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Play-based Learning in Pre-primary Schools: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of School Teachers in Addis Ababa specifically Gullele Sub City.

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A Thesis submitted to the Center for Early Childhood Care and Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts (MA) in Early Childhood Care and Education

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I declare that this is an original work toward the degree of Master of Art in Early Childhood Care and Education and that has never been submitted as part of any other institution's application for a degree or professional qualification. I affirm that all supporting literature has been properly referenced and that contributors to any resources used in this work have been adequately recognized. I have undertaken the study independently with the guidance and support of the advisor.

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Approval of the Board of Examiners

Advisor

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Table of Contents

Abbreviation and Acronyms

ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education

IPA: International Play Association

MOE: Ministry of Education

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

UNESCO: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Education

WHO: World Health Organization

List of tables

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards play based learning. The study employed mixed methods research design specifically a concurrent embedded research method. Quantitative data were collected from a total of 135 pre-primary school teachers who were selected through simple random sampling. For the qualitative data, pre-primary school teachers were also selected purposefully. Accordingly, to obtain relevant data, the researcher utilized both self-developed and adapted questionnaire consisting of a total of 26 closed-ended items, semi-structured interviews, observations, and document reviews. The results of the study showed that pre-primary school teachers have adequate knowledge, positive attitude, and appropriate practice towards play-based learning. However, the correlation results revealed weak positive correlations between knowledge and attitude, knowledge and practices that is not statistically significant. The strongest correlation exists between attitude and practice. It is recommended that pre-primary school teachers need to take refresher courses in play based learning.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is a critical issue in developing nations as it is the means of supporting the holistic development of children from birth to eight years old. It includes early learning, health, nutrition, and protection, and aims to ensure that all children have access to quality services that promote their well-being, learning, and development (UNICEF, 2008).

Pre-primary education is the first step in a child's educational journey and encompasses organized early education programs designed to enhance children's learning experiences and development. It prepares them for primary school and develops their aspects of development and overall well-being (Gestwicki & Bertrand, 2011).

Early childhood educators have long believed that play based activities makes important contributions to children's development and therefore must have a key role in pre-school curriculum. These educationists have also known that play is a rich, varied, and complex process that requires ample time, materials, and resources. However, the teachers face mounting pressure from parents and administrators to provide structured, formal instructions as a result, the amount of time allocated to play has been severely reduced in many early childhood programs (Bodrova & Leong, 2007).

Pre-primary school teacher's professional knowledge, attitudes, and practice may differ in professional background factors such as type of training, qualification and professional development. Play based learning, of course, is not determined just by the teacher's background; knowledge and attitudes; it should also be responsive to children's needs and various classroom and school background factors (OECD, 2009).

Pre-primary school teacher's attitudes also contribute to the implementation of play based learning in classrooms. Teacher's attitudes such as enthusiasm, self-efficacy and beliefs about evidence-based practices are vital to successful implementation of play-based learning (Clayback et al., 2022). Teachers with a more positive attitude of the curriculum often have higher implementation rates. This reiterates the importance of gaining teacher buy-in and commitment at the beginning of implementation (Clayback et al., 2022).

Results from a study done by Taylor and Boyer (2019) showed that each teacher observed in the classroom implemented play differently. The differences came from the teacher's personal beliefs or the varying perspectives on the purpose of play in the classroom. Teachers have expressed that they may feel differently if they had the knowledge base to successfully implement play-based learning, which in turn would reduce the amount of stress that comes with implementing a new strategy.

Implementing new approaches to teaching and learning requires teachers to adapt and reshape their practices, which can lead some teachers to feel uncomfortable because it isn't familiar (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018). Some feel that there is tension between classical pedagogy and the inclusion of play as a learning tool, especially in a formal school setting where there is a tendency to overstructure the time that the students are at school (Ciolan, 2013). While most teachers have implemented play into their classrooms, there is a need for more exposure and proper training towards a play-based learning pedagogy (Ashiri & Hushairi, 2018).

The knowledge, attitudes, and practices of pre-primary school teachers about play-based learning vary greatly across the globe. Pre-primary school teachers in developed countries such as the USA and Singapore have a relatively better conception, attitude, and practice towards play-based learning, whereas in many developing countries, such as some Asian and sub-Saharan African countries, including Malaysia, Kenya, Ghana, and Ethiopia, pre-primary school teachers have an inadequate attitude and practice towards play-based learning due to a lack of preschool teacher competence, school factors, and child-related factors (OECD, 2012). In order to attain the intended holistic outcomes of children's learning and development, early childhood educators in Ethiopia, as in other African nations, are enmeshed in the attitude and practice gap between the theoretical relevance of play and its practical execution.

The national policy framework for ECDE also focuses on play-based learning in preschool education. The policy recognizes that play is a vital component of young children's learning and development and that play-based learning can promote children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. This means that instructional methods and techniques should be designed to facilitate play and exploration and should be flexible and responsive to children's interests and needs (MoE, 2022).

According to the Standard of the Pre-Primary Program (MoE, 2001), the pre-formal education program is effectively implemented using a play-based methodology. The rationale behind

adopting this teaching approach lies in the fact that children in this age group perceive play as their primary activity. Engaging in play allows them to develop physically, enrich their cognitive abilities, and enhance their social and emotional values.

The primary view of the current study is based on the notion that the competence or quality of preschool teachers is one of the elements that negatively impacts the quality of preschool education in general and play-based pedagogy in particular. Therefore, teaching through play is a basic issue for the overall learning and development of children.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Play is crucial for physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in early childhood. It makes children better adjusted, smarter, and less stressed (Wenner, 2009). Play has also been identified as of great importance in the education and development of children, specifically in western countries. Play has been linked to the development of various early skills that are essential in preparing children to teach (Berk & Meyers, 2013).

The play-based learning is relatively new, and more empirical research is needed to determine the effective implementation of early childhood curriculum by considering pre-primary school teachers as key players in young children's education. To enhance and promote effective play-based learning in these settings, further research has to be conducted because recognizing pre-primary school teachers' conceptions, attitudes, and practices of play-based learning is necessary in educating preschool children (Gestwicki, 2017).

The inspiration for this study grew from the researcher's practical observation and related literature reading. Pre-primary school teachers in Ethiopia face diverse challenges in the implementation of play-based learning due to a lack of available play materials, a lack of time and space allotted for play, a lack of training, and teachers giving high attention to academic outcomes with little emphasis on developmental outcomes and other related problems (OECD, 2012). Due to the many constraints impeding its implementation, there are significant differences in the attitudes and practices of preschool teachers toward the use of play-based learning among themselves, within preschools, and among nations worldwide. This shows that the problem is deeply rooted among preschool teachers throughout the world and needs an investigation. Overwhelmingly, in Ethiopia, since ECCE is a recently introduced field, the field has received little attention due to a lack of attitude and practice about the importance of play and play materials for children's holistic development and learning (MoE, ESDP V, 2019).

Even though there are different studies conducted in the area of ECCE, little research has been carried out in the area of preschool teachers' conceptions, attitudes, and practices regarding play-based learning in preschool settings. In fact, there are different studies conducted separately in different countries regarding pre-primary school teacher's conceptions, attitudes, and practices towards play-based learning. For instance, quantitative research was conducted by Jennifer (2023) in New York on teachers' perceptions of barriers to play-based instructional practices. The data showed that kindergarten teachers value and positively perceive implementing play-based instructional strategies in their classrooms. Furthermore, kindergarten teachers reported a lack of support from schools and school districts. They reported that a lack of training and unsuitable environments played a role in determining whether and how much play-based learning takes place in their classroom.

A qualitative study conducted by Buldu (2022) in Turkey on preschool teachers' views and implementation of play and playful learning in their own classrooms. The study findings indicated the need for new government regulations and teacher training programs to assist teachers' knowledge and practice in offering playful learning.

Other qualitative research was conducted by Sjoerdsma (2016) on play-based instruction within a preschool learning environment. Based on the data, the researcher found that most preschool professionals had a positive attitude toward play and valued play-based learning.

Other unpublished research was conducted by Yohannes (2021) in Ethiopia on preschool teachers' perceptions towards play-based instruction. The study showed that many teachers did not integrate play into their activities to support the teaching and learning process, even though they agreed that children love to play. On the other hand, factors related to preschool teachers that affect play-based instruction include time allocation for play activities, limited and unsuitable space for play, a lack of knowledge and skills required to implement play-based learning, and poor support from administrators.

Although there are bits and pieces of research elsewhere, play based research in relation to pre-primary school teachers' conception, attitude, and practice is not established even more in Ethiopia, too, a little research has been identified in this area. Against this backdrops, the researcher tries to study pre-primary school teacher's knowledge, attitudes, and practices towards play-based learning in Addis Ababa City, specifically in Gullele Sub City.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the stated objectives the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do pre-primary school teachers conceptualize play-based learning?
2. What is the attitude of pre-primary school teachers towards play based learning?
3. Do pre-primary school teacher's practices play based learning? If yes, is it properly practiced?
4. What is the relationship among teachers; knowledge, attitude, and practice of play based learning?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General objectives

The overall objectives of the study was to investigate pre-primary school teachers conception, attitude, and practice to wards play based learning in Addis Ababa city specifically Gullele sub city.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was can help preschool teachers of young children better grasp on play-based learning, what mechanisms and strategies should be employed while using play based learning in early childhood care and education and the results of this study will improve play-based learning practices by introducing new knowledge and techniques. It is also assist in resolving issues related to the use of play-based learning in early childhood education. Raising awareness among kindergarten teachers and curriculum designers about the importance of play-based learning for the overall development of young children. It gives ECE program administrators and curriculum designers for a fresh perspective on the present play-based learning methods. Besides, it served as a spring board for those who are interested to conduct further extensive research on play based learning in ECCE.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

Geographically, the study was delimited to the Addis Ababa region, in some selected pre-primary schools in Addis Ababa city, specifically in Gullelle sub-city. The rationale behind choosing Gullelle sub-city pre-primary schools is to make the study manageable in terms of time, money, and human resources, and also because the researcher is familiar with society, so the researcher simply gets valuable information and delimited the issue. Conceptually, the study

delimited pre-primary school teacher's knowledge, attitudes, and practices of play-based learning, and finally, the researcher also delimited the participants, for all selected pre-primary school teachers and preprimary school directors participated in the research area. Methodologically, this research was delimited to employing a mixed research approach with concurrent embedded design. Hence, the study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and observation as data gathering tools and accordingly analyzed the data using quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods, respectively.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following key terms are defined as follows and used throughout the study in the way they are defined here.

Knowledge: pre-primary school teacher understands or knowledge towards play based learning in pre-primary school setting and the data were collected by in depth interview.

Attitude: preschool teachers feeling, belief, perception and perspective towards play based learning. It will be assessed by attitude scale that is developed by the present researcher.

Practice: preschool teacher's activities, skills, and experience and participation in specific types of play activities (e.g., open-ended exploration, guided play, collaborative play).

Play based learning: an educational approach in preschool that incorporates guided and structured play experience to promote children's physical, cognitive, and social development.

Preschool: a setting or an educational program and environment specifically designed for children aged around four to six years.

