing their attention and interest. The interviewees continued justifying those kindergarten level students will learn better if they have warm and close communication with the teacher, have variety learning aids, closer supervision, have included in the classroom and when their curiosity and interest are taken care of. Moreover, they also mentioned classroom environment may affect the students' performance either positively or negatively. Classroom environment affect the students performance positively, when it became a comfortable environment and be a place where the students feel like they are belonging, safe, feel comfortable with their classmates and their teacher and may be also feel part of the learning process. Whereas, it will have negative impacts if the students are not feeling safe or don't feel like their voices are not heard or listened, will shut down and not learn anything they want, feel like they are immature then this could cause more behavioral problem than goods.

From this, one can have understood that all the interviewees expounded the positive role of classroom environment in facilitating the learning processes in kindergarten classless and their learning, while failure to create nurturing classroom environment will hurt the learning processes and resulted in undesired consequences in the process as well as in the behavior of learners.

#### **4.3.2. The General Interactions in the Classrooms and Classroom Environment**

Under this section, the researcher posed questions related to students-student interaction, teacher-student interaction, teacher-teacher interaction and how this interaction processes facilitated the learning process and facilitated by the classroom environment. The report of the interviewees was presented in the following sections.

### 4.3.3. Student-Student Interaction

Under this section, the researcher tried to summarize the nature of student-student interaction, the facilitation role for students learning and the role of the classroom environment in facilitating the interaction process.

Accordingly, most of the interviewees agreed and explained that the current method of teaching is student centered and the main role of teachers creating learning environment for student and facilitating the learning process. So, in the process, student express their ideas and views with their class mates, work in groups and demonstrate their work in front of the class, given comments by their class mates about their work. Moreover, they described that since it is the kindergarten classrooms most of the communications of the period will be dominated by students while count numbers, English alphabets, Amharic letters, words and the like with their class mates by taking turns one after the other. Teachers only intervene to start the sessions and give corrections and comments. Regarding the role of the classroom environment in facilitating the interaction, one of the interviewee explained by taking the role of the playing field of any games for the players. Therefore, he said that conducive environment facilitates the interaction among students, as well-furnished plying field facilitates the communication among the players in achieving the result of the game, and vice versa.

Therefore, according to most of the interviewed participants perception students are provided with ample opportunities to communicate with each other, which in turn create chances for them to learn from each other, discovering things together or teaching each other about something new, effectively construct their knowledge, share responsibility for learning with each other, discuss divergent understandings, and shape the direction of the class. This ultimately not only facilitates the learning process, but also improves their learning outcome.

#### **4.3.4. Student-Teacher interaction**

Similarly, hereunder, the researcher tried to summarize the nature of teacher-student interaction, the facilitation role for students learning and the role of the classroom environment in facilitating the interaction process.

Based on this, almost all the interviewees described that teachers interact with students when he/she provide the startups like setting lesson objectives, asking brain storming open and close-ended questions, providing emotional support, reacting and preventing maladaptive behaviors, giving feedback and the like. whereas students will also communicate with teachers in asking questions, supports, explaining their views, giving answers, reporting the misbehavior of their classmates, accepting feedback, comment from their teachers either in verbal or written forms. Therefore, most of them indicated that an effective teacher must create maximum chances and freedom for children to communicate and be participants in the learning process and make the class interactive, rather than teachers dominate the learning process.

Finally, they have described that the classrooms of these kindergarten are believed to be conducive- warm and positive communication between teachers and students and this will foster the learning process and the learning performance of students. They also said that most of students have good performance if you see their performance description sheets, when available.

#### **4.3.5. Teacher-Teacher Interactions**

As interviewees explained that, in the school, there is a community that works together for the benefits of the students as well as to the whole environments. This community is called PLC (Professional Learning Community). As a result, the international community school (ICS) communities feel like they have a very strong PLC all members even the teaching assistants have

equal voices in it and serves as promoting the interaction or the communication among teachers and assistants for creating learning environments for students as well as develop their professionalism through experiences sharing programs. According to the views of the interviewees, teachers use to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in such community meetings. At this point the researcher posed a question about the observed gap between teachers and assistants during transition periods and they agreed that sometime such problems are prevalent at such specific situation.

