PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SKILLS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

The study aimed at assessing Problems of Social Skills in Early Childhood Education Program in Ethiopia. Descriptive survey research design was employed through using stratified random sampling procedure to collect the survey data from 280 teachers recruited from early childhood education programs across three cities: Dire Dewa (130 teachers; 10 schools); Chiro (40 teachers; 6 schools); and Harar (110 teachers; 8 schools). They completed a questionnaire by starting filling the demographic information and a 5-item measure in which they rated problems influencing socials skills in early childhood education program. Firstly, about 89% of early childhood education teachers were not trained in the program. Secondly, about 64% of the early childhood education curriculum was highly influencing children's social skills. Finally, it was found that children were unable to cooperate during learning social skills with their classmates, and they were unable to solve social problems during playing with their classmates. Therefore, to ensure quality of early childhood education, education stakeholders, parents, teachers, administrators, non-government and ministry of education of the country at large need to improve teachers' training and curriculum under usage to improve and to fit to children's social skills in early childhood education programs.

Keywords: Early, childhood education, problems, social skills, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The adolescents of 2035 are now in their early childhood years, still on the threshold of entering primary school. Quality pre-primary education is one of the best investments available for ensuring their future success and that of those who will follow in their footsteps. Universal pre-primary education of good quality will bring enormous benefits to children, families, education systems and society at large (UNICEF, 2019). Across widely differing countries and circumstances, students equipped with quality early childhood education are better prepared for the transition to primary school. They reach higher levels of education and are more likely to develop the skills that the modern job market demands, including critical thinking, collaboration, resilience and creativity (UNICEF, 2019; and World Bank, 2018).

Quality pre-primary education sets the stage for a positive transformation in learning outcomes throughout a child's lifetime. Successful students move more efficiently through the education system, which makes investing in quality early learning opportunities cost-effective, lessening the need for remedial efforts and resources to make up for lost learning (García, Jorge, and Luis, 2016). Quality pre-primary education also supports country goals for economic growth. Children's participation in pre-primary education offers mothers and other caregivers opportunities to participate in the workforce and increase their earnings, Naudeau and Sophie (2020), facilitating the upward mobility of two generations. In the long term, pre-primary education can contribute to the framework of well-being throughout a country by enhancing labour force productivity and reducing the social costs of crime and health care. But if access to pre-primary education is only available to comparatively well-off families, pre-primary programs can widen the gap in opportunities between children from the poorest and wealthiest households (Michelle, Neuman & Lynette, 2019).

The role of the school is to stimulate student's integral skills within three domains of knowledge: affective, cognitive and psychomotor. It is expected from the teachers to equally stimulate all students' capabilities (Mijatović, 1999) and to observe the student as a human and social being

(Previšić, 1999). In accordance with the above, more and more classes are being affirmed that are oriented to the child (Walsh, 1997) as well as pro-social classes (Čudina-Obradović & Težak, 1995) that encourage social learning as a part of overall learning. Children's social skills, which represents the skills of capabilities of understanding social relations and suitable psychosocial functioning, includes behaviour, attitudes and affects united into children's interaction with adults and peers (Brajša-Žganec, 2003). Numerous researches that were involved into children's social skills indicate to positive influence of teachers, parents and peers on the social skills of the students (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2008, Buljubašić-Kuzmanović & Livazović, 2010) emphasizing how socially developed child acquires good developing results that enable satisfying and competent participation in the community that they belong to (Katz & McClellan, 1997; Raver & Zigler, 1997; Rose-Krasnor, 1997). Katz and McClellan (1997) emphasize that the community is the basis for creation of a context of social skills, and the communities could be families, school and peer groups.

In the period of middle childhood, the influence of family, teachers and peers is of an extreme importance (Vizek-Vidović, 2003). The results showed that the children that created a relationship of trust with teachers are more socially competent in the relationships with the peers (Klarin, 2006), and it is especially emphasized the importance of emotional literacy of parents on social skills of the students and the quality of adjustment (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2008). The school has a role to prepare the student for the future profession, but also to work in the community (Rychen & Salgnik, 2003; Ten Dam & Volman, 2007). The teachers need to have an educative effect, encourage students to work in groups, and to base their classes on interaction, partnership and cooperation (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2012). The school as the community of upbringing into the centre of the educational process sets the students and their integral skills, and to the social skills, as a significant factor of growing up and success, attaches a special attention. In order to contribute to better children's social skills, the teachers need to know theories of social skills well. Knowing the theories of the social skills, they can create, with more quality, the school activities that will stimulate children's social skills, as well as the integral skills in general.

Doing business as usual is not working! There must be a definite shift in thinking about how, when, and where resources for early childhood education (ECE) should be invested. Until African leaders begin to step back, reflect, and make conscious policy decision to invest in human resources to build human capabilities through specific targeting of 3-6 year olds and their mothers, vision of a developed and prosperous Africa will continue to remain a vision. Without transforming human resources into human capital, African countries in general and Ethiopian in particular will continue to struggle to provide the basic necessities for their citizens (UNESCO, 2010; World Bank, 2018)).