Preschool teachers: are a pre-school teachers who teaches children aged from four to six years.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptualization of play

Many researchers debate how to define the concept of children's play, and there disagreement regarding what human actions are included in this activity, why children engage in it, and how it impacts learning and development (Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2012). It was suggested that although we can recognize when children play, defining play is not an easy task due to its multifaceted character (Fesseha & Pyle, 2016). Which means play is an extremely difficult concept to define, or no single recognized definition of play exists, so due to this reason, most of the authors and researchers define play differently. Some writers define play as being operationalized as intrinsically motivating, pleasurable, freely chosen, non-literal, actively engaging, opportunistic and episodic, imaginative and creative, fluid and active, and predominantly for the moment and therefore concerned more with means than ends (Ashiabi, 2007; Sturgess, 2003).

Although many of these ideas lay the foundation for different conceptualizations of play, two different types of play have dominated the focus of current research in education: children's pretend play (Wallerstedt & Pramling, 2012) and adult-guided play (Weisberg et. al., 2013).

It can also refer to other kinds of play; the word "free play" is commonly used to characterize play that is child-directed, voluntary, flexible, and frequently involves pretend play (Fisher et al., 2013). On the other hand, it is said that adult-guided play falls "midway between direct instruction and free play." Similar to free play, guided play emphasizes child-directed activities where the child has the locus of control. The activity can be started by the child or by an adult (Weisberg et. al., 2013).

Bergen (2009) asserts that play ought to be enjoyable, provide internal control, and convey internal realism and intrinsic motivation. Children engage in play, which is self-directed and self-selected; play is inherently motivating, regulated by rules, incorporates creativity, and is not stressful (Gray, 2009). Play is a multi-player activity that typically involves props and toys, intimacy, and conversation (Waite & Rees, 2014). Play is a dynamic process that evolves and transforms as it gets more sophisticated and diversified. It represents the social and cultural environments in which children live and is seen as a crucial facilitator for learning and

development across domains (Christie, 2001). Play is not merely fun; it is how we learn to explore, experiment, discover, create, and solve problems, and play is crucial for healthy development in children, impacting physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth (Gray, 2012).

Besides the above definition, Piaget (1962) believed that play is a way for children to assimilate, or incorporate, new experiences into their existing schemas. By acting out experiences in play, children can make sense of them and fit them into their understanding of the world. Play is not always a delightful activity for kids because there are games that aren't really enjoyable. He argues that play gives pleasure only if the child finds the result interesting, but if the result is unfavorable, the child will experience displeasure (Vygotsky, 1978).

To generalize, pre-primary school teachers must have adequate knowledge, and attitudes about the definition or conceptions of play, use play as a means of learning, and promote children's overall learning and development in the early childhood classroom.

2.2 Play based learning

An essential component of early childhood education is play-based learning. Young children can communicate new understandings, investigate concepts, and try out items through play. One can play alone, quietly, and introspectively. Additionally, play can be enjoyable, social, and active. In early childhood education, play is often seen as the foundation for learning; however, this isn't necessarily the case in all contexts. Social interactions and observational learning also provide potent pedagogical learning contexts for young children, according to cultural differences in play and learning (Edwards, 2017).

Playful learning pedagogies are in line with the qualities that learning science research indicates facilitate human learning. Playful learning makes effective use of the qualities of meaningful, engaging, non-distracting, and active (minds-on), socially engaged, and iterative thinking and learning to enhance learning (Zosh et al., 2022).

Underpinned by the idea that play-based experiential learning cultivates a positive attitude toward learning, a play-based learning environment amplifies chances for play engagement (Walsh et al., 2006). Therefore, it has been said that play-based curricula give children a relevant framework in which to learn. Play without direction is not "free" in this sense. Instead, teachers include play into the curriculum to support and enhance students' learning and development (Nicolopoulou, 2010).

2.3 Importance of play based learning

The following qualities of play have the ability to support several aspects of young children's social and cognitive development: Youngsters negotiate and converse with peers to create a pretend scene, and they use items in symbolic ways. Youngsters adopt several themes and roles, as well as specific rules and regulations, for pretend conduct. Early childhood classes offer a special environment for encouraging the kind of dramatic play that develops social and cognitive development. There are other children to play with, an environment that may be set up to promote imaginative play, and adults who can support the play and help kids interact with each other in a constructive way. This is, in fact, the foundation of all knowledge (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

Play is the true work of a child. Children are busy when they are playing, and they are learning when they play. Children learn, for instance, when they lift, drop, examine, pour, bounce, hide, build, knock down, climb, run, and engage in play-acting. According to Health Nexus Sante (2011), children can learn the following things through play: Scientific concepts, such as what sinks and floats and how to balance blocks to build a tower; mathematical concepts, such as how to divide toys or treats evenly, or what is bigger, smaller, more or less; literacy skills, such as trying out new words, telling stories, or pretend play; social skills, such as how to get along with others, make friends, and be respectful; thinking skills, such as how to recognize and solve problems; and movement skills, such as walking, running, hopping, balancing, throwing, and catching.

Many researchers suggest that play is the best way to know and examine a child better. Play-based education is complementary to and inseparable from general education. It involves intentional and well-planned activities designed to support the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of developing countries. Children learn behaviors such as deciding, cooperating, arranging, organizing, sharing, respecting others' rights, and helping through play time. Through play, a child can practice, assess, and evaluate the skills that he or she will need in adulthood (Ayan, S., & Memiș, U. A. 2012).

Far from simply frivolous activity, play-based learning is a vital force in early childhood development (UNESCO, 2017). It's not just about fun and laughter; it's about building crucial skills and dispositions that pave the way for lifelong learning and success. Here's why:

One. Cognitive Development: Play ignites curiosity and exploration, fostering problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and creativity. As children build block towers, navigate imaginary landscapes, or experiment with science kits, they're actively constructing knowledge and learning to make sense of the world around them (Bruner, 1983).

Two. Social and Emotional Learning: Play provides a safe space to practice social skills like communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution (Gokhale, 1995). Building forts together, enacting dramatic play, or playing cooperative games teach children about empathy, negotiation, and teamwork—invaluable skills for navigating their social world.

Three. Language Development: Play offers a rich context for expanding vocabulary, honing communication skills, and fostering a love of language (Pellegrino & Goldman, 2001). Through storytelling, pretend play, and singing songs, children develop fluency, expressiveness, and a knack for understanding and using language effectively.

Four. Physical Development: Play isn't just mentally stimulating; it's also physically beneficial. Children develop gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and spatial awareness through playing tag, building with blocks, or manipulating objects (Pate & Huchison, 2011). These skills form the foundation for physical literacy and healthy habits later in life.

Five. Emotional Well-Being: Play allows children to express and regulate their emotions in a safe and supportive environment (Freud, 1965). Pretending to be superheroes, acting out stories, or engaging in creative arts provide outlets for managing stress, building resilience, and developing a healthy sense of self.

In conclusion, play-based learning is not an optional add-on but an essential foundation for a child's holistic development. By prioritizing play, we cultivate happy, healthy, and well-rounded individuals who are prepared to thrive in all aspects of life.

2.4 Pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice about play based learning

Enhancing educational processes in ECCE settings require an awareness of the perceptions, attitudes, and practices of pre-primary school teachers. Different professional background elements, such as training type, certification or qualification, and professional growth, may affect teachers' perceptions, attitudes, and real-life practices. Naturally, play-based learning isn't solely influenced by the pre-primary school teacher's experience, training, and attitudes; it should also take into account the needs of the kids as well as different classroom and school background

elements that support constructivist teaching and learning philosophies and direct transmission (OECD, 2009).

Thus, training has a big impact on pre-primary school teacher's understanding, attitudes, and abilities about play-based learning, which promotes beneficial learning and developmental outcomes for the kids. Pre-primary school teachers are important factors in determining the quality of early childhood education and care (ECCE) in general and the teaching and learning process in particular, according to the researchers. As such, their competency (perceptions, attitude, and practice) may help or hinder the use of play-based learning.

2.4.1 Pre-primary school teacher's knowledge towards play based learning

According to Pyle and Danniels (2018), play-based learning is an educational strategy that improves children's learning through a range of learning activities. Developmentally appropriate learning activities, such as experimentation, engagement, problem-solving, cooperation, and exploration with people and objects, are the components of play-based learning (Dinnerstein, 2016).

The pre-primary teacher is knowledgeable because they know how play helps children learn and what its characteristics are. Conception is understanding and knowledge of play. Pre-primary school teachers are knowledgeable about play from both a pedagogical and content perspective (Riefel et al., 2004). Pre-primary school teachers' expertise or comprehension is defined as having both subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge regarding play. Pre-primary school teachers' understanding of the nature and importance of play is shaped by important theories of learning.

2.4.2 Pre-primary school teacher's attitude towards play based learning

The term "attitude" is broad, and the literature provides numerous definitions of attitudes. For example, according to Fishbein (1967), attitudes are personal mental processes that govern "the actual and potential responses" of an individual in a social environment. According to Bogardus (1973), attitude is the propensity to behave in a favorable or unfavorable way toward something in one's surroundings. Fishbein (1967) defined attitude as a person's mental condition toward a value. According to a Dictionary of Psychology, attitude is "an enduring pattern of evaluative responses towards a person, object, or issue" (Colman, 2006). Lastly, attitude can be described as an acquired inclination to react either positively or negatively to a person or an item (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Pre-primary school teacher's attitudes towards play have been an important component of effective early childhood education. Pre-primary school teacher's attitudes have been affected by their own comfort level, knowledge, confidence, and personal beliefs about how children learn. Attitude is affected by knowledge, understanding, and beliefs regarding play (Maier et al., 2013). The way that pre-primary teachers see play is also essential to the success of play-based learning. Not every instructor has the same perspective on play. The attitude of teachers towards play has been identified in several studies as a potential barrier to its implementation. While many preschool teachers view play-based learning as an essential teaching strategy, other early childhood professionals have differing opinions about play in the preschool years (Dockett, S. 2010).

A study by Howard and Hill (2006) found that teachers who had a positive attitude towards play-based learning were more likely to implement it effectively in their classrooms. They found that these teachers were more likely to create an environment that encouraged exploration and creativity, which are key components of play-based learning. This study suggests that teacher attitudes can significantly impact the effectiveness of play-based learning.

On the other hand, some teachers may have negative attitudes towards play-based learning. A study by Stipek and Milburn (1995) found that some teachers viewed play as a waste of time and believed that it did not contribute to children's learning. These teachers were less likely to implement play-based learning in their classrooms, which could potentially hinder the development of their students.

However, it's important to note that teacher attitudes can be influenced by various factors. For instance, a study by Trawick-Smith and Liu (2016) found that teachers' attitudes towards play-based learning were influenced by their beliefs about child development, their personal experiences with play, and their perceptions of parental expectations. This suggests that teacher attitudes towards play-based learning are complex and multifaceted.

2.4.3 Pre-primary school teachers practice towards play based learning

The term "practice" describes a kindergarten teacher's actual classroom instruction. The play techniques recommended by the NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Techniques (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) are implemented by kindergarten teachers. According to research, teachers' pedagogical attitudes are frequently based on the teacher-directed approach and the child-initiated approach, two opposing approaches to classroom activities (Charlesworth, 1993).