In general, from their explanation, one can have implied that there is good communication between and among teachers and this in turn facilitates the learning process.

#### **4.4. Discussions**

In this section, the major findings of the study were discussed in line with the basic research questions posed in chapter one and the literature review findings presented in chapter two. The analysis was performed first at indicator, and dimension level for all the three domains of the checklist and finally, the three domains were presented together for all the observed classrooms.

##### **4.4.1 The Classroom Environment Facilitates the Learning Process and Learning**

###### **Outcomes**

In general, most of the observed result of the indicators, the dimensions and the domains were found to be in high range, indicating that the degree of the teacher-student interactions in the observed classrooms were high. In other words, there was high level of emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support, consequently this may facilitate the learning process, the student-teacher interactions and their learning outcomes. Moreover, as most of the

indicators of most dimensions and domains were rated in high range, indicating that there were high quality classroom environments in almost all the observed classrooms. Most literature supported this finding by stating that high quality classroom facilitates the learning process and fosters desired social behaviors as well as students' academic gains (Obaki, 2017; Velayutham, 2012; Howes et al., 2008; Mashburn et al., 2008).

Regarding the findings of each domain, the finding showed that most of the dimensions of positive climate indicators were rated in high range for all the observed classrooms. In other words, the teacher-student interactions during the observations session were characterized by strong and positive relationship, full of positive emotions, positive communication, and mutual respect in the classroom. The classroom organization dimensions of teacher support, promoting mutual respect, promoting task-related interaction, and not promoting performance goals are arguably vital for students at all grade levels (Patrick & Ryan, 2003).

Concerning the second dimension of emotional support, negative climate, the observation result from Kindergarten1 through Kindergarten 4 shows that all the behavioral indicators of the dimension were found to be in the low and medium range. This shows that control mechanisms for misbehaviors are less punitive and are less likely to express negative emotions, like anger, acting out, yelling and others in the classroom during the learning process in most classes. However, teachers and students, sometimes in some classes have expressed severe negativity and disrespect among each other. In support of this result, (Marzano & Marzano, 2003; Turano, 2005) argued that behavior management and classroom control are central to stimulating learning.

Teachers were highly sensitive in most of the classrooms during the observation process. This shows that teachers were consistently aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention and consistently provided effective support and help in addressing students' problems and concerns. Teachers were also good enough to identify the needs and interests as well as problems of their students; consistently responsive to students and matches her/his support to their needs and abilities, and provided effective supports for addressing those needs and problems to facilitate their classroom interaction and learning as well. Finally, students also observed to be comfortable in seeking support from, sharing their ideas with, and responding freely to teachers. Accordingly, the finding by (Turano, 2005) revealed that when students feel "at home" in the classroom, then they are "not afraid to express their thoughts or feelings and are motivated to participate and try their best".

Moreover, classroom organization domain encompasses three indicators such as behavior management, productivity and instructional learning format, which further sub-divided in to twelve sub-dimensions or indicators. As a result, all the classroom organization dimensions and indicators were observed in high rang for all the cases. In other words, the teachers' behavior management mechanism was effective in all the observed cases. The researcher were observed as they set clear behavioral expectations, act proactively to deter maladaptive behavior, and effective in redirecting the signaled misbehaviors. Moreover, they have tried their maximum effort to help students the maximum possible from the learning periods or their classes. To achieve this, they were observed providing effective facilitation of students learning, use variety of learning methods and materials, setting clear objectives in their lessons and with an effort to capture the interest of their students during the observation sessions. This as one segment of the checklist, show that there is high teacher-student interaction as well as good level of student-

student interaction. This result is consistent with (Marzano and Marzano, 2003) that behavior management and classroom control are central to stimulating learning. This result may point out that the target schools gave special emphasis for this domain in the observed kindergarten classes. This along with the interviewees results show that there are sound interactions with teacher and among students in most of the classrooms. Therefore, this result also seems in line with the findings of (Cano, 2001) which confirm significant relationships between the degree and frequency of praise, use of classroom time, and the amount of attention given to groups or individuals with the learner's ability to learn.