The researcher believes that early childhood education is the cornerstone for the next stage of development (psychosocial, physical, moral & personality) and learning. This is only possible where child-centered curriculum has been in the position, but this is very thin and very shallow in Ethiopia context. As the experienced teacher in Ethiopia, the researcher has critically observed that early childhood education was lacked attention from parents, government, non-governments, privates and religious institutions. These problems initiated the researcher to investigate the extent to social so skills of the children have been affected by irrelevant curriculum, poor teachers training and lack of collaboration among the stakeholders.

Review of Related Literature

This part of the paper mainly dealt with the theoretical framework of reviewing different literature for the purpose of getting pertinent evidence from previously conducted research products. It contains views of children's social skills, developmentally appropriate curriculum and social relevance of the curriculum to quality early childhood education in study area.

Theoretical views of the children's social skills
When we analyze children's social skills and the influence of the family, peer and school on them, it is important to know the basics of the theory of the social skills. Some of the theories emphasize the

importance of the family for the children's social skills, while the others emphasize the influence of the child's social environment. The theory of commitment of the theorist Bowbly (1969) emphasizes the importance of early relationship with parents (guardians) in child's skills and great influence on social relationships in the whole life. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall (1978) discovered that children that are tightly connected to their mothers as babies have a tendency to develop stronger self-respect and better self-confidence, to be independent, better in school, have successful social relationships and experience less depression and anxiety.

Schaffer and Emerson (1964) based on researches concluded that children that grew up in orphanages can also manage to develop a feeling of trust, but it is then important factor of a care quality. When guardians react fast and prompt, children learn to rely on people who are responsible for their care, and in contrary, the children that do not gain a trust early in their life can have a negative influence in a later childhood and during the life when different types of behaviour disorder appear. Socio-cultural theory of Lev Vygotsky (1978) belongs to the early theories of social constructivism according which for the skills of more cognitive functions social environment in which the child acquires experiences is important. He further emphasizes the importance of cognitive processes for children's social behaviour and social interactions, wherein the child learns new social and cognitive skills through interactions with adults and elder children (Brajša–Žganec, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner ecological theory (1995) emphasizes the importance of the environment for children's social skills. Within the ecological theory of skills, he identified four levels of environmental influences on child: Microsystems (family, kindergarten, school), Mesosystem (mutual action of different Microsystems), Exosystem (wider environment) and Macrosystem (features of certain culture: education, religion, social system) (Brajša-Žganec, 2003). Paquette and Ryan (2001) analyzing ecological theory suggest that the child is in the centre of the system, while the layers of the environment are getting wider around him/her in concentrated circles, and they stronger and weaker influence on his/her skills. Bronfenbrenner also underlines that overall the context in which the children's skills is carried out importantly influences the course of skills and skills outcomes, and without neglecting individual features of the child and believes that the skills is a result of interaction of child's features and environment in which the child grows (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

When we speak about social skills, it is also important to mention the theory of cognitive skills of Jean Piaget that emphasizes how children cannot achieve maximal possible degree of cognitive skills without exposing to stimulating experiences in the social environment (Piaget, 1987). With his theory, known as socio-constructivist, he emphasized that the construction of knowledge happens during the interaction with social environment and active actions of the child. The implications of the Piaget's theory for education are visible in a change of a role of the teacher that does not have to be the transmitter of the knowledge but moderator and creator of the conditions for acquiring knowledge of the children. During such organization of the classes, it is important that the teacher, besides of ensuring the conditions for acquiring knowledge of the students, needs also to provide conditions for the social skills of the children (Vass, 1998).

Social skills in the middle childhood
In the period of the middle childhood, the extremely important one is social skills, which represents the skills related to the skills of child's capability of understanding of social relations and suitable psychosocial functioning (Brajša-Žganec, 2003). Even though in these developments period the children spend less time with family, the influence of the family is not decreased (Klarin, 2002). The parents represent to the child a model, as in behaviour also for attitudes and the parents provide them the feeling of being a shield of their immediate environment, permanent feeling that they are worried, cherished and protected (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2012).

Starting the school an important leap in the skills of social relations simultaneously occurs because the child from simple and familiar situation of family, where he/she was protected and privileged often, passes into new, complicated and unpredictable situation where he/she has to fight for his/her position

in the big group of equal peers (Andrilović & Čudina-Obradović, 1990). The main features of the social skills in the middle childhood are: forming of the first friendships, growth of self-respect, differentiation of capabilities, effort and happiness during the success and failure, regulating emotions, understanding of connection between moral regulations and social conventions, appearance of peer groups, mutual trust (Berk, 2008; Dowd, 2016).

Developmentally appropriate curriculum

When one speaks about developmentally appropriate curriculum, one speaks about curriculum planned to be appropriate for the age span of children within the program (Chinyani, 2013). One also needs to be aware that once a teacher begins to work with a group of children and begins to learn more about individual children within the group, the curriculum might change drastically. Curriculum should be driven by the different needs, levels of functioning, and interests of the children in the group. Curriculum planned in the summer before a teacher even knows the children in the class is curriculum that will not be sensitive to individual learners. Curriculum developed under those conditions is also curriculum bound to fail because it was not designed specifically for the group (Yigzaw, 2018). When planning developmentally appropriate curriculum, all aspects of skills need to be taken into consideration.

Developmentally appropriate curriculum focuses on integrating learning rather than departmentalizing learning. Children learn through interaction with children, materials, and adults. In developmentally appropriate curriculum, children learn through direct experiences not by learning about persons, places, and things from someone always telling them about them. In a developmentally appropriate environment, children learn science, social studies, language arts, and math through reading books and listening to stories, engaging in sensory experiences, participating in cooking experiences, being involved with art activities, taking part in dramatic play, using manipulative, taking field trips, building, creating, and sharing all of these experiences with their peers and the adults in their classrooms (Chinyani, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Children aged 3 to 6 years constitute a large section of the Ethiopian population according to the national census conducted by Central Statistics Agency (CSA, 2009). Over 16% percent of the then, 74 million populations, that is, more than 11.8 million were under this age category and above 10% were in the ages 4 to 6 years. However, Early Childhood Education (ECE) is one of the most neglected areas in Ethiopia. As to the Annual Educational Statistical Abstract of Ministry of Education, 2013), the gross enrollment rate of Kindergarten (KG, ages 4 to 6) was only 6.2% and mainly concentrated in urban areas. Moreover, extremely very thin preprimary school teachers have been trained in early childhood education in the country (Woldehanna, Mesele and Araya, 2017).

In tune with the international commitment, the Ethiopian Government has embarked on a continuous process of reengineering the issue in its education and training policy and in the past five Education Sector Development Plans (ESDPs). The first five-year plan of the Education Sectors Development Plan (ESDP-I) was launched within the framework of the Education Training Policy (ETP, 1994) and the following three year ESDP-II plans did not consider Early Childhood Education (ECE) as absolutely necessary. Not until the third five year ESDP-III plan, Early Childhood Education (ECE) was given the needed policy support by the government to create conducive policy environment and support mechanisms for the participation of various stakeholders which was not implemented as immediate as possible. Moreover, nothing has been said about the preprimary school teachers' training even if it has been the cornerstone in the early childhood education program (Dowd, 2016).

ECE received much focus in ESDP-IV (2010 to 2014/15), which provided a useful analysis of lessons learnt from ESDP-III (2005/06 to 2010/11). Tangible program outcomes and targets were set than ever before the preceding ESDPs through different approaches to meet the objective of ECE as stipulated in Education for All (EFA, 2000) Dakar documents. It has placed mainly two key outcome targets to increase Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) from 6.9% in 2009/10 to 20% in 2014/15 and to establish a pre-primary class in all rural and urban primary school compounds (MoE, 2018;

Woldehanna, Mesele and Araya, 2017). Despite the presence of these statements in different sectors of governmental policy and the comprehensive inclusion of ECE in the ESDP- IV, ECE in Ethiopia was one of the most neglected areas of educational programs in the country.

It is clear that the different regions of Ethiopia have adopted the education sector development program prepared at the federal government. Among these regions Oromia, Harari and Dire Dewa City Administration are also the one that is implementing the program to address the issue of early childhood education programs in all zones of the region. Based on this reality, investigating problems of social kills in early childhood education program in Ethiopia was attempted at Chiro, Dire Dawa and Harar Towns.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to investigate how the problems of social skills in early childhood education program in Ethiopia is affecting preschoolers in in teaching-learning processes in schools**.** Specifically, this study was intended to;

- identify the extent to which early childhood education teachers were qualified and trained to the required social skills in their professional competence

- assess the preprimary school teachers' perceptions towards the relevance of curriculum in Harar, Chiro and Dire Dawa Towns

- pinpoint the relevance of curriculum in supporting children's social skills in early childhood education

- explain the extent to which curriculum relevance affects children's social skills

- compare whether there was statistically a significant mean difference exist among the three centers.

METHODS

The research design was descriptive survey research design, where schools were purposively selected and the participants were randomly selected through stratified random sampling techniques: (1) Dire Dewa Center (130 teachers; 10 schools), (2) Chiro centers (40 teachers; 6 schools), and (3) Harar centers (110 teachers; 8 schools). All data presented in this study were collected in January, 2020.

Sample Size Estimation
Randomization was conducted at the school level and stratified by three city centers. A sample size of 24 schools with approximately ten teachers per school was assumed. To do this, Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula was employed to determine the sample size of preprimary school teachers under the study.

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{1 + N_i(\alpha^2)} = \frac{996}{1 + 996(0.05)^2} = \frac{996}{1 + 996(0.0025)} = \frac{996}{1 + 2.49} = \frac{996}{3.49} = 286$$ where N$_i$ is the

total preprimary school teachers in the three cities; n$_i$ is the total sample size to be taken at α = .05.

Sampling Procedures
Three of the nine cities in the Eastern Ethiopian where early childhood education has been practiced were selected. These cities were rated as the most disadvantaged districts on the 2014 UNICEF District League Table (a social accountability index that ranks regions and districts based on skills and delivery of key basic services, including education, health, sanitation, and governance). These three schools were purposively selected, where these schools were found within five-hours driving distance from Hararamaya University where the researcher permanently lives.

School Sample
All schools in the three cities were identified using the Educational Management Information System database, which lists all registered schools in the eastern part of the country. Schools were then

randomly sampled and stratified by city and within city by public schools. Eligible schools had to be registered with the government and have at least one preprimary schools class. A school listing was then conducted to confirm the presence of each school and to obtain information on each school's principal. There were 40 public schools across the three cities where every public school was sampled. Then, 24 schools were sampled from 40 schools.

Teacher Sample

All preprimary school teachers in schools selected for the study were invited to participate in the study. The majority of schools had less than ten preprimary school teachers although the range was from nine to twelve. If there were more than nine preprimary school teachers in the school, nine of them were randomly sampled per school for filling the survey. The final sample included 286 teachers out of which six of them did not fill the survey correctly and they were left out during analysis. Therefore, the analyses were only made on the 280 preprimary school teachers.

Preprimary school teacher's level of training about children's social skills

Preprimary school teachers answered a survey in Afan Oromo, Somali, Harari and Amharic (the language of Ethiopia's early childhood education system in these three cities). Items were multiple choices which were selected by the preprimary school teachers. First, the researcher prepared 5 items which talked about teachers'- social skills questionnaires with teachers to assess whether they understood each question, both consistently across constructs and in the way the item was intended. Secondly, five Likert scales items taking about the relevance of curriculum in supporting children's social skills in early childhood education program were surveyed. The items were summed and analyzed. Thirdly, five Likert scales items were surveyed to measure the extent to which relevance of curriculum affects children's social skills. Finally, he piloted the survey by administering it to 20 teachers (14 females and 06 males) and assessed the distribution of responses for each item. From these exercises, he concluded that all items were suitable for use in this sample. Items were answered on the following scale: Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4) and Strongly agree (5).

To interpret the data descriptively, if the calculated mean score is between 1.00-1.50, it would be strongly disagree; if the calculated mean score is 1.50-2.50, it would be Disagree; if the calculated mean score is 2.50-3.50, it would be Undecided; if the calculated mean score is between 3.50-4.50, it would be Agree; if the calculated mean score is between 4.50- 5.00, it would be Strongly agree. A pilot study was conducted on twenty preprimary school teachers (14 males and 06 females) who represented the population character but not the sample to check the reliability of the items by using Cronbach alpha value. Accordingly, the researcher was able to decide the characteristics of the questionnaire that needed to be adjusted or remained or to be changed in some technical words or phrases that seemed to be technical for these participants. The reliability of the three sections of the questionnaire was indicated in the following tables as follows.

Table1. Reliability test result

Items and alpha value	Items and alpha value
Number of items	5
Cronbach alpha	.88

Therefore, the computed alpha values (.88) given in this section of the questionnaire was highly reliable. Therefore, it was safe to use them with a little modification. The validity was tested by expert and well experienced teachers over the area. The questionnaire was administered on face to face basis so that the distributed questionnaires were collected from these participants after they were completed filling them. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, means, coefficient of variation and standard deviation were used to summarize the participants' response to children's social skills in early childhood education in Eastern Ethiopia while inferential statistics (one way ANOVA and factor analysis) were used to show the mean differences among groups and the explained variables of the study respectively. The level of significance was set to be $\alpha = .05$.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the main findings. Questionnaire was distributed to 286 preprimary school teachers from 24 pre-primary schools; 280 (97.90%) copies were returned. The collected quantitative data were analyzed quantitatively using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, coefficients of variation, one way ANOVA, and Factor analysis. The analyzed data were compiled and organized in a way that it suits the interpretations of the results in addressing the research objectives. In this way, 9 tables were constructed in categorizing the objectives of the study in thematic groups in details to deal with the responses of participants. The quantitative data obtained from participants were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-version 20).