Teachers who implement play-based learning practices take an active role in guiding students' interactions and, in turn, use student motivation and interest to explore concepts and ideas (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018).

To prepare teachers for the effective adoption of play-based learning strategies and curricula in kindergarten classrooms, teacher education programs in colleges and universities should include courses for implementing play-based learning instruction in kindergarten classrooms (Pyle & Danniels, 2018).

2.4.4 Relationship between pre-primary school teachers knowledge, attitude, and practice

In a study conducted by Mohamed (2024), the result indicates that pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice level are only at a moderately high level. Besides, multiple linear regression tests showed strong and significant relationships among pre-primary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes with their practices towards an active learning approach.

"Once knowledge is established, it may influence the formation of new attitudes," and "the performance of a particular behavior may lead to new knowledge about the issue, in turn influencing attitude," are two ways Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) expressed the relationship. It is well accepted that the attitudes and knowledge of teachers have an impact on the teaching practices in the classroom. For this reason, it would be useful to assess preschool teachers' attitudes and knowledge regarding developmentally appropriate play-based learning.

According to Layang and Mahamod (2019), the teachers' practice level in implementing an active learning approach in preschool settings is associated with their knowledge and attitude level. According to Mulatu and Bezabih (2018), the readiness of teachers in terms of knowledge and attitudes plays an important role because they are the key indicators to increase their practice level towards active learning activities.

Another study by Li and Li (2019) in China found significant relationships between the level of knowledge and the pre-primary school teacher's attitude and the level of their practice towards implementing active learning activities. This is because highly knowledgeable teachers will know the most meaningful and effective approach to helping children achieve learning goals.

The current researcher postulated that there is a relationship between pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices in support of this literature.

2.5 Play based pedagogical approach in preschool settings and its benefits

Teachers or practitioners are expected to use different pedagogical approaches, which include adult-led and child-initiated activities, as well as "free" and structured play. Adult-led activities include structured approaches with defined learning intentions that are applicable to the whole class or to groups (Wood, 2010). However, there are varying degrees of flexibility for children in how tasks are presented and what responses are expected. Teachers can harness the qualities of play by developing integrated pedagogical approaches that combine the benefits of adult-directed and child-initiated activities (Wood, 2010).

Learning through play can take the form of a teacher-directed or guided-play approach (Weisberg et al., 2013). Weisberg et al. (2013) postulated that guided play is child-centered, where children are actively collaborating with adults and peers in their learning experience and adults provide the opportunity for discovery-based learning through scaffolding. A child-centered approach is grounded in early childhood theory and accentuates the individualized construction of knowledge based on children's interests, developmental needs, and capabilities. It also affords children the opportunity to explore, investigate, critically think, and be creative as they construct mental symbols in the acquisition of knowledge (Leggett, 2017; Salmon, 2008).

A child-initiated approach is defined as play that is started and "led and controlled by the child rather than an adult" (Drew, 2019). Child-led play allows the child to have full control over the direction and outcome of their play and is vital in boosting children's confidence, creativity, and innovation. As adults, sometimes we may have the urge to take over children's play, as we have lots of ideas of how the play should go, but how about we just stand back and observe what the children are doing and provide adult guidance when necessary.

2.5.1 Benefits of child led-approach

Expression: Child-led play can provide many opportunities for children to express themselves in ways that are most comfortable to them. It also offers opportunities for children to communicate their desires for how others should participate in their play scenarios, which in turn provides opportunities for leadership and coordination among others (Drew, 2019).

Independence: Child-led play allows children to exercise autonomy, independence, and creativity by making their own decisions, making choices, thinking critically, and problem-solving when it comes to their play scenarios and outcomes (Bullard, 2014).

Gain knowledge: Child-led play also increases opportunities for us as adults to observe and learn things about the children. During play, children can enact scenarios that can help us learn more about their cultural upbringing, interests, strengths, and weaknesses, which can help us understand their perspective and provide support where needed (Drew, 2019).

2.6 Overview of play in Ethiopia preschool education

The National policy framework for ECDE in also focus on play-based learning in preschool education. The policy recognizes that play is a vital component of young children's learning and development, and that play-based learning can promote children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. This means that instructional methods and techniques should be designed to facilitate play and exploration, and should be flexible and responsive to children's interests and needs (MoE, 2022).

According to the Standard of pre-primary program (MoE, 2001) the rationale behind adopting this teaching approach lies in the fact that children in this age group perceive play as their primary activity. Engaging in play allows them to develop physically, enrich their cognitive abilities, and enhance their social and emotional values. Consequently, through various individual and group games, children's physical, mental, emotional, and social thinking skills are fostered, preparing them for mainstream education. Due to its immense significance, particular emphasis is placed on incorporating play within the educational framework.

Furthermore, the games provided to children in the pre-regular program should align with their mental and physical capabilities and make a substantial contribution to their future development. Consequently, this level does not constitute a formal education program, but rather focuses on developmental activities that serve as the foundation for children's growth. As a result, all activities necessitate the active involvement of both children and teachers. Therefore, any activities planned to be carried out individually or collectively should consider the physical, mental, emotional, and social conditions of the children.

Research indicates that children benefit from a diverse range of teaching methods to enhance their learning experience (MoE, 2001). The Ethiopian pre-primary program standard offers teachers various teaching methods that can be employed. Group games, individual games, role play, demonstrations, field visits accompanied by close supervision and subsequent discussions, oral presentations and descriptive activities involving active participation from children, among others.

Teachers in ECCE

The Ethiopian pre-primary program's standard states that, a Pre-primary education teachers are required to possess the essential expertise and competencies to address the diverse abilities and needs of the children under their care. Moreover, they are expected to effectively combine their knowledge and skills with appropriate professional ethics throughout their professional engagements and actively engage in the children's activity program. In fulfilling their role, these teachers should carefully devise and execute activities within the pre-school program, taking into consideration the physical, emotional, and social development of the children. By doing so, they create a conducive environment that nurtures holistic growth in the young learners (MoE, 2001).

Allocations of teachers

According to the Ethiopian pre-primary program in pre-primary institutions, there is a preference for women to serve as principals, teachers, and tutors. Each teacher is assigned a group of 40 children and is supported by an assistant teacher who also oversees 40 children. Additionally, a nanny is assigned to provide care for a group of 40 children. The allocation of staff in a pre-formal education institution is determined by the number of classes and the total number of children. Furthermore, to raise children properly, in order to take care of and prepare for regular education effectively, the amount of working hours per week for a teacher will be 30 hours per week if the children have lunch and bed at home.

Qualifications of teachers

The education level of teachers and staff varies depending on their roles and responsibilities. According to the Ethiopian standard teachers are required to have graduated with a diploma in the field of pre-formal education. Assistant teachers, on the other hand, should have completed 10th grade and obtained a certificate in Kindergarten Education. In addition to these criteria, teachers who will be working with children with special learning needs should have received short trainings in special education. For speech teachers, they are expected to have completed 10th grade and received training as a kindergarten teacher, holding a certificate in the field. Additionally, they should also have training in special education to cater to the needs of children with speech impairments. Nannies are required to have completed 10th grade, and it is preferable for them to have experience in nutrition training and food preparation. This ensures that they can properly attend to the dietary needs of the children under their care. They must have completed at least 8th grade (MoE, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research design

To achieve the set objectives and answer research questions, the researcher gathered both quantitative and qualitative information. Though the strategies of data inquiry are quite different, the final database represents both quantitative (for an objective question) and qualitative (for a subjective question) data (Creswell, 2003).

To accomplish this study, the research approaches used were both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with more emphasis on quantitative as a leading method and qualitative as a supporting method. The quantitative approach was emphasized because it assessed the knowledge, attitude, and practice of pre-primary school teachers' toward play-based learning and the relationship between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice towards play-based learning. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was emphasized because of how pre-primary school teachers conceptualized play-based learning and the practice it answered both qualitatively and quantitatively.

3.2 Sampling

As recommended by Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007), the researcher employed both probability and non-probability sampling strategies or techniques in order to account for the complexity of data collection and analysis. The total population of this study was 367 pre-primary school teachers in Gullele Sub City. From this, using simple random techniques, the participants of this study were 184 pre-primary school teachers. Because of the need to manage time as well as money and human resources.

Following the selection of a sample of the population, 135 pre-primary school teachers were selected from ten pre-primary schools by using simple random sampling techniques, specifically the lottery method, to get rich information and give participants an equal opportunity to be selected, reducing personal bias, and their numbers were allocated proportionally using the rule of thumb. Besides, of the 135 pre-primary school teachers, 10 were selected purposefully by using purposive sampling techniques for a semi-structured interview from ten pre-primary schools. Why ten preschools because of with a relatively better ECCE practice and available play materials set by ECCE minimum standard were selected purposively for the study.

3.3 Sample Size Determination

In order to examine the pre-primary school teacher's knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward play-based learning in the Gullele sub-city of the selected preschool, the researcher used a sample that was determined based on Calmorin's (2007) formula based on the following assumptions because the population is more than 100. According to Calmorin's, if the population is more than 100 individuals, the simple size is determined by the following procedures or formula:

$Ss = \frac{Nv + [se\ (1-p)]}{Nse + [Vxp\ (1-p)}$, Or $Ss = \frac{Nv + (se)^2 x\ (1-p)}{Nse + (v)^2 x\ p\ (1-p)}$

Where; Ss=sample size, N=total number of population, V=standard value (2.58) at1%level of probability with 0.99(99%) reliability, Se=sampling error (0.01), P= largest possible proportion 50% or (0.50) .Given: N=184, V=2.58, Se=0.01, P=0.50.

$Ss = \frac{Nv + (se)^2 x\ (1-p)}{Nse + (v)^2 x\ p\ (1-p)}$

So, $Ss = \frac{184(2.58) + (0.01)^2 x\ (1-0.50)}{184\ (0.01) + (2.58)^2 x\ 0.50\ (1-0.50)}$ $Ss = \frac{474.72 + 0.0001 x\ 0.50}{1.84 + 6.6564 x\ 0.50\ (1-0.50)}$

$Ss = \frac{474.72 + 0.00005}{1.84 + 3.3282 x\ 0.5}$ $Ss = \frac{474.72005}{1.84 + 1.6641}$

$Ss = \frac{474.72005}{3.5041}$

Ss = 135.4 ~135

Ss = 135

The calculated sample size using the above formula gives 135.Therefore; this sample size of 135 represents the 184 subjects of the study.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

In order to get the relevant information, the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. For primary data sources, the researcher used a questionnaire and interviews with pre-primary school teachers, and again, interviews with pre-primary school teachers and observation during the instructional process of pre-primary school teachers, whereas document review was used as a secondary data source.

As recommended by Terrel (2012) and Patton (2002), multi-method data collection tools were used to gather the relevant data for the investigation. This is based on the idea of using multiple methods of data collection instruments to substantiate the weakness of one method with the strength of another and for triangulation purposes. As a result, the researcher used the following data collection instruments for this study: This are:

I). **Questionnaire**

Questionnaires were used to collect data from participants to address the objectives of the study. Questionnaires are easy to administer, are free from bias, and are able to collect information from large sample sizes easily. Therefore, in order to examine pre-primary school teachers's conceptions, attitudes, and practices toward play-based learning, the researcher adapted 12 items of practices, attitudes, and play-based learning. Which is developed by Adane Tilahun, 2020). The practice items had a Cronbach alpha of 0.79, the attitude items had a Cronbach alpha of 0.87, and the play-based learning items had a Cronbach alpha of 0.83. The practice, attitude, and play-based learning scores will be based on a four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was prepared in English and later translated into Amharic so as to alleviate any unnecessary complications by responding to the items and meaning differences in the versions. Consequently, the questionnaires were designed and organized into different parts. All statements were positive, and the item pool was drafted based on literature reviews for all four variables.

Knowledge scale

The knowledge was designed to test the knowledge of pre-primary school teachers play based learning by using statements that were either "false" or "true" with possible scores ranging from 8 8(8x1) to 32 (8x4).

Attitude scale

The attitude scale was designed to explore pre-primary school teachers' attitudes toward play-based learning with close-ended statements ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 disagree, 3=agree and 4 (strongly agree), with possible scores ranging from 10 (10x1) to 40 (10x4). The item pool consisted of 10 items.

Practice scale

The practice scale was designed to investigate how pre-primary school teachers practice of play-based learning with close-ended items ranging from 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, and 4=always, with possible scores ranging from 8 (8x1) to 32 (8x4). The item pool contains 8 items.

II. **Interview**

In line with the research questions, the researcher prepared an interview guide with four sets of questions that were mostly semi-structured to enable the participants to express themselves in depth on play-based learning practices in the selected preprimary school settings. The semi-structured interview was conducted on a one-on-one basis in Amharic language, because most of the preprimary school teachers' are not fluent in English language. The aim of the interview was to allow the researcher to gain access to the participant's views on how they conceptualize play and use learning through play in their classrooms. The main assumption behind the use of this interview was that the researcher believed that individuals have a unique and better understanding of what is happening in their world, which can be shared through verbal communication. In this regard, the interview supported the researcher in exploring the understanding and beliefs of teachers about the use of play-based learning in the classroom. During the interview session, the researcher made an effort to be flexible in asking interview questions to obtain relevant data. Regarding the duration of the interview, each interview was between 10 and 15 minutes for each participant, and it was conducted in the offices in the preprimary schools.

The interview prepared pre-primary school teachers with the themes of conceptions and practices for the provision of play-based learning in terms of coaching, supervising, and giving training to pre-primary school teachers. And the observation questionnaires were prepared based on the reviewed literature on the variables of the study.

III. **Observation**

The researcher created observation checklist items to look at pre-primary school teachers play-based learning techniques based on the synthesis of the literature review. To do this, observation was used to gather relevant information from outdoor play spaces and classrooms, which was added to the instructors' self-reported information gathered from the questionnaire. This is because classroom observations both indoors and outdoors have provided concrete details regarding the state of the school, the activities taking place there, the health of the students both inside and outside of the classroom, and the teaching strategies of the teachers. Using an observation checklist, the researcher employed direct, non-participatory observation.

IV. **Document analysis**

Important papers about preschool teachers' usage of play-based learning were gathered during the site visit to the preschools and used as data sources. In the context of elucidating play-based learning strategies. The lesson plans of preschool teachers, the school minute (timetable or schedule), and the amount of play time allocated were among the important materials the researcher examined in preparation for data collection.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The study followed all standards for ethical principles in research. The study also covered a variety of ethical perspectives.

First, the researcher obtained a permission letter from the Addis Ababa University Center of Education and Behavioral Sciences. The researcher made preliminary visits, communicated with the responsible preschoolers, and informed them about the study. A suitable period for data collection at the preschools was scheduled in collaboration with the pre-primary school directors. Pre-primary school teachers were initially informed about the purpose of the study and how they could help. Then the participants who provided informed consent completed the surveys without sharing any personal information. In order to collect data about pre-primary school teachers on play-based learning practices, conceptions, and attitudes, a teacher rating scale sheet was provided in the classroom, and they recorded the data of teachers on the scale measurement.

Furthermore, the teacher's participants were informed that they had the right not to participate in the study or withdraw from the study at any time and asked for their informed consent. The questionnaires took between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. The participant's information was kept completely confidential. In addition, before data collection, the questionnaires were translated into Amharic, as it is an instructional language, because all pre-primary teachers in preschools may not understand the English language easily. And the other reason is to make questionnaires easily understandable for participants and to increase the effectiveness of data collection. The Amharic version was translated back into English by a bilingual lecturer from the Department of Ethiopian English Language and Literature. It was confirmed that the two versions were linguistically equivalent.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

To evaluate the acquired data using different instruments, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches were applied, and the outcomes of the findings were interpreted

appropriately. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to assess the quantitative data acquired via questionnaires. And steps were taken in the preliminary process and methods to analyze using the SPSS application. The data collected from questionnaires were analyzed using a variety of descriptive statistics techniques, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. Inferential statistics techniques that were employed in this study include one-sample t-test and Pearson's product moment correlation.

More precisely, one sample t-test was employed to investigate pre-primary school teachers' attitudes toward play-based learning. Because of the researcher tires to check the sample of attitude. The existence of statistically significant associations between knowledge, attitude, and practice towards play-based learning among pre-primary school teachers was also ascertained by the application of Pearson's product moment correlation. The study employed mean, standard deviation, and percentages to investigate how pre-primary school teachers approach or practice play-based learning. By correlating the three variables to generalize the knowledge, attitude, and practices towards play based learning.

Thematic analysis, a method of qualitative research that groups codes, categorizes them, and finally organizes them into themes, was used to examine the qualitative data gathered from observation, interviews, and document review. The idea and use of play-based learning by pre-primary school teachers were supported by thematic analysis as well.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The study followed all standards for ethical principles in research. The study also covered a variety of ethical perspectives.

First, the researcher obtained a permission letter from the center of early childhood care and education at Addis Ababa University. Then, to be able to go to the field, the researcher first visited the schools that had been chosen for the study to make contact with the preschool. The best time for data collection was determined. The respondents were informed of their right to be protected from any misuse of the information they provided and that the information they provided is important in the manner specified in the questionnaire's introduction. The researcher was confidential to make certain that the information given was kept private.

Second, informed consent was obtained from the study; the participants were asked for consent. During the conduct of the study, the researcher did not discriminate against participants based on

culture, economic status, or religious belief. Therefore, the participant's willingness to participate was confirmed.

Third, the confidentiality of the information and all data references were kept anonymous. Additionally, the researcher did not mention the participants' real names without their consent. Respect for the culture and norms of the participant’s confidentiality and privacy was considered.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter explores the study's findings, analyzing both numerical (quantitative) and descriptive (qualitative) data. Statistical methods (descriptive and inferential) along with thematic analysis are used to interpret this data in light of the research questions established at the study's start. The chapter prioritizes quantitative data presentation, followed by qualitative narratives and participant descriptions regarding the study's objectives. These qualitative aspects serve to enrich or substantiate the quantitative results.

This study focused on understanding pre-primary school teachers' perspectives on play-based learning within ten schools in Gullele Sub City Administration. It investigated their conceptions, attitudes, and practices in this area. The analysis and interpretation of the findings were guided by the research questions formulated at the outset of the study.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This study analyzed the participants based on their gender, field of study, teaching experience, educational qualifications, and type of training received in play-based learning. Thus, the descriptive analysis of respondents is displayed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 demographic characteristics of pre-primary school teachers

Categories	Characteristics	F	%	M	SD
Gender	Female	135	100.00		
	Male	-	-		
	Total	135	100.0	1.00	.000
Field of study	Pre-primary school teachers education	103	76.3		
	Others	32	23.7		
	Total	135	100.0	1.24	.427
Educational level	Grade 10^{th} complete	12	8.9		
	Pre-primary	34	25.2		

	school teachers training certificate				
	Certificate (TTI)	15	11.1		
	College diploma in ECCE	69	51.1		
	Degree	5	3.7		
	Total	135	100.0	3.16	1.119
Teaching experience	0-3 years	49	36.3		
	4-7 years	49	36.3		
	8-10 years	26	19.3		
	11 years and above	11	8.1		
	Total	135	100.0	1.99	.942
Types of training	Pre-service	14	10.4		
	In-service	22	16.3		
	Both	88	65.2		
	I didn’t take any training	11	8.1		
	Total	135	100.0	2.71	.762

According to Table 4.1, let's look at the gender breakdown of the respondents with M=1.00 and SD=.000, 135(100.0%) of them are females. Which means all of the participants are females categories. The majority (76.3%, n=103) of pre-primary school teachers hold qualifications in pre-primary school teacher education. This represents the most common field of study among the

teachers surveyed. The remaining 23.7% (n=32) come from various other academic backgrounds. It's important to note that this data is presented with an average (M) of 1.24 and a standard deviation (SD) of .427.

The educational attainment of pre-primary school teachers shows that diplomas are the most common qualification, held by over half (51.1%, n=69) of the teachers surveyed. KG training certificates are the second most frequent qualification (25.2%, n=34). The remaining teachers possess degrees (3.7%, n=5), other certificates (TTI) (11.1%, n=15), or have completed grade 10 (8.9%, n=12) with M= 3.16 and SD= 1.119.

The teaching experience of pre-primary school teachers is summarized as, 49(36.3%) teachers have 0-3 years of experience while 49(36.3%) teachers have 4-7 years of experience. which is 0-3 years of experience and 4-7 years of experience are the highest category, 26(19.3%) between 8 to10 years and 11(8.1 %) have 11 and above years of pre-primary school teachers teaching experience with M=1.99 and SD= .942.

The analysis of training on play-based learning revealed that the majority of pre-primary school teachers (65.2%, n=88) have participated in both pre-service and in-service training. A significant portion (16.3%, n=22) has received in-service training only, while some teachers (10.4%, n=14) have undergone pre-service training alone. Notably, 11 (8.1%) haven't received any training on this topic with regard to the type of training taken on play based learning, pre-primary school teachers with M=2.71and SD=.762.

How do you conceptualize play-based learning?

Data obtained from interview discloses the following common idea was generating from pre-primary school teacher’s conception towards play based learning.

PPST 1: "My understanding of play-based learning includes a variety of activities such as indoor and outdoor play, arts and crafts, songs, and storytelling. However, the gap for me is between knowing about them and effectively implementing them in my classroom on a regular basis."

PPST 2: “Play is inherently enjoyable for children! Play-based learning is all about using play as the foundation for teaching young children. Imagine it as a fun and engaging way for them to explore, experiment, and develop all their important skills”.

In general that early pre-primary school teachers are fully knowledgeable about the concept of play-based learning. However, they are not able to practice it frequently. Specifically pre-

primary teachers from other field of study who teaches pre-primary children still require trainings that make them able to exercise play-based learning.

On the other hand, pre-primary school teachers responded the following idea based on their understanding towards play based learning.