Similarly, instructional support domain also divided in to three dimensions and fourteen indicators. As this domain appears to be relatively difficult for teachers to support kindergarten level students, some of the concept development and language modeling indicators were observed in medium range for some observed cases. However, most of the indicators of concept development, language modeling and quality of feedback were found to be high for most of the cases. In general, the result explained that teachers were provided unreserved support for students to understand concepts and linking them with their life situation; generate new ideas as well as enrich their vocabulary by using new words in each classroom during the observation period. These results seem also consistent with the findings of (Burchinal et al., 2010 & Cano, 2001).

#### **4.4.2 The Role of Teacher and Students Interaction for the Learning Process and Outcome**

As explicitly explained above that the checklist exclusively focuses on measuring teacher-student interaction and that the result of the observation checklist in general as well as the independent domains shows the presence of high level of interaction between teachers and

students as well as among students. The interview results also confirmed that there was good level of teacher-student, student-student and teacher-teacher interaction in the observed classes. Moreover, results from both sources showed that the good level of interaction among the different stake holders facilitates the learning process and students' academic learning as well as behavioral development (Howes et al., 2008; Mashburn et al., 2008; August & Shanahan, 2006; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Burchinal et al., 2010).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this section, the major findings of the study were discussed in line with the basic research questions and previous findings related to the issue under investigation. Finally, based on the findings conclusion remarks were drawn and possible suggestions were made under the subsequent sections.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

Overall, the four classrooms, according to the classroom environment checklist and the researcher's detailed records during the observation period, are all environments where the three domains of the checklist (the teachers emotional support, classroom organization and the instructional support) were observed to be in medium to high range, indicating that the teacher-student interactions in the classrooms were very good and are conducive for the learning process.

The teachers have created classrooms where there is warm and loving atmosphere in the classrooms; no harsh and physical control mechanism; teachers responsive to their students' needs, and students feel safe, welcomed as well as encouraging students' views and perspectives in the learning process. This all pointed out that the level of teachers' emotional support for all the observed cases reinforce and facilitate the classroom interaction, which ultimately create conducive environment for learning through improving teacher-student and student-student interactions during class times.

Moreover, the classroom organization of the observed classrooms was found to be conducive where teachers have worked a lot to manage the behaviors of students through proactive monitoring and using constructive strategies, to enhance the productivity of students in

the learning periods and employ a variety of instructional formats to address the different learning needs of students and maximize their learning from lessons provided.

In addition, teachers have been working a lot during the observation period to help students conceptualize and create connections between concepts, increase their vocabularies, generate their own ideas in the classrooms, and improve their language skills in general through different methods like questioning, group discussion, conversation with classmates and with the teachers, demonstration, doing research using technology etc.

In general, the finding can be concluded that the teachers created a classroom environment that facilitate the teacher- student interaction and student-student interactions, which in turn may create conducive learning atmosphere that reinforces and foster students leaning in the observed classes. Teachers were giving good level of emotional and instruction support to their students and the classroom was organized in a stimulating manner, where students feel free, welcomed and included in the learning process.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

Based on the major findings of the study and the observation process, the researcher would like to recommend the following points for the school based on the observed four Kindergarten classes. This may be important for the teachers of these classes to further improve their interaction with students for a better outcome.

Most of the observation result indicated that almost all the dimensions of the three domains were checked the maximum achievable ratings in the checklist. Therefore, this may be an indication that, the teachers level of emotional support, instructional support and their classroom organization in the learning process were very good for almost all the observed

classes, there is still a room for improving the teacher-student's interactions through improving the three domains. Therefore, the school and the teachers should work in collaboration to improve the physical environment of the classrooms and the competencies and skills of teachers through a continuous training and teacher's self-development programs.

The researcher also observed that teachers give more focus for the classroom organization domain of the checklist as it is relatively easier and the related with the teacher-centered teaching modality. Therefore, quality classroom would not be ensured by capitalizing only on one domain and there is a need for teachers to emphasize the three domains in a balanced way to facilitate the learning process by enhancing the teacher-student interaction.

The researcher also observed there were some gaps between teachers during transition, some punitive control and yelling on students, some expression of negative emotion by teachers, and miscommunication between the teachers and the teaching assistants in some classrooms. The researcher would like to suggest that some of the problems are related with teachers' preparation and hence teachers need to be prepared and properly communicate to avoid gap in between periods. Moreover, teachers need to improve their emotional support and conceal negativity as much they can through sharing experiences with experienced teachers and monitoring their own emotion while they are in the classroom of such lower grades.

## REFERENCES

- August, D., & Shanahan, T., (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the national literacy panel on language-minority children and youth*. Accessed from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254116496\\_](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254116496_).
- Battistich, S. (1991). Promoting Health Development Through School-Based Prevention: New approaches In Preventing Adolescent in School: From Theory to Practice. Goplerud publisher. Inc, Washington, DC, USA, p, 34-39.
- Bowman, B. T., Donovan, M. S., & Burns, M. S. (Eds.). (2001). *Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers*. Accessed from <http://www.orionchildreninternational.org/uploads/2/2/4/7/22473078/...pdf>
- Burchinal, M., Vandergrift, N., Pianta, R., & Mashburn, A. (2010). Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25, 166–176. doi: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.10.004
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Advanced Mixed Methods Research Designs: Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, In a Tashakkori & C. Teddlie, p, 209–213.
- David, T. (2000). *Lives on the Boundary. The Presence of Others*. (2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed). Marilyn Moller. Inc. Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, USA, p, 122..
- Hammond, D. (2006). *Constructing the 21st -Century Teacher Education*. *Journal of Teacher Education*. Journal of Education. Carlington. No. 2. V. 1, p, 1-15.

- Howes, C. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in pre-kindergarten and children's development of academic, language and social skills. *Child Development, 79*, 732–749:Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01154
- Howes, C., Burchinal, M., Pianta, R. C., Bryant, D., Early, D., Clifford, R., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Ready to learn? Children's pre-academic achievement in pre-kindergarten programs. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 23*, 27–50.\; doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.05.002
- Junec, C. R., & Sanders, W . L. (1996). *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on the Future Student Academic Achievement*. University of Tennessee value- Added Research and assessment center. Tennes. Austria, p 87-91.
- Liberante, L. (2012). *Journal of Student Engagement Education Matters: The Importance of Teacher Student Relationships*. Unveristy of Hoston. U.S.A. No.3. V.1, p, 111-112.
- Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarin, O., Bryant, D., ... Mike, R. (2000). *Lives on the Boundary: The Presence of Others*. (1<sup>st</sup> Ed). Marilyn Moller. Inc. Boston. Bedford. St. Martin's, p, 106-115.
- Obaki, S .O. (2017). Impact Of Classroom Environment On Children's Social Behavior, *International Journal of Education and Practice, 5*(1), pp. 1-7:DOI: 10.18488/journal.61/2017
- Sagayadevan,V., & Jeyaraj, S. (2012). *The Role of Emotional Engagement in Lecture-student Interaction and the Impact on academic outcomes of Student Achievement and*

*Learning*. Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Vol.12, p, 284, 329.

Sanders, W . L., & Rivers, J. (2006). *Roles of Teachers on the Future Student Behavioral Achievement*. University of Tennessee. Value Added Research and Assessment Center, p, 83-85.

Stake, R. (2010). *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. Guilford Press. New York, p, 39-43.

## Appendices

### Part I: English Version Observation Checklist

Addis Ababa University

College of Educational and Behavioral Studies

School of Psychology

#### Observation Checklist

The researcher adapted the Class Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation instrument from (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) with minor content and presentation modifications. The observation instrument greatly focused on measuring the dynamic teacher-student interactions in the teaching learning process focusing on ten dimensions (*Positive climate, Negative climate, Teacher sensitivity, Regard for student perspectives, Behavior management, Productivity, Instructional learning formats, Concept development, Quality of feedback, and Language modeling*), which further organized in three domains (*Emotional support, Classroom organization, and Instructional support*). Based on this, the first domain, emotional support consists of four dimensions; Positive climate, Negative climate, Teacher sensitivity, Regard for student perspectives; the third dimension, classroom organization includes; Behavior management, Productivity, Instructional learning formats; while the third dimension, Instructional support consists of concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling.

The observation checklist is rated in seven scales ranged from low to high. Whereas, low indicates the absences of the attribute and high, on the other hand, foretells the presence of the attribute observed in a higher degree or a greater frequency. The dimensions, the components in each dimension and the checklists with its corresponding ratings are presented in the table below.

**CLASS Observation Checklist**

Dimensions	Components	Checklists		
		Low (1,2)	Medium (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
<b>Positive Climate</b>	<b>Relationships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical proximity</li> <li>• Shared activities</li> <li>• Peer assistance</li> <li>• Matched affect</li> <li>• Social conversation</li> </ul>	There are few, if any, indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.	There are some indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.	There are many indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.
	<b>Positive Affect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smiling</li> <li>• Laughter</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> </ul>	There are no or few displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students.	There are sometimes displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students.	There are frequent displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students.
	<b>Positive Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal affection</li> <li>• Physical affection</li> <li>• Positive expectations</li> </ul>	There are rarely positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students.	There are sometimes positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students	There are frequently positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students.
	<b>Respect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye contact</li> </ul>	The teacher and students rarely, if ever, demonstrate respect for one another.	The teacher and students sometimes demonstrate respect for one another.	The teacher and students consistently demonstrate respect for one another.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm, calm voice</li> <li>• Respectful language</li> <li>• Cooperation and/or sharing</li> </ul>	another.		
<b>Negative Climate</b>	<b>Negative Affect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Harsh voice</li> <li>• Peer aggression</li> <li>• Disconnected or escalating negativity</li> </ul>	The teacher and students do not display strong negative affect and only rarely, if ever, display mild negativity.	The classroom is characterized by mild displays of irritability, anger, or other negative affect by the teacher and/or the students.	The classroom is characterized by consistent irritability, anger, or other negative affect by the teacher and/or the students.
	<b>Punitive Control</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yelling</li> <li>• Threats</li> <li>• Physical control</li> <li>• Harsh punishment</li> </ul>	The teacher does not yell or make threats to establish control.	The teacher occasionally uses expressed negativity such as threats or yelling to establish control.	The teacher repeatedly yells at students or makes threats to establish control.
	<b>Sarcasm/Disrespect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarcastic voice/statement</li> <li>• Teasing</li> <li>• Humiliation</li> </ul>	The teacher and students are not sarcastic or disrespectful.	The teacher and/or students are occasionally sarcastic or disrespectful.	The teacher and/or students are repeatedly sarcastic or disrespectful.
	<b>Severe Negativity</b>	There are no instances of	There are no instances of severe	There are instances of severe

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victimization</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Physical punishment</li> </ul>	severe negativity between the teacher and students.	negativity between the teacher and students.	negativity between the teacher and students or among the students.
<b>Teacher Sensitivity</b>	<b>Awareness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipates problems and plans appropriately</li> <li>• Notices lack of understanding and/or difficulties</li> </ul>	The teacher consistently fails to be aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention.	The teacher is sometimes aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention.	The teacher is consistently aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention.
	<b>Responsiveness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges emotions</li> <li>• Provides comfort and assistance</li> <li>• Provides individualized support</li> </ul>	The teacher is unresponsive to or dismissive of students and provides the same level of assistance to all students, regardless of their individual needs.	The teacher is responsive to students sometimes but at other times is more dismissive or unresponsive, matching her support to the needs and abilities of some students but not others.	The teacher is consistently responsive to students and matches her support to their needs and abilities.
	<b>Addresses Problems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps in an effective and timely manner</li> <li>• Helps resolve problems</li> </ul>	The teacher is ineffective at addressing students' problems and concerns.	The teacher is sometimes effective at addressing students' problems and concerns.	The teacher is consistently effective at addressing students' problems and concerns.

	<p><b>Student Comfort</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks support and guidance</li> <li>• Freely participates</li> <li>• Takes risks</li> </ul>	The students rarely seek support, share their ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher.	The students sometimes seek support from, share their ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher.	The students appear comfortable seeking support from, sharing their ideas with, and responding freely to the teacher.
<b>Regard for Student Perspectives</b>	<p><b>Flexibility and Student Focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows flexibility</li> <li>• Incorporates student's ideas</li> <li>• Follows lead</li> </ul>	The teacher is rigid, inflexible, and controlling in his plans and/or rarely goes along with students' ideas; most classroom activities are teacher-driven.	The teacher may follow the students' lead during some periods and be more controlling during others.	The teacher is flexible in his plans, goes along with students' ideas, and organizes instruction around students' interests.
	<p><b>Support for Autonomy and Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows choice</li> <li>• Allows students to lead lessons</li> <li>• Gives students responsibilities</li> </ul>	The teacher does not support student autonomy and leadership.	The teacher sometimes provides support for student autonomy and leadership but at other times fails to do so.	The teacher provides consistent support for student autonomy and leadership.
	<p><b>Student Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages student talk</li> <li>• Elicits ideas and/or perspectives</li> </ul>	There are few opportunities for student talk and expression.	There are periods during which there is a lot of student talk and expression but other times when teacher talk predominates.	There are many opportunities for student talk and expression.

	<b>Restriction of Movement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows movement</li> <li>• Is not rigid</li> </ul>	The teacher is highly controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.	The teacher is somewhat controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.	Students have freedom of movement and placement during activities.
<b>Behavior Management</b>	<b>Clear Behavior Expectations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear expectations</li> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• Clarity of rules</li> </ul>	Rules and expectations are absent, unclear, or inconsistently enforced.	Rules and expectations may be stated clearly but are inconsistently enforced.	Rules and expectations for behavior are clear and consistently enforced.
	<b>Proactive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipates of problem behavior or escalation</li> <li>• Low reactivity</li> <li>• Monitors</li> </ul>	The teacher is reactive, and monitoring is absent or ineffective.	The teacher uses a mix of proactive and reactive responses; sometimes she monitors and reacts to early indicators of behavior problems but other time misses or ignores them.	The teacher is consistently proactive and monitors the classroom effectively to prevent problems from developing.
	<b>Redirection of Misbehavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective reduction of misbehavior</li> <li>• Attention to the positive</li> <li>• Uses subtle cues to redirect</li> <li>• Efficient redirection</li> </ul>	Attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective; the teacher rarely focuses on positives or uses subtle cues. As a result, misbehavior continues and/or escalates and takes time	Some of the teacher's attempts to redirect misbehavior are effective, particularly when he or she focuses on positives and uses subtle cues. As a result, misbehavior rarely continues, escalates, or takes time	The teacher effectively redirects misbehavior by focusing on positives and making use of subtle cues. Behavior management does not take time away from learning.

		away from learning.	away from learning.	
	<b>Student Behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent compliance</li> <li>• Little aggression and defiance</li> </ul>	There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom.	There are periodic episodes of misbehavior in the classroom.	There are few, if any, instances of student misbehavior in the classroom.
<b>Productivity</b>	<b>Maximizing Learning Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of activities</li> <li>• Choice when finished</li> <li>• Few disruptions</li> <li>• Effective completion of managerial tasks</li> <li>• Pacing</li> </ul>	Few, if any, activities are provided for students, and an excessive amount of time is spent addressing disruptions and completing managerial tasks.	The teacher provides activities for the students most of the time, but some learning time is lost in dealing with disruptions and the completion of managerial tasks.	The teacher provides activities for the students and deals efficiently with disruptions and managerial tasks.
	<b>Routines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students know what to do</li> <li>• Clear instructions</li> <li>• Little wandering</li> </ul>	The classroom routines are unclear; most students do not know what is expected of them.	There is some evidence of classroom routines that allow everyone to know what is expected of them.	The classroom resembles a “well-oiled machine”; everybody knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it.
	<b>Transitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief</li> <li>• Explicit follow-through</li> <li>• Learning opportunities within</li> </ul>	Transitions are too long, too frequent, and/or inefficient.	Transitions sometimes take too long or are too frequent and inefficient.	Transitions are quick and efficient.

	<p><b>Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials ready and accessible</li> <li>• Knows lessons</li> </ul>	The teacher does not have activities prepared and ready for the students.	The teacher is mostly prepared for activities but takes some time away from instruction to take care of last minute preparations.	The teacher is fully prepared for activities and lessons.
<b>Instructional Learning Formats</b>	<p><b>Effective Facilitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher involvement</li> <li>• Effective questioning</li> <li>• Expanding children's involvement</li> </ul>	The teacher does not actively facilitate activities and lessons to encourage students' interest and expanded involvement.	At times, the teacher actively facilitates activities and lessons to encourage interest and expanded involvement, but at other times she merely provides activities for the students.	The teacher actively facilitates students' engagement in activities and lessons to encourage participation and expanded involvement.
	<p><b>Variety of Modalities and Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of auditory, visual, and movement opportunities</li> <li>• Interesting and creative materials</li> <li>• Hands-on opportunities</li> </ul>	The teacher does not use a variety of modalities or materials to gain students' interest and participation during activities and lessons.	The teacher is inconsistent in her use of a variety of modalities and materials to gain students' interest and participation during activities and lessons.	The teacher uses a variety of modalities including auditory, visual, and movement and uses a variety of materials to effectively interest students and gain their participation during activities and lessons.
	<p><b>Student Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active participation</li> </ul>	The students do not appear interested and/or involved in the	Students may be engaged and/or interested in periods of time, but at	Students are consistently interested and involved in activities and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Focused attention</li> </ul>	lesson or activities.	other times their interest wanes and they are not involved the activity or lesson.	lessons.
	<p><b>Clarity of Learning Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced organizers</li> <li>• Summaries</li> <li>• Reorientation statements</li> </ul>	The teacher makes no attempt to or is unsuccessful at orienting and guiding students toward learning objectives.	The teacher orients students somewhat to learning objectives, or the learning objectives may be clear during some periods but less so during others.	The teacher effectively focuses students' attention toward learning objectives and/or the purpose of the lesson.
<b>Concept Development</b>	<p><b>Analysis and Reasoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why and/or how questions</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Prediction/experimentation</li> <li>• Classification/comparison</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul>	The teacher rarely uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning.	The teacher occasionally uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning.	The teacher often uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning.
	<p><b>Creating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Producing</li> </ul>	The teacher rarely provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and products.	The teacher sometimes provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and	The teacher often provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and products.

	<p><b>Integration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect concepts</li> <li>• Integrates with previous knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>Concepts and activities are presented independent of one another, and students are not asked to apply previous learning.</p>	<p>The teacher sometimes links concepts and activities to one another and to previous learning.</p>	<p>The teacher consistently links concepts and activities to one another and to previous learning.</p>
	<p><b>Connections to the Real World</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real-world applications</li> <li>• Related to students' lives</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher does not relate concepts to the students' actual lives.</p>	<p>The teacher makes some attempts to relate concepts to the students' actual lives.</p>	<p>The teacher consistently relates concepts to the students' actual lives.</p>
<p><b>Quality of Feedback</b></p>	<p><b>Scaffolding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hints</li> <li>• Assistance</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher rarely provides scaffolding to students but rather dismisses responses or actions as incorrect or ignores problems in understanding.</p>	<p>The teacher occasionally provides scaffolding to students but at other times simply dismisses responses as incorrect or ignores problems in students' understanding.</p>	<p>The teacher often scaffolds for students who are having a hard time understanding a concept, answering a question, or completing an activity.</p>
	<p><b>Feedback Loops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back-and-forth exchanges</li> <li>• Persistence by teacher</li> <li>• Follow-up questions</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher gives only perfunctory feedback to students.</p>	<p>There are occasional feedback loops—back-and-forth exchanges—between the teacher and students; other times, however, feedback is more perfunctory.</p>	<p>There are frequent feedback loops—back-and-forth exchanges—between the teacher and students.</p>

	<p><b>Prompting</b></p> <p><b>Thought Processes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks students to explain thinking</li> <li>• Queries responses and actions</li> </ul>	The teacher rarely queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions.	The teacher occasionally queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions.	The teacher often queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions.
	<p><b>Providing Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion</li> <li>• Clarification</li> <li>• Specific feedback</li> </ul>	The teacher rarely provides additional information to expand on the students' understanding or actions.	The teacher occasionally provides additional information to expand on the students' understanding or actions.	The teacher often provides additional information to expand on students' understanding or actions.
	<p><b>Encouragement and Affirmation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Reinforcement</li> <li>• Student persistence</li> </ul>	The teacher rarely offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.	The teacher occasionally offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.	The teacher often offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.
<p><b>Language Modeling</b></p>	<p><b>Frequent Conversations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back-and-forth exchanges</li> <li>• Contingent responding</li> <li>• Peer conversations</li> </ul>	There are few if any conversations in the classroom.	There are limited conversations in the classroom.	There are frequent conversations in the classroom.

	<p><b>Open-Ended Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions require more than a one-word response</li> <li>• Students respond</li> </ul>	<p>Most of, the teacher's questions are closed-ended.</p>	<p>The teacher asks a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions.</p>	<p>The teacher asks many open-ended questions.</p>
	<p><b>Repetition and Extension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeats</li> <li>• Extends/elaborates</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher rarely, if ever, repeats or extends the students' responses.</p>	<p>The teacher sometimes repeats or extends the students' responses.</p>	<p>The teacher often repeats or extends the students' responses.</p>
	<p><b>Self- and Parallel Talk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maps own actions with language</li> <li>• Maps student action with language</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher rarely maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description.</p>	<p>The teacher occasionally maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description.</p>	<p>The teacher consistently maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description.</p>
	<p><b>Advanced Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of words</li> <li>• Connected to familiar words and/or ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The teacher does not use advanced language with students.</p>	<p>The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.</p>	<p>The teacher often uses advanced language with students.</p>

## **Part II: Interview Guide Questions**

### **Addis Ababa University**

#### **College of Educational and Behavioral Studies**

#### **School of Psychology**

##### **Interview Guide**

The researcher also designs interview guide questions for the purpose of enriching and increasing the completeness and comprehensiveness of the findings. Therefore, the interview will be used to collect data from classroom teachers (the main and assistant), Directors and Other management staffs of the school. The questions will be;

1. What does the learning process of this class look like? Explain
  2. Do you think that the classroom environment facilitates the learning process? if so, how?
  3. In your opinion, how the classroom environments affect students' learning?
  4. What do the interactions look like in general in this class?
    - student-student interaction
    - student- teacher interaction and
    - teacher- teacher interaction
1. Do you believe that the classroom environment facilitates these interactions? If so, how?
  1. How do you think that these interaction patterns affect the learning process and students learning?
  2. Any additional remarks you want to give on the issue

**Thank you For Your Cooperation for the Interview!**