

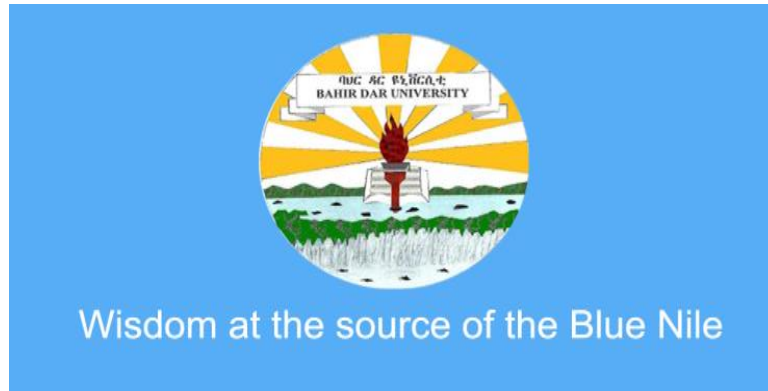
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Preschool Teachers Knowledge Attitude, Practice and Challenges Regarding Play Based Instruction: The Case of Bahirdar City Administration Selected Preschools

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BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM

**PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE,
PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES REGARDING PLAY BASED
INSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF BAHIRDAR CITY
ADMINISTRATION SELECTED PRESCHOOLS**

BY:

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FEBRUARY 2020

BAHIR DAR, ETHIOPIA

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CHALLENGES REGARDING PLAY BASED INSTRUCTION: THE CASE
OF BAHIRDAR CITY ADMINISTRATION SELECTED PRESCHOOLS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND
EDUCATION (ECCE)**

BY:

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February 2020

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

DECLARATION

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University. In compliance with internationally accepted practices, I have duly acknowledged and referenced all materials used in this work.

Declared by:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

As the candidates' advisor, this thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval.

Advisor Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis entitled with **“Preschool Teachers’ Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Challenges Regarding Play Based Instruction: The Case of Bahir Dar City Administration selected Preschools”** by Adane Tilahun is approved as fulfilling the Thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in ECCE.

Approved by the board of examiners

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANRSEB:	Amhara National and Regional State Education Bureau
DAP:	Developmentally Appropriate Practices
ECCE:	Early Childhood Care and Education
ESDPV:	Education Sector Development Program V
KAP:	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KG:	Kindergarten
MLR:	Multiple Linear Regressions
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAEYC:	National Association for the Education of Young Children
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBI:	Play Based Instruction
SPSS:	Statistical Package for social sciences
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play based instruction at selected preschools of Bahir Dar city administration. In order to achieve the central objectives, a mixed research approach; sequential explanatory design was employed. Data were collected from 10 purposively selected preschools with a total of 132 participants; 121 preschool teachers, 10 school principals and one City Administration ECCE focal person. Preschool teachers were selected through simple random sampling whereas school principals and ECCE focal person were selected comprehensively. Accordingly, to obtain relevant data the researcher utilized self developed questionnaire consisted of a total of 47 closed –ended items for preschool teachers as the main data gathering instrument whereas five semi structured interview questions, observation and document review were utilized to enrich and triangulate the data obtained through questionnaires. Consequently, the collected quantitative data were analyzed in SPSS software version 23 by using descriptive, correlational and regression analysis and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis. The results of the present study showed that preschool teachers have moderate knowledge and fair practice while they have good attitude towards play based instruction. This study also depicted that knowledge was negatively correlated with attitude, practice and play based instruction whereas attitude and practice were positively correlated with play based instruction. Moreover, about 36.5 % variation of play based instruction was explained by the variation of knowledge, attitude, practice, experience, educational level and training type of the participants. The current study also explained that Preschool teachers perform multidimensional and complex roles while using play as a means of instruction in and out of the classroom but they encountered different challenges in implementation such as competency, structural, attitudinal, conceptual and resource challenges. In conclusion, the study revealed that the implementation of play based instruction can be predicted by the associated factors of preschool teachers' KAP along with their demographic variables. Finally, it is recommended that the city administration in collaboration with different pertinent stakeholders shall work in a coordinated manner to provide stimulation programs for preschool teachers so as to enhance their capacity for effective implementation of play based instruction.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background for this study with an overview of literatures and empirical researches carried out in the area of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of play based instruction are examined. Then, the statements of the problem with specifically conducted researches in the area of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges regarding play based instruction are stated clearly and associated research questions as well as its objectives are presented. Finally, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and operational definitions of terms are explained.

1.1. Background of the Study

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is a critical issue in the developing nations as it is the means of support for children's survival, growth, development and learning from birth to the time of entry into the primary school and served as one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality education (UNESCO, 2010). Pre-school education is the first step in the child's educational journey and Play as a way of learning for children has been a priority in early childhood education. Playing and learning in children are dimensions that stimulate each other and can be seen as indivisible entirety. As play is a natural instinct for a child, using play based approach is an effective way to shape and develop children's overall learning and development (Moyles, 2005; Gestwicki & Bertrand, 2011).

Research on teaching approaches and pedagogies has pointed out play as a critical element of the early childhood curriculum, a universal phenomenon, the most appropriate method of teaching in the early years and a crucial element to children's learning and development. Play is also a leading factor in child's learning and development and the primary vehicle for learning in the early years that influences children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Play is highly recognized in the most recent documents of professional organizations such as National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), International Play Association (IPA), the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) and the Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OUNHCHR) (Bredenkamp & Cople, 2009).

The history of play based instruction can be traced back to seventeenth and eighteenth century by European philosophers and educators such as Comenius, Rousseau and Pestalozzi but actual play of children was fully described by the well known pioneer in the field of ECCE called Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852). He introduced play based curriculum through Gifts and Occupations (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2012). As with all levels of education, there are multiple approaches to teaching in early childhood education. One approach that becomes more child centered is play based instruction which is specifically child focused that geared towards preschool and has a focus on play. Free play and guided play are the two types of play based instruction; the former is child-directed and internally motivated, while the latter is supported by adults and geared at a specific learning goal (Krogh & Slentz, 2010).

Studies have also shown teachers' understanding on the meaning of play is different across various researches. Different definitions and perspectives of play and learning make it challenging for preschool teachers to integrate play within their classroom. Thus, the lack of a common definition of play makes it hard to provide and advocate a play based approach in early childhood classroom (Pyle & Bigelow, 2015; Baker, 2014). Therefore, research shows that it is important to take in to account a number of conditions to be met for the effective implementation of play based instruction in and out of the classroom. These include knowledge, attitude and skill of kindergarten teachers, classroom arrangement, time and space for play. Besides, in order to use play as a means of instruction and to promote children's learning, preschool teachers should need first recognize the definition or conception of play, the different forms of play, benefits of play, value of play, types of play materials and their use and the roles they perform in play to determine their knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges for the implementation of play based instruction (Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2008).

Preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices with proper qualification and training in the field of ECCE are very critical for the effective implementation of play based instruction in preschools. Preschool teachers with adequate knowledge and skill, positive attitude, adequate training and experience are more likely to hold child centered, age and developmentally

appropriate pedagogical practices to bring better learning outcomes for children (UNESCO, 2015). Researchers have also revealed preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of play based instruction impacted children's learning experience. Therefore, it is essential for preschool teachers to understand the play based approach and its role in early childhood learning and development (Taylor, Samuelsson and Rogers, 2010).

Globally, there are great variations in preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of play based instruction. preschool teachers in developed countries such as USA and Singapore have a relatively better knowledge, attitude , practice and relatively hindered by little challenges regarding play based instruction, whereas in much of developing countries such as some Asian and sub-Saharan African countries including Malaysia ,Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia, preschool teachers have inadequate knowledge, attitude and practice regarding play based instruction due to lack of preschool teachers competence, school factors and child related factors (OECD, 2012). Early child hood educators in Ethiopia like other African countries are engulfed in a knowledge gap between the theoretical significance of play and its actual implementation so as to achieve the desired holistic outcomes of children learning and development. In Ethiopia, preschool teachers are expected to have the adequate knowledge, attitude, practice and understanding of all aspects of child development including theories and approaches of teaching for the successful implementation of good early teaching in general and play based instruction in particular. This helps to integrate new knowledge and skills with the current practice (MOE, 2010).

Various studies have attempted to study how preschool teachers' knowledge and attitude affect their classroom practices. For instance, Moyles, Adams and Musgrove (2002) research finding describes the principles underlying effective pedagogy are often linked to attitudes and expectations of educators. Attitudes about learning, teaching and the teachers' roles in classrooms serve to influence and guide teachers in their practice and teachers' beliefs about their roles were grounded in their own teaching experiences and professional knowledge. In order to teach, teachers operationalize their theories of children's learning and development, informed by their beliefs and professional knowledge. Their perceptions on their roles were important because these perceptions would affect and influence their beliefs, which in turn lead

to actions in their classroom practices with two views of teaching approaches; child-initiated and teacher-directed practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Researchers have also asserted that there are patterns of relationships among preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices about play based instruction. For instance, according to behavior modification theory of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) , person's attitude often determines whether he or she will use knowledge and transform it into practice. These three components are reciprocal and intertwined theoretically, empirically and bidirectionally, informing one another. For example, practices are related to knowledge and attitudes, and often involve the application of knowledge and attitudes. Attitudes are affected by knowledge that in turn affects practice. Practices are also affected by different challenges that preschool teachers are encountered with their internal characteristics or external factors. In short, if one doesn't believe in or value knowledge, one is less likely to act upon it. Preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice are shaped not only by each other but also by a number of contextual factors including students' needs and various student, classroom and school background factors (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Preschool teachers as key players in young children's education have a complex, multidimensional and crucial roles to perform in early childhood curriculum implementation specifically in the implementation of play based approach. The role of preschool teacher is integral to supporting children's learning and development. They provide support to extend the duration and complexity of children's play as well as encourage children to incorporate language, literacy and numeracy within their play. In play based classroom, the teachers' role includes adjust the daily schedule, the learning environment, the materials, interactions and activities based up on the strengths, needs and interests of children required to enhance learning opportunities (Bordova & Leong, 2010). Preschool teachers also understood their role to be that of co-learners, facilitators, co-constructors and scaffolders of children's learning (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013; Martlew et al., 2011).

The Ethiopian National Policy Framework for ECCE since 2010 recognized the importance of play as a mode of instruction in early childhood education. This program is guided by a child-centered approach and promotes the child's holistic development. It includes culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate and inclusive of indoor and outdoor play materials to that activity effect. Its curriculum design should follow a play based approach by stating preschool teachers

as a first responsible body for the implementation of preschool program .Thus, preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and skill are critical for effective implementation of the instructional approach and was so considered in education and training policy of Ethiopia to address the needs of preschool children (MOE,2010).

According to MOE (2010),the Strategic Operation Plan and the Guidelines have been developed as separate documents to put in to action this ECCE policy framework and stated the program will cater for the development of basic skills (pre -reading, pre-writing, pre-counting and pre-arithmetic) in preparation for the child's formal schooling. In the Kindergarten Curriculum Framework, play-based instruction is defined as a child-centered approach where young children are engaging in learning through play. Play and learning are seen to have strong links with each other especially in the areas of problem solving, language acquisition, literacy, numeracy, and social, physical, and emotional skills (MOE, 2010). Similarly, the Amhara National Regional State Education Bureau (ANRSEB) welcomes the ECCE Framework and its Strategic and Implementation Guidelines to put in to action the implementation of play as an instructional tool (ANRSEB, 2011).

The issue of play-based instruction is considered very critical to the quality of preschool education in general and the implementation of play-based pedagogy in particular as it is stated under National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009). It is essential for preschool teachers to understand the teaching through play and its role in preschool education because early childhood stage is a play age (Whitebread, 2015).Recognizing preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges are essential for effective implementation of play based instruction in preschool classrooms in terms of conceptualizing, theoretical understanding and practical implementation (MOE, ESDP V, 2015).

A review of related literature indicated the presence of numerous factors affecting the implementation of play –based instruction. Therefore, in order to examine preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice, challenges, their roles and interactions in children's play to implement play based instruction the two constructivist theories of play and the three play based approaches, NAEYC (2009) position statement DAP guidelines, principles and strategies and the Ethiopian ECCE policy framework guidelines and standards were taken as theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

From the theoretical bases, it had come primarily from the work of constructivist approaches particularly, Piaget's (1962) cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's(1967) theory of social constructivism. These theories served as core theoretical models underpinning and guiding this research study to examine preschool teachers' role in line with their interaction in children's play and practice of play based instruction. The underlying assumption of these theories is that learning takes place through constructing knowledge when children engage in activities and explorations. The Constructivist learning theory centers on the instructional methods and practices that impact the learning experiences of children and encourages play based activities. These theories stress on the role of teachers as facilitators and constitute the basis of constructivist principles of teaching in early childhood classrooms which are related to developmentally appropriate practices and largely these theories of play provide the researcher for better understanding of play-based learning in the most integrated way(Breadkamp & cople, 2009).

In addition, the three play – based approaches in line with the above constructivist theories of play namely;

- 1) The trust – in – play approach (teachers act as an observer of children's play without intervene by providing appropriate play materials).
- 2) Facilitate- play approach (teachers as a facilitator by creating special environments and interacts (intervene) in children's activities in purposeful ways.
- 3) The learn- and- teach through play approach (teachers can enter in to play activities and intentionally promote one or more areas of learning i.e., to achieve specific academic learning goals through play. Given the research on these various approaches, it is often agreed that teachers should consider borrowing the best elements of each approach (Frost, Wortham and Reifel ,2012).

The core argument of the present researcher is emanated from the idea that preschool teachers' quality or competence is one of the detrimental factors that affect the quality of preschool education in general and the play based pedagogy in particular. Hence, teaching through play is a basic issue for the overall learning and development of children.

The inspiration for this study partly arises from dealing with linking theories of play and practice in early childhood education. It is also the desire of the researcher for greater understanding of appropriate instruction in preschool classrooms in recognizing preschool teachers' adequate knowledge, attitude and practice with the challenges encountered regarding the effectiveness of play-based approach. This is because mostly teachers have misconception, misunderstanding and misuse of play based learning due to the presence of different challenges. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play based instruction at some selected preschools of Bahir Dar city administration.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Extrapolating preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play based instruction is important for understanding and improving educational processes in early childhood settings. It is difficult to ignore the problem because preschool teachers who lack a basic knowledge, attitude and skill about play based instruction will not be able to meet their children's holistic learning and developmental outcome. Preschool teachers' professional knowledge, attitudes, actual practices and challenges may differ in professional background factors such as type of training, qualification and professional development. Play based instruction, of course, is not determined just by the teacher's background; knowledge, attitudes and practice; it should also be responsive to children's needs and various classroom and school background factors (OECD, 2009).

The impetus for this study grew from the researchers' practical observation and related literature readings, preschool teachers in Ethiopia face diverse challenges in the implementation of play based instruction due to lack of available play materials, lack of time and space allotted for play, lack of training and teachers giving high attention to academic outcomes with little emphasis to developmental outcomes and other related problems. There are great variations among preschool teachers knowledge, attitude and practice regarding the use of play based instruction among preschool teachers themselves, among preschools and different countries of the world due to the presence of different factors hindering its implementation. This shows that the problem is deep rooted among preschool teachers throughout the world and needs an investigation. overwhelmingly in Ethiopia, since ECCE is a recently introduced field and the field received

little attention due to lack of knowledge, attitude and practice about the importance of play and play materials for children's holistic development and learning, the problem seems prevalent among ECCE professionals (MOE, ESDPV, 2015).

The pedagogy of play based instruction is relatively new and more empirical research is needed to determine the effective implementation of early childhood curriculum by considering preschool 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 preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges on play based instruction is necessary in educating preschool children (Gestwicki, 2017).

Even though there are different researches conducted in the area of ECCE, little research has been carried out in the area of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play based instruction in preschool settings. In fact, there are different separately studied previous studies conducted in different countries regarding preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges regarding play based instruction. For instance, a qualitative research conducted by Peng(2011) in Singapore on early childhood educators' knowledge and practice of learning through play in preschool classrooms revealed that teachers (a) defined play differently, (b) believed that play was important for children's learning and development across key domains (c) performed multi-faceted roles, and (d) encountered obstacles using play as a curricular tool. The results of this study showed that kindergarten teachers have enough knowledge and practice about learning through play. Cheng's (2012) study also showed the relationship between early childhood teachers' conceptualization of play and their practice. The finding shows that there is a strong relation between conceptualization of play and practice.

A quantitative research finding by Aliza (2013) in Malaysia on preschool teachers' attitude towards play based instruction showed that teachers have a positive attitude towards play based instruction. They believed that children like to play and are actively involved in play. However, they were unsure about the use of play based approach due to the presence of the following issues and constraints such as time allocation for play activities, limited and unsuitable space for play, lack of support from administrators and lack of knowledge and skills required to implement

developmentally appropriate teaching including play, made them resort to a didactic teacher – directed approach in their classrooms.

In addition, a qualitative research finding by Rengel (2013) in Croatia on preschool teachers' attitude towards play based instruction revealed that preschool teachers have mixed or contradictory attitudes towards play-based instruction, conceptualization of play in general and their roles as viewing in terms of educational tool and authentic play. The results of this research indicate that, alongside contradictory conceptualizations of play in theory, preschool teachers have contradictory attitudes towards play, and this has implications for practice, i. e. reality of early childhood education.

Recent qualitative research study by sjoerdsma (2016) in USA on early childhood education with a purpose to investigate and compare the attitudes and beliefs about play based instruction in preschool classrooms, among a variety of early childhood professionals indicated that Kindergarten teachers and elementary administrators have mixed beliefs and attitudes about Play-based instruction. It is developmentally appropriate for children to learn through hands on meaningful experiences implemented through play based instruction. Preschool teachers can provide these opportunities based on children's interest and personal experience. However, not all preschool teachers agree on the value of play based instruction and different teachers understand play differently in practice .In addition, teachers' knowledge, attitude and implementation on the use of a play – based approach involves awareness, understanding and interpreting how a play based approach provides learning benefits to children.

Unpublished research study in Ethiopia by Sewalem (2018) on the practice of learning through play in ECCE settings revealed that preschool teachers view play – based instruction as a daily routine, fun and pleasurable. However, teachers' knowledge and practice of learning through play was low due to the challenges such as lack of training, lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials, unavailability of enough playing ground, lack of time allocation for play, lack of support from the administrators and high child-teacher ratio.

Similarly, a study conducted by Animaw, Abebaw , Mehari ,Temesgen and Zemenu (2015) on the practices and challenges of ECCE in west Amhara sub region revealed that lack of teachers appropriate training, qualification and inadequacy of indoor and outdoor play materials were

major challenges to use play as a method of teaching. It is also showed that in most preschools instructional and play materials, specifically the curriculum, was serious problem (ANRSEB, 2016).

In spite of the importance of play based instruction in preschool classrooms, preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges on play based instruction are not explored yet in Ethiopia, especially in Bahirdar City Administration to the best of researcher's knowledge. Actually there are few abroad studies for instance; Rengel's (2013), Peng's (2011) and sjoerdsma's (2016) conducted in the area of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of play based instruction, they lack empirical evidence and methodological gap and largely most of them focused on other aspects of preschool teachers towards play based instruction.

Likewise, most studies conducted abroad tried to study preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges separately by overlooking preschool teachers' knowledge and the challenges they face for the implementation of play based instruction utilizing qualitative research approach within small samples in some selected type of preschools, rather psychological constructs like attitude and knowledge have to be studied quantitatively and comprehensively. Moreover, most of the previous aforementioned researches did not focus on the probable interaction or predictive nature of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice towards play based instruction conducted through regression analysis. So far the researcher has been able to find one small scale unpublished local research; Sewalem's (2018) study on teachers' practice of learning through play. However, the current study explored the implementation of play based instruction by integrating knowledge, attitude practice and challenges of preschool teachers' comprehensively to fill the empirical research gap and methodological gap utilizing mixed research approach in different types of preschools.