Table 2. Qualifications & training versus pre-primary school teachers' cross-tabulation

Qualification	Pre-primary School Teachers				Percentage (%)
	Dire Dawa	Chiro	Harar	Total	
Grade ten Complete	42	10	34	86	30.71
Grade twelve Complete	24	7	30	61	21.79
Early Childhood Education Certificate (ECEC)	20	6	10	36	12.86
(TTC) Diploma	20	6	10	36	12.86
10 + 3 graduate (TVET)	10	6	12	28	10.00
Others if there is any	8	4	10	22	8.46
12 Grade Complete and ECEC	4	2	3	9	3.22
12 Grade Complete and TTCC	2	1	1	4	1.43
Total	130	40	110	280	100

From Table 2 shown, 86 (30.71%) of the pre-primary school teachers were a grade ten complete; 61 (21.79%) of them were a grade 12 complete; 36 (12.86%) of them were an Early Childhood Education Certificate (ECEC) complete; 36(12.86%) of them were a diploma complete from Teachers' Training College (TTC) complete; 28(10.00%) of them were a 10+3 graduate in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) complete; 22(8.46%) of them were another complete if there is any; 9(3.22%) of them were a 12 grade complete and had Early Childhood Education Certificate (ECEC) whereas 4(1.43%) of the participants were a complete of grade 12 and Teachers' Training College Certificate(TTCC). Generally, 88.74% of preprimary school teachers were not well qualified and trained in early childhood education program. This may indicate that there was no special attention has been given to social skill development to early childhood education in Ethiopia.

In opposing this finding, Dominguez, Vitiello, Maier, Greenfield, and Daryl (2010) suggested that well qualified and trained preprimary school teachers are crucial; a child-centered program requires appropriate activities for each child and teachers who guide and scaffold so that each child advances. In support of these ideas, Contemporary Maria Montessori schools still emphasize individual pride and achievement, presenting many literacy-related tasks (e.g., outlining letters and looking at books) to young children (Lillard, 2005; 2013). Moreover, Gibson (2013) highlights three key attributes that professionals should have. First, they must have expert skills in a particular field. Second, they must possess a body of knowledge related to this field; and third, the professionals must be able to make decisions and solve problems with this set of knowledge and skills. Oberhuemer (2008) emphasizes the need for professional traits such as professional relationships with students, parents, administrators, fellow teachers, and community members; a strong foundational knowledge; and practical skills of ECCE. These views make the role of the ECCE professional more complex and multi-dimensional than a list of standards.

The ECE educator's sense of professional self in the community embodies collaborative relationships with colleagues, parents, the management and the community beyond the centre. It comprises being

able to work for the advantage of children, staff, management and community, modelling good practices, working in teams, and making links with the community (Dalli, 2008). Studies have also shown that teachers' sense of partnership with fellow teachers is essential in fostering teachers' sense of professional self, supporting the importance of encouraging professional collaboration and professional communities (Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011).

Table 3. Problems of social development in early childhood education program

	Children did not develop	M_i	SD_i	CV%
1	cooperating during learning different skills with their classmates	3.65	.71	19.75
2	solving social problems during learning and playing with their classmates	3.70	.78	21.08
3	protecting and respecting their cultures	3.74	.79	21.12
4	respecting diversity in class and out of classrooms	3.75	.82	21.87
5	a communication skills	3.78	.86	22.75

As it was indicated inTable3, the computed mean scores (M_1= 3.65, M_2 = 3.70, M_3 = 3.74, M_4 = 3.75, and M_5 = 3.78) of the participants were clearly explained that early childhood education curriculum were irrelevant in supporting children's social skills in classrooms in terms of (i) cooperating during learning different skills with their classmates, (ii) solving social problems during learning and playing with their classmates inside and outside of the classroom, (iii) protecting and respecting their habits, custom and cultures, (iv) respecting diversity in class and out of classrooms and (v) a communication skills with classmates, teachers and school community at large in understanding different social taboos. However, the computed coefficients of variations indicated that there was the highest variation (CV_1 = 22.75%) among the preprimary school teachers' responses on the relevance of curriculum in supporting children's social skills on a communication skills whereas there was the most consistent coefficient of variation (CV_1 = 19.75%) among participants in cooperating during learning different skills with their classmates. It is possible to say that there was almost not as such variability among the participants on the five variables cited in Table 3 above.

In opposing of these findings, David (2016) suggested that the social skill and emotional competence is an important part of children's early skills and learning. As to him social and emotional competence means the ability to understand and manage emotions and behavior to make decisions and achieve goals, and to establish and maintain positive relationships, including feeling and showing empathy for others. Developing these capacities is important for children's learning and academic success. Social and emotional competence give children the capacity to engage in academic tasks by increasing their ability to interact constructively with teachers, work effectively with peers, and dedicate sustained attention to learning. The social and emotional support and security provided by positive relationships contributes in many different ways to young children's learning success. For instance, children who have secure relationships with their parents develop greater social skills with adults and peers and greater social and emotional understanding of others, show more advanced moral skills, and have a more positive self-concept (Santrock, 2009). Therefore, a well-designed and planned relevance of curriculum to early childhood education is too fundamental for the benefit of the children in this age in general and the nation in particular.

On the other hand, the previous research by David (2016) again showed that preschoolers identified as academically at risk based on demographic characteristics and reports of problems by their kindergarten teachers were followed to the end of first grade. The children with first-grade teachers who provided high amounts of instructional and emotional support had achievement scores comparable to their low-risk peers. A child's ability to regulate his or her emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations, managing stress, controlling impulses, and working toward goals can affect learning and relationships with adults and peers. Children who lack effective self-regulation do not participate in a productive way in learning activities. They may act disruptively and aggressively; they then receive less support from their peers, which in turn may undermine their learning. Young children are better able to exercise self-regulation in the company of educators who have developmentally appropriate expectations for their self-control, provide predictable routines, and offer

guidance that scaffolds their developing skills of self-management, especially in the context of carefully designed daily practices in a well-organized setting.

Generally speaking, relevance of curriculum must create learning environments that are well-structured and predictable, provide support for children's self-regulatory capacities, and offer secure and warm relationships with educators will benefit children's social and emotional skills, as can some curricula and interventions designed to promote social and emotional learning. These supports in the learning environment can also be a buffer for the negative effects children experience as a result of chronic stress and adversity (Santrock, 2018). However, such children, as well as other children facing challenges with their social and emotional skills, may have other specific needs for support.

Child mental health consultants and referrals to specialized services can be resources for educators in supporting children's social and emotional skills. Consultants can provide educators with guidance on classroom management and instructional practices for all children, as well as individualized consultation for particular children based on classroom observations. So, early childhood education curriculum must be relevant, developmentally appropriate, and socially & emotionally responsive for positive relationship, self-regulating and self-managing, cooperative and experiential in learning among children in schools and out of schools.

Table 4a. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.74
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	269.64
	df	10
	Sig.	.00

As it was seen from Table4a, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) reported a value of .74 which were very excellent as it was approached one. Any value greater than .60 KMO measures of sampling adequacy is considered to be an indication that the data are suitable for factor analysis (Everitt & Hothorn, 2011). The next test result is for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which reported a chi-square test of 269.64 at degree of freedom (df = 10) and a significance level of .00. This is a positive result, and the researcher felt more confident that his final factor analysis was going to yield useful information about the factor analysis so as to identify the explain variable under the study.

Table 4b. Rotated component matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
protecting and respecting cultures	**.759**	-.062	.223
cooperating during learning different skills	**.754**	.010	-.230
communication skills	-.114	**.905**	.004
solving social problems during learning & playing	.484	**.495**	-.029
respecting diversity in class and out of classrooms	-.009	-.005	**.965**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

As the Table 4b indicated, the three rotated components are just good components in explaining and reproducing the observed correlation matrix. In the rotated components, protecting & respecting cultures, and cooperating during learning different skills with their classmates all have high positive loadings on the first component, (and low loadings on the second and the third components); communication skills, and solving social problems during learning & playing have high positive loadings on the second components, (and low loadings on the first and the third components) whereas respecting diversity in class and out of classrooms have very high positive loadings on the third components (and low loadings on the first and second components).

Literature shows that the teaching profession is often viewed to have a lower status than many other professions (Ingersoll & Mitchell, 2011). When the profession is considered in subgroups of pre-school, primary and secondary teachers, it is argued that pre-school teachers have the lowest status (Chan, 2018). Foundational to the sense of professionalism in EC is the dominant theme of mothering, underpinned by women's intrinsic and natural connection to children. Osgood's (2012) work on EC professionalism and identity in a UK context highlighted how materialistic discourses are embraced and how they inform and limit teacher professional identities. However, internationally as well as in Singapore, efforts have been made to raise the professional status of EC teachers with the setting of prescribed criteria such as knowledge, expertise and training, based on sector-agreed competencies and standards of practice for specific job roles in the field (Feeney & Freeman, 2018).

Table 4c. Component transformation matrix

Component	1	2	3
1. Sharing, cooperating and protecting cultural values	**.958**	.273	-.089
2. Communicating and problem solving skills	.265	**-.718**	.644
3. Respecting diversity	-.112	.640	**.760**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
*Rotation Method:* Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Here, the researcher has named the 5 items into three components as per the rotated component matrix of Table 4b. Component-1 includes two items (1 and 2) named as "Sharing, cooperating & protecting cultural values" and Component-2 includes two item (3 and 4) and named as "Communicating & problem solving skills," and Component-3 has one item (5) and named as "Respecting diversity".