PPST 1: “as my understanding when I employ play based learning in my classroom I try to create a stimulating classroom by designated areas for different types of play, such as dramatic play, building, arts and crafts, and reading and prepared by Open-ended materials like blocks, loose parts, dress-up clothes, and art supplies encourage creativity and exploration”.

PPST 2: "I incorporate simple activities like block building or pretend grocery store play into my curriculum. These activities act as springboards for me to facilitate rich learning experiences for the children." Based on the above answer pre-primary school teachers despite having sufficient knowledge of play-based learning, pre-primary teachers face limitations in accessing play materials for classroom implementation.

It can be conclude that the majority of pre-primary school teachers were good or appropriate knowledge or conceptions towards play based learning.

Pre-primary school teachers’ knowledge towards play based learning

In order to examine the knowledge of pre-primary school teachers towards play based learning, descriptive statics like frequency, and percent were employed. This quantitative study were used as a supplementary or supportive of qualitative study.

Table 4.2 pre-primary school teacher’s knowledge

Sn	Questions	Responses	F	%
1	Play-based learning is only suitable for recreational activities	False	89	65.9
		True	46	34.1
		Total	135	100.0
2	It is unnecessary to use play based learning in pre-primary education	False	103	76.3
		True	32	23.7
		Total	135	100.0
3	Children engaged in play-based learning are less likely to develop cognitive skills	False	104	77.0
		True	31	23.0
		Total	135	100.0
4	Play-based learning is not suitable for preparing children for	False	107	79.3

	formal schooling	True	28	20.7
		Total	135	100.0
5	Understands the importance of play in supporting children's holistic development	False	45	33.3
		True	90	66.7
		Total	135	100.0
6	Able to design play-based activities that promote cognitive skills	False	30	22.2
		True	105	77.8
		Total	135	100.0
7	Unfamiliar with the concept of free play and its benefits	False	64	47.4
		True	71	52.6
		Total	135	100.0
8	Lacks the knowledge to adapt play-based activities for children with diverse needs	False	83	61.5
		True	52	38.5
		Total	135	100.0

This table presents the responses to 135 pre-primary school teachers knowledge survey about play-based learning. The survey consists of 8 questions, and for each question, the pre-primary school teachers had to choose between "false" or "true" as their response. Certainly, let's dive deeper into the interpretation of the data in this table:

Pre-primary school teachers were asked whether play-based learning is only suitable for recreational activities or not. For this item 65.9% of pre-primary school teachers' responded "false" to this statement, indicating that they understand play-based learning has applications beyond just recreational activities. And, 34.1% of pre-primary school teachers responded "true" to this statement, suggesting that they think or understand that play-based learning is only suitable for recreational activities.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked play based learning is unnecessary to use in pre-primary education. For this item 76.3% of pre-primary school teachers' responded "false" to this statement, suggesting that they understand the importance of using play-based learning in pre-primary education. Whereas, 23.7% of participants responded "true" to this statement, indicating that they understand it is unnecessary to use play-based learning in pre-primary education.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked in children engaged in play-based learning are less likely to develop cognitive skills. For this item a majority of the pre-primary school teachers (77.0%) responded "false" to this statement, indicating that they believe play-based learning can support the development of cognitive skills in children. Whereas, 23.0% of participants responded "true" to this statement, suggesting that they think children engaged in play-based learning are less likely to develop cognitive skills.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked whether play-based learning is a suitable for preparing children for formal schooling or not. For this item 79.3% of pre-primary school teachers responded "false" to this statement, suggesting that they believe play-based learning can be a suitable approach for preparing children for formal schooling. Whereas, 20.7% of participants responded "true" to this statement, indicating that they think play-based learning is not suitable for preparing children for formal schooling.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked whether in they understand the importance of play in supporting children's holistic development or not. For this item over two-thirds (66.7%) of the pre-primary school teachers acknowledged the importance of play in supporting children's overall development. And, 33.3% of participants responded "false" to this statement, suggesting that they do not fully understand the importance of play in supporting children's holistic development.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked if they are able to design play-based activities that promote cognitive skills. For this item 77.8% of pre-primary school teachers responded "true" to this statement, indicating that they have the ability to design play-based activities that can promote cognitive skills in children. Whereas, 22.2% of participants responded "false" to this statement, suggesting that they may lack the knowledge or skills to design such play-based activities.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked whether they are familiar with the concept of free play and its benefits or not. For this item over half (52.6%) of pre-primary school teachers were unfamiliar with the concept of free play or its benefits, highlighting a potential gap in knowledge. Whereas, 47.4% of participants responded "false" to this statement, suggesting that they are familiar with the concept of free play and its benefits.

Pre-primary school teachers were asked if they lacks the knowledge to adapt play-based activities for children with diverse needs. For this item 61.5% of pre-primary school teachers

responded "false" to this statement, indicating that they have the knowledge to adapt play-based activities for children with diverse needs. Whereas, 38.5% of participants responded "true" to this statement, suggesting that they lack the knowledge to adapt play-based activities for children with diverse needs.

Overall, the table suggested that the majority of the participants have adequate knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the role of play-based learning in supporting children's cognitive, social, and holistic development. However, a minority (around 20–35%) is still a significant proportion of participants who hold misconceptions or lack the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement play-based learning in their practice.

Pre-primary school teachers' attitudes towards play based learning

In order to examine pre-primary school teacher's attitude towards play based learning, the researcher was used descriptive statics (frequency, percent, mean, and standard deviation) and one sample t-test

Table 4.3 pre-primary school teacher's attitudes towards play based learning

Sn	Questions	Responses	F	%	M	SD
1	I feel comfortable using play based instruction in my classroom	Disagree (1)	6	4.4		
		Agree (2)	129	95.6		
		Total	135	100.0	3.59	.603
2	I believe play-based learning is effective for teaching children across different content areas (e.g. math, literacy).	Disagree (1)	3	2.2		
		Agree (2)	132	97.8		
		Total	135	100.0	3.67	.573
3	I believe it is necessary to use play based learning in pre-primary education.	Disagree (1)	5	3.7		
		Agree (2)	130	96.3		
		Total	135	100.0	3.59	.590
4	I think teaching children through play is pleasant	Disagree (1)	7	5.2		
		Agree (2)	128	94.8		
		Total	135	100.0	3.61	.636
5	I believe play-based learning is an effective way to engage young children in the learning process.	Disagree (1)	4	3		
		Agree (2)	131	97		
		Total	135	100.0	3.68	.581
6	I believe it is useful for me to learn the approach of play	Disagree (1)	3	2.2		
		Agree (2)	132	97.8		

		Total	135	100.0	3.73	.495
7	I feel confident incorporating play-based activities into my teaching practice.	Disagree (1)	3	2.2		
		Agree (2)	132	97.8		
		Total	135	100.0	3.68	.568
8	I am willing to adapt my teaching methods to incorporate more play-based activities.	Disagree (1)	3	2.2		
		Agree (2)	132	97.8		
		Total	135	100.0	3.71	.558
9	I think play-based learning highly motivates preschool children.	Disagree (1)	13	9.6		
		Agree (2)	122	90.4		
		Total	135	100.0	3.65	.673
10	I believe play-based learning can enhance children's creativity.	Disagree (1)	7	5.2		
		Agree (2)	128	94.8		
		Total	135	100.0	3.66	.673

The table shows 10 questions (Q1–Q10) related to various aspects of pre-primary school teachers' attitudes about the use of play-based learning. For each question, the table shows the frequency (F) and percentage (%) of responses for the 4-point Likert scale response options (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). In addition to this, the mean and standard deviation are included under each question.

The key results are presented as follows:

Questions 1–5: These questions focus on the pre-primary school teachers' attitudes toward play-based learning. The majority of pre-primary school teachers (over 95%) agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable using play-based learning (question 1), believe it to be effective for teaching across content areas (question 2) and necessary for pre-primary education (question 3), and find teaching through play to be pleasant (question 4) and an effective way to engage young children (question 5).

Questions 6–8: These questions address the pre-primary school teachers' perceived value of play-based learning for themselves. All the respondents (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that learning the approach of play is useful (question 6), that they feel confident incorporating play-based activities into their teaching practice (question 7), and that they are willing to adapt their teaching methods to incorporate more play (question 8).

Questions 9–10: These questions focus on the teachers' perceptions of the impact of play-based learning on children. The vast majority of respondents (over 90%) agree or strongly agree that

play-based learning motivates preschool children (question 9) and enhances their creativity (question 10).

The mean scores for the questions range from 3.59 to 3.73, further confirming that pre-primary school teachers have generally positive attitudes towards play-based learning. The standard deviations range from 0.495 to 0.673, suggesting a moderate level of variability in the responses, with most pre-primary school teachers clustered around the mean values.

The overall pattern of responses suggests that the surveyed pre-primary school teachers have a positive attitude towards play-based learning, with a majority strongly agreeing with the benefits and importance of play-based learning in early childhood education.

Table 4.3.1 T-test result of pre-primary school teacher's attitudes towards PBL

Variable	Mean	SD	Test value	T	DF	Sig.
Pre-primary school teachers attitudes	3.6359	.39584	2.5	33.342	134	.000

P <0.05

The one-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the pre-primary school teachers' attitudes towards play-based learning are significantly different from a neutral or indifferent attitude (test value of 2.5). The results show that the mean attitude score of 3.6359 is significantly higher than the test value of 2.5, with a t-statistic of 33.342 and a p-value less than 0.001. This indicates that the pre-primary school teachers have a positive and favorable attitude towards play-based learning, and the observed difference from the neutral attitude is highly statistically significant. The small standard deviation of 0.39584 suggests a relatively homogeneous attitude among the pre-primary school teachers, with most of them clustering around the high mean value.

In summary, the table shows strong statistical evidence that pre-primary school teachers have a highly positive and favorable attitude towards the use of play-based learning in their classrooms.

Pre-primary school teacher's practices towards play based learning

In order to examine the practices of pre-primary school teachers towards play based learning, descriptive statics like frequency, mean, percent and standard deviation were employed.

Table 4.4 pre-primary school teacher's practices towards play based learning

Sn	Questions	Responses	F	%	M	SD
1	**I incorporate play-based activities into my daily lesson plans**	Never (1)	1	.7		
		Sometimes (2)	32	23.7		
		Often (3)	24	17.8		
		Always (4)	78	57.8		
		Total	135	100.0	3.33	.862
2	**I allocate specific time for free play within the daily schedule**	Never (1)	7	5.2		
		Sometimes (2)	6	4.4		
		Often (3)	20	14.8		
		Always (4)	102	75.6		
		Total	135	100.0	3.61	.802
3	**I integrate play-based learning into various subject areas, such as math and language**	Never (1)	5	3.7		
		Sometimes (2)	13	9.6		
		Often (3)	24	17.8		
		Always (4)	93	68.9		
		Total	135	100.0	3.52	.818
4	**I provide a variety of materials to facilitate play-based learning**	Never (1)	5	3.7		
		Sometimes (2)	13	9.6		
		Often (3)	37	27.4		
		Always (4)	80	59.3		
		Total	135	100.0	3.42	.815
5	**I adapt my teaching methods to align with children's play-based interests**	Never (1)	5	3.7		
		Sometimes (2)	19	14.1		
		Often (3)	25	18.5		
		Always (4)	86	63.7		
		Total	135	100.0	3.42	.868
6	**I collaborate with parents to emphasize the benefits of play-based learning at home**	Never (1)	7	5.2		
		Sometimes (2)	9	6.7		
		Often (3)	21	15.6		
		Always (4)	98	72.6		

		Total	135	100.0	3.56	.835
7	**I provide a stimulating environment for play-based learning**	Never (1)	0	0.0		
		Sometimes (2)	8	5.9		
		Often (3)	37	27.4		
		Always (4)	90	66.7		
		Total	135	100.0	3.61	.600
8	**I collaborate with colleagues to share ideas for play-based learning experiences**	Never (1)	8	5.9		
		Sometimes (2)	6	4.4		
		Often (3)	23	17.0		
		Always (4)	98	72.6		
		Total	135	100.0	3.56	.834

The table shows the frequency and distribution of how often pre-primary school teachers use various play-based learning strategies in their classrooms. For all eight statements, the most common response was "always," indicating that the vast majority of pre-primary school teachers (over 65%) incorporate play-based activities into their daily lesson plans, allocate specific time for free play, integrate play-based learning into various subject areas, provide a variety of materials to facilitate play-based learning, adapt their teaching methods to align with children's play-based interests, collaborate with parents to emphasize the benefits of play-based learning at home, provide a stimulating environment for play-based learning, and collaborate with colleagues to share ideas for play-based learning experiences.

On the other hand, the average mean score of pre-primary school teacher reported using a play-based learning strategy with a mean between 3.33 and 3.61 on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (always), with a standard deviation between 0.60 and 0.868. Which means the "mean" (M) represents the average response of pre-primary school teachers for each question (e.g., 3.33 for question 1). A higher mean closer to 4 (often/always) indicates a stronger emphasis on that play based learning practice.

The "standard deviation" (SD) reflects the variability in responses. A lower SD (e.g., 0.6 for question 7) suggests a more consistent approach (almost everyone responded "always"). A higher SD (e.g., 0.86 for question 5) indicates a wider range of responses (some pre-primary school teachers use this practice more frequently than others).

Overall, the table suggests that the majority of participants (over 65%) are actively engaged in incorporating play-based learning into their teaching practices. They allocate time for free play, integrate play-based learning across subject areas, provide a variety of materials and stimulating environments, and collaborate with parents and colleagues to support play-based learning. However, there is still a small percentage of participants who report "Never" or "Sometimes" engaging in these practices, indicating a need for continued professional development and support in this area. Pre-primary school teachers show a strong appropriate practices towards play-based learning, with an average score of 67.15% on a quantitative measure.

While there may be variations in how teachers implement play-based learning, qualitative data from observations and document reviews revealed two key themes that emerged as consistent practices:

I) Organization of Indoor and Outdoor Play Equipment

The researcher observed that most pre-primary school classrooms contained basic materials like flashcards, blocks, and art supplies, along with some visual teaching aids. However, dedicated learning areas like dramatic play corners (shop, family, etc.), health corners, music corners, and math manipulatives were less prevalent in the average pre-primary school studied.

Outdoor play areas in all pre-primary schools offered basic equipment like slides, ladders, sandboxes, tires, and seesaws. This meets the minimum standard for outdoor play. Additionally, the researcher found a positive trend of many schools incorporating climbing frames and locally-made swings and seesaws, providing more diverse play opportunities.

Despite variations in available resources due to sponsorship or ownership, pre-primary school teachers demonstrated a strong commitment and initiative to create play materials from locally available resources. While teachers displayed high utilization of these materials, awareness about the full benefits and uses of play materials seemed lacking in most schools. However, some pre-primary schools stood out with a better understanding and offered a wider range of play materials, including storybooks in classrooms.

While most observed pre-primary schools offered a moderate amount of visible indoor and outdoor play materials that could promote exploration, cooperation, creativity, and problem-solving skills, several shortcomings were identified. These included:

- **Safety concerns:** Inadequate safety measures for the play materials.
- **Overcrowding:** Insufficient materials for the number of children present.

- **Poor organization:** Lack of proper organization, clear partitions, and variety in the play materials.

Document analysis and observations revealed that pre-primary school teachers consistently prepare weekly and daily lesson plans. These plans undergo directorial review at the week's end. Additionally, collaborative checklists were developed with pre-primary schools and teachers to serve as a follow-up mechanism for activity implementation.

II) Using play based learning in the classroom

The researcher observed a positive trend in pre-primary school teachers utilizing a variety of methods, including play-based learning, storytelling with songs, dramatization, discussions, and lectures. Most teachers commendably checked student exercises. While mother tongue was the primary language, some teachers occasionally used English for instruction. While using play-based learning, there was a lack of proper utilization of play materials for enhanced learning. A moderate number of pre-primary school teachers encouraged child-centered learning and independent activities, suggesting potential for wider implementation. Inconsistency was observed in teaching numbers and alphabets. Some pre-primary school teachers exceeded the syllabus, potentially causing learning difficulties for children.

The relationships among pre-primary school teachers play based learning knowledge, attitude, and practice

To assess the relationships between knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding play-based learning, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted.

Table 4.5. Correlation among teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practices

Variables	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Knowledge		.190*	.059
Attitude			.647**
Practice			

*P < 0.05 and **P < 0.01

Table 4.5 shown here presents the Pearson correlation analysis results. The analysis revealed that A statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .190$, $p < .05$) exists between knowledge and attitude. This indicates that teachers with higher knowledge of play-based learning tend to have slightly more positive attitudes towards it. However, the strength of this correlation is relatively weak (.190 is considered weak). A statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .059$, $p < .05$)

was found between knowledge and practice. While significant, the correlation coefficient (.059) is very weak, suggesting a minimal association between knowledge and actual implementation of play-based learning.

On the other hand, the strongest correlation ($r = .647$, $p < .01$) existed between attitude and practice. This suggests that the pre-primary school teachers with a more positive attitude towards play-based learning are more likely to integrate it into their practices.

This study found a positive relationship between pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding play-based learning. There is a statistically significant correlation between teachers' knowledge and attitude ($r = 0.190$), and an even stronger correlation between attitude and practice ($r = 0.647$). However, the strength of the knowledge-practice correlation ($r = 0.059$) is very weak. This suggests that simply having knowledge of play-based learning may not directly translate into its implementation.

Overall, the findings support the alternative hypothesis that teacher knowledge, attitude, and practice contribute positively to promoting play-based learning. However, focusing on fostering positive attitudes towards play-based learning may be particularly impactful for increasing its use in pre-primary classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the study's four key findings and their sub-findings, identified through data analysis. The discussion integrates and synthesizes these findings with relevant research and literature reviews, addressing the research questions.

5.1 Knowledge of play based learning

From the results presented in chapter four of this study, numerous findings emerged and conception of pre-primary school teachers toward play was among the key findings. The results revealed that pre-primary school teachers conceptualized play as inherently enjoyable for children! Play-based learning is all about using play as the foundation for teaching young children. Imagine it as a fun and engaging way for them to explore, experiment, and develop all their important skills. This idea was supported by different literature like Bergen (2009) play is fun, gives internal control, and expresses intrinsic motivation and internal reality.

On the other hand, Children's play has been operationalized as intrinsically motivating; pleasurable; freely chosen; non-literal; actively engaging; opportunistic and episodic; imaginative and creative; fluid and active; and predominantly for the moment and therefore concerned more with means than ends (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983; Sturgess, 2003).

Another idea that comes one pre-primary school teacher's conception towards play based learning, she said my "understanding of play-based learning includes a variety of activities such as indoor and outdoor play, arts and crafts, songs, and storytelling. However, the gap for me is between knowing about them and effectively implementing them in my classroom on a regular basis." This idea was supported by (Montessori, as Cited in Winnie, 2016). The finding also revealed that play based learning is an activity for enjoyment which includes funs, game, singing and drawing and dancing, crawling, rolling, jumping activity but children were learn different idea due to this type of activity.

In general that early pre-primary school teachers are fully knowledgeable about the concept of play-based learning. However, they are not able to practice it frequently. Specifically pre-primary teachers from other field of study who teach pre-primary children still require training that make them able to exercise play-based learning.

5.2 Pre-primary school teachers' attitudes towards play based learning

According to the finding from descriptive statics and one sample t-test revealed that most of the pre-primary school teachers were positive and favorable attitudes towards play based learning the results show that the mean attitudes score of 3.6359 is significantly higher than the test value of 2.5, with a t-statistic of 33.342 and a p-value less than 0.001.

In this regard, different literatures show that the attitude of pre-primary school teachers towards play based learning. For example, a study by Howard and Hill (2006) found that teachers who had a positive attitude towards play-based learning were more likely to implement it effectively in their classrooms. They found that these teachers were more likely to create an environment that encouraged exploration and creativity, which are key components of play-based learning. This study suggests that teacher attitudes can significantly impact the effectiveness of play-based learning.

On the other hand, a study by Trawick-Smith and Liu (2016) found that teachers' attitudes towards play-based learning were influenced by their beliefs about child development, their personal experiences with play, and their perceptions of parental expectations. This suggests that teacher attitudes towards play-based learning are complex and multifaceted.

Overall, the data shows in both descriptive statics and one sample t-test are a strong statistical evidence that the pre-primary school teachers have a highly positive and favorable attitude towards the use of play-based learning in their classrooms.

5.3 Pre-primary school teachers' practices towards play based learning

Under these the researcher was used quantitative data collected from questionnaires and as well as qualitative data was used collected from observation and document analysis as a supportive of pre-primary school teachers practice towards play based learning. The quantitative data result revealed that most of the pre-primary school teachers was appropriate practices and pre-primary school teachers have active role towards play based learning. And similar result also in the qualitative data. However, there is still a small percentage of participants who report "never" or "sometimes" engaging in the practice of play based learning or this indicated that some of the pre-primary school teachers doesn't practices play based learning frequently.

Regarding this result different literatures show that the practice of pre-primary school teachers towards play based learning. Teachers who implement play based learning practices take an

active role in guiding students' interactions and, in turn, use student motivation and interest to explore concepts and ideas (Nolan & Paatsch, 2018).

To prepare teachers for effective implementation of play-based learning practices and curricula in kindergarten classrooms, teacher education programs in colleges and universities should include courses for implementing play-based learning instruction in kindergarten classrooms (Pyle & Danniels, 2018).

5.4 The Relationships between Pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, Attitude, and Practice towards play based learning

This study examined the relationships between pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding play-based learning. The results revealed significant positive correlations between all three variables. However, the strength of these correlations varied.

A weak positive correlation ($r = 0.190$) exists between knowledge and attitude. This suggests teachers with higher knowledge may have slightly more positive attitudes towards play-based learning. The correlation between knowledge and practice is very weak ($r = 0.059$) and not statistically significant. This implies minimal association between knowledge and actual implementation of play-based learning. The strongest correlation ($r = 0.647$) exists between attitude and practice. This suggests teachers with a more positive attitude are more likely to integrate play-based learning into their classrooms.

Overall, while knowledge plays a role, a positive attitude towards play-based learning appears to be the strongest factor influencing its implementation in pre-primary classrooms.

In this regard, different literatures show the existence of patterns of relationships among preschool teachers‟ knowledge, attitude and practice about play based learning. For example, a study conducted by Mohamed (2024), the result indicates that pre-primary school teacher's knowledge, attitude, and practice level are only at a moderate high level. Besides, multiple linear regression tests showed a strong and significant relationship among pre-primary school teacher's knowledge and attitudes with their practice towards an active learning approach.

Another study conducted by Li and Li (2019) in China, who found a significant relationship between the level of knowledge and the teacher's attitude with the level of their practice towards implementing active learning activities. This is because highly knowledgeable teachers will know the meaningful and effective approach to help children in achieving learning goals.

This study found that the relationships between pre-primary teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding play-based learning can vary in strength and significance.

Key findings include:

- A weak but positive correlation exists between knowledge and attitude.
- There is a very weak and non-significant correlation between knowledge and practice.
- The strongest and most significant correlation is between attitude and practice.

These findings suggest that simply having knowledge of play-based learning may not directly translate into its implementation. However, fostering positive attitudes towards play-based learning appears to be a key factor in encouraging its use in pre-primary classrooms.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter wraps up the study by presenting its key takeaways. It starts with a concise background, then dives into the main findings, revisiting the initial research questions. Next, it draws conclusions based on these findings and offers recommendations stemming from those conclusions.

6.1 Summary

Play-based learning is seen as a cornerstone of high-quality pre-primary education, especially when it comes to implementing play-based pedagogy, the most fitting approach for early learners. To effectively implement this method, pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices are crucial.

This study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of pre-primary school teachers within Gullele sub city administration towards play-based learning. The research focused on a selection of pre-primary schools in the area.

To guide the investigation, the study posed four key research questions:

1. How do pre-primary school teachers conceptualize play based learning?
2. What is the attitude of pre-primary school teachers towards play based learning?
3. Do pre-primary school teacher’s practices play based learning?
4. What is the relationships among pre-primary school teachers play based learning knowledges, attitudes, and practices?

To address the research questions, a mixed methods approach was employed, specifically a concurrent embedded design. This design prioritized quantitative data collection through surveys with 135 pre-primary school teachers from Gullele sub city administration selected via simple random sampling. Additionally, purposive sampling was used to select a subset of teachers for qualitative interviews.

From the analysis made, the obtained major findings are summarized as follows:

- From the qualitative analysis in general that early pre-primary school teachers are fully knowledgeable about the concept of play-based learning. However, they are not able to practice it frequently. And from quantitative data similar to that of qualitative data with an average score of 69% but some exaggeration was happened in the collected data.

- The descriptive statics analysis revealed that the majority pre-primary school teacher's attitudes (over 63%) responded agree or strongly agree towards play-based learning.
- On the other hand, the t-test result on pre-primary school teacher's attitudes toward play based learning revealed that the mean attitude score of 3.6359 is significantly higher than the test value of 2.5, with a t-statistic of 33.342 and a p-value less than 0.001.
- The descriptive statics analysis revealed that the majority of pre-primary school teachers (over 65%) are actively engaged in incorporating play-based learning into their teaching practices. They allocate time for free play, integrate play-based learning across subject areas, provide a variety of materials and stimulating environments, and collaborate with parents and colleagues to support play-based learning. However, there is still a small percentage of participants who report "Never" or "Sometimes" engaging in play based learning practices.
- On the other hand the qualitative data stated that play based learning practice in all preschools was not as per National ECCE Quality standard. Children interest and needs in teaching and learning has not been taken into account as the required level. Most of the indoor and outdoor play based instruction practices were found below the national ECCE standard.
- A weak positive correlation ($r = 0.190$) exists between knowledge and attitude. The correlation between knowledge and practice is very weak ($r = 0.059$) and not statistically significant. The strongest correlation ($r = 0.647$) exists between attitude and practice. The correlation findings suggest that simply having knowledge of play-based learning may not directly translate into its implementation. However, fostering positive attitudes towards play-based learning appears to be a key factor in encouraging its use in pre-primary classrooms.

6.2 Conclusion

A thorough analysis of the data from the multi-method instruments yielded clear and compelling conclusions, which are summarized below.

Most of the pre-primary school teachers are fully knowledgeable about the concept of play-based learning that was collected from both qualitative and quantitative data. However, they are not able to practice it frequently. The overall pattern of responses suggests that the surveyed pre-primary school teachers have a positive attitudes towards play-based learning, with a majority

strongly agreeing in the descriptive statics, and similar result in one-sample t-test. Which means most of the pre-primary school teachers attitudes were positive and favorable.

Result revealed that collected from quantitative and qualitative data the pre-primary school teachers practice was appropriate but still a limitation or drawback in most of the indoor and outdoor play based learning practices were found below the national ECCE standard. The study examined the relationships between pre-primary school teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding play-based learning. The results revealed that positive correlations between all three variables. However, the strength of these correlations varied as well as the significant value.

6.3 Recommendation

This study investigated pre-primary school teacher's knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding play-based learning. It built upon existing research and literature, identifying potential gaps in teacher preparedness. The findings highlight that these knowledge, attitude, and practice gaps pose significant challenges to the effective implementation of play-based learning in preschools.

Informed by the study's findings, discussions, and conclusions, the following general and specific recommendations are tailored for different stakeholders.

For pre-primary school directors or administrators

- This study has indicated that pre-primary school teacher's knowledge, attitude and practice is positive towards play based learning. This positive sign is important for every group of pre-primary school teacher. It is recommended that this practice of pre-primary schools should be transferred and shared with other pre-primary schools.
- Many pre-primary schools face a shortage of indoor and outdoor play materials. To address this challenge, we can explore several strategies.
- Many of the play materials, especially outdoor play material are questioning in safety issue. So, to address this kind of challenge.
- There is a lack of proper organization, clear partitions, and variety in the play materials. Address this issue or challenges because its affect pre-primary school teacher's practices towards play based learning.

For pre-primary school teachers

- Pre-primary school teachers should actively seek opportunities to update their knowledge and skills in play-based learning through regular and ongoing professional development.
- Pre-primary school teachers have appropriate practices towards play based learning but still a limitation its implement frequently. It is recommended that the pre-primary school teachers should implement frequently.
- Inconsistency was observed in teaching numbers and alphabets. So, the pre-primary school teachers should consistent.
- Some pre-primary school teachers exceeded the syllabus. Should avoid this kind of activity because of this kind of activity potentially causing learning difficulties for children.

For further researcher

- While this study suggests that pre-primary school teachers in the sampled schools generally demonstrate adequate knowledge, favorable attitudes, and appropriate practices towards play-based learning, further research is needed to confirm these findings across a wider range of schools. However, these positive results offer valuable insights.

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Appendix A

English version Questionnaire prepared for Pre-primary school Teachers

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education

Questionnaire Prepared for Pre-primary school Teachers

Dear respondents: The main purpose of this questionnaire is to examine pre-primary school teacher's conception, attitude, and practice towards play based learning in Gullele sub city.

The questionnaire contains four sections. Section one is about the demographic information of respondents, section two contains items related to pre-primary school teachers conception towards play based learning, section three contains items related to pre-primary school teachers attitude towards play based learning, and section four contains items related to pre-primary school teachers practice towards play based learning.

I assure you that the information you provided will be kept confidential and used for this academic research purpose only. The success of this study highly depends on your genuine response. Thus, you are kindly requested to take due care in filling the questionnaire for each of the items.

"Thank you in advance for your cooperation!"

Section One: Demographic information of pre-primary school teachers.

Instruction: Give your answers by putting (''✓") mark for items requiring selection at the appropriate place. No need of writing your name.

1. Gender A) Female □ B) Male □

2. Educational Level

A) Grade 10th complete □ C) Certificate (TTI) □ D) ECCE College diploma □

B) Preschool teachers training certificate □ E) BA/BED degree □

3. Teaching experience in preschool education

A) 0-3 years □ B) 4-7 years □ C) 8-10 years □ D) 11 years and above □

4. Type of training taken on play based learning

A) Pre-service training only □ B) In-service training only □

C) Both pre service and in service training □ D) I did not take any type of training □

Section two: Items to Assess Pre-primary school Teachers' knowledge towards Play Based Learning (Knowledge scale)

Instruction: The following statements are related to your attitude towards play – based learning. Read each items carefully and indicate your choice by putting an "✓" mark in the most appropriate place that you agreed in one of the two alternatives (use the following options: 1= False 2= True)

No	Items	Alternatives	
		1	2
1	Play-based learning is only suitable for recreational activities.		
2	It is unnecessary to use play based learning in pre-primary education.		
3	Children engaged in play-based learning are less likely to develop cognitive skills.		
4	Play-based learning is not suitable for preparing children for formal schooling.		
5	Understands the importance of play in supporting children's holistic development		
6	I able to design play-based activities that promote cognitive skills		
7	Unfamiliar with the concept of free play and its benefits		
8	Lacks the knowledge to adapt play-based activities for children with diverse needs		

Section three: Items to Assess Pre-primary school Teachers' Attitude towards Play Based Learning (Attitude Scale)

Instruction: The following statements are related to your attitude towards play – based learning. Please read each statement carefully and indicate your level of agreement using the Likert scale below. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond honestly and to the best of your knowledge. Likert scale 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Agree and 4= Strongly agree

No	Items	Alternatives			
		1	2	3	4
1	I feel comfortable using play based instruction in my classroom				
2	I believe play-based learning is effective for teaching children across different content areas (e.g. math, literacy).				
3	I believe it is necessary to use play based learning in pre-primary education.				
4	I think teaching children through play is pleasant				
5	I believe play-based learning is an effective way to engage young children in the learning process.				
6	I believe it is useful for me to learn the approach of play				
7	I feel confident incorporating play-based activities into my teaching practice.				
8	I am willing to adapt my teaching methods to incorporate more play-based activities.				
9	I think play-based learning highly motivates preschool children.				
10	I believe play-based learning can enhance children's creativity.				

Section four: Items to Assess Pre-primary school Teachers' practices towards Play Based Learning (practice Scale)

Instruction: Below are items to assess your practice of play-based learning. Read each statement carefully and indicate your choice by putting an "✓" mark in the most appropriate place that you practiced in one of the four alternatives (use of the following options 1= Never, 2= Sometimes, 3= Often and 4=Always).

No	Items	Alternatives			
		1	2	3	4
1	I incorporate play-based activities into my daily lesson plans.				
2	I allocate specific time for free play within the daily schedule.				
3	I integrate play-based learning into various subject areas, such as math and language.				
4	I provide a variety of materials to facilitate play-based learning.				
5	I adapt my teaching methods to align with children's play-based interests.				
6	I collaborate with parents to emphasize the benefits of play-based learning at home.				
7	I provide a stimulating environment for play-based learning.				
8	I collaborate with colleagues to share ideas for play-based learning experiences.				

Appendix B

Amharic Version Questionnaire filled by pre-primary school teachers

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርስቲ

የትምህርትና ስነ-ባህርይ ኮሌጅ

የቀዳማይ ልጅነት ዘመን እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ማዕከል

በቅድመ-አንደኛ ትምህርት ቤት መምህራን የሚሞላ የጽሁፍ መጠይቅ

መመሪያ፡- የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓላማ በጉለሌ ክፍለ ከተማ አስተዳደር ስር የሚገኙ የቅድመ-አንደኛ ትምህርት ቤት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ዙሪያ ያላቸውን እዉቀት፣ አመለካከት እና አተገባበር መመርመር ነው፡፡ ከመጠይቁ የሚገኘው መረጃ ሚስጥር የሚጠበቅና ለዚህ ጥናት ብቻ የሚውል መሆኑን አረጋግጣለሁ፡፡ የዚህ ጥናት ስኬት እርስዎ በሚሰጡት እውነተኛ ምላሽ የተወሰነ ነው፡፡ ስለዚህ ይህን መጠይቅ ሲሞሉ እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በጥንቃቄ እንዲሞሉ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ፡፡

‘‘ስለትብብርዎ ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ’’

ክፍል አንድ፡- የቅድመ-አንደኛ ት/ት ቤት መምህራን ግላዊ (ዳራዊ) መረጃዎች

መመሪያ፡ ትክክለኛውን መልስ በትክክለኛው ቦታ የ (’’✓’’) ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ፡፡

1. *ፆታ ሀ)* ሴት □ ለ) ወንድ □
2. የሰለጠኑበት የትምህርት መስክ

   ሀ) በቅድመ-አንደኛ መምህርነት □ ለ) በሌላ የትምህርት መስክ □
3. የትምህርት ደረጃ

   ሀ) 10ኛ ክፍል ያጠናቀቀ/ች □ ለ) የቅድመ-አንደኛ መምህርነት ስልጠና ሰርትፍኬት □ ሐ) ሰርትፍኬት □ መ) ኮሌጅ ዲፕሎማ □ ሠ) ዲግሪ □
4. በቅድመ-መደበኛ መምህርነት የሰሩበት የማስተማር ልምድ

   ሀ) ከ0-3 አመት □ ለ) ከ4-7 አመት □ ሐ) ከ8-10 አመት □ መ) 11 ዓመትና በላይ □
5. በጨዋታ ስለማስተማር ዘዴ የወሰዱት የስልጠና አይነት

   ሀ) የቅድመ -ስራ ስልጠና □ ለ) የስራ ላይ ስልጠና □ ሐ) ሁለቱንም □ መ) ስልጠና አልወሰድኩም □

ክፍል ሁለት፡- የቅድመ- አንደኛ ህፃናት መምህራን ስለጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ያላቸውን እውቀት የሚለኩ ጥያቄዎች (የእውቀት መለኪያ)

መመሪያ፡- ከዚህ በታች የቀረቡት ዓ.ነገሮች እርስዎን በጨዋታ ስለማስተማር ዘዴ ያላቸውን እውቀት የሚመለከቱ ናቸው፡፡ እያንዳንዱን ዓ.ነገር በጥንቃቄ በማንበብ ከሁለቱ አማራጮች በአንዱ እርስዎ የሚስማሙበትን ትክክለኛ ቦታው ላይ የ ’’✓’’ ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ (የሚከተለውን አማራጭ ይጠቀሙ **1-ሀሰት 2- እዉነት**)

ተ.ቁ	ዓ.ነገሮች	አማራጮች	
		እዉነት	ሀሰት
1	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ለመዝናኛ ድርጊቶች/እንቅስቃሴዎች ብቻ ተስማሚ ነዉ፡፡		
2	በቅድመ-አንደኛ ደረጃ ተምህርት ቤት ዉስጥ በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት መጠቀም አስፈላጊ አይደለም፡፡		
3	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ላይ የተሰማሩ ልጆች የግንዛቤ ክህሎቶችን የማዳበር እድላቸዉ አነስተኛ ነዉ፡፡		
4	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ልጆችን ለመደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት ለማዘጋጀት ተስማሚ አይደለም፡፡		
5	የልጆችን ሁለንተናዊ እድገት ለመደገፍ በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ያለዉን ጠቀሜታ እረዳለሁ፡፡		
6	የእዉቀት (ኮግኒቲቭ) ክህሎቶችን የሚያበረታቱ በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረቱ እንቅስቃሴዎችን መንደፍ ችያለሁ፡፡		
7	እኔ ስለ ነጻ ጨዋታ ፅንሰ ሀሳብና ጥቅሞች ብዙም እዉቀት እና ግንኙነት የለኝም፡፡		
8	የተለያየ ፍላጎት ላላቸዉ ልጆች ጨዋታን መሰረት ያደረጉ እንቅስቃሴዎችን/ድርጊቶችን የመከወን እጥረት አለብኝ፡፡		

ክፍል ሦስት፡- የቅድመ-አንደኛ መምህራን ስለጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ያላቸውን አመለካከት የሚለኩ ጥያቄዎች (የአመለካከት መለኪያ)

- *መመሪያ፡-* የሚከተሉት ዓ.ነገሮች እርስዎ በጨዋታ ስለማስተማር ዘዴ ያላቸውን አመለካከት የሚመለከቱ ናቸው፡፡ እያንዳንዱን ዓ.ነገር በጥንቃቄ በማንበብ ከአራቱ አማራጮች በአንዱ እርስዎ የሚስማሙበትን ትክክለኛ ቦታ ለይ የ (’’✓’’) ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ፡፡ (የሚከተለውን አማራጭ ይጠቀሙ **1-በጣም አልስማማም፣ 2-አልስማማም፣3- እስማማለሁ እና 4 - በጣም እስማማለሁ)**

ተ.ቁ	ዓ.ነገሮች	አማራጮች			
		በጣም አልስማማም	አልስማማም	እስማማለሁ	በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	በክፍሌ ዉስጥ በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ለመጠቀም ምቾት ይሰማኛል፡፡				
2	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ልጆችን በተለያዩ የይዘት ዘርፎች ለማስተማር ዉጤታማ እንደሆነ አምናለሁ (ለምሳሌ ሂሳብ፣ ማንበብና መጻፍ)፡፡				
3	በቅድመ-አንደኛ ትምህርት ቤት ዉስጥ በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት መጠቀም አስፈላጊ ነዉ ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡				
4	ለእኔ ልጆችን በጨዋታ ማስተማር አስደሳች ነዉ ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡				
5	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት ልጆችን በመማር ሂደት ዉስጥ ለማሳተፍ ዉጤታማ መንገድ ነዉ ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡				
6	የጨዋታ አቀራረብን መማር ለእኔ ጠቃሚ እንደሆነ አምናለሁ				
7	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርትን ከማስተማር ልምዴ ጋር ሳካትት በራስ መተማመን ይሰማኛል፡፡				
8	ተጨማሪ ጨዋታን መሰረት ያደረጉ ድርጊቶችን/እንቅስቃሴዎችን ለማካተት የማስተማር ዘዴዬን ለማስተካከል ፍቃደኛ ነኝ፡፡				
9	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት የመዋለ ህፃናት ልጆችን በእጅጉ ያነሳሳል ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡				
10	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርት የልጆችን ፈጠራ እንደሚያሳድግ አምናለሁ፡፡				

ክፍል አራት፡- የቅድመ-አንደኛ መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ያላቸውን ትግበራ የሚለኩ ጥያቄዎች (የትግበራ መለኪያ)

መመሪያ፡- ቀጥሎ የተዘረዘሩት ዓ.ነገሮች የእርስዎን በጨዋታ የማስተማር ዘዴን ትግበራ የሚመለከቱ ናቸው፡፡ እያንዳንዱን ዓ.ነገር በጥንቃቄ በማንበብ ከአራቱ አማራጮች በአንዱ እርስዎ የሚስማሙበትን ትክክለኛ ቦታው ላይ የ (✓) ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ (የሚከተለውን አማራጭ ይጠቀሙ **1- በጭራሽ፣2- አልፎ አልፎ፣ 3- በአብዛኛው እና 4- ሁልጊዜ)**

ተ.ቁ	ዓ.ነገሮች	አማራጮች			
		በጭራሽ	አልፎ አልፎ	በአብዛኛው	ሁል ጊዜ
1	በዕለታዊ የትምህርት ዕቅዶቼ ዉስጥ ጨዋታን መሰረት ያደረጉ ድርጊቶችን/እንቅስቃሴዎችን አካትታለሁ፡፡				
2	በዕለታዊ መርሀ ግብር ዉስጥ ለነፃ ጨዋታ የተወሰነ ጊዜ እመድባለሁ፡፡				
3	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርትን ከተለያዩ የትምህርት ዘርፎች ማለትም ከሂሳብ እና ከቋንቋ ጋድ አዋህዳለሁ፡፡				
4	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ትምህርትን ለማመቻቸት የተለያዩ ቁሳቁሶችን አቀርባለሁ፡፡				
5	የማስተማር ስልቶቼን ከልጆች በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ ፍላጎት ጋር ለማስማማት እጥራለሁ፡፡				
6	በቤት ዉስጥ ጨዋታን መሰረት ያደረገ ትምህርት ያለዉን ጥቅም ለማጉላት ከወላጆች ጋር እተባበራለሁ፡፡				
7	በጨዋታ ላይ ለተመሰረተ ትምህርት ትግበራ ደህንነቱ የተጠበቀ አካባቢ አቀርባለሁ፡፡				
8	በጨዋታ ላይ የተመሰረተ የመማር ልምዶችን ለማካፈል ከስራ ባልደረቦቼ ጋር እተባበራለሁ፡፡				

Appendix c

Semi-Structured Interview Questionnaire for pre-primary school teacher's conception about play based learning.

Direction

This questionnaire aims to understand pre-primary teachers' conceptions about play-based learning. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. This conversation will explore your understanding and experiences with play-based learning in your pre-primary classroom.

1. How would you define play-based learning?
2. When play based learning apply?
3. How do you employ play-based learning in your pre-primary school classroom?
4. How do you engage children in play-based learning?

Appendix D

Classroom and outdoor observation checklist

Observation checklist for preschool teachers' practice of play based learning

No	Items	Alternatives	
		sufficiently available	sufficiently unavailable
I	**Organization of indoor and outdoor play materials**		
1	Availability of developmentally appropriate play materials		
2	Availability of indoor play materials		
3	Availability of outdoor play materials		
4	Play materials are selected to suit children developmental level		
5	The arrangement of play materials enhance children cooperative play		
II	**Details in the classroom instruction**	Yes	No

1	Supervision / guiding/ of children during indoor and outdoor play		
2	Sufficient time allocated for play		
3	KG teachers perform multidimensional roles in line with their interaction in children play		
4	KG teachers understand child ZPD by providing appropriate play materials		
5	Arrange the classroom based on interest of the child		
6	Setting up play centers and activities		
7	Provision of concrete play and learning		

Name of the observed preschool.....Date of observation.....

Comment----------

Appendix E document analysis

Documents review

- School minute (time table/schedule)
- Number of pre-primary school teachers in the school
- Lesson plan pre-primary school teachers prepare and use
- Number of children in the pre-primary school