As preschool teachers are a mediator of the teaching- learning process, the role of their knowledge, attitude and practice requires closer examination. By examining knowledge and attitudes of preschool teachers, one can better understand what impacts the practice of play based instruction. Thus, a rationale for conducting a research on this topic is to address the research gap by examining the level of knowledge, the prevailing attitude and current practices of preschool

teachers regarding play based instruction and to make significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

1.3. Research Questions

This research was aimed to address the following research questions;

- 1) What is the level of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice about play based instruction?
- 2) Are there significant relationships between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction?
- 3) To what extent do the knowledge, attitude and practice of preschool teachers predict the implementation of play based instruction along with their demographic characteristics (educational level, teaching experience and training type)?
- 4) How do preschool teachers perform their roles in implementing play-based instruction?
- 5) What are the challenges hindering preschool teachers implementation of play based instruction?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The main objective of this study was to investigate preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges regarding play based instruction in the case of Bahir Dar city administration selected preschools.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

More specifically, this study was intended to:

- 1) Examine preschool teachers' level of knowledge, attitude and practice about play based instruction.
- 2) Determine the relationships that exist among preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude practice and play based instruction.

- 3) Analyze the extent of knowledge, attitude and practice of preschool teachers in predicting the implementation of play – based instruction along with their demographic characteristics (educational level, teaching experience and training type).
- 4) Assess preschool teachers’ role in the implementation of play – based instruction.
- 5) Identify the challenges preschool teachers face in implementing play based instruction.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be significant for various stakeholders (groups of people and institutions at large). Consequently, the present study would benefit ECCE educators in filling the gap between the practices and the rhetoric of play. Hence, this study would shed light to see the importance of preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitude and practice to reduce the challenges they face in implementing play based instruction and then to refine their misunderstandings, misconceptions and misuses. Specifically; preschool teachers, school administrators and educational experts working at all levels of preschool education would use the result of this study as a spring board or window to plan their action and to fill preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitude and practice gap concerning play – based pedagogy in ECCE.

The result of the study will be used as base line information for ANRSEB and city Administration to design appropriate intervention strategies to increase preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitude and practice of play based instruction and reduces the challenges they face in implementing it.

Particularly, this study has the following contributions:

- 1) The study points to the importance of providing preschool teachers with relevant information about how their knowledge and attitude affects their practice of play – based instruction in their teaching approach and hence, preschool teachers and school administrators will be able to know their knowledge, attitude and practice status and to put their effort on play based instruction by overcoming the challenges they face through sensitization and stimulation programs.
- 2) It enhances Bahirdar City Administration preschools to assess the knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of their preschool teachers regarding play based instruction by providing

appropriate training on it. It also provides clear information for woreda, zonal and regional educational experts to what extent play based instruction is implemented and its status in pre schools to take remedial action.

3) The study will give curriculum developers and policy makers' information to make wise decisions on early childhood educators' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding the implementation of play based instruction on course of developing ECCE curriculum and decision making.

4) It will be used by teacher training institutions working in the field of ECCE in planning and providing pre-service and in-service training programs for preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play based pedagogy.

5) It will serve as baseline information for further research in this area for other researchers by adding additional variables and in other study areas with a vast majority of participants.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study was delimited to the assessment of Preschool teachers' Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Challenges regarding Play based instruction in Bahir Dar City Administration. Geographically, this study was delimited to 10 selected Bahir Dar City Administration preschools encompassing and practicing preschool program with play based instruction for the 2018/19 academic year.

The rationale behind choosing Bahirdar city Administration preschools is because of the presence of large number of preschools and the practice of ECCE, particularly the implementation of play- based approach is relatively better in comparison with other preschools of the city and other areas of Amhara region as it is supported by Animaw et al., (2015). Furthermore, the relative availability of play materials, the philosophical and pedagogical richness of the schools in implementing ECCE approach, specifically play based approach at the representative preschools helped the researcher to get valuable information.

The variables of the study were conceptually delimited to assessing preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and their role in providing play – based instruction. The study also

tried to investigate the relationships between teachers' variables with respect to demographic characteristics and the challenges they face in practicing play based instruction.

Participants wise, the study has tried to examine preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of play-based instruction in all types of ECCE settings involved 121 preschool teachers, 10 school principals and one ECCE focal person. Methodologically, this research was delimited to employ mixed research approach with sequential explanatory design. Hence, the study utilized questionnaire, semi structured interview, observation and document analysis as data gathering tools and accordingly analyzed by 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.

- ❖ **Attitude:** preschool teachers' feeling, belief, perception and perspective towards play based instruction. It was assessed by attitude scale that was developed by the present researcher. Study participants who fall in highest, moderate and low quartile range and mean on attitude items are scaled as having positive, enough and negative level of attitude respectively.
- ❖ **Challenges:** different constraints that hinder preschool teachers practice of play based instruction
- ❖ **Knowledge:** preschool teachers' theoretical understanding, information, knowhow and awareness of play – based instruction. It was assessed by knowledge scale that was developed by the researcher. Study participants who fall in highest, moderate and low quartile range and mean on knowledge items are scaled as having high, moderate and low level of knowledge respectively.
- ❖ **Play based instruction:** is a child-directed approach of instruction in preschools where teachers provide meaningful hands- on learning experience, taking account of children's interest by using a variety of play materials. It was measured through play based instruction scale that was developed by the researcher. Study participants who fall in highest, moderate and low quartile range and mean on prepared items are scaled as

having high, moderate and low level of play based instruction respectively. This term used interchangeably with play- based learning and learning through play.

- ❖ **Practice:** preschool teachers' activities, skill and experience manifested in play based classrooms where as implementation is to put or using the skill acquired in to practice. It was measured through practice scale developed by the researcher. Study participants who fall in highest, moderate and low quartile range and mean on practice items are scaled as having good, fair and poor level of practice respectively.
- ❖ **Preschool teacher:** a teacher who works in preschools, particularly teaching 4 to 6 years of age children.
- ❖ **Preschool:** a setting where by children of 4 to 6 years of age are placed and early childhood education is provided and used interchangeably with pre-primary school and ECCE setting.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section , previous empirical findings and theoretical bases relevant to the problem under investigation, i.e. related literature on preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and Challenges of play based instruction were reviewed. The literature review begins with conceptualization, types, benefits of play and the use of play materials and goes specifically to previous studies conducted in the area of preschool teachers knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of play based instruction and other themes supported to meet objectives of the study were deeply reviewed.

2.1. Conceptualization, Types, Benefits of Play and the Use of Play Materials

In order to use play as a means of instruction and to promote children's holistic learning and developmental outcomes, kindergarten teachers should need first recognize the definition or conception of play, the different types of play, benefits of play, value of play, types of play materials and their use and the roles they perform in play (Frost et al, 2008).

Majority of authors in play arena considered the term play as an extremely difficult concept to define. No single recognized definition of play exists; different authors and researchers define play differently. Some writers define play as a pleasurable activity of children (Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983 as cited in Frost et al., 2012). While others as Vygotsky (1978) opposed this definition saying that defining play as an activity that gives pleasure to the child is inaccurate because there are games in which the activity itself is not pleasurable. 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.

Regardless of this difference, majority of authors and researchers conceptualize play as pleasurable, intrinsically motivating, process oriented, freely chosen, spontaneous and voluntary, active involvement and non-literal (Johnson, Christie & Yawkey, 1999). Here the present researcher shared the above scholars and defined play as an activity that includes both goal-oriented and goal- less, pleasurable and unpleasurable activities.

In the work of Johnson et al.,(1999), play takes several types and it is broadly categorized in to cognitive play, social play, gross motor play and games with rules; with their own sub category for the purpose of enhancing each aspect of development. practice play, constructive play, socio-dramatic/ make believe play, rough and tumble play, games with rules, symbolic play, social play are some of types of play preschool teachers should know to enhance different aspects of learning and development. Much has been written about the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language benefits of play as well as the types and stages of play that takes place in early child hood classrooms (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009).

Play is a critical element of the early childhood curriculum and it is the first and most important mode of instructional strategies in kindergarten. By providing an environment in which children are free to play with each other and with a wide range of carefully selected materials, teachers facilitate children's development and learning. It influences children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The developmental literature has identified play as stimulating all aspects of children's developmental domains (Frost et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2005; Wood 2007).

There are different types of indoor and outdoor play materials available in world market. Because play is an important way of teaching children, appropriate and sufficient indoor and outdoor materials are necessary for the successful realization of kindergarten education. However, in this study, the focus was given for those play materials most recommended by ECCE experts in ECCE programs, widely prepared and used in play grounds. According to Johnson et al., (1999) play materials can be classified as Replica toys, educational toys, construction toys, gross motor toys and real material toys.

In sum, preschool teachers must have the adequate knowledge, awareness and attitude on the definition or conception of play, the different types of play, benefits of play, value of play, types of play materials, their use and the roles they perform in play in order to use play as a means of instruction and to promote children's holistic learning and developmental outcomes in early childhood classrooms.

2.2. Theories of Play and Theoretical Framework of the Study

According to Frost et al., (2005), different theories of play provide different lenses for understanding play because each theory allows us to see different aspects of play. Each of these theoretical perspectives points to the importance of play, but the underlying assumptions differ starting from classical theories of play to modern play theories. In order to investigate preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice regarding play based instruction in preschool classrooms, the two developmental play theories of constructivism i.e., Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories were taken as theoretical frameworks because Developmentally Appropriate Practices as a teaching approach was based on Constructivist approach by considering each child need.

Particularly in order to examine preschool teachers practice, role and their interaction in play based instruction, the theoretical framework of the Constructivism Play theory was used to better understand how practitioners perceive the teaching methods and instructional practices that impact the learning experiences of their students. These two constructivist theories of are chosen because they centers on the instructional methods and practices that impact the learning experiences of children and supports play based learning. Their underlying assumption is that learning takes place through constructing knowledge and meaning when children engage in activities and explorations. The teacher does not directly instruct, but leads children to draw conclusions through activities. The role of the teacher is very important within a constructivism learning theory. The teacher functions as a facilitator whose role is to aid the student when it comes to their own understanding (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

Seminal theorists; Piaget's and Vygotsky's works were chosen as they strongly influenced the Constructivist Learning Theory. Constructivism as a theory has its origins in the work of Jean Piaget who saw play as a major component in a child's learning that allows for exploration and experimentation. Piaget's theory of constructivism contends that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences. Piaget's theory covers learning theories, teaching methods, and education reform. He argued that children should be encouraged to explore a variety of educational props, storybooks, arts and crafts, puzzles and games that enable them to learn by doing (Frost et al., 2008).

Lev Vygotsky (1978), a social constructivist, also supports Play based learning and believed in the role of a more knowledgeable person and their affect on a child's development. He believed that play is a leading factor in development because as children are playing and exploring, they are learning the skills and knowledge of every day experiences. Vygotsky acknowledged that what a child learns should be matched to their developmental level (Wood&Attfield, 2005).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development describes how learners should be challenged within close proximity to, yet slightly above, their current level of development. Without the essential components of a play based learning classroom, with a teacher facilitator, in a classroom that is well managed as a safe and supportive environment, students wouldn't be able to increase their current development abilities. Hence, the most preferred approaches should be based on the children's interests and self-initiated activities. Therefore educators have to consider these teaching strategies when teaching young children and strive to achieve an optimal balance between self-initiated and adult guidance and support (Bordova&Leong, 2010).

Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism clearly indicates the importance of teacher involvement in learning. The importance of teacher-child interaction is maintained in "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) and be assisted by a more knowledgeable person to help him/her move beyond his/her daily skills(Frost et.,2012).

In this regard, the constructivist play theory directly applies to an examination of teachers' practice in preschool program in providing the use of play in the instructional experience. These two constructivist theories of play reiterate the impact that the individual teacher's knowledge, attitudes and practices can have on the instructional process with the implication that child-centered beliefs and pedagogical practices can improve the provision of play based program, holistic child development and learning.

2.3. Preschool Classrooms Indoor and Outdoor Play Organizations

Most preschool programs should include a combination of indoor and outdoor play activities and group times. The classroom environment is usually arranged into play centers and spaces where children can play and learn independently. These are organized in logical ways, visually partitioned with shelves or dividers to minimize distraction, and equipped with a balance of

complex and simple, open and closed, and realistic and nonrealistic materials. The daily schedule for a play-based curriculum usually reflects an even balance of quiet and active experiences (Frost et al., 2012)

Indoor activities may include art and craft activities, clay or dough, puzzles, games, blocks and construction, books and sensory activities. Materials are presented in ways that are easily accessible and managed independently. Children are generally invited to select their own activity. Johnson et al., (2000) also suggested that different corners used to help the total development of the child, should be available. In every early childhood classroom, children need a variety of materials for self expression. Developmentally appropriate materials for children of all ages provide important opportunities for children to use divergent thinking .Examples for common classroom learning centers and some of their material includes: Block center, Dramatic-play center, Table-toy center, Art center, Writing center, Science center and other learning centers that are developmentally appropriate for each child.

In an outdoor play area you may find a sandpit, a digging patch, a variety of climbing equipment, water play, swings, balls, blocks, carpentry and aids for dramatic play. Weather permitting, almost any activity offered indoors could also be offered outdoors (Johnson et al., 2000). Good quality of ECCE curriculum is to employ play since this stage is a play age. Therefore, teachers should focus on play based learning approaches and situations within the preschools because children at this age level learn through imitation, exploration, manipulation and experimenting with variety of play material (Whitebread, 2015).The present researcher suggested that preschool teachers need to consider providing activities, both indoor and outdoor play for children in the program by taking into consideration to provide appropriate equipments and the individual need of the child.

2.4. Play Based Curriculum and Play Based Pedagogical Approaches in Early Childhood Setting

2.4.1. Play Based Curriculum and Teaching Practices in Preschool Settings

The two most common curriculums teachers used in preschool education are academic-based curriculum and play-based curriculum. Unlike academic- based curriculum, the play-based curriculum was founded on the belief that play is the most appropriate method of teaching

children in their early years (Frost, et al., 2008). This curriculum has been endorsed by preschool educators because it is arguably the most appropriate learning environment for young children; it supports their need for exploration, discovery, and attention. For most educators, play-based curriculum is a necessity in preschool programs in concert with other learning activities. The play-based curriculum can be explained in that it operates through the principle of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities (Wood, 2004).

Teaching practices for young children include opportunities for choice, hands on learning, promotion of collaboration between children, use of a variety of teaching strategies, individualization, and self-regulation. Learning and teaching strategies in early childhood education has to be child centre. Hence children's active participation is pivotal to the effectiveness of learning. No matter which learning and teaching strategy is adopted, play is an indispensable and important tool for facilitating children's learning. It helps children know their surroundings and experience the joy of co-operating and sharing with others (Brede-kamp & Copple, 1997).

Through play, children can develop their physical, intellectual, social, creative and thinking abilities. Play is also considered to be the best activity for promoting children's physical and mental development. Suitable play not only enables children to express their emotions and gain pleasurable experience, but also promotes their learning and growth. Therefore, play and children's development are interrelated. Preschool teachers have to make good use of play as a major element for constructing the curriculum (Brede-kamp & Copple, 2009).

2.4.2. Play Based Pedagogical Approaches in Preschool Settings

Teaching is a process that requires teachers to plan and make decisions about classroom practices and teachers often rely on their beliefs and professional knowledge to guide them. Literature has identified two prominent; yet contrasting early childhood educational approaches to teaching, namely child-initiated and teacher-directed approaches that have dominated the landscape of early childhood. Each of these approaches presents a different viewpoint on early childhood education and reflects different philosophical orientations about how children learn (Spodek & Saracho, 2003).

One teaching approach is teacher-directed instruction that focuses on teaching specific skills sets to children. It emphasizes on acquisition of academic skills associated with mathematics, reading and writing. Teacher-directed teaching is preferred over discovery learning as it is argued that the ultimate aim is to prepare preschoolers for formal schooling, as against letting children construct their own meaning and knowledge which can be an elusive concept to grasp and implement (Saracho&Spodek, 2003).

On the other hand the child-initiated approach /play based approach/ is grounded on the premise that learning takes place through knowledge construction and learning environments reflect both normative and individual expectations of the child. This approach is drawn from a theoretical perspectives that include cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. The focus of teachers is on children's learning and development and the role of the teachers is to support, guide and scaffold children's learning by providing a variety of stimulating materials in the environments (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Spodek & Saracho, 2003). In a child-initiated approach, classrooms are organized for individualized learning experiences, according to each child's individual, developmental and cultural characteristics. Hence, this approach or and Play is referred as a central component to by advocates as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Bredekamp& Copple, 1997).

It is often agreed that classroom practices should integrate both teacher-directed and child-initiated approach that can be developmentally appropriate when they are benchmarked against given definitive developmental learning principles (Hatch et al., 2002). Although teacher-directed instruction can be a useful teaching approach, it is no longer considered appropriate to use only this approach in a preschool setting and children should experience many ways of learning. There is a place for teacher-directed instruction in the preschool setting, but it is not the only teaching approach that should be used because it focuses on what the teacher wants to teach instead of focusing on children's interests and experiences (Kagan, 1990 as cited in Bredekamp & Copple, 2009).

According to Danniels (2017), Play-based pedagogy describes an approach where the teacher recognizes that children learn through an active, hands-on, playful environment. In a play-based classroom, the teacher makes decisions about and adjusts the daily schedule, the environment,

the materials, interactions and activities based upon the strengths, needs, interests, and input of the students in the classroom, as required, to enhance learning opportunities.

Specifically, Play-based learning for him is defined as a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the use of play in promoting multiple areas of children's development and learning. Play-based learning is, essentially, to learn while at play. Although the exact definition of play continues to be an area of debate in research, including what activities can be counted as play. Play-based learning is distinct from the broader concept of play. Learning is not necessary for an activity to be perceived as play but remains fundamental to the definition of play-based learning.

Within studies that have examined the benefits of play based learning, two different types of play have been the primary focus: free play, which is directed by the children themselves, and guided play, which is play that has some level of teacher guidance or involvement. Free play is typically described as play that is child-directed, voluntary, internally motivated, and pleasurable. One type of free play frequently endorsed is socio-dramatic play, where groups of children practice imaginative role-playing through creating and following social rules such as pretending to be different family members (Krogh & Slentz, 2010 ;Danniels ,2017).

On the other hand, the term guided play refers to play activities with some level of adult involvement to embed or extend additional learning opportunities within the play itself. A range of terminology has been used to refer two types of guided play activities (e.g., centre-based learning, purposefully framed play); however, one distinction that can be made is who has control over the play activity: Some activities are described as teacher directed, such as intentionally planned games, while others are described as mutually directed, where teachers get involved without taking over or transforming the activity so that both teachers and students exercise some control over the play.

One example of teacher-directed play is the modification of a children's board game to include actions that practice numerical thinking and spatial skills, while one example of mutually-directed play is a teacher observing students acting out a popular movie and suggesting that the class make their own movie, which leads to creating and writing a script, researching relevant topics, and practicing different roles in a collaborative manner. This distinction between free

play, mutually directed play, and teacher-directed play is useful for examining the growing body of literature on different types of play-based learning (Miller & Almon, 2009).

In order to integrate developmental and academic approaches, play-based learning can be conceptualized as a continuum that incorporates varying levels of adult involvement in play. Child-directed activities (free play) are situated at one end of the continuum while teacher directed play (learning through games) falls at the other end, with mutually directed play (collaboratively designed play) falling in the middle, but balancing between teacher-directed play and child –directed play is a difficult task for teachers to meet the individual needs of children (Daniels, 2017).

According to Sylva et al., (2004) research findings the most effective pedagogy for young children was seen to be one that combines both 'teaching' and the provision of freely chosen play and potentially instructive play activities. The most effective settings were found to be those where the quality of the adult-child interactions was such that 'sustained shared thinking' was a feature. Martlew et al. (2011) also suggested that, *“an approach based on both curriculum-generated play to support the development of specific skills and knowledge and a play-generated curriculum based on teachers responding to the interests of the children is the best approach to curriculum planning”* (as cited in Wood & Attfield, 2005, p. 32).

Likewise, the present researcher agreed that a play based pedagogy that combines both child-directed play and teacher- directed play is important so as to integrate children’s learning and developmental outcomes. Here one can say that the more effective play based instruction is implemented while the integrated learning and developmental outcome provided, especially if both free play and guided play are involved. It is also often agreed that the corner stone in ECCE are three interrelated concepts, i.e. DAP, child centered and play based approaches. Similarly, play based instruction is interchangeably used with play based learning (PBL) and learning through play (LTP) by different Authors and were used interchangeably throughout the study.

2.4.2.1. The Defining Characteristics of a Play-Based Pedagogical Approach

According to Gestwicki (2017), some of the defining characteristics of play-based pedagogical approach as identified by the play-based pedagogy working group includes: a child-focused,

child-centered approach, the classroom environment is seen as a ‘third teacher’, a teachers is co- constructor, co-learner, and co-explorer with students in indoors and outdoors classrooms, teachers have an integral role in the planning, guiding, observing in ‘purposeful learning’, teachers remain active agents in the indoor and outdoor environments, even during periods of unstructured free-play. A play based classroom is not a teacher-directed classroom, rather, it is child- focused. It is important to incorporate a play- based approach as part of the preschool curriculum to help children develop physically, academically, mentally and socially.