Table 4d. Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.42	28.44	28.44	1.39	27.83	27.83
2	1.06	21.19	49.63	1.07	21.35	49.18
3	1.02	20.26	69.89	1.04	20.71	69.89

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

As it was seen from this Table4d, the researcher clearly saw the eigenvalues for the 5 items out of which only three most important components were extracted. Look at the column called Initial Eigenvalues, and notice the value of 1.42 for Component-1. This eigenvalues (1.42) is equivalent to 28.44% of the total variance when all 5 items are considered. The second row shows the eigenvalues of 1.06 for Component-2, which means that it accounted for 21.19% of the total variance for all 5 items. The third row shows the eigenvalues of 1.02 for Component-3, which means that it accounted for 20.26% of the total variance for all 5 items. These percentages were not related to the variance of the first component and the second extracted factors all together; therefore, cumulatively, these components were accounted for 69.89% of the variance for all the 5 items whereas 30.11% of the variances were not explained.
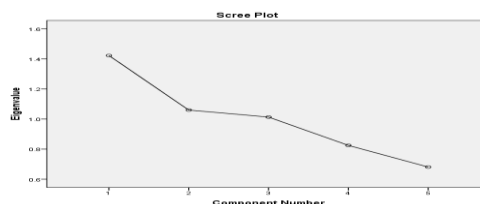
Figure 1. Scree plot

The scree plot is shown in Figure1, which graphs the eigenvalues on the y-axis and the 5 component number on the x-axis. The scree plot is a widely accepted aid in selecting the appropriate number of components when interpreting factor analysis. The researcher simply selected those components above the "elbow" portion-in this case, components-1, component-2 and component-3. As it was seen in the same Figure 1, components-1, component-2 and component-3 were accounted for 69.89% of

the variances that have been explained in the study. It can be said that this scree plot provides additional evidence in supporting of a three- components solution for the factor analysis problem.

Table 5. The extent to which irrelevant of curriculum affect children's social skills

Extent		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percent
1	Low	40	14.29	14.29
2	Moderate	54	19.29	33.58
3	High	186	66.42	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	

From the results given under Table 5, it is clear that 186 (66.42%) of the preprimary school teachers responded that irrelevance of curriculum in early childhood education program were highly affecting children's social skills; 54 (19.29%) of them were moderately affected children's social skills development in early childhood education; 40 (14.29%) of them were lowly affected children's social skills development. From these results, it is clear that 85.00% (19.29% + 66.42%) of the preprimary school teachers rated that irrelevance of curriculum in early childhood education program were either moderately or highly affecting children's social skills development.

Seminal contributions have been made by Previšić (1999) explained that school is needed today is the school that encourages overall skills of the children, respects diversity, and encourages individualization and socialization of the classes. In the school, the children have to, with an active role, acquire knowledge and develop creativity, and preprimary school teacher needs to encourage social sensitiveness and partnership between the parents and the school. School is needed as a modern institution that is, besides acquiring knowledge, oriented to the skills of the children's personality and his/her individuality as a complete young person that is an equal member of the social community. The early childhood education program curriculum should be well organized in such a way that it can attract today's youth and actively respond to their needs and expectations (Buljubašić-Kuzmanović, 2012).

Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) suggest that national support and policies constitute key parts of the network which impact on the sense of professional self of teachers. They further argued that the teachers' multi-dimensional roles are represented within the several layers of these network structures. The structures can be identified in school culture as well as inter-personal knowledge construction among the teaching community (Day et al., 2006). The societal and political dimensions, as such, can impact and transform the professional profile within the society. This expansion of the roles to include how EC teachers are professionally understood and positioned in terms of quality outcomes for children and the nation, shifts from that of materialism and child-minding to that of professional frameworks that are tied to reporting structures, training, pedagogy and outcomes for children (Millei & Jones, 2014). Paradoxically, despite the disempowering effect of earlier links to mothering and child-minding, care and concern should be considered as key traits for the early childhood professional (Dalli, Miller, & Urban, 2012).

Jónsdóttir & Coleman (2014) explored how views of ECE teachers and how stakeholders' perceptions affect their sense of the profession. The findings showed that the stakeholders did not seem to recognize the ECCE teachers' expertise in their educational work with children. While professional status is often judged by remuneration, degree of content knowledge and qualification level, the feeling of being valued and respected by society was considered the ultimate gain in professional status (Fuller, Goodwyn, & Francis-Brophy, 2013). There seems to be a gap between how the ECE teachers view themselves, as professionals, and the perspectives of stakeholders, particularly parents and politicians.

The researcher used an established technique, namely one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) so as to analyze the existing mean differences among the three towns (Chiro, Dire Dewa & Harar) on the two dependent variables as they have been indicated under Table6. Accordingly, it was found that

there were statistically significant mean differences among the three towns on irrelevance of curriculum in early childhood education, $F_{(2, 277)} = 3.03$, p<.05, one tailed. This clearly implied that these three towns had different problems on irrelevant of curriculum. Moreover, there was statistically a significant mean difference among the three towns in the children's social skills in early childhood education, $F_{(2, 277)} = 11.86$, p<.05, one tailed.

Table 6. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) among the three towns on children's social skills

Variables		SV	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
1		Between Groups	285.69	2	142.85	3.03	.04*
	Irrelevant of curriculum (IR)	Within Groups	12989.12	277	46.89		
		Total	13274.81	279			
2		Between Groups	162.46	2	81.23	11.86	.00*
	Social skills development	Within Groups	1897.08	277	6.85		
		Total	1959.54	279			

*p<.05

The previous studies by (Santrock, 2009) suggested that more comprehensive description was found. He alleges by researching that children's social skills in the middle childhood and how it is important for the encouraging socio-emotional skills of the child to adjust to child's skills needs. Furthermore, he alleges the necessity of encouraging peer interaction, enhancing social skills and positive social relations in the school. He emphases the importance of the school as it is the place that stimulates the skills of positive characteristics of child's personality, self-respect, emotional intelligence and modeling of pro-social behaviour. The school is expected that in the co-creation of the school curriculum puts students in the center and their integral skills, multisource and multidimensionality of didactic-methodological design of the classes.

Kelchtermans (2009) suggests that the formation of the professional self consists of related domains and it evolves as the teacher develops. These domains include self-image: how teachers describe themselves in their profession; self-esteem is the evolution of self as a teacher, defined by both self as well as others; Motivation to teach: reasons for teachers' retention and attrition; Task perception: the expectation of teachers of their tasks and roles; and Future perspective: teachers' perception for their professional. Hilferty (2008) argues that a teacher's sense of professionalism is a social setup ''that is being defined and redefined through educational theory, policy and practice'' (p. 53). ECE teachers' professional perceptions are defined by impacts across a variety of dimensions (Tukonic & Harwood, 2015; Dowd, 2016). From the perspective of an ECCE teacher this may encompass behaviours to improve and achieve best practices and which includes their professional role of respect, work ethics, development, and professional interactions (Tukonic & Harwood, 2015; Dowd, 2016).

Martin, Meyer, Jones, Nelson, and Ting (2010) examined factors, which contributed to perceptions of professionalism of EC teachers. They found that the teacher's sense of commitment seem to have the strongest impact on the perceptions of professional self. Other factors that were significant included years of experience in early child care, enjoyment of work, professional development, parents turning to the child care professional for information, and feeling qualified. This sense of one's professional self is also the result of interactions between beliefs of the society, personal philosophies, professional development and practice (Moloney, 2010). The ECCE teachers' perception of themselves as professionals, their perceptions of how they are viewed by others and their work conditions can affect the development of their professional identity.

CONCLUSIONS

By collecting data from the participants through questionnaire about the children's social skills and the theories of the social development, it is evident how the children's social skills is under the influence of preprimary school teachers' qualification, training, and relevance of curriculum especially in the period of early childhood education program. In the period of early childhood education, influence of the preprimary school teachers' perception is still crucial even though the

influences of the relevance of curriculum too crucial. The preprimary school teachers by their support and cooperation with the school can help with right children's social skills development whenever preprimary school teachers are well qualified and trained in early childhood education. Their mutual cooperation in particular can be manifested during the creation of school activities that will encourage social interactions between children.

Especially important role is a role of the teacher in the creation of the classes that need to be enriched with activities that encourage the cooperation and mutual respect between the children. The classes that encourage the social development need to be led by humanistic and holistic approach encouraging the quality of social skills. It is of great importance the influence of the relevance of curriculum on the social development in the period of early childhood education because it is the period of creating the first friendships. Considering the aforementioned, it is more and more necessary to make relevance of curriculum and teachers' perceptions encourage interaction-communicational education related to the interpersonal relations, the quality interaction and communication as well as readiness for the cooperation.

By researching the children's social development in early childhood education, Santrock (2006) alleges how it is important for the encouraging socio-emotional skills of the child to adjust to child's developmental needs. Furthermore, he alleges the necessity of encouraging positive teachers' perception, enhancing social skills and positive social relations in the school. He emphases the importance of the school, as it is the place that stimulates the development of positive characteristics of child's personality, self-respect, emotional intelligence and modeling of pro-social behaviour. Therefore, the school should be expected to the co-creation of the relevance of curriculum puts children in the center and their integral development, multisource and multidimensionality of didactic-methodological design of the classes. The classes should be enriched with variety of teaching methods, procedures and social forms of work, which will contribute to the social interactions and the quality of children's social skills.

Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations of this study also need to be addressed. First, besides any possible limitations of the databases used, the researcher only searched for research written in English. This may imply a bias connected to language-spheres and traditions of how research is published. Second, the decision to only include research published in peer-reviewed research journals was meant to ensure scientific quality although these have excluded research published in books and dissertations. Thus, a synthesis has the advantage of offering a more comprehensive view; theory development and generalizability of quantitative research that can make the findings more practically applicable, but at the same time were not too far removed from the first and second level interpretations. However, at the same time, quantitative meta-synthesis excludes qualitative studies, which in this case resulted in only 23 studies meeting the inclusion criteria. Third, doing a meta-synthesis of primary articles with disparate designs, different styles of writing and variations in the extent of the presented is an additional challenge. Moreover the data were not collected as per the schedules and plans because the then existing and time bore problems in the country. As a result the study was delayed for a year.

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