In play-based instruction, children learn cooperatively with their peers, the teacher is a facilitator and a guide to learning, and children are directly involved in the discovery of their own knowledge. Rousseau believed that children learned through their senses and that they need to be guided, not directly taught, by a teacher since a play based classroom is not a teacher-directed classroom, rather, it is student focused(Krogh & Slentz, 2010 as cited in Sjodersma, 2016).

2.4.2.2. The Three Play Based Approaches in a Play Based Classroom Interaction

Although play-based classrooms usually include common elements, there is much variation in how play is included in the classroom. According to Frost, Wortham and Reifel (2012) three different approaches of teachers’ interactions in children’s play can be identified. These are;

1) The Trust –in-Play Approach: is a play- based approach with the underlying assumption that teachers act as an observer of children’s play without intervene by providing appropriate play materials and children benefit most from self-guided play. Teachers encourage children to play on their own, with little restriction and their involvement in play is minimal. Teachers might increase time for purely child-directed free play that includes no adult involvement. They can use these periods for observing and assessing play and the social- emotional development of their students that allow the expression of and mastery over anxieties or social problems for the emotional exhilaration of a beautiful day and engage in movement activities that contribute to physical health.

2) The Facilitate-Play Approach: is with the idea that teachers as a facilitator by creating special environments and interacts (intervene) in children’s activities in purposeful ways. It

emphasizes adult–child play interactions to facilitate specific types of play. Research suggests that this approach not only enhances the type of play being addressed but also can lead to broader developmental outcomes over time, such as language acquisition or mathematical reasoning. Teachers might interact with children to enhance specific types of play that support development such as socio-dramatic play, games with rules (construction play, motor play and games) and teachers would strive to promote play, itself, without ulterior motives for academic learning.

3) The Learn-and –Teach through Play Approach: is with the tenet that teachers can enter in to play activities and intentionally promote one or more areas of learning without interrupting children are learning themes. In this approach, the curriculum is designed to achieve specific academic learning goals through play. The focus is on helping children to learn a concept or skill rather than enhancing the play itself; for instance teaching through board games and puzzles. Teachers might identify just the right moments to ask questions, pose problems, or present new information in play (Frost et al., 2012). With this regard, the present researcher suggested that preschool teachers should borrow the best elements from each approach, particularly those ideas that have been supported by research.

2.5. Preschool Teachers’ Knowledge, Attitude and Practice about Play Based Instruction

Preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitudes and practices are important for understanding and improving educational processes in ECCE settings. Teachers’ professional knowledge, attitudes and actual practices may differ in professional background factors such as type of training, certification/qualification/ and professional development. Play based instruction, 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 with holding direct transmission and constructivist beliefs of teaching and learning (OECD, 2009).

According to Illinois State Board of Education Manual (2011) and OECD(2012) report quality implementation of ECCE in general and play based instruction in particular should have ;well trained and qualified teacher, Developmentally appropriate curriculum and play materials, small class size and low child-teacher ratio, adequate instructional time and parental and other

concerned bodies support. Kindergarten teachers with more training and experience are more likely to hold child centered beliefs and pedagogical practices to bring better learning outcome for children.

Similarly in Ethiopia, teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction through pre-service and in-service training (MOE, 2002). Particularly, UNESCO (2015) also recognizes that at least 30 days in-service training and two weeks orientation on ECCE should be provided for facilitators' to enhance their knowledge and skill.

Hence, training has significant effect on preschool teachers knowledge, attitude and skills regarding play based pedagogy which leads to bring positive child learning and developmental outcomes. The researchers argument here is that because preschool teachers are key determinants of quality ECCE in general and in the teaching learning process in particular, there quality or competence (knowledge, attitude and practice) may impede or enhance the implementation of play based instruction.

2.5.1. Preschool Teachers' Knowledge about Play Based Instruction

According to Bennet et al., (1997) and Riefel et al.,(2004), Knowledge is that the teacher knows not only about the nature of play but also about how children learn through play. Knowledge is the information and understanding of play. Preschool teachers' knowledge is defined as both content knowledge of play and pedagogical knowledge of play. Preschool teachers' knowledge about the nature of play and its importance are very much guided by the theories of learning that inform them. They need to know how the children are involved in their play and how many are engaged in play activities that reflect to reduce more of boredom.

Understanding the current theories of learning can provide teachers with relevant knowledge to enable them to distinguish when children are at play and when they are not. The understanding of early childhood teachers' knowledge on children's' learning provide strong linkages to their classroom practices and teachers' perspectives on how children learn are often dependent on the theories that informed them(Bennet et al.,1997; Riefel et al.,(2004).

Many preschool classrooms are specially geared towards play-based instruction where play is the focus. This teaching method allows children to learn cooperatively with their peers, the teacher is a facilitator and guide to individualized learning, while allowing children to be directly involved in their own discovery and knowledge. The teachers planned instruction centered on play as a developmentally appropriate practice and discussed that their beliefs affect the implementation of play. Play was fostered by using play scenarios, thematic learning centers, and many opportunities for social interaction to improve cognitive skills (Sjoedrsma, 2016).

2.5.2. Preschool Teachers' Attitude towards Play Based Instruction

Attitude is a learned feeling, belief, point of view about something to react in a positive, negative, or ambivalent way to a person, object, or idea (in this case play based instruction). Attitudes are defined as feelings that affect how teachers react and respond to situations; In general, an attitude is considered as a feeling and belief as what one considers as true (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Maier, et al. 2013).

Preschool teachers' attitudes towards play have been an important component for effective early childhood education. Kindergarten teachers' attitude has been affected by their own comfort level, knowledge, confidence, and personal beliefs of how children learn. Attitude is affected by knowledge or understanding and beliefs regarding play. It is also affected or determined by a person's interest, perceived value of the subject, values, motivation and philosophy of learning. Knowledge and attitudes can be measured best through Likert scales and self-report checklists (Maier, et al (2013).

How teachers view play is also critical to effective play-based instruction. Not all teachers view play in the same way. Several Studies have mentioned that teachers' attitude towards play could be an obstacle to its implementation. Play-based instruction is an important teaching approach for many preschool teachers, but there is mixed attitudes about play in preschool from other early childhood professionals (Samuelsson& Johansson, 2006).

Sjoedrsma (2016) conducted a study in several Midwestern schools that included a group of early childhood educators. This study was designed to determine the attitudes and beliefs towards play-based instruction in preschool. The surveys were based on the early childhood

teaching approach of play-based instruction. Kindergarten teachers and elementary administrators have mixed beliefs and attitudes about Play-based instruction.

2.5.3. Preschool Teachers' Practice of Play Based Instruction

Practices are those actions taken that reflect knowledge (Harlen, 1997), attitudes and beliefs (Koballa & Crawley, 1985). Teachers' practice appears to match their attitudes in the classroom. Practice refers to the teaching activity of kindergarten teachers as manifested in their classes. Kindergarten teachers' practices of play are those that are suggested in NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Research suggests that teachers' pedagogical beliefs are often grounded on two contrasting approaches to classroom practices: the child-initiated approach and the teacher-directed approach (Charlesworth, 1991).

Contemporary studies on teachers' pedagogical beliefs suggest that they fall along the continuum of child-initiated practice to teacher-directed practice. The lack of interest and motivations are influencing factors. The teacher's learning philosophy may also hinder the role of play in the classroom (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

A research conducted by Peng(2011) in Singapore on early childhood educators' knowledge and practice of learning through play in preschool classrooms revealed that teachers (a) defined play differently, (b) believed that play was important for children's learning and development across key domains (c) performed multi-faceted roles, and (d) encountered obstacles using play as a curricular tool. The results of this study showed that kindergarten teachers have adequate knowledge and practice about learning through play.

According to Shipley (2013), the common practices seen in a play based classroom includes the following: teachers plan using an emergent approach involving children, incorporating and collaborating with children's ideas, activities and interests by integrating curriculum, students are provided with extended periods of time for exploration and play using the physical environment, both indoors and outdoors, literacy and numeracy are integrated into every area of the learning and the environment and there is a mix of both teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities.

Unpublished research study in Ethiopia by Sewalem (2018) on the practice of learning through play in ECCE settings revealed that preschool teachers view play – based instruction as a daily

routine, fun and pleasurable. However, teachers' knowledge and practice of learning through play was low due to the challenges such as lack of training, lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials, unavailability of enough playing ground and materials, lack of time allocation for play, lack of support from the administrators and high child-teacher ratio.

In sum, it is commonly agreed that adequate preschool teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices are important for understanding and improving educational processes in early childhood settings by tackling the problem they encountered.

2.5.4. Relationships between Preschool Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Play Based Instruction

There is a positive relationship between attitudes and knowledge. If the knowledge is inadequate, then the attitude towards the issue or problem is also negative but not a strong consensus in the literature on how these are defined. Attitudes and knowledge have been described as multi-dimensional constructs where an attitude is composed of values, beliefs, and behaviors (Mueller, 1986; Maier et al., 2013).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975); Fishbein et al., (2001), define attitude as *“a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object”* (p. 6). According to these definitions, attitudes are feelings that affect how we react and respond to situations and knowledge is what a teacher perceives to know about subjects where both have influence over the other.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) explained the relationship: “once knowledge is established it may influence the formation of new attitude”, “performance of a particular behavior may lead to new knowledge about the issue in turn influencing attitude.” There is consensus that both teacher attitudes and knowledge influence teaching practices in the classroom, therefore, it would be beneficial to have a measure of preschool teachers' attitudes and knowledge towards developmentally appropriate practices of play based instruction. In the area of play based instruction, some studies have shown that preschool teachers' knowledge on play pedagogy can change teaching practices.

There are studies that have shown relationships between teacher attitudes toward teaching and learning, knowledge and teacher practices in the classroom. Researchers have also asserted that there are patterns of relationships among preschool teachers' attitude, knowledge and practice about play based instruction. These three components are reciprocal and intertwined theoretically, empirically and bidirectionally, informing one another. For example, practices are related to knowledge and attitudes, and often involve the application of knowledge (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

According to behavior modification theory of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) person's attitude often determines whether he or she will use knowledge and transform it into practice. Attitudes are affected by knowledge, motivation, interest, understanding and different challenges regarding play based instruction. It is also affected by preschool teachers' interest, belief, view, perspective and perceived value of play based instruction and philosophy of teaching. In short, if one doesn't believe in or value knowledge, one is less likely to act upon it. Preschool teachers' attitude, knowledge and practice are shaped not only by each other but also by a number of contextual factors including children's needs and various children, classroom and school background factors.

Cheng (2012) completed a study to show the relationship between early childhood teachers' conceptualization of play and their practice. The study was designed to give the reader insight into the importance of play in a preschool classroom and the effect of a teacher on the implementation of whether play is a part of the learning process in the classroom. He also compared kindergarten teachers' attitudes and practices towards play based instruction; found that teachers were influenced by their beliefs and background knowledge.

In supporting of these literatures, the present researcher at the beginning of the study hypothesized that: A) Relationship exists between preschool teacher's knowledge, attitudes, practices and play based instruction, B) Preschool teachers' Knowledge, attitudes and practices predict play based instruction in controlling demographic characteristics of the participants (educational level, teaching experience and training type).

In sum, the most important points which emerged in many of the correlational studies revealed that teachers' variables have all been shown to influence the implementation of play based instruction. These correlational studies merely show the relationship between these variables, but not the degree to which play based instruction can be predicted from individual teachers' variables.

2.6. The Role of Preschool Teachers in Play-Based Classroom Instruction

Teaching practices for young children include opportunities for choice, hands-on learning, and promotion of collaboration between children, use of a variety of teaching strategies, individualization, self-regulation and teachers should also balance between teacher-initiated and child initiated activities (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). In play based strategy teachers have no dominant role in the learning activities, but engage in various roles such as that play facilitator, play supporters and play observers. preschool teachers perform a complex and multidimensional roles, they are responsible for implementing a program that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, integrated, developmentally appropriate, and culturally and linguistically responsive, and that promotes positive outcomes for all children (Wood,2007) .

According to Montessori approach, the role of the teacher is changing and organizing the environment in convenient way to the children's need and their development. As the curriculum implementers, teachers should also consider play, learning, and care as a whole, as these are inter-related in the holistic development of children. They must also have the knowledge, awareness, ability and attitude to support life-long learning. Teachers not only transmit knowledge, but also help children to construct knowledge.

Through play interactions, teachers can provide children with developmentally appropriate materials, ideas, practical achievements and support them in the development of their own thoughts and interests (Frost et al., 2005; Vygotsky, 1978). In sum, play involves different kinds of teacher interactions with children and teachers have to decide on the degree of involvement in children's activities. Teachers have to observe what children are doing, support their efforts, and get involved thoughtfully to support additional learning.

Two dominant discourses about the roles in which preschool teachers are involved in play can be distinguished from the literature: guidance, i. e. regulation and support of play. Regulation of

play refers to play that is initiated, guided and directed by the preschool teacher, and support of play refers to child-initiated play that is supported by the preschool teacher that builds on children's interests (Bodrova & Leong, 2010). Similarly, NAEYC(2009) position statement and DAP teaching guide line that teachers know how and when to scaffold children's learning that is, providing just enough assistance to enable each child. Scaffolding can take a variety of forms. It can be provided in a variety of contexts, not only in planned learning (Breadkamp & cople, 2009).

There are specific roles preschool teachers take when they are involved in play, identified by various authors, such as co-player (Reynolds & Jones, 2011), stage-manager, play leader (Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1999), collaborator, model, mediator and responsive preschool teacher (Bodrova & Leong, 2016). The roles can be considered within the discourse of regulation and/or support, depending on the conceptualization of play by the preschool teacher who takes the role.

The passive position of the preschool teacher in relation to play is exemplified by the roles of the observer who reflects, builds and plans (Reynolds and Jones, 2011), preschool teacher as a provider of materials, time, space and experience (Johnson et al., 1999), preschool teacher as a planner and monitor of children's safety, preschool teacher as the one who encourages children and provides experiences that inspire children (Bodrova &Leong, 2016).

Preschool teachers understood their role to be that of co-constructors, co-learners, facilitators, and scaffolders of children's learning (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013; Martlew et al., 2011). Teachers have an understanding of how to set up classroom activities to support play-based learning. In relation to the first theme of teachers being co-constructors of knowledge, teachers often choose themes within the classroom that are based on children's interests (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013). Teachers are engaged in co-constructing the curriculum with children in mind so that it includes children's interests as well as meeting curriculum expectations (VanOers & Duijkers, 2013).

While children are playing, teachers are acting as observers (Karia, 2014; Bennett et al., 1997); as the children are problem solving, observing provides a clear understanding of what is happening within a child's mind to understand how they learn and how to assist them (Bennett et

al., 1997). Within a daily routine, play would include students sharing knowledge with each other, asking questions, and demonstrating individual skills (Pyle & Bigelow, 2015). Jones and Reynolds in their book “*The Play’s the Thing*” (2011, p.32-96) describe teachers’ have integral roles in play such as being: Stage Manager, Mediator, Player and Planner.

To summarize, the researcher believed that preschool teachers perform multidimensional roles such as facilitating, being a play mate and friend, guiding behaviors, role models, observer, planner and so forth both in both care and education aspects.

2.7. The Challenges Hindering Preschool Teachers Implementation of Play Based Instruction

Play based instruction brings challenges and opportunities on the part of preschool teachers. Preschool teachers’ inadequacies in the knowledge, attitude and skill of play based instruction may result in children to feel bored, depressed, less motivated and interested and make them passive in the teaching learning process because children are concrete learners than abstract learners. As a result, teaching children with joy and fun by shifting chalk and talk method to fun teaching brings can bring opportunities (Frost et al., 2008). There are array of challenges mentioned in literature. But for purpose of this study teacher related, administrative related, and resource related factors were reviewed and considered.

Tran’s (2017) research finding on the challenges of implementing play based instructions revealed that although learning through play can have a significant impact on young children’s learning, there are concerns with this new approach. There have been numerous concerns with this new approach. Firstly, teachers expressed how there is a lack of time when creating a play-based classroom (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013; Karia, 2014). When teachers provide activities that are based on children’s interest, they have to be observant in order to acknowledge when activities turn less exciting for students. In order to regain the children’s interests, teachers must think of new ways to excite them. This may mean changing the entire learning centre (Karia, 2014).

Secondly, teachers expressed a concern about the difficulties with assessment and teaching within play-based to meet curriculum expectations (Karia, 2014 & Martlew et al., 2011). Martlew et al. (2011) suggested that, “an approach based on both curriculum-generated play to

support the development of specific skills and knowledge and a play-generated curriculum based on teachers responding to the interests of the children is the best approach to curriculum planning” (as cited in Wood & Attfield, 2005, p. 32).

Thirdly, teachers’ understanding of the meaning of play is different across various researches (Pyle & Bigelow, 2015; Baker, 2014; Samuelsson & Johansson, 2006). Different definitions and perspectives of play and learning make it challenging for teachers to integrate play within their classroom (Pyle & Bigelow, 2015). Lastly, teachers often express concerns on how to balance between teacher and child directed learning. They need to determine the right time to get involved within these experiences (Pyle & Bigelow, 2015).

The Challenges in Implementing Play-Based Approach according to Rengel(2013) research finding includes lack of; time allocation ,handling materials ,student control, space not suitable, teachers’ skills ,support from school administrators and parents .Wood (2004) also asserted that teachers have also identified limitations as follows: (a) pressures and expectations from parents, colleagues, and school inspectors; (b) lack of time for adult involvement;(c) the structure of the school day (timetable, fixed times for school assemblies and outdoor play); (d) downward pressures associated with the national curriculum; and (e) the emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

In sum, the present researcher believed that preschool teachers encountered different challenges or obstacles to use play as a means of instruction in and out of the classroom such as structural school related constraints (time, space, resource) ,teacher-related constraints (lack of adequate knowledge, attitude, skill, training) child-related constraints (short attention span, interest and experience) and attitudinal constraints (parental, administrator and collegial expectation and support).

2.8. Overview of Play and Preschool Teachers’ Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Regarding Play Based Instruction in Ethiopian Preschool Education

According to MOE (2010), the new Curriculum Framework for Ethiopian Education adopts the principles of Active learning and a competency based approach to education as the most flexible means to achieve the desired changes. Research indicates that children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process through participation, contribution and production.

Modern teaching methods recognize that there is a need to give students the chance to think about what they are being taught or what they are learning. This approach is based on the constructivist theory of teaching and learning, which underpins the concept of competency-based education.

Approaches to Kindergarten Education

Kindergarten education uses a child-centered approach where children can learn through play in an informal environment at their own pace and promote the child's holistic development. It includes culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate and inclusive indoor and outdoor materials and activities to that effect. Its design should follow a play-based approach. Play is used as the main means of enhancing the child's learning experiences. The mother tongue or the language spoken in the schooling area will be used as medium of teacher/caregiver-child interaction, as it is the best instrument towards realizing the full potential of the learner. Free play encourages the child to engage in learning voluntarily, experimenting and making their own discoveries both independently or with other children and adults. All children learn differently at different speeds so adults need to be sympathetic to each child's interests and needs, considering each child individually.

Specific Approaches to KG Education Include; learning through free and facilitated play such as sports, dance, music, visual arts and role-play; using mother tongue as a medium of instruction and for storytelling; using hands-on activities with a creative approach and facilitating open-ended projects with a focus on the process rather than final product thus allowing the child to experiment and discover independently and sensory learning. The integrated kindergarten curriculum consists of the following learning areas for children: relating with others, taking care of myself, my environment, developing literacy and numeracy.

Main Teachers and Assistant Teachers

The pre- primary school teacher is the first responsible person for the pre-school program. Those entrusted with the responsibility of supporting the learning and development of preschool children should have the following qualities: Knowledge and skills related to holistic child development, ability to work well with children, parents and others in the preschool setting,

commitment to enhancing the development of young children, love and respect for all children regardless of their culture and be advocates of the rights and the protection of the child.

Teachers should hold a 10 months preschool teacher training course certificate from the Teacher Education Institute, or have attended a 2 months course to upgrade their skills and knowledge, especially in the field of “active learning of young children”. The maximum teacher-child ratio in the preschool is 1: 30 for the four to five-year-olds and 1:40 for the five to six-year-olds. In addition to the main teacher there is an assistant teacher or ECCE caregiver for both age groups (four to five-year-olds and five to six-year-olds). The assistant teachers support the work of the main teachers. Assistant Teachers should have reached grade 8-10 and hold a Community Health Promoters or Health Assistant certificate with special attention to early stimulation, as offered by the Government or other institutions authorized by the Government(MOE, 2010).

To sum up, in Ethiopia the term preschool is commonly understood and it is a kind of educational services where an early child studies before commencing regular school. In Ethiopian context, ECCE is a program that incorporates children from age of four-six years. Likewise, there are differences in naming the key actors from NAEYC guidelines and Ethiopian ECCE Policy guideline as ECCE facilitators, KG teachers ECCE educators, practitioners, pre-primary school teachers and preschool teachers. The present researcher has got preschool and preschool teacher appropriate terms for their comprehensive and commonly understood nature and used throughout the research process.

2.9. Conceptual Framework of the Study

A review of related literature indicated the presence of numerous factors affecting the implementation of play –based instruction. However, the research investigating on preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitude and practice is minimal or no attempts into developing a model on the aforementioned constructs. This gap led the researcher to sketch his own model of play based instruction. The model is framed within the context of the two constructivist play theories and the three play based approaches from the theoretical base, NAEYC (2009) position statement DAP guidelines, principles and strategies and the Ethiopian ECCE policy framework guidelines and standards from the literature perspective were taken as frameworks for this study. Thus, after synthesizing different literatures this conceptual framework is developed as a method

to explain the factors affecting the implementation of play based instruction. The framework was developed with the assumption that teacher related variables such as knowledge; attitude, practice, experience; qualification and training may enhance or impede the implementation of play based instruction. This model is explained as preschool teacher related competences influence the pedagogical process and ultimately impacts child learning and developmental outcomes.

Generally, the aforementioned theoretical bases and literature bases were taken as frameworks to examine preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices, challenges, their role and interactions in children's play to implement play based instruction. Thus, these frameworks had their own implication in instrumentation, data collection, findings and discussion.

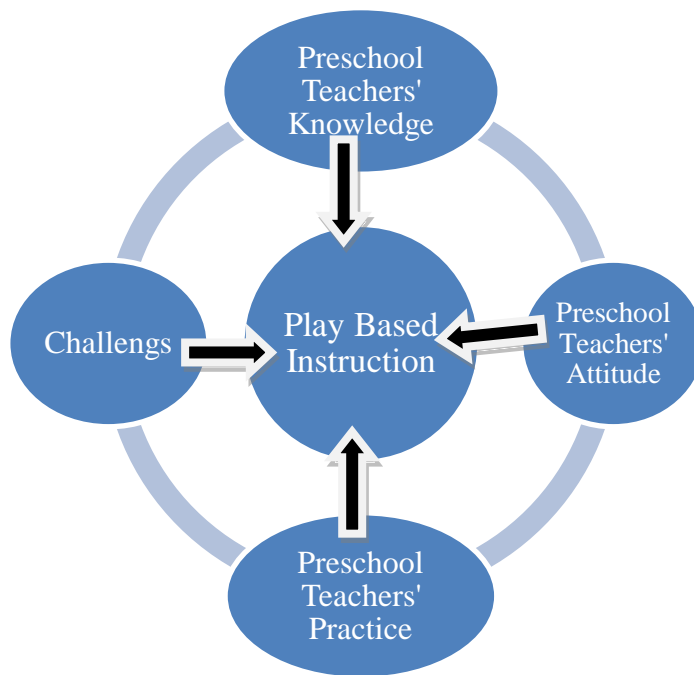


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

2.10. Summary

Play-based instruction describes a child centered approach where the teacher recognizes that children learn through an active, hands-on, playful environment using variety of play materials. In order to use play as a means of instruction, to promote children's holistic learning and developmental outcomes, preschool teachers must have adequate knowledge, attitudes and practices with appropriate educational level, experience and training.

The role of preschool teacher's attitudes, practices and knowledge require closer examination. By examining attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of the teacher one can better understand what impacts the teacher's practice of play based instruction. Generally speaking knowledge related to cognition, attitudes related to motivation and practices refers to teachers' activities or approaches to play that can shape how children learn.

Researchers have also asserted that there are patterns of relationships among preschool teachers' attitude, knowledge and practice about play based instruction. These three components are reciprocal and intertwined theoretically, empirically and bidirectionally, informing one another.

Pre-school teachers as key players in young children's education have a complex, multidimensional and crucial roles to perform in early childhood curriculum implementation, specifically in the implementation of play based approach. They understood their role to be that of co-learners, facilitators, observer, scaffolders, mediator, role model and planner of children's learning the like.

Challenges hindering the implementation of play based instruction include lack of understanding play concept, available play materials, and space and time allocation, more focus on academic learning outcome than developmental learning outcomes and inability to balance child directed and teacher directed learning and so forth.

Finally, literature clearly shows that definition of play and play based instruction, its theoretical background, variables of the study, and their significant relationships. Besides, preschool teachers' role in implementing play based instruction and the challenges they encountered are reviewed from local and international perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This chapter presents the research method used for this study. Primarily, issues such as the study design, research approach, study area, population and sample, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and procedures are presented in detail. In addition to these, variables of the study, ethical considerations and data analysis methods are discussed.

3.1. Design of the Study

To answer research questions of the study, a mixed research approach specifically sequential explanatory design from pragmatist paradigm was employed. This approach is chosen based on Creswell's and Terrel's(2012) assumption of using mixed approach for the purpose of triangulation , comprehensive understanding of a problem and it gives the researcher freedom to choose methods, techniques and procedures by recognizing the nature of the problem. In addition, mixed approach was utilized to offset the weakness of one method with the strength of other method through overcoming the limitation of using a single approach.

Hence, using mixed sequential explanatory design the researcher collected and analyzed quantitative data first and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases for breadth and depth understanding of the problem. Moreover, the problem under investigation has more of a quantitative aspect i.e., data collection and analysis of the tasks was done mostly in terms of quantitative approach and the qualitative approach was used to triangulate, validate and strengthen the quantitative information.

Furthermore, the current study utilized survey method for quantitative aspect and case study method for qualitative aspect. A descriptive-cross sectional survey was employed for the quantitative part of this study in order to collect data from large number of preschool teachers regarding their knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play-based instruction. This design is appropriate when investigating specific variables of a proposed conceptual framework and seeking to discover possible relationships between groups of independent and dependent variables that can be addressed with survey in line with Developmentally Appropriate

Practice (DAP) NAEYC guideline . Moreover, according to Rea's and Parker's (2005) assumption survey is a good fit because the study variables are personal and requires self-reporting by the study participants.

For the qualitative data collection aspect of this study, collective or cumulative case study was used for preschool principals and ECCE focal person to get in-depth and far richer information on the practice and challenges of play based instruction by using a point of saturation. This method is chosen as an appropriate for this study as it helps to obtain rich and thick stories from different preschools about play based instruction as it is noted by Creswell (2012) and Stake (2005).

3.2. Study Area

The setting for this study was Bahirdar, Amhara Region, Ethiopia specifically on preschools providing preschool education. Bahir Dar is the capital city of Amhara National and Regional State which is one of the nine regional states of Ethiopia. It is divided into ten district/Kifle Ketemas/ and located approximately 578 Km far from the North -west of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia at the elevation of 1,840 meters above sea level. It is bordered by Woreta in the East, in the West by Meshenti town, in the North by Lake Tanna and in the South by Blue Nile having 28 km². According to Amhara National and Regional State Education Bureau (ANRSEB) and BahirDar City Administration Education Office statistics of 2018, in Bahir Dar town, totally there are 49 kindergartens. Out of 49 kindergartens, 29 of them are owned by private; nine of them are owned by religious organizations; five of them are owned by government; two of them are owned by missionaries; two of them are owned by associations; one is owned by NGO and also one is owned by public. An adequate number of preschool teachers are working in teaching preschool children in the 2018/19 academic year with having different level of education, experience and type of training.

3.3. Target Population of the Study

The participants or subjects of this study were 164 preschool teachers' (Female=163, Male=1) and 10 school principals (Female=7, Male=3) of Bahir Dar city administration who are working in 10 selected preschools. In addition, one ECCE focal person (Male) working at city

administration was target population of the study in order to examine knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of preschool teachers on play based instruction. In this regard, a total of 175 participants were the target population of the study.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

By taking in to account the complexity of data collection and analysis, the researcher employed both probability and non- probability sampling techniques as it is suggested by Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007). Among 49 preschools, 10 preschools with a relatively better ECCE practice and available play materials set by ECCE minimum standard were selected purposively for the study.

The preschools were taken wherein play as a part of pedagogy was being employed in transacting the curriculum of ECCE and then the schools were selected according to their type of ownership. Out of 10 preschools; two private owned, one religious owned ,three Government owned, one NGO owned, one missionary and two association owned kindergartens were selected from all types of ECCE providers through purposive or judgmental sampling to get more ample information about the issue and to make the study all inclusive on my best of knowledge.

Following the selection of sample schools, 121 preschool teachers from ten preschools were selected using simple random sampling technique; specifically lottery method to get rich information and to give an equal opportunity to be selected for participants and this reduces personal bias and their numbers were allocated proportionally using rule of thumb. When the number of preschool teachers' got manageable, comprehensive sampling technique was employed to select government preschool teachers. Besides, from 121 preschool teachers, 12 teachers were purposively selected for unstructured interview.

Finally, 10 preschool principals and one City Administration office ECCE focal person were selected for interview based on comprehensive sampling technique because they are easily manageable.

3.5. Sample Size Determination

In order to examine preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of play based instruction at selected preschools of Bahir Dar city, the researcher used a sample to

undertake the research and to get good representatives of the study. Sample size was determined using the procedures of Calmorin's (2007) formula based on the following assumptions because the population is more than 100.

$$Ss = \frac{NV + [Se(1-p)]}{NSe + [V \times P(1-P)]}, \text{ or } Ss = \frac{NV + (Se)^2 \times (1-P)}{NSe + (V)^2 \times P(1-P)}$$

Where; Ss=sample size, N=total number of population, V=standard value (2.58) at 1% level of probability with 0.99(99%) reliability, Se=sampling error (0.01), P= largest possible proportion 50% or (0.50). Given: N=175, V=2.58, Se=0.01, P=0.50.

$$Ss = \frac{175(2.58) + (0.01)^2 \times (1 - 0.50)}{175(0.01) + (2.58)^2 \times 0.50(1 - 0.50)}; Ss = \frac{451.5 + 0.0001(0.50)}{1.75 + 6.6564(0.25)}$$

$$Ss = \frac{451.5 + 0.00005}{1.75 + 1.6641}; Ss = \frac{451.50005}{3.4141}$$

$$Ss = 132.2457 \Rightarrow 132$$

The calculated sample size using the above formula gives 132. Therefore; this sample size of 132 represents the 175 subjects of the study. The necessary sample size was determined to be 10 preschools and a total of 132 participants; 121 preschool teachers selected from each school using rule of thumb, 10 preschool principals and one Bahir Dar City administration office ECCE focal person. Hence forth, the researcher employed this sample size by considering the nature of the problem, the design and interpretation approach.

Table 3.1**Target population and sample of participants in the study**

<i>NO.</i>	<i>Name of pre/primary/school</i>	<i>Type of preschool (ownership)</i>	<i>Preschool Teacher Target population</i>	<i>Preschool Teacher sample</i>	<i>Principal Target population</i>	<i>Principal sample</i>	<i>ECCE focal person Target population</i>	<i>ECCE focal person sample</i>
1	BahirDar Academy	Private	42	28	1	1	1	1
2	A.D.M	Private	28	21	1	1		
3	Bezabizuhan	Religious	22	16	1	1		
4	SOS	NGO	14	11	1	1		
5	B/G/Catholic	Missionary	14	11	1	1		
6	Dilchibo	Government	2	2	1	1		
7	Shumabo	Government	2	2	1	1		
8	Yewuket Fana	Government	2	2	1	1		
9	Alpha	Association	14	11	1	1		
10	Eshet academy	Association	24	18	1			
Total		10	164	121	10	10	1	1

Source: *BahirDar City Administration Education Office (2018)* and Each Preschools Record Office

3.6. Data Gathering Instruments

In order to get the relevant information, the researcher utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Of primary data sources, the researcher used questionnaire for preschool teachers, semi-structured interview for preschool principals and ECCE focal person, observation during preschool teachers' instructional process whereas document review was used as a secondary data source.

The data pertinent to this study were collected using multi-method data collection instruments as it is suggested by Terrel(2012)and Patton (2002). 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 purpose. As a result, the researcher employed questionnaire to gather quantitative data whereas semi-structured interview, observation and document analysis were used to gather qualitative data as instruments of data collection.

Thus, data collection instruments were prepared based on framework of the study, objectives of the study, information from practical observation and concepts of related literature reviews. Moreover, relevant national and regional education policy documents were used as references for the study. In addition, contents and items of data collection were basically adopted and contextualized from standards of ECCE in Ethiopia (MOE, 2010; NAEYC, 2009) DAP early childhood play based approaches.

A) Questionnaire

Guided by research questions of the study and review of related literature, the questionnaire was designed and administered for preschool teachers to get more dependable and reliable data from large samples about their opinions and attitudes as it is supported by Best & Khan (2005) and Yalew (2017). Therefore, in order to examine preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of play- based instruction, the researcher adapted (Self developed structured survey) questionnaire was employed to collect data from the sample of preschool teachers.

Four scaled item questionnaires namely Knowledge scale, Attitude scale, Practice scale and Play based instruction scale were used to collect data from preschool teachers. The questionnaire items were adapted based on play based statements from early childhood approaches, play based

instruction and Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) for young children NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp&Copple, 2009) and Ethiopian ECCE policy guideline (MOE, 2010) literatures. Accordingly, major themes on preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play-based instruction were identified from the literature.

The questionnaire includes a total of 47 closed –ended items (six non-scaled items and 41 scaled items). Particularly two non-scaled items to gather data on preschool teachers role and the challenges they face while interacting and using play as an instruction, a 4 point Likert type scale consisted of 41 items were administered to collect data on Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Play based instruction variables of preschool teachers while four background information questionnaire items on gender, educational level, experience and training type was utilized to gather data about their demographic variables . This is to assure more consistency on the participant's response that shows their agreement or disagreement. The questionnaire was prepared in English and latter translated into Amharic language so as to alleviate any unnecessary complication, responding to the items and meaning differences in the versions.

Consequently, the questionnaire was designed and organized in to different parts. All statements were positively worded and item pool was drafted based on literature reviews for all four variables. Specifically; the questionnaires were organized with the following four self developed (researcher adapted) scales.

I) Knowledge Scale; designed to investigate preschool teachers' knowledge about play based instruction with closed ended items ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and 4= strongly agree with possible scores range from 13 (13x1) to 52 (13x4). The item pool consisted of 13 items with a cronbach alpha value of 0.91.

II) Attitude Scale; designed to examine preschool teachers' attitude towards play based instruction with closed ended statements ranging from 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and 4=strongly agree with possible scores range from 9 (9x1) to 36 (9x4) .The item pool consisted of 9 items with a cronbach alpha value of 0.87.

III) Practice Scale; designed to explore preschool teachers' practice of play based instruction with close ended statements ranging from 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often and 4=always with

possible scores range from 10 (10x1) to 40 (10x4). The item pool contains 10 items with a cronbach alpha value of 0.79.

IV) Play Based Instruction Scale; designed to identify the overall characteristics of play based approaches in positive worded statements ranging from 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree and 4=strongly agree with possible scores range from 9 (9x1) to 36 (9x4). The item pool contains 9 items with a cronbach alpha value of 0.83. Thus, the internal consistency of the four scales was high and the instruments were found reliable to collect the data because the reliability coefficient was above 0.70.

Pilot Testing: Before administering the main questionnaires to the participants, the instrument was pilot tested in one preschool on a sample of 30 teachers.

The overall result of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice towards play based instruction was analyzed based on participants quartile and grand mean score as Knowledge (high level, moderate level and low level of knowledge), Attitude (positive ,enough and negative attitude), and Practice (good ,fair and poor practice). Mean score below 2.5 was considered as low exhibiting the character, the scores between 2.5 to 3.5 were considered as moderately exhibiting the character and mean scores between score 3.5 to 4 were considered to be highly exhibiting the character.

Finally, the main questionnaire was distributed to 121 preschool teachers and all 121(100%) were returned and employed as usable responses for data analysis.

B) Semi-structured Interview

The researcher used a self-prepared semi structured (in-depth) interview questions that triangulate the questionnaire data for preschool principals and ECCE focal person. These people were selected because of their close duties and responsibilities in describing the implementation of play based approach. Interview with preschool principals and BahirDar city administration ECCE focal person have also helped in describing the practices, challenges and sorts of support provided regarding the effective implementation of play based instruction. Hence, as Yalew (2017) noted semi- structured interview helps the researcher to get in-depth information from respondents and it increases flexibility of getting the relevant information.

The semi structured interview was conducted for two sets consisted of five questions with the same type of items in their office for a minimum of 30 minutes after conducting classroom observation with preschool teachers and takes a total of 10 days. The interview questions were prepared upon thorough review of pertinent literature on the variables of the study.

One set was prepared for preschool principals with the themes on the practice and challenges for the provision of play- based instruction in terms of coaching, supervising, giving trainings for preschool teachers and other administrative or school related factors. The second set was prepared for ECCE focal person at Bahir Dar City Administration with the themes on the practices and challenges for the provision of play-based approach in terms of providing instructional curriculum materials, guidelines, textbooks, facilitating supervision and trainings for school principals and teachers for the better practice of play-based instruction.

In addition, unstructured interview was conducted to get better understanding on preschool teachers' implementation of play based instruction in and out of the classroom after observation of each class room instructional practice with some purposively selected preschool teachers.

The interview questions were prepared in English and latter translated into Amharic language so as to create utmost communication with the interviewees and its first draft was also evaluated by my advisor. Hence, the interview was conducted through having an appointment with each individual and done accordingly. Consequently, analysis was made with 5 school principals, one ECCE focal person and 12 preschool teachers by using point of saturation (thematic or data).

C) Observation

Based on the synthesis of literature review, the researcher prepared observation checklist items to examine the practices, roles and challenges of preschool teachers regarding the implementation of play based instruction. In doing so, observation was employed to draw pertinent data from classrooms and outdoor play areas that supplement teachers self-reported data obtained through the questionnaire. This is because Classroom(indoor) and outdoor observation has given tangible information about the school conditions, classroom activities and children's condition in and out of the class and teachers teaching methods. The researcher used direct non-participatory observation through an observation checklist in 10 selected preschools for 10 days and for one period with each grade levels both for indoor and outdoor activities.

Items of the observation checklist consisted; detailed instruction in the classroom, classroom size, organization of classrooms and activity centers, availability of indoor and outdoor play materials, learning centers, school minute (time table or schedule), interaction between preschool children with their materials and teachers, teachers teaching approaches, provision of materials and planning learning environment (center) and challenges in implementing play based instruction. Besides, items related to the three play – based approaches’ and the two constructive theories of play assumptions were the focus of observation in line with teachers role in play based instruction to capture their practices and challenges.

D) Document Analysis

During the site visit to preschools, important documents related to the practice and challenges of play based approach among preschool teachers’ were collected and used as data sources. Within the frame in explaining play based instructional practices and challenges, the researcher reviewed significant documents such as plan of checklists preschool principals and focal person use, preschool teachers’ lesson plan, school minute (time table or schedule) and time allotted for play were used as data sources.

Different national and regional documents on the practices and challenges of play based instruction such as ANRSEB ECCE Guideline and Strategy document (2011), Education Sector Development Plans(I-V) , National ECCE Quality standards, Strategic Plan and Guideline for ECCE(2010), the National Curriculum Framework for Education(2010) and KG-Grade 12(MOE, 2012) were used as reviewed documents. Moreover, documents indicating the number of students in one class, teacher’s qualification and the number of preschool teachers, availability of curriculum materials as well as photo, video and audio records were taken in the time of data collection to narrate the interviewed and observed data respectively.

3.7. Instrument Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are important issues to be considered in conducting research to ensure high standards of it. To do so, data collection instruments designed by the researcher was verified and evaluated by the advisor and other experts in the area of ECCE. In addition, face validity, content validity and construct validity of the questionnaire were assured before main

data gathering. Then the collected data from interview, observation and document review were triangulated (method and data) and members checked to ensure the trustworthiness of the study with survey questionnaire in the selected samples.

A survey questionnaire for preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction were developed in recognizing this issues and areas of concern in mind throughout this research. To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey questionnaire (rating scale), a pilot study was performed and finally Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to test the internal consistency of survey items for each constructs: knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction by using 'SPSS IBM software 23 version. This is because as supported by Wiersma and Jurs (2009), the generally accepted minimum Cronbach's alpha value for reliability estimates in educational research is .70 or greater.

Therefore, the instrument was assumed to be a reliable measure of these variables. Generally, to address the issue of validity and reliability, an item adapted by the researcher was translated from English to Amharic and back from Amharic to English by panel of experts or professional translators and thesis advisor to check authenticity and to avoid meaning differences in the versions of items. For the quantitative part of instrument, psychometric property of construct validity was checked through inter- item and total item correlation analysis to get accurate responses and maximum return rates.

3.8. Variables

For this study, preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges were considered or regarded as continuous predictor (independent) variables and demographic characteristics of participants as categorical independent variables whereas play –based instruction is considered as a criterion (dependent) variable.

3.9. Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect the whole necessary data for this study, the researcher used the following procedures step by step. First, the researcher identified preschools where participants are possibly available by receiving official permission letter from Bahir Dar University, college of Education and Behavioral Science, Psychology department to Bahir Dar city administration

Education Office. Then, the researcher received cooperation letter from the city administration to the preschools and requested the selected preschools to get their informed consent. After designing or developing data gathering tools and made ready for administration, the researcher contacted the participants using cooperation letter given from the above mentioned bodies to collect the main data.

After that, the purpose, objective and actual benefit of the research was described to various bodies. This helps the researcher to get support from all the concerned bodies to conduct the research and make easy to obtain the required information. Following the selection of respondents, data for the pilot study was collected from the participants of the study. Moreover, before administering the main data gathering instruments, a pilot study for survey questionnaire was tried out in one preschool on 10 sample preschool teachers and performed by assuring informed consent from the participants to check the wording, clarity and content validity to create the pool of items. Following the pilot study, the reliability estimates of the various scales were computed using cronbach alpha Coefficient. Items in the survey questionnaire were clearly explained to the respondents before they made to provide any necessary responses to the scale items. This ensured consistency and accuracy of responses of the pre-school teachers.

The questionnaire was distributed and collected on the same day that helps to get accurate and maximum return rate. Then items with poor item-total correlation were removed from the instruments, which resulted in the revised version with the reduced number of items. The correlation analysis was conducted to validate the instruments with the reduced number of items. Accordingly, further improvement was made on the instruments. All the information gathered from the study using the questionnaires were checked for accuracy and clarity of expression. Likewise, semi-structured interview was administered for school principals and ECCE focal person, indoor and outdoor observation in line with document review was also conducted after administering questionnaire. The participants were contacted by phone and an interview time was arranged in a convenient time and place for the interviewee. Besides, unstructured interview was conducted for some purposively selected preschool teachers for better understanding of the issue after observation.

Finally, all necessary data was administered in person for one month and collected through questionnaire, interview, observation and document review through consensus and discussion

with the participants of the study. Accordingly, the collected data through different instruments was analyzed i.e., the collected data through questionnaire was coded and entered in to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 23, whereas the collected data through interview, observation and document review was thematically arranged before the actual analysis and was triangulated in order to assure validity and reliability.

3.10. Methods of Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data using different instruments, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed and the results of the findings were interpreted appropriately. The quantitative data obtained through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inferential Statistical techniques. Both the rated and non- rated scaled responses of participants were sorted, coded and scored in order to be analyzed through SPSS program in the preliminary process and procedures have been undertaken before, during and after the data analysis.

Among descriptive Statistics methods; Means, standard deviations, quartiles, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data obtained from questionnaires and from Inferential Statistics methods; one sample t- test, Pearson's product moment correlation and multiple linear regression were used in this study.

More specifically, quartile and one sample t-test were utilized in order to examine the current status of preschool teacher's knowledge, attitude, and practice about play based instruction. Similarly, Pearson's product moment correlation was used to determine the existence of statistically significant relationships between attitude, knowledge, practice and play based instruction among teachers and Multiple linear Regression Analysis specifically standard(simultaneous)regression model was used determine the contribution or association of each predictor variables (knowledge, attitude and practice) on the use of play based instruction. The significance tests were examined at alpha .05 or 95% confidence interval level and p value less than .05.

The qualitative data collected through interview, observation and document review were analyzed using thematic analysis method of qualitative research with narrative description (paraphrasing and interpretation) through grouping codes, categorizing and finally organizing in

to themes. In addition to thematic analysis, preschool teachers' practice and roles in play based instruction were again analyzed based on the two constructivist play theories and the three play based approaches.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

According to Creswell (2013) and Tracy (2010), the issue of ethics is the most crucial areas of research. Hence, when conducting this study, the researcher takes in to account of the research ethics or guidelines. Thus, in this research before the study, official approval to conduct the study was obtained.

First and foremost, the researcher asked permission from preschools and participants where the study is going to be conducted. The willingness of sample preschool teachers, principals and ECCE focal person was assured and reached consensus through discussion. Besides, sufficient information and explanation to all research participants about the research objective, purpose (purely academic), actual and potential benefit of the study was described to various bodies and, the purpose of the study was also written in the introduction part of the questionnaires to the respondents.

Furthermore, the study participants were informed abbreviations and pseudo names were used for anonymity and their information would be kept confidential before the beginning of data collection. Hence, most ethical considerations outlined in the APA (2010) were strictly followed while collecting, analyzing and reporting the results as well.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

In this chapter, data collected from quantitative and qualitative findings of the study presented, analyzed and interpreted through descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis in line with the research questions set at the beginning of this study. It begins with quantitative data presentation and goes with the qualitative narratives and descriptions of participants' response on the study objectives to further explain or support the quantitative results.

The major purpose of this study was to investigate preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of play based instruction in ten selected pre schools of BahirDar City Administration. The findings are analyzed and interpreted as per the guiding research questions of the study.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The participants of this study were characterized in terms of their gender, experience in teaching , educational qualification and type of training taken on play based instruction. Thus, the descriptive analysis of respondents is displayed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4. 1. Demographic Characteristics of Preschool Teachers

Categories	Characteristics	F	%	M	SD
Gender	Male	1	.8		
	Female	120	99.2		
	Total			1.99	.91
Teaching experience in KG/preschool	0-3years	32	26.4		
	4-7years	44	36.4		
	8-10 years	25	20.7		
	Above 11 years	20	16.5		
	Total			2.27	1.033

Educational level	10 th complete	1	.8			
	KG training certificate	43	35.5			
	Other certificate (TTI)	28	23.1			
	Diploma	34	28.1			
	Degree	15	12.4			
	Total				3.16	1.07
	<hr/>					
Training type	Pre service	23	19			
	In-service	37	30.6			
	Both	61	50.4			
	Total				2.31	.775

As it is depicted from Table 4.1, the gender of respondents with $M=1.99$ and $SD=.091$, 121(99.2%) of them are females which is the highest category and only 1 (.8%) is male. The teaching experience of KG/preschool teachers is summarized as, 32(26.4%) teachers have 0-3 years of experience while 44(36.4%) teachers have 4-7 years of experience which is the highest category, 25(20.7%) between 8 to 10 years and 20(16.5%) have 11 and above years of preschool/KG teaching experience with $M=2.27$ and $SD=1.033$. Regarding respondents educational level, majority of the teachers who are 43(35.5%) are KG training certificate holders. Only 1(0.8%) of them is ten complete, 28(23.1%) have other certificate (TTI), 34(28.1%) are diploma holders and 15 (12.4%) are degree holders with $M=3.16$ and $SD=1.07$.

With regard to the type of training taken on play based instruction preschool teachers with $M=2.31$ and $SD=.775$, 61(50.4%) have take both pre-service and in service training, 37(30.6%) have take in-service training and 23 (19%) have take pre service training only. Here it is possible to say the majority of preschool teachers in the studied preschools are females, have 4-7 years of experience, KG training certificate qualification and take both pre service and in service trainings.

4.2 The Level of Preschool Teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice about Play Based Instruction

In order to examine the level or status of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice about play based instruction, quartile and one sample t-test were employed. The significance tests were examined at alpha 0.05 or 95% confidence interval level.

Knowledge(Q1=38,Q2=43&Q3=48; 5th,10th&15th item respectively with aggregate mean of 22.32 and N=121), Attitude (Q1=11, Q2=14&Q3=17; 3rd,6th&9thitem respectively with aggregate mean of 12.78 and N=121), Practice (Q1=14,Q2=19 &Q3=24;5th,10th&15th item respectively with aggregate mean of 18.91 and N=121) and play based instruction (Q1=11,Q2=14&Q3=18; 3rd,6th&9thitem respectively with aggregate mean of 13.71 and N=121) respectively.

Table 4. 2 Preschool Teachers Quartile Level of Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Play Based Instruction

Quartile	F	Cf	Knowledge Status
Below Q1	4	4	Very Low
Q1-Q2	5	9	Low
Q2-Q3	6	15	Moderate
Above Q3	4	19	High

Quartile	F	Cf	Attitude Status
BelowQ1	2	2	Negative
Q1-Q2	3	5	Enough
Q2-Q3	4	9	Enough
AboveQ3	2	11	Positive

Quartile	F	Cf	Practice Status
BelowQ1	4	4	Poor
Q1-Q2	5	9	Poor
Q2-Q3	6	15	Fair
Above Q3	4	19	Good

Quartile	F	Cf	Play Based Instruction Status
BelowQ1	2	2	Low
Q1-Q2	3	5	Low
Q2-Q3	4	9	Moderate
Above Q3	2	11	High

As it is shown in Table 4.2, 6 scores of preschool teachers' response on knowledge items fall in between Quartile two and Quartile three of knowledge level about play based instruction. While 5 of the scores fall between Quartile1nd Quartile 2 and 4 of the scores in combination fall below the first quartile and above the third quartile respectively .It is disclosed that majority of preschool teachers have moderate level or status of knowledge about play based instruction. Likewise, the above table clearly mentioned that 4 scores of preschool teachers on attitude items fall between the second Quartile and the third Quartile whereas 3 of the score fall between Quartile one and two and 2 of the scores in combination fall below the first Quartile and above the third quartile respectively .It is uncovered that majority of preschool teachers have a good enough positive attitude towards play based instruction.

With regard to preschool teachers' practice of play based instruction, the above table reveals that 6 scores of preschool teachers' response on practice items fall in between Quartile two and Quartile three of practice level of play based instruction. While 5 of the scores fall between Quartile1nd Quartile2 and 4 of the scores in combination fall below the first Quartile and above the third quartile respectively .It is depicted that majority of preschool teachers have moderate (fair) practice of play based instruction. Regarding preschool teachers level or status of play

based instruction, the above table depicts that 4 scores of preschool teachers on play based instruction items fall between the second Quartile and the third Quartile whereas 3 of the score fall between Quartile one and two. 2 of the scores in combination fall below the first Quartile and above the third Quartile respectively. It is very apparent that majority of preschool teachers have moderately good level or status of play based instruction.

It can be concluded that the big majority of preschool teachers have moderate level or status of knowledge, fair practice and positive attitude towards play based instruction. In sum, the results of the study indicated that the overall level of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice regarding play based instruction were found to be moderate though there were some exaggerated individual responses on knowledge and attitude items.

Table 4. 3. Level of Preschool Teachers' Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Regarding Play Based Instruction; One-Sample t- test result (2.5 Expected Individual Mean or test Value and N=121)

Variables	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	observed mean	Expected mean
Knowledge	-23.23	118	.000	-10.18	22.32	32.5
Attitude	-29.731	120	.000	-9.72	12.78	22.5
Practice	-13.331	119	.000	-6.09	18.91	25
Play Based Instruction	-28.119	120	.000	-8.79	13.71	22.5

Statistically significant at P<0.05

As it can be seen from Table4.3, the one sample t-test result also demonstrated that the grand calculated or observed mean of all four variables are significantly lower than the aggregate expected mean or test value hence their mean differences lie below the test value. With 95 % of respective confidence interval (CI) [-11.046,-9.315],[(-10.371,-9.076), [-6.997,-5.187] and [-9.417,-8.178]; assumed mean (x=32.5, 22.5, 25&22.5) and aggregate mean of knowledge=22.32, attitude=12.78, practice=18.91 and play based instruction= 13.71 with a mean difference of -

10.18, -9.72, -6.09 and -8.79 respectively with their respective t values at 0.05 level of significance. For example, if we take knowledge items of respondents response, the grand mean value is $(X=32.5-10.18=22.32)$ which is significantly lower than the expected mean $(X=32.5)$. These shows the calculated mean of all four variables significantly lower than the test value (assumed mean) at $p=.000$. This implies that preschool teachers have significantly lower level of knowledge, attitude and practice about play based instruction.

Likewise, in addition to the responses of preschool teachers to the questionnaires about the current status of play based instruction practice, data obtained from the interview response which was held with BahirDar City Administration ECCE focal person and preschool principals' affirmed similar responses with the responses collected by the questionnaire. Thus, regarding the status of the aforementioned issue the City Administration ECCE focal person said that:

The status of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice on play based instruction is moderately good even if there is a skill gap in knowing play based instruction in principle and in practice among preschool teachers. Even though insufficient short term trainings, seminars and workshops are provided to enhance the knowledge, attitude and practice of preschool teachers about play based instruction ; our monitoring, evaluation and supervision is not as required how much they put in to practice what they have know in theory or principle go in line with the stimulation program provided .

One of the private preschool principal also responded that:

A 10 month teachers training and 10 credit hour allotted for ECEE; play based pedagogy is not enough to enable the preschool teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge that enhance the quality of kindergarten education in general and play based instruction in particular. There are some preschool teachers with Training by other field that might limit the competency of teachers to implement the EECE curriculum, which in turn affect the whole development of children in the studied preschools due to lack of knowledge on pedagogical skills of early child development theories and teaching approaches .

Additionally, even though there are variations from teachers to teachers and from preschools to preschools in practicing play based instruction, qualitative data obtained from observation and document review about the practices of play based instruction can be concluded by the researcher in to the following two emerged themes as the revealed observed practices.

A) Indoor and Outdoor Play Material Organization

In fact, play is an important way of teaching children and hence appropriate and sufficient indoor and outdoor materials are mandatory. With regard to indoor or classroom play materials of the preschools the researcher observed that most of the preschools have flash cards , blocks, art materials, pictorial teaching aids but corners such as shop corners, family corners, health corners, music corners, mathematics corners, table toys were not sufficiently available in the average studied preschools.

Regarding outdoor play materials, the researcher observed the following materials, for example slide, merry-go-round, ladder, sand box (available only in one preschool), tires and seesaws in private and NGO based preschools with moderately sufficient level. But, the outdoor materials of the other preschools are not appropriate to child development, with insufficient features such as a slide, merry-go-round, ladder, sand box and seesaws (mostly in government and association preschools). All Preschools in the study area have the minimum standard for outdoor play materials such as climbing frames, locally made swings and seesaws and this was an encouraging trend.

Preschool teachers have commitment and initiative to prepare play materials from locally available resources though the adequacy of play materials was different so as to their sponsorship or ownership. The degrees of utilization of play materials by preschool teachers were high but most of them lack awareness about the benefits and uses of play materials though private preschools had in better position than other preschools and some story books were offered inside classroom in some studied preschools.

Specifically, availability of educational and play materials as measured by access and usage of age appropriate books, availability of varieties of materials for indoor learning/play activities and familiarity of these learning and play materials to children was found inadequate in most government preschools. In most observed preschools, the indoor and outdoor play materials are

somewhat moderate, adequate, visible for children's that promotes opportunity for exploration, cooperative play, creativity and problem solving skills but with inadequate safety and proportion to the number of children, are not properly organized, partitioned, visually clear and varied. The curriculum materials was not properly adapted to the local context that mostly focuses on cognitive aspect of development particularly numeracy and literacy than incorporating other developmental outcomes that are not suited to children's developmental level.

The researcher also made document analysis and observed that teachers indeed prepare weekly and daily lesson plans and the plans are checked by principals at the end of the week and checklists were prepared in collaboration with the school and preschool teachers that is used as a follow up mechanisms for implementation of the activities. Surprisingly all observed preschools have a flexible school minute schedule (timetable) with average 1:36 teacher child ratio and educational qualification set by EECE policy framework. Observations in the classroom were made to check to what extent teachers use the curriculum materials. However, most teachers cannot use the materials and instead preferred different textbooks which served as student texts which had been imported from abroad and prepared in a foreign language and context without the acknowledgement of the government by simply using the MOE curriculum books as a reference.

Preschool teachers and principals reported that the education bureau had not supplied the necessary materials for the preschools adequately. Accordingly, a significant number of preschools prepared a textbook without considering the maturity level of their children, the environment and the demands of the government and they found their own ways to get other curriculum materials. Based on the above information it is possible to conclude that there was a lack of governmentally prepared textbooks, teacher's guides, guidelines for preschool education and guidelines for educating children through play based instruction.

As the researcher observed most of preschools copied or adopted curriculum materials either from other experienced schools or from their intuitive experiences and what was expected to be accomplished in preschool children. Almost all teachers designed routines and activities during planning to be followed according to their order time (not flexible). But they varied them considering different internal challenge such as class size, behavior management problem and time available. They planned consistently high quality and challenging goals and contents but

narrowly focused on few learning and development goals. Thus they failed to attempt to reflect knowledge about sequences and pace of children development and learning.

B) Details in the Classroom Instruction

The researcher observed that most preschool teachers used play based instruction, illustrating stories and learning by song and fun in the classroom in coordination with other teaching methods such as dramatization, discussion and lecturing methods as a classroom instruction. Teachers always tried to check student exercises, this is an encouraging trend but they lack the proper usage of play material teaching aids. Nearly all teachers used the mother tongue language to teach children but sometimes they used English as an instructional language. The researcher observed that a moderate number of teachers encourage child centered learning and independent activities. Teaching numbers and alphabets in the context of child development and level lacks uniformity, with some teachers and schools teaching beyond the limits of the syllabus and this may result in learning difficulties for children. Besides, as the researcher observed and data obtained from participants uncovered the school and the teachers have been becoming the curriculum and children learn what the teachers wished to teach.

The observation and interview data discloses the teaching practices in the majority of the schools were based on self chosen materials and approach and little emphasis is taken in to account of children's interest. When this was asked for preschool teachers during interview as why they did not take into account, they said that:

“Children stage cannot be communicated and it is us who know what is good for them and prepare what we think are good for the children”.

In sum, although there were few preschools enjoyed with play based instruction practice, majority of the sampled preschools lacked inputs which quality ECCE program demands such as age relevant play and educational materials , adequate curriculum materials with inadequate space and time for play which in turn hinder children's physical, mental and psychosocial development. The teaching learning methodology was moderately good that involves play based; child centered instruction with purposeful play as a major element that promotes opportunities to explore, manipulate, problem solving, freedom to choose largely provided through mother

tongue language. Preschool teachers found well in principle and conception regarding play based instruction but not well in practice with the required level and standard.

4.3 The Relationships between preschool Teachers’ Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Play Based Instruction

Correlation analysis, specifically Pearson Correlation was performed to determine the strength and direction of intra and inter relationships among the four variables investigated in this study (knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction). Correlations of these variables are displayed in Table 4.4 below.

Table.4. 4. Correlations between Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Play Based Instruction (N=121)

Variables	Sig	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice	Play based instruction
Knowledge	.000	1			
Attitude	.000	-.569**	1		
Practice	.000	-.456**	.366**	1	
Play based instruction	.000	-.439**	.532**	.313**	1

Statistically significant at **p < 0.05

The Pearson correlation analysis result table 4.3 revealed that there was a significant negative correlation between knowledge and attitude, $r = -.569$, $p < .05$, knowledge and practice, $r = -.456$, $p < .05$, knowledge and play based instruction, $r = -.439$, $p < .05$. This implies that when preschool teachers exhibited lower levels of Knowledge and practice, they tend to have lower score of attitude and play based instruction thereby indicating the magnitude of the relationship as nearly moderate.

The above table also shows that there is a significant positive correlation between attitude and practice, $r=.366$, $p<.05$, attitude and play based instruction, $r=.532$, $p<.05$ and between practice and play based instruction, $r=.313$, $p<.05$ evidencing the magnitude of the relationship as nearly low. This is to imply that when preschool teachers exhibited higher levels of attitude and practice, they tend to have higher score of knowledge and play based instruction. All four variables have perfect significant correlation each other, $p=.00$ and $r=1$.

Interestingly, there was a significant intra and inter correlation among the investigated variables of the study. It is concluded that attitude and practice of preschool teachers are in strength to promote play based instruction positively where as knowledge of preschool teachers is in strength to promote play based instruction negatively. This result is in line with the alternative hypotheses of the study, that is there is a significant relationship between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction.

With regard to the relationships between preschool teachers knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction, the interview and observation data obtained from preschool principals, some selected preschool teachers and ECCE focal person further indicated that preschool teachers knowledge, attitude and practice exists to improve or impede their implementation of play based instruction. According to the interviewees these factors influence one another and they said that there is an inverse and positive relationship between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and their implementation of play based instruction. One preschool principal and ECCE focal person in particular further explained that:

Groups of both internal and external characteristics of preschool teachers such as, interest, motivation, play material resources allocation in line with their KAP, educational status, experience and training have affected the implementation of play based instruction hence teaching is a moral enterprise and these factors are not separate categories but interrelated among themselves. For instance, preschool teachers with inadequate KAP, training, educational level, experience, low interest and motivation are unable to implement play based instruction at the greater level.

The researcher also observed these issues when preschool teachers with inadequate Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and training were challenged in implementing play based instruction at the required level.

4.4 Preschool teachers' Knowledge, Attitude and Practice as a Predictor of Play Based Instruction Along with their Demographic Characteristics

To determine whether preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice in controlling demographic variables predict Play based instruction, all groups of preschool teachers' variables were regressed at once. Hence, a standard (simultaneous) multiple linear regressions was conducted to assess preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice along with the selected demographic characteristics as the predictor variables with the ability to predict the criterion variable of play based instruction.

All predictor variables tolerance levels were examined in order to evaluate whether multicollinearity was a concern. Evidence of multicollinearity was shown by the value of variance infliction factor (VIF) having a tolerance level of between .585 and .978 and VIF level between 1.203 and 1.709. In addition, linearity, normality, and various goodness of fit were checked and validated to check whether or not model fit with data. Moreover, the plot of ZPRED against ZRESID indicated that the assumptions of homoscedasticity as well as random distribution of errors were met. The sampling distribution has also met the assumptions of normality. To determine the significant predictor from the independent variables over the dependent variable, all variables under the study were entered into a regression model in a single step. The results are presented below in Table 4.5. Furthermore, to identify statistically significant and no significant predictors; significance test of the regression coefficients was conducted.

Table 4. 5. Result of Standard Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized		Standardized		Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
(Constant)	10.231	4.168		2.455	.016
Knowledge	-.134	.071	-.185	-1.889	.061
Attitude	.375	.091	.388	4.099	.000
Practice	.041	.060	.059	.684	.495
Educational Level	.444	.249	.138	1.786	.077
Experience	.546	.258	.163	2.117	.036
Training type	.430	.338	.097	1.274	.205

A. Dependent Variable: Play based instruction

B. Independent variables(predictors):KAP, experience, educational level and training type

C.R=.605 , $R^2 =.365$ Adjusted $R^2=.332$

As it is revealed from ANOVA and model summary table, preschool teachers knowledge, Attitude ,practice, educational level, experience and training type accounted for a statistically significant amount of variability in play based instruction, $R^2 =.365$, $F(6,113)=10.848$; $P<0.05$. There is linear relationship between the variables and the F result also indicated that there is a good model fitting. The F value obtained from the model result was significantly different from the critical value of F at 6 and 113 degrees of freedom respectively. So the explanatory variables included in the model jointly influenced play based instruction.

The relationship between the dependent variable and a set of explanatory variables result was also shown in the multiple linear regression analysis. The multiple correlation coefficient measure($R=.605$) explained that the relationship between continuous dependent variable for play based instruction and independent variables was moderately and positively correlated. The R^2 value was .365 thereby accounting for 36.5% of play based instruction implementation as a result of preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice along with their educational

level, experience and type of training taken. Stated otherwise, the value of coefficient of determination the model summary showed that the total independent variables combined together explained (predicted) about 36.5 % of the total variation of the model of R^2 . The total variance accounted for by all the independent variables under the study on play based instruction was .365(36.5%).

Furthermore, an examination of Beta coefficients (table 4.5) indicated that among the independent study variables preschool teachers attitude ($\beta = .388$, $t=4.099$, $p<.05$) was the strongest predictor of play based instruction followed by experience ($\beta = .163$, $t=2.117$, $p<.05$), were statistically significant positive contributors of play based instruction implementation. Beta coefficient (β) of .388 suggests that for every unit increment of preschool teachers' attitude, there was a .388 unit of increment in play based instruction. Stated otherwise, the implementation of play based instruction increased by 38.8% when preschool teachers' increased by a unit and hence the interaction provided a statistically significant amount of 38.8% incremental variance change.

Similarly, the Beta coefficient (β) of .163 implies that for every unit increment of preschool teachers' experience, there was a .163 unit of increment of play based instruction. None of the other independent variables in the model were significantly associated with play based instruction because their significant test p-value was greater than .05. In other words, the interaction provided a statistically non significant amount of incremental or decremented variance change.

In sum, all the independent variables under the study have significantly predicted play based instruction by $R^2=.365$, $F(6,113) = 10.848$, $P<.05$. The researcher infers from the standard multiple regression analysis result that preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, educational level, experience and training are determinant teacher variables that influence the improvement or hamper of play based instruction. It was observed that the overall preschool teachers variables plays a key role in the general teaching learning process improvement and play based instruction effectiveness in particular.

4.5 Preschool Teachers Role in Implementing Play Based Instruction

In order to examine the roles preschool teachers' performed during practicing play based instruction descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were employed.

Table 4. 6. Preschool Teachers' Role in Implementing Play Based Instruction

No	Items	f	%	M	SD
1	Co-Player(Teach and Learn)	39	32.23		
2	Play Facilitator(Scaffolder)	48	39.67		
3	Play Observer(Trust in Play)	23	19.01		
4	Play Planner(Co-Constructor)	11	9.09		
Total				30.25	16.5

As it can be seen from Table4.6 with regard to their roles and interaction when they involved in Play based instruction , 48(39.67%) of preschool teachers performed scaffolding or act as play facilitators, 39(32.23%) involved as co-players or teach and learn approach. Other preschool teachers, 23(19.01%) take play observer role or trust in play approach and 11(9.09%) of them engaged as play planners or co-constructors with M= =30.25and SD=16.5. It can be concluded that a vast number of preschool teachers responded that they performed a facilitator role followed by co-players, play observers and co –constructors' role while they use play based instruction in and out of the classroom.

Likewise, data obtained from interview and observation discloses the following two major emerged themes as common preschool teachers' roles when they involved in play based instruction in the classroom based on the two constructivist theories of play and the three play based approaches.

- A) Preschool Teachers Involved in Engagement with Children;** preschool teachers as their involvement in engaging with children preschool teachers may take roles in guiding children's behavior, being role model, demonstrating mutual respect, collaborator being a play mate or friend and facilitators of children's play.

B) Preschool Teachers as Reflective Pedagogies; preschool teachers may perform pedagogical roles such as play observer, planner, direct instructor, co-player/co-learner and evaluator. Besides to this, some preschool teachers and principals said:

Preschool teachers are not a mere critical pedagogists but also performed different multidimensional and complex roles that are necessary for the future holistic learning and development of children both in educational and care aspect predominantly in child related and teacher related guidance .

As the researcher observed Preschool teachers take different roles as reflective pedagogists such as varieties of teaching methods and approaches focusing on majority of children. They used methods like active or child centered, play and motivation. They used both small group and whole group for indoor outdoor activities if the type of lesson is play based. Some teachers use basically scaffolding, allowing children to take the lead in the learning process. Usually they scaffold and direct for highly sated goals. But they said that “it is very time wasting to scaffold each child”. This implies that participant teachers were performed different roles during play interaction. But this finding showed that their implementation of teaching methods are not based on knowledge of each and following each child individual differences to meet each child intentionally.

4.6 Major Challenges Hindering Preschool Teachers Implementation of Play Based Instruction

For the purpose of identifying the major challenges preschool teachers encountered to implement play based instruction, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were utilized.

Table 4. 7. Major Challenges Hindering the Implementation of Play Based Instruction

No	Items	F	%	M	SD
1	Lack Of Appropriate Training in Play Based Instruction	14	11.6		
2	Difficulty in Understanding the Meaning of Play	8	6.6		
3	Inadequate Time and Space Allocated for Play	17	14.1		
4	Lack of Available Indoor and Outdoor Play Materials	34	28.1		
5	Difficulty in Balancing between Teacher-Directed And Child-Initiated Play	6	4.9		
6	Lack of Principals and Family Support to Use Play as an Instruction	4	3.3		
7	High Child-Teacher Ratio and Small Class Size	26	21.5		
8	Pressure From Principals and Parents to Focus on Brining Academic Learning Outcomes	12	9.9		
Total				15	10.3

Concerning to the challenges hindering preschool teachers implementation of play based instruction from the sampled preschools, the result portrayed in Table 4.7 with M= 15 and SD =10.3 indicated that 34(28.1%) of preschool teachers responded that lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials were the major challenge, 26(21.5%) of them agreed high child-teacher ratio and small class size was their challenge,17(14.1%) of them uncovered inadequate time and space allocated for play was their challenge and 14(11.6%) of them answered lack of appropriate training on play based instruction were the major challenges they encountered to implement play based instruction.

It is also revealed that 12(9.9%) of preschool teachers agreed that pressure from principals and parents to focus on brining academic learning outcomes are their challenges,8(6.6%) of the said they have difficulty in understanding the meaning of play,6(4.9%) of them discloses they have difficulty in balancing between teacher-directed and child-initiated play and 4(3.3%) of them

responded lack of principals and family support to use play as an instruction were the challenges that hinder their practice of play based instruction.

It can be concluded that a big majority of preschool teachers encountered lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials followed by small class size and high child-teacher ratio and inadequacy of time and space for play while they use play in the classroom as a means of instruction. Despite majority of preschool teachers in the demographic characteristics section responded they have taken both pre-service and in-service trainings, here it is found that getting appropriate refreshment on -the job, training and retraining, workshops and seminars still exist insufficient. Other challenges such as difficulty in balancing between teacher-directed and child initiated play and lack of principals and family support to use play as an instruction were the least responded challenges by the respondents.

The observation and interview data obtained from interviewees (ECCE focal person, school principals and preschool teachers) that supplement the above quantitative result also revealed that the following four emerged major themes to ease the analysis were the major challenges to implement play based instruction raised by respondents.

A) **Structural challenges**; constraints such as lack of administrative and collegial support, inadequate on job training; limited time and space allotted for play, small class size and high child teacher ratio

B) **Resource challenges** including lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials, curriculum materials, culturally relevant story books.

C) **Attitudinal, technical and conceptual challenges** including misconception and ignoring play as a means of teaching method or instruction, lack of awareness, interest, motivation and commitment about play based pedagogy, considering play as only a means of fun or recreation, giving more focus for academic learning outcomes (numeracy and literacy) than bringing other developmental outcomes and unbalanced parental and principals expectation.

D) **Preschool teachers' competency challenges** including lack of knowledge, attitude and skill to use play as a means of instruction, classroom management problem due to large classroom composition, difficult children's behavior and more desire to play outside than learning sitting in

the classroom. Generally the researcher squeezed these challenges in to structural and process challenges.

Regarding to the challenges of play based instruction one government school principal said:

Lack of standard curriculum guideline, lack of assistant teachers scheduling problem, lack of readymade (commercial) play materials, parents expectation to focus only on numeracy and literacy, shortage of short term and long term on- job training, lack of teachers commitment to implement play based instruction and lack of uniformity in the implementation are the major challenges mostly observed among government preschool teachers.

Though these challenges are hindering the implementation of play based instruction in the studied preschools, BahirDar City Administration education office in collaboration with BahirDar University and the preschools themselves work together to tackle the challenges and to bring best opportunities in order to implement play based instruction effectively. Some of the opportunities include providing some seminars, awareness creation, workshops, refreshment and on the job trainings on the use and preparation of play materials and play based pedagogy. In addition, different ownership preschools which have best experiences also shared and transferred their teaching learning methodology to the other preschool that has to be encouraged.

It can be concluded that AS preschool teachers are the most important factors in implementing the ECCE curriculum, all teachers at preschool level must be trained to assist the children and implement the play based program as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This section presents discussion of results on five major findings along with their constituent sub findings identified through the process of the analysis. The present findings of the study as per research questions were discussed integrated and synthesized in line with previous research findings and literature reviews as required.

5.1 The Level of Preschool Teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Regarding Play Based Instruction

Different Literatures disclosed that Preschool teachers are expected to have adequate knowledge and skill, positive attitude and practice to effectively implement play based instruction in early childhood settings to bring better learning outcomes for children (UNESCO, 2015). Therefore, investigating preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices are important for understanding and improving educational processes in early childhood settings (OECD, 2009&2012).

In line with this literature, both consistent and inconsistent findings were obtained in the present study. Preschool teachers of the present study were found having moderate knowledge, positive attitudes and fair practices regarding play based instruction. Specifically consistent with the present finding regarding to preschool teachers level of knowledge and practice about play based instruction, a research finding conducted by Peng(2011) in Singapore on early childhood educators' knowledge and practice of learning through play in preschool classrooms revealed kindergarten teachers have adequate knowledge and practice about play based instruction.

Besides, inconsistent to the present study a research conducted in Ethiopia by Sewalem (2018) on the practice of learning through play in ECCE settings revealed that preschool teachers view play – based instruction as a daily routine, fun and pleasurable. However, teachers' knowledge and practice of learning through play was low due to the challenges such as lack of training, lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials, unavailability of enough playing ground, lack of time allocation for play, lack of support from the administrators and high child-teacher ratio.

Unlike the findings of the present study, with regard to preschool teachers attitude towards play based instruction recent research study by sjoerdsma (2016) in USA with a purpose to investigate and compare the attitudes and beliefs about play-based instruction in preschool classrooms, among a variety of early childhood professionals indicated that Kindergarten teachers and elementary administrators have mixed beliefs and attitudes about Play-based instruction. Preschool teachers can provide these developmentally appropriate opportunities based on children's interest and personal experience. However, not all preschool teachers agree on the value of play – based instruction and different teachers understand play differently in practice.

In addition, a research finding by Rengel (2013) in Croatia on preschool teachers' attitude towards play based instruction revealed that preschool teachers have mixed or contradictory attitudes towards play-based instruction, conceptualization of play in general and their roles as viewing in terms of educational tool and authentic play. The results of this research indicate that, alongside contradictory conceptualizations of play in theory, preschool teachers have contradictory attitudes towards play, and this has implications for practice, i. e. reality of early childhood education.

More specifically regarding to preschool teachers practice of play based instruction, the present finding showed that the practice of play based instruction was moderately good involving purposeful play as a major element and lacked inputs which quality ECCE program demands such as age relevant play and educational materials and adequate curriculum materials with inadequate space and time for play which in turn hinder children's physical, mental and psychosocial development.

In most observed preschools, the indoor and outdoor play materials are somewhat moderate, adequate, visually clear for children's that promotes opportunity for exploration, cooperative play, creativity and problem solving skills but with inadequate safety and proportion to the number of children, are not properly organized, partitioned, and varied. The curriculum materials was not properly adapted to the local context that mostly focuses on cognitive aspect of development particularly numeracy and literacy than incorporating other developmental outcomes that are not suited to children's developmental level. Preschool teachers found well in principle and conceptually in play based instruction but not well in practice with the required level.

Therefore, the above findings are not in line with NAEYC (2009) position statement; DAP teaching guidelines inline and the two constructivist principles (Piaget's and Vygotsky's play theories) which suggested that hence play is an important way of teaching children, appropriate and sufficient indoor and outdoor materials are necessary for the successful realization of kindergarten education because they are key to promote problem solving skills, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. It also stated that classroom materials should be systematically arranged, and easily accessible to children, labeled using a format that is visually clear and neat, varied and appeal to the multiple senses, both natural and manufactured materials, available so that children can play with identical materials at the same time, and reflect human diversity and the positive aspects of children's homes and community cultures.

Moreover, Regarding the play and learning materials, the Ethiopian ECCE strategic and implementation guideline and Preprimary Education Standard (2010) have specified that play and educational materials, trained manpower and curriculum as basic inputs to quality preschool program. It is also stated that the teaching -learning methodology should be child centered and follow play based approach having with ample developmentally (age)appropriate play materials that promotes children's discovery exploration, manipulation and the general holistic learning and development along with stimulating locally available indoor and outdoor play materials. However, in the majority of studied preschools these issues were not go in line with what Early Childhood Care and Education strategic operational plan and guideline for Early Childhood Care and Education recommends.

5.2 The Relationships between Preschool Teachers' knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Play Based Instruction

The associations between preschool teachers knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction were examined in the current study. The correlation result disclosed that there are significant associations between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction. The Pearson correlation analysis also revealed that knowledge was negatively correlated with attitude, practice and play based instruction whereas attitude and practice were positively correlated with play based instruction. This implies that attitude and practice of

preschool teachers are in moderate strength to promote play based instruction positively where as knowledge of preschool teachers is in low strength to promote play based instruction negatively.

From the qualitative data, results similar to the correlation analysis findings were obtained. A significant theme surfaced during the interviews was the presence of strong interrelationships between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction. They explained that groups of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices are not separate categories to implement play based instruction but interrelated among themselves having an inverse and positive relationship between them.

In this regard, different literatures show the existence of patterns of relationships among preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice about play based instruction. For example, Ajzen and Fishbein, (1980); Fishbein et al., (2001) stated that these three components are reciprocal and intertwined theoretically, empirically and bidirectionally, informing one another. Practices are related to knowledge and attitudes, and often involve the application of knowledge.

Similarly, according to behavior modification theory of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980); Fishbein et al.,(2001), person's attitude often determines whether he or she will use knowledge and transform it into practice. Attitudes are affected by knowledge and understanding regarding play based instruction. It is also affected by preschool teachers' interest, belief, view, perspective and perceived value of play based instruction and philosophy of teaching. In short, if one doesn't believe in or value knowledge, one is less likely to act upon it.

In summary, it can be inferred that the correlation between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction will not be out of either positive correlation or negatively correlation. It can be also either significant association or non significant association because these variables can impede or enhance the implementation of play based instruction.

5.3 Preschool Teachers' Knowledge, Attitude and Practice As a Predictor of Play Based Instruction Along With Their Demographic Characteristics

The standard multiple linear regression result shows that Preschool teachers knowledge, Attitude ,practice, educational level, experience and training type accounted for a statistically

significant amount of variability in play based instruction, $R^2 = .365, F(6,113)=10.848; P<0.05$. Stated in another way, the R^2 value was .365 thereby accounting for 36.5% of play based instruction implementation as a result of preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice along with their educational level, experience and type of training taken.

Furthermore, the significance test of the regression coefficients disclosed that from the independent variables under the study only attitude and experience were found the two significant predictors whereas others were not significant predictors. From the multiple regression analysis result it is clearly indicated that preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, educational level, experience and training are determinant teacher variables that influence the improvement of play based instruction. It was explained that the overall preschool teachers variables under the study plays a key role in the general teaching learning process improvement and play based instruction effectiveness in particular.

In support of this result, studies have attempted how preschool teachers' knowledge and attitude affect their classroom practices. For instance, Moyle's et al., (2002) research finding describes the principles underlying effective pedagogy are often linked to attitudes and expectations of educators. Attitudes about learning, teaching and the teachers' roles in classrooms serve to influence and guide teachers in their practice and teachers' beliefs about their roles were grounded in their own teaching experiences and professional knowledge which in turn lead to actions in their classroom practices with two views of teaching approaches; child-initiated and teacher-directed practices.

In line with this finding, literature says that preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice with proper qualification, experience and training in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) are very critical for the effective implementation of play based instruction in preschools. Preschool teachers with adequate knowledge and skill, positive attitude, adequate training and experience are more likely to hold child centered, age and developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices to bring better learning outcomes for children (UNESCO, 2015).

Literatures both in Ethiopian ECCE policy framework(2010) and NAEYC(2009) DAP guidelines also suggested that preschool teachers are expected to have the knowledge, attitude

and practices and understanding of all aspects of child development including theories and approaches of teaching for the successful implementation of good early teaching in general and play based instruction in particular. This helps to integrate new knowledge and skills with the current practice (MOE, 2010).

However, contrary to the current finding, OECD (2009 &2012) reported that Play based instruction, of course, is not determined just by the teacher's background, knowledge, attitudes and practices along with their demographic characteristics; but it should also be responsive to children's needs and various classroom and school background factors by which teachers hold either direct transmission or constructivist beliefs of teaching and learning.

In sum, though different arguments are posed in the above few empirical research studies and literatures, preschool teacher's knowledge, attitude and practice along with their demographic characteristics has been found to be the impetus for the effective implementation of play based instruction.

5.4 Preschool Teachers Role in Implementing Play Based Instruction

Literatures tells us preschool teachers as key players in young children's education have a complex, multidimensional and crucial roles to perform in early childhood curriculum implementation, specifically the implementation of play based approach. With regard to preschool teachers role in implementing play based instruction, a descriptive analysis of a present study uncovered a vast number of preschool teachers responded that they performed a complex and multidimensional roles such as a facilitator role followed by co-player , play observer and co –constructor role while they use play based instruction in and out of the classroom.

Similarly, the interview and observation data also revealed that Preschool teachers perform multidimensional and complex roles while using play as a means of instruction in and out of the classroom with two emerged themes such as engagement with children and as reflective pedagogists. As the researcher observed, basically most preschool teachers provided frequent attention and support to scaffold. During class time they tried to direct activities to practice by themselves. They frequently attend and scaffold not to frustrate when the activities seems

challenging to them. They were rather concerned highly to solve children`s learning problems. But sometimes they preferred to teach and whole child when they were in class room or leave them free to play and exercise by themselves when they were in outdoor activities.

Therefore, this finding is in line with the literature suggested in NAEYC(2009) position statement and DAP teaching guide line that teachers know how and when to scaffold children`s learning that is, providing just enough assistance to enable each child. Scaffolding can take a variety of forms. It can be provided in a variety of contexts, not only in planned learning (Breadkamp & cople, 2009).

Several other studies come up with mixed results; both consistent and inconsistent with the present finding .For instance this result aligns with the findings of Van Oers & Duijkers(2013) and Martlew et al., 2011) where they found Preschool teachers understood their role to be that of co-constructors, co-learners, facilitators, and scaffolders of children`s learning. Similar finding on preschool teachers role as play observers also revealed while children are playing, teachers are acting as observers; as the children are problem solving, observing provides a clear understanding of what is happening within a child`s mind to understand how they learn and how to assist them (Karia, (2014) ; Bennett et al., 1997) .

There are also specific roles preschool teachers take when they are involved in play, identified by various authors, such as: co-player (Reynolds & Jones, 2011), stage-manager, play leader (Johnson et al., 1999), collaborator, model, mediator and responsive preschool teacher (Bordova & Leong, 2016). In play based classroom, the teachers role includes adjust the daily schedule, the learning environment, the materials, interactions and activities based up on the strengths, needs and interests of children required to enhance learning opportunities with two dominant discourses of guidance; regulation and support of play (Bordova & Leong, 2010).

Unlike to the present finding, Frost et al., (2012) identified three different approaches of teachers` interactions in children`s play although there is much variation in how play is included in the classroom. These are; the trust in play approach (play observer), facilitate- play approach (scaffolder) and the learn and teach through play (co-player) approach.

The Ethiopian ECCE policy framework, strategic and operation plan guideline and the preschool curriculum standard also affirmed that the pre- primary school teachers are the first responsible

person for implementation of the pre-school program; teaching –learning methodology i.e., play based instruction in particular. Those entrusted with the responsibility of supporting the learning and development of preschool children should have the following qualities: Knowledge and skills related to holistic child development, ability to work well with children, parents and others in the preschool setting, commitment to enhancing the development of young children, love and respect for all children regardless of their culture and be advocates of the rights and the protection of the child.

Therefore, the present findings are consistent with the frameworks used to examine preschool teachers role in play based instruction set at the beginning of the study i.e. Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s constructivism play theories and the three play based approaches namely the trust – in – play approach(play observer), facilitate- play approach (scaffolder) and the learn- and- teach through play(co-player) approach.

5.5 Major Challenges Hindering Preschool Teacher’s Implementation of Play Based Instruction

Different literatures tells us Play based instruction brings both challenges and opportunities on the part of preschool teachers that may result in children either to feel bored, depressed, less motivated and interested and make them passive in the teaching learning process or creates joy because children are concrete learners than abstract learners.

Concerning to the challenges hindering preschool teachers implementation of play based instruction from the sampled preschools, a descriptive analysis of a present study revealed that a big majority of preschool teachers encountered different challenges while they use play in the classroom as a means of instruction such as lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials followed by small class size and high child-teacher ratio , inadequacy of time and space for play and lack of appropriate training on play based instruction as the most responded challenges. Other challenges such as pressure from principals and parents to focus on brining academic learning outcomes followed by difficulty in understanding the meaning of play, difficulty in balancing between teacher-directed and child-initiated play and lack of principals and family support to use play as an instruction were the least responded challenges by the participants of the study.

Likewise, the observation and interview data obtained from interviewees also supports the above quantitative result and revealed that preschool teachers encountered four emerged challenges to implement play based instruction in and out of the classroom such as preschool teachers' competency challenges ,structural challenges, attitudinal, conceptual and technical challenges and resource challenges.

Several studies come up with mixed results; both consistent and inconsistent with the present finding .For instance, Rengel's (2013) finding on the Challenges in Implementing Play-Based Approach discloses lack of; time allocation ,handling materials ,student control, space not suitable, teachers' skills ,support from school administrators and parents are the major challenges hindering preschool teachers implementation of play based instruction . similarly, Wood (2004) asserted that teachers have also identified limitations as follows: (a) pressures and expectations from parents, colleagues, and school inspectors; (b) lack of time for adult involvement;(c) the structure of the school day (timetable, fixed times for school assemblies and outdoor play); (d) downward pressures associated with the national curriculum; and (e) the emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

Moreover, Tran's (2017) research finding on the challenges of implementing play based instructions revealed that although learning through play can have a significant impact on young children's learning, there are concerns with this new approach. There have been numerous concerns with this new approach. Firstly, teachers expressed how there is a lack of time when creating a play-based classroom Secondly, teachers expressed a concern about the difficulties with assessment and teaching within play-based to meet curriculum expectations, Thirdly, teachers' understanding of the meaning of play is different across various researches and Lastly, teachers often express concerns on how to balance between teacher and child directed learning.

Few local researches conducted in Ethiopia also assured the presence of different challenges to implement play based instruction. For example, a study conducted by Animaw et al.,(2015) on the practices and challenges of ECCE in west Amhara sub region revealed that lack of teachers appropriate training, qualification and inadequacy of indoor and outdoor play materials were a major challenges to use play as a method of teaching(ANRSEB,2016).

Similarly, a study finding by Sewalem (2018) on the practice of learning through play in ECCE settings revealed that preschool teachers view play – based instruction as a daily routine, fun and pleasurable. However, teachers’ knowledge and practice of learning through play was low due to the challenges such as lack of training, lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials, unavailability of enough playing ground, lack of time allocation for play, lack of support from the administrators and high child-teacher ratio with small class size.

With regard to the challenges of the current finding basically on training, availability of play materials and preschool teachers competence along with their demographic characteristics literatures on international organization reported the following.

According to The Illinois State Board of Education Manual (2011) report and OECD(2012) report quality implementation of ECCE in general and play based instruction in particular should have ;well trained and qualified teacher, Developmentally appropriate curriculum and play materials, small class size and low child-teacher ratio, adequate instructional time and parental and other concerned bodies support. Kindergarten teachers with more training and experience are more likely to hold child centered beliefs and pedagogical practices to bring better learning outcome for children.

Similarly in Ethiopia, teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction through pre-service and in-service training (MOE, 2002). Particularly, the global ECCE Policy Framework also recognizes that at least 30 days in-service training and two weeks orientation on ECCE should be provided for facilitators’ to enhance their knowledge and skill. However, the current finding is not go in line with The Illinois State Board of Education Manual (2011) and OECD(2012) report and the Ethiopian National ECCE Policy Framework MOE(2002) strategic and operation guideline.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the major findings, conclusions drawn from the results and recommendations of the study. It begins with a brief overview of the study followed by a summary of the major findings vis-à-vis the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. Finally conclusions are drawn from the summary of major findings and recommendations are forwarded based on the conclusions of the study.

6.1 Summary

The issue of play-based instruction is considered very critical to the quality of preschool education in general and the implementation of play-based pedagogy in particular as it is the first and most appropriate method of teaching in the early years. Preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices are significant to implement play based instruction through tackling their challenges in preschool classrooms because they are key actors in the teaching –learning process.

Studies on preschool teachers knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of play based instruction from the perspective of early child hood teaching methodology in general and from the perspective of play based pedagogy in particular are hardly available in Ethiopia. Henceforth, this study was conducted with the main purpose to assess the knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of play based instruction among preschool teachers of BahirDar City Administration selected preschools.

To this end, the following five basic guiding research questions were raised in the study:

1. What is the level of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice about play based instruction?
2. Are there significant relationships between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes, practices and play based instruction?
3. To what extent do the knowledge, attitudes and practices of preschool teachers predict the implementation of play based instruction along with their demographic characteristics (educational level, teaching experience and training type)?

4. How do preschool teachers perform their roles in implementing play-based instruction?
5. What are the challenges hindering preschool teachers implementation of play based instruction?

In order to answer these basic questions, a blend of quantitative and qualitative research approaches (mixed approach), particularly sequential explanatory strategy with a priority given to the quantitative aspect was employed. Data was collected from 10 purposively selected preschools with a total of 132 participants; 121 preschool teachers, 10 school principals and one Bahir Dar City Administration Education Office ECCE focal person. Preschool teachers were selected through simple random sampling where as school principals and ECCE focal person were selected comprehensively.

Accordingly, to obtain relevant data the researcher used a total of 47 self -developed questionnaire items for preschool teachers (four background information questionnaire items was utilized to gather data about their demographic variables, while 41 scaled items were administered to collect data on preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Play based instruction constructs and two non scaled items on their roles and challenges they face while interacting and using play as an instruction were employed. Besides, interview (5 semi structured interview questions for school principals and ECCE focal person and unstructured interview for 12 purposively selected preschool teachers), observation, and document review that enrich and triangulate the questionnaire data were utilized as tools of data collection.

Consequently, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques in line with the specific purposes of the study to analyze the obtained data. Specifically, the quantitative data collected through Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and play based instruction scale were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, quartile, means and standard deviations), measures of association (Pearson correlation) and inferential statistics such as one sample t-test and standard multiple regressions using IBM SPSS version 23. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis.

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

A) The level of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice regarding play based instruction

- The quantitative data obtained from quartile and one sample t-test analysis revealed that the big majority of preschool teachers have moderate level or status of knowledge, fair practice and positive attitude towards play based instruction. This puts the general status of play based instruction in the moderate level though there were some exaggerated individual responses on knowledge and attitude items that were validated through qualitative data. The qualitative data obtained from observation, interview and document review also supplements the above quantitative results.
- Play based instruction practice in all preschools was not as per National ECCE Quality standard. Children's interest and needs in teaching and learning has not been taken into account as the required level. Learning through play in most of preschool visited was moderately practiced though teacher-centered approach somewhat dominated over child-centered approach in majority of preschools. Preschool teachers had barely attempted to develop locally made teaching materials from the surrounding.
- Most of the indoor and outdoor play based instruction practices were found below the national ECCE standard. Therefore, both indoors and out-door play based instruction practices are crucial areas that needs a lot of investment in all preschools. Most visited and sampled preschools indoor and outdoor play materials availability were also found to be much below the national standard: inadequacy of readymade and out-door playing materials, lack of playing ground and age inappropriate playing material and insecure playing ground were areas that needed great improvement. Insufficient curriculum materials approved by government, lack of cultural and age appropriate were one of the major findings in relation to curriculum. Moreover, lack of syllabus, teacher guide and student text books were major shortages.

B) The interrelationships between preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and play based instruction

The quantitative result obtained from Pearson correlation analysis depicted that knowledge was negatively correlated with attitude, practice and play based instruction at ($r = -.569, -.456, -.439, p < .05$) respectively whereas attitude and practice were positively correlated with play

based instruction at($r=.366,.532,.313,p<.05$) respectively. The qualitative data obtained from interview and observation also affirmed that Knowledge, attitude and practice of preschool teachers regarding play based instruction are significantly correlated and they are not separate categories.

Furthermore, it is disclosed as preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice exists to improve or impede their implementation of play based instruction. According to the interviewees these factors influence one another and they said that there is an inverse and positive relationship between them.

C) Preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice as a predictor of play based instruction along with their demographic characteristics.

The standard multiple linear regression result shows that Preschool teachers knowledge, Attitude ,practice, educational level, experience and training type accounted for a statistically significant amount of variability in play based instruction, $R^2 =.365,F(6,113)=10.848; P<0.05$. Stated in another way, the R^2 value was .365 thereby accounting for 36.5% of play based instruction implementation as a result of preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice along with respect to their educational level, experience and type of training taken. From the independent variables under the study only attitude and experience were found the two significant predictors whereas others were not significant predictors.

D) Preschool Teachers Roles in implementing Play Based Instruction

A descriptive analysis of a present study uncovered a vast number of preschool teachers responded that they performed a facilitator role (39.67%) followed by co-player (32.23%), play observer (19.01%) and co –constructor (9.09%) role while they use play based instruction in and out of the classroom. Similarly, the interview and observation data also revealed that Preschool teachers perform multidimensional and complex roles while using play as a means of instruction in and out of the classroom with two emerged themes such as engagement with children and as reflective pedagogists.

E) Major challenges hindering preschool teacher's implementation of play based instruction

A descriptive analysis of a present study revealed that a big majority of preschool teachers encountered different challenges while they use play in the classroom as a means of instruction such as lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials (28.1%) followed by small class size and high child-teacher ratio (21.5%), inadequacy of time and space for play (14.1%) and lack of appropriate training on play based instruction (11.6%) were the most responded challenges. Other challenges such as pressure from principals and parents to focus on bringing academic learning outcomes (9.9%) followed by difficulty in understanding the meaning of play (6.6%), difficulty in balancing between teacher-directed and child-initiated play (4.9%) and lack of principals and family support to use play as an instruction (3.3%) were the least responded challenges by the participants of the study.

The observation and interview data obtained from interviewees also supports the above quantitative result and revealed that preschool teachers encountered four emerged challenges to implement play based instruction in and out of the classroom such as preschool teachers' competency challenges, structural challenges, attitudinal, conceptual and technical challenges and resource challenges.

6.2 Conclusions and Implications of Results

The current study sheds light on the knowledge, attitudes, practices and challenges of preschool teachers regarding play based instruction under the present context of Bahirdar City Administration selected preschools because investigating preschool teachers quality or competence and the challenges they encountered is one of the determinant in-school factor for the effective implementation of ECCE program in general and play based instruction in particular.

Based on rigorous findings obtained from the multi-method instruments, the following major and specific conclusions were drawn:

The results of the present study showed that preschool teachers have moderate knowledge and fair practice while they have good attitude with regard to play based instruction along with their educational level, experience and type of training taken. This shows that it is not enough that needs concern to be scaled up the play based instruction practice as the required level and

remains necessary to increase their play based instruction knowledge, attitudes and skills because the mere presence of moderate Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of preschool teachers is not a guarantee for effective implementation of Play based instruction at higher level.

In this study; Knowledge, attitude and practice of preschool teachers regarding play based instruction are significantly correlated and they are not separate categories but interrelated among themselves and also affected by different contexts including demographic characteristics. This indicates that knowledge and attitudes of respondents were important factors in practicing Play based instruction. Moreover, all the independent variables under the study have significantly predicted play based instruction by $R^2=.365$, $F(6,113) = 10.848$, $P < .05$. From the independent variables under the study only attitude and experience were found the two significant predictors whereas others were not significant predictors of play based instruction. About 36.5 % variation of play based instruction was explained by the variation of knowledge, attitude, practice, experience, educational level and training type of the participants.

This implies that it is imperative to work on non significant predictors of this study and other variables which are not included under the study that accounted around 63.5% may predict the implementation of play based instruction. It is inferred that preschool teachers Knowledge, Attitude and Practice along with their educational level, experience and training are the associated determinant teacher variables that influence the implementation of play based instruction. The current study also further explained that Preschool teachers perform multidimensional and complex roles while using play as a means of instruction in and out of the classroom such as engagement with children and as reflective pedagogists but they encountered different challenges in implementation such as competency, structural, attitudinal, conceptual and resource challenges.

Implications of Results

These results imply that implementation of Play based instruction can be fostered through the adequate provision of preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices along with school background factors by giving more recognition on building intervention program in the implementation of play based instruction

The results of the present research may contribute to play theory, practice and further research leading to enhance the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of preschool teachers regarding play based instruction. As a result, it has implication for preschool teachers to be equipped with the right knowledge, attitude and practice to provide play based instruction in preschool classrooms through taking appropriate training, qualification and experience hence, teachers' ability determines all the activity in the teaching-learning process in the kindergarten. Therefore, continuous training and re-training about how to teach using play based instruction is advisable for the successful implementation of the play based program.

The current study further pointed out that, although there are varieties of play materials in the sampled preschools, the scarcity of some kinds of readymade play materials make children to have limited play choices. In addition, it seems that the awareness of some teachers on the available play materials is not adequate. So, the implication of findings shows that examining the knowledge and attitude of preschool teachers by itself is not a guarantee to practice play based instruction at the highest level. Consequently, it is better to consider other school background and child related factors in addition to the aforementioned teacher related variables so as to effectively implement play based instruction by tackling different challenges hindering its implementation.

The results of the study can be used by teacher training institutions and NGO's working in the field of ECCE in planning training programs of short duration for preschool teachers. With validation studies and further reliability checks, a refined version of the research design, samples and instruments could be used by future researchers to gather information from preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play based instruction. Such information would prove useful in long term curriculum for pre-service and in-service training of preschool teachers.

6.3 Recommendations

This study was basically emphasized on preschool teachers' knowledge, attitude and practical gaps along with some empirical studies and literatures. As the finding shows that preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices are very serious issues to effectively implement play based instruction in preschools. Therefore, an immediate intervention mechanism or strategy that enhances preschool teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices on the effective

implementation of Play based instruction is needed to be designed by different stakeholders (concerned bodies) in preschools of Bahirdar City Administration.

More specifically based on the findings obtained, discussions and conclusions made the following general and specific recommendations are forwarded to different stakeholders accordingly.

A) For Preschool Administrators

- ❖ This study has indicated that knowledge, attitude and practice level of preschool teachers is moderate regarding play based instruction. This is a positive sign that every important group of preschool teacher is well aware of play based instruction and scaling up these statuses should be still considered significant. It is recommended that this Practice status of preschools should be transferred, shared and utilized by other Government and Non-Government preschools in the region.
- ❖ Age appropriate and adequate indoor and outdoor organization of play centers, play materials and equipment are an important part in helping children to acquire the skills and competencies associated with preschool provision. Therefore, preschools need to provide age appropriate and well equipped play materials to facilitate the children's' need. Besides, teachers' commitment should be strengthened to prepare instructional play materials using low cost or locally available raw materials to improve the shortages.
- ❖ In most preschools, indoor and outdoor teaching (play) materials are limited. Thus, to alleviate the current shortage of play material, establishing a preschool material production center is important and teachers have to know how to produce simple and local play materials. Besides, So as to address constraints with related to inadequacy of in-door and outdoor physical setting, preschools must have a separate compound that is not shared with higher class students.
- ❖ Children can learn better if they get various play choices. However, the limited accesses of some basic play materials from the studied preschools make children disadvantaged of gaining benefit from the engagement of various kinds of play. So, it is better if the preschools buys the play materials that are not available in the school and adds play materials that have scarcity.

- ❖ Though the awareness of some teachers about play materials is good, there are also teachers whose awareness is not clear and detail. So, it is better if the preschools invite ECCE professionals to provide refreshment trainings to preschool teachers on the importance of play materials for children's holistic learning and development that ultimately fosters play based instruction practice.
- ❖ Preschool administrators must advocate for the need of play based instruction for children in all early educational settings with the underlying assumption that when children are playing they are learning to become well-rounded students. Besides, pre school administrators need to stop the 'sit and watch approach' and consider them as part of responsible persons.

For Preschool Teachers

- ❖ Preschool teachers should be organized to work as advocators of play based instruction and in this regard they should be sensitized through workshops and seminars.
- ❖ Preschool teachers should involve and use any opportunity to update their knowledge and skill on Play based instruction via with appropriate regular and continuous training, retraining, guidance and stimulation activities.
- ❖ preschool teachers should read and understand the basic concept of play, types of play and play materials, their use, indoor and outdoor play organization to implement play based teaching in line with other areas of child development, and professional knowledge of child development to build experiences that meet children's needs across multiple domains.

For Bahir Dar City Administration Education Office

- ❖ Bahirdar city Administration Education Office in collaboration with other stakeholders shall organize a panel discussion on the issue of how to teach preschool children in early childhood settings with a focus on play based instruction by allocating all the required indoor and outdoor play materials.
- ❖ The City Administration Education Office should Provide appropriate (sufficient) both in-service and pre service training in collaboration with government, NGOs and concerned bodies involved in the sector for preschool education to promote the practice

of play based instruction . Training, seminars and professional guidance should be given so as to equip teachers with appropriate knowledge, attitude and skills required at the level that helps them to implement play based instruction.

- ❖ The researcher recommends the City Administration should organize training and education about play-based instruction for preschool teachers and school administrators (both primary and preschool level) on what play-based instruction actually looks like in the preschool classroom and how students learn through play.

For Amhara National Regional State Education Bureau

- ❖ The ANRSEB in collaboration with Bahir Dar City Administration Education Office should take immediate measures to prepare developmentally appropriate and relevant curriculum materials, print and distribute the kindergarten textbooks, teacher’s guides, syllabuses, standards and other related directives to preschools with proper improvement. This will help to make the implementation of play based instruction uniform.
- ❖ The Regional Education Bureau, Zone Education Department and Woreda Education Office shall work together to solve preschool teachers knowledge, attitude and practice gap regarding play based instruction through an increased linkage and frequent supervision, follow up, monitoring and evaluation.
- ❖ The regional bureau in general and professionals in each level in particular should organize sensitization workshops and facilitate an awareness program to the preschool teachers about the general characteristics of play based instruction in collaboration with the nearest universities.
- ❖ Curriculum experts working at regional level in collaboration with assigned authorities should work to increase the pre-service training term of preschool teachers to a relatively longer period, perhaps from 10 month to two or three years that focused more deeply on preschool education related courses more importantly on play based pedagogy and other important areas of child development to enable early childhood pedagogy to be more effective.

For Further Researchers

- ❖ Further research should be done to find out whether there are significant differences in understanding and implementing play based instruction between private preschools and government preschools using comparative research design in the other study area in order to determine and describe the overall status of play based instruction practice.
- ❖ Further comprehensive research should be carried out to identify factors affecting the implementation of play based instruction such as school background and child related factors(external variables) in combination with teachers variables(internal characteristics) considered in this study to further explain their cause of relationships.
- ❖ Further research is recommended on Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and challenges of preschool teachers regarding play based instruction by taking vast participants as data sources including parents along with focus group discussion and refined instruments as data collection tools for triangulation purpose.

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APPENDICES

Appendix “A”; English version Questionnaire prepared for Preschool Teachers

Bahir Dar University

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Department of Psychology

Early Childhood Care and Education Program

Questionnaire Prepared For Preschool Teachers

Direction: The main purpose of this questionnaire is to examine preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play-based instruction in Bahir Dar City Administration.

The questionnaire contains six sections. Section one is about the demographic information of respondents, section two contains items related to preschool teachers knowledge about play – based instruction; Section three contains items related to preschool teachers attitude towards play-based instruction; section four contains items related to preschool teachers practice of play-based instruction; section five contains scale on play based instruction and section six deals with the major challenges that hinder preschool teachers play based practice and the role they perform in implementing play based instruction.

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!”

5	I have the skill of using play materials				
6	I have necessary know how and skill about teaching through play-based instruction				
7	I perceive multidimensional roles KG teachers perform in play-based instruction				
8	I know that children learn best at their developmental level and pace				
9	I know the difference between teacher-directed instruction and play-based instruction				
10	Children learn best when they use prior knowledge to construct new learning				
11	Educational materials should fit the developmental stages of children				
12	I have sufficient knowledge of early childhood teaching approaches				
13	Learning centers classroom arrangement is necessary in play – based pedagogy				

Section Three: Items to Assess Preschool Teachers’ Attitude towards Play – Based Instruction (Attitude Scale)

Instruction: The following statements are related to your attitude towards play – based instruction. Read each statement carefully and indicate your choice by putting an “✓” mark in the most appropriate place that you agreed in one of the four alternatives (use the following options: 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	Teaching children through play is good				
3	Teaching children through play is pleasant				
4	I think that Children learn best through their senses				
5	I believe that Children learn best when they engage in play rather than direct instruction				
6	It is important for me to know the pedagogy of play				
7	It is useful for me to learn the pedagogy of play				
8	I like supporting children's for problem solving				
9	I like the best learning environment that promotes exploration				

Section Four: Items to Assess Preschool Teachers' Practice of Play-Based Instruction (Practice Scale)

Instruction: Below are items to assess your practice of play-based instruction. 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 take in to account of children's interest				
2	I encourage children during play to choose among a variety of materials				
3	I employ the continuum of free play and guided play				
4	I provide opportunities for children to choose learning activities freely				
5	I employ child-centered pedagogy				
6	I use developmentally appropriate play materials for teaching in the classroom				
7	I provide play materials for manipulation				

8	I often choose play themes based on interest of children				
9	I plan time for children's cooperative learning				
10	I facilitate children's play while learning				

Section Five: Play – Based Instruction Scale

Instruction: The following statements are the general defining characteristics of play – based pedagogy. Read each items carefully and indicate your choice by putting an “√” mark in the most appropriate place that you agreed in one of the four alternatives (use the following options: 1= strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Agree and 4=strongly agree).

No	Items	Alternatives			
		1	2	3	4
1	Teachers primary role is a facilitator of children's learning				
2	Learning happens best when children's work cooperatively with their peers				
3	Teaching through hands- on experiences are best for children's learning				
4	Play-based instruction promotes holistic development and learning outcomes				
5	Free play and guided play should be balanced in the classroom				
6	Classroom environments has to be designed with a variety of learning centers /materials/				
7	Learning happens best through individualized instruction				
8	The best learning activities are guided by children's interest				
9	Play-based instruction is developmentally appropriate for children's learning				

Section Six: Questions Related to the Major Challenges Hindering Preschool Teachers Play – Based Instruction Practice and the Roles they perform in Implementing Play-Based Instruction.

Instruction: Read the questions carefully and put an “✓” mark on the appropriate choice (you can use “✓” mark more than once and above)

1. The major challenges hindering your implementation of play-based instruction in the classroom.

- A) Lack of appropriate training on play based instruction
- B) Difficulty in understanding the meaning of play
- C) Inadequate time and space allocated for play
- D) Lack of available indoor and outdoor play materials
- E) Difficulty in balancing between teacher-directed and child-initiated play
- F) Lack of principals and family support to use play as an instruction
- G) High child-teacher ratio and small class size
- H) Pressure from principals and parents to focus on brining academic learning Outcomes

2) Role of preschool teachers in practicing play-based instruction

- A) Co-player/teach and learn/
- B) Play facilitator/scaffolder/
- C) Play observer/trust in play/
- D) Play planner/co-constructor

Appendix “B”; Amharic Version Questionnaire filled by preschool teachers

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የቅድመ ህፃናት እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ፕሮግራም

በአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን የሚሞላ የጽሁፍ መጠይቅ

መመሪያ:- የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና አላማ በባህር ዳር ከተማ አስተዳደር ስር የሚገኙ የአፀደ ህፃናት ትምህርት ቤት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ዙሪያ ያላቸውን እውቀት፣ አመለካከት፣ አተገባበርና የሚያጋጥሟቸውን ችግሮች ለመመርመር ነው። ከመጠይቁ የሚገኘው መረጃ ሚስጥር የሚጠበቅና ለዚህ ጥናት ብቻ የሚውል መሆኑን አረጋግጧለሁ። የዚህ ጥናት ስኬት እርስዎ በሚሰጡት እውነተኛ ምላሽ የተወሰነ ነው። ስለዚህ ይህን መጠይቅ ሲሞሉ እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በጥንቃቄ እንዲሞሉ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

“ስለትብብርዎ ክልብ አመሰግናለሁ”

ክፍል 1: የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን ግላዊ (ዳራዊ) መረጃዎች

መመሪያ: ትክክለኛውን መልስ በትክክለኛው ቦታ የ (“✓”) ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ

1. ያታ ሀ) ወንድ ለ) ሴት
2. የትምህርት ደረጃ
 - ሀ) 10ኛ ክፍል ያጠናቀቀ/ች ለ) የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህርነት ስልጠና ሰርትፍኬት
 - ሐ) ሰርትፍኬት መ) ኮሌጅ ዲፕሎማ
 - ሠ) ዲግሪ
3. በአፀደ ህፃናት መምህርነት የሰሩበት የማስተማር ልምድ
 - ሀ) ከ0-3 አመት ለ) ከ4-7 አመት ሐ) ከ8-10 አመት መ) 11 አመትና በላይ

4. በጨዋታ ስለማስተማር ዘዴ የወሰዱት የስልጠና አይነት

- ሀ) የቅድመ -ስራ ስልጠና ለ) የስራ ላይ ስልጠና ሐ) ሁለቱንም

ክፍል ሁለት:- የአፀደ 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 ከአራቱ አማራጮች በአንዱ እርስዎ የሚስማሙበትን ትክክለኛ ቦታው ላይ የ “✓” ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ (የሚከተለውን አማራጭ ይጠቀሙ። 1- በጣም አልስማማም፣ 2- አልስማማም፣ 3- እስማማለሁ እና 4 - በጣም እስማማለሁ)

ተ.ቁ	ዓ.ነገር	አማራጮች			
		በጣም አልስማማም	አልስማማም	እስማማለሁ	በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	ስለጨዋታ ፅንሰ-ሀሳብ በቂ እውቀት አለኝ				
2	የተለያዩ አይነት የጨዋታ አይነቶችን አውቃለሁ				
3	የጨዋታ ጥቅሞችን አውቃለሁ				
4	የተለያዩ አይነት የጨዋታ መሳሪያዎችን አውቃለሁ				
5	የጨዋታ መሳሪያዎች አጠቃቀም ክህሎት አለኝ				
6	በጨዋታ ስለማስተማር በቂ እውቀትና ክህሎት አለኝ				
7	የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን ዘርፈ-በዙ ሚና እንደሚያከናውኑ እገነዘባለሁ				
8	ህፃናት በጥሩ ሁኔታ የሚማሩት በራሳቸው የእድገት ደረጃና ፍጥነት				

	እንደሆነ አውቃለሁ				
9	በመምህር ቀጥታ ትእዛዝ ማስተማር ዘዴና በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ መካከል ያለውን ልዩነት አውቃለሁ				
10	ህጻናት በጥሩ ሁኔታ አዲስ ነገር የሚማሩት በቀደመ እውቀታቸው ሲገነባ ነው				
11	የትምህርት መሳሪያዎች ከህፃናት የእድገት ደረጃ ጋር መስማማት አለበት				
12	በቅድመ-ህፃናት የማስተማሪያ ዘዴዎች ዙሪያ በቂ እውቀት አለኝ				
13	የመማሪያ ቦታዎች የክፍል ውስጥ አደረጃጀት በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ውስጥ አስፈላጊ ነው				

ክፍል ሶስት:- የአፀደ ህፃናት 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 ላይ የ “✓” ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ (የሚከተለውን አማራጭ ይጠቀሙ። 1- በጣም አልስማማም፣ 2- አልስማማም፣ 3- እስማማለሁ እና 4 - በጣም እስማማለሁ)

ተ.ቁ	ዓ.ነገር	አማራጮች			
		በጣም አልስማማም	አልስማማም	እስማማለሁ	በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ በክፍል ውስጥ ስጠቀም የምቸት ስሜት ይኖረኛል				
2	ህፃናትን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ጥሩ ነው				
3	ህፃናትን በጨዋታ ማስተማር				

	ያስደስተኛል				
4	ህፃናትን ችግር እንዲፈቱ መደገፍ ደስ ይለኛል				
5	የህፃናትን የመመርመር ፍላጎት በጥሩ ሁኔታ የሚያበረታታ የመማሪያ ክፍል ደስ ይለኛል				
6	በጨዋታ የማስተማር ዘዴን ማወቅ ለእኔ አስፈላጊ ነው				
7	በጨዋታ የማስተማር ዘዴን መማር ለእኔ ጠቃሚ ነው				
8	ህፃናት በጥሩ ሁኔታ የሚማሩት በስሜት ህዋሳቶቻቸው እንደሆነ አስባለሁ				
9	ህፃናት በጥሩ ሁኔታ የሚማሩት በቀጥታ የማስተማር ዘዴ ሳይሆን በጨዋታ ሲማሩ እንደሆነ አምናለሁ				

ክፍል አራት፡- የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ የማስተማር 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.ነገር	አማራጮች			
		በጭራሽ	አልፎ አልፎ	በአብዛኛው	ሁል ጊዜ
1	ሳስተምር የህፃናትን ፍላጎት ግምት ውስጥ አስገባለሁ				
2	በጨዋታ ጊዜ ህፃናትን ከብዙ የጨዋታ				

	መሳሪያዎች በምርጫቸው እንዲሰሩ አበረታታለሁ				
3	የነፃ ጨዋታና የድጋፍ ጨዋታን በማመዘዝን አጠቀማለሁ				
4	ህፃናት የመማር እንቅስቃሴያቸውን በነፃነት እንዲመርጡ ምቹ ሁኔታዎችን አቀርባለሁ				
5	ህጻናትን ያማክለ የማስተማር ዘዴ አጠቀማለሁ				
6	በማስተምርበት ጊዜ ለህፃናት የእድገት ደረጃ ትክክለኛ የሆኑ የጨዋታ መሳሪያዎችን አጠቀማለሁ				
7	በእጅ በመገኘት ሊያስተምሩ የሚችሉ መሳሪያዎችን አቀርባለሁ				
8	አብዛኛውን ጊዜ የጨዋታ ጭብጥ መልእክቶችን የህፃናትን ፍላጎት ግምት ውስጥ በማስገባት አመርጣለሁ				
9	ለህጻናት ትብብራዊ የትምህርት ጊዜ አቅዳለሁ				
10	በትምህርት ጊዜ ህፃናትን በጨዋታ እደግፋለሁ				

ክፍል አምስት፡- ጨዋታን መሰረት ያደረገ የማስተማር ዘዴ መጠይቅ (በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ መለኪያ)

መመሪያ፡- የሚከተሉት ዓ.ነገሮች ጨዋታን መሰረት ያደረገ የማስተማር ዘዴ አጠቃላይ መገለጫዎች ናቸው። እያንዳንዱን ዓ.ነገር በጥንቃቄ በማንበብ ከአራቱ አማራጮች በአንዱ እርስዎ የሚስማሙበትን ትክክለኛ ቦታው ላይ የ “✓” ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ

(የሚከተለውን አማራጭ ይጠቀሙ። 1- በጣም አልስማማም፣ 2- አልስማማም፣ 3- እስማማለሁ እና 4 - በጣም እስማማለሁ)

ተ.ቁ	ዓ.ነገር	አማራጮች			
		በጣም አልስማማም	አልስማማም	እስማማለሁ	በጣም እስማማለሁ
1	የመምህራን ዋነኛ አላማ የህፃናትን ትምህርት ማመቻቸት ነው				
2	መማር በጥሩ ሁኔታ የሚከናወነው ህጻናት ከጓደኞቻቸው ጋር በትብብር ሲሰሩ ነው				
3	ህፃናት ነገሮችን በመስራት እንዲማሩ ማስተማር ጥሩ የማስተማሪያ ዘዴ ነው				
4	በጨዋታ ማስተማር የህጻናትን ሁለንተናዊ እድገትና የመማር ውጤት ያበረታታል				
5	በክፍል ውስጥ በነፃ ጨዋታ ማስተማርና በድጋፍ ማስተማር መመጣጠን መቻል አለባቸው				
6	የመማሪያ ክፍሉ አካባቢ በብዙ አይነት የመማሪያ መሳሪያዎች መደራጀት መቻል አለበት				
7	መማር ጥሩ የሚሆነው ሁሉም ህፃን በግል ፍላጎቱ (በልዩ ሁኔታ) ሲማር ነው				
8	ጥሩ የመማር እንቅስቃሴ የሚመራው በህፃናቱ ፍላጎት ላይ ሲመሰረት ነው				
9	በጨዋታ ማስተማር ለህፃናት የእድገት ደረጃ የሚመጥን ትክክለኛ መማሪያ ነው				

ክፍል ስድስት፡- የአጸደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ሲተገብሩ የሚያጋጥሟቸው ችግሮችና በጨዋታ ሲያስተምሩ የሚያከናውኑት ሚና ጥያቄዎች

መመሪያ፡- ጥያቄዎችን በጥንቃቄ በማንበብ በትክክለኛ ምርጫ ላይ የ “✓” ምልክት ከሳጥኑ ያስቀምጡ (ከአንድ ጊዜ በላይ መምረጥና የ “✓” ምልክት መጠቀም ይቻላል)።

1. በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴን በክፍል ውስጥና ውጭ ለመተግበር የሚያጋጥሙ ችግሮች

ሀ. በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ዙሪያ ስልጠና አለማግኘት

ለ. የጨዋታን ፅንሰ ሀሳብ የመረዳት ችግር

ሐ. ለጨዋታ የተመደበው ጊዜና ቦታ በቂ አለመሆን

መ. የክፍል ውስጥና ውጭ የመጫወቻ መሳሪያዎች እጥረት

ሠ. በህፃናት ተነሳሽነት መጫወትና በመምህሩ ቀጥታ ትእዛዝ ጨዋታ መካከል የማጣጣም ችግር

ረ. ጨዋታን እንደ ማስተማሪያ ለመጠቀም የርእሰ መምህራንና የወላጆች ድጋፍ አናሳ መሆን

ሰ. በክፍል ውስጥ ያለው የተማሪዎች ብዛት ችግር

ሸ. ከእድገታዊ የመማር ለውጥ ይልቅ የቀለም ትምህርት ለውጥ እንዲመጣ የወላጆችና እና የርዕሰ መምህራን ግፊት

2. የአጸደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴን ሲተገብሩ የሚኖራቸው ሚና

ሀ. አብሮ በመጫወት መማርና ማስተማር

ለ. ጨዋታውን መደገፍና ማመቻቸት

ሐ. የልጆችን ጨዋታ መመልከት

መ. ጨዋታውን ከልጆች ጋር በጋራ ማቀድ

**Appendix “C”; English version Semi-Structured Interview Guiding Questions
for School Principals and ECCE Focal Person**

Bahir Dar University

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Department of Psychology

Early Childhood Care and Education Program

**Semi-structured interview guide for preschool principals and BahirDar City
Administration Education Office ECCE focal person**

Direction: The main purpose of this interview is to collect information regarding preschool teacher’s knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges of play-based instruction in Bahir Dar city administration. It also aims to assess the current status of preschool teachers’ knowledge, attitude, practice and challenges regarding play-based instruction through the provision of support and appropriate training by their principals and city administration ECCE focal person.

You are selected for the interview because the researcher believed that, the information you provide will help to enrich this study. Hence, you are kindly requested to provide the information needed objectively and honestly. It is assured that the collected information will be kept confidential and used for this research purpose only.

A) Gender.....B) Educational level.....C) Experience.....

1. How do you evaluate the current preschool teachers’ practice of play-based instruction in your preschool school? Why and how?
2. Do you think that preschool teachers’ practice of play – based instruction is hindered by the inadequate knowledge and attitude they have? How?

3. What roles do you think preschool teachers should perform to implement play-based instruction?
4. What sort of support and training provided by city administration or your school for preschool teachers about play-based instruction practice? In what way?
5. What do you think are the major challenges that hinder preschool teachers' practice of play-based instruction? Why and how?

Appendix “D”; Amharic version Semi-structured interview guide questions for school principals and ECCE focal person

በባህር ዳር ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የትምህርትና ስነ-ባህርይ ኮሌጅ

የስነ-ባህርይ ትምህርት ክፍል

የቅድመ ህፃናት እንክብካቤና ትምህርት ፕሮግራም

ለአፀደ ህፃናት ርዕሰ/መ/ራንና ለከተማ አስተዳደሩ የቅድመ-መደበኛ ትምህርት ተጠሪ የተዘጋጀ

ክፍል ቅርፅ ቃለመጠይቅ

መመሪያ:- የዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ ዋና አላማ በባህር ዳር ከተማ አስተዳደር ስር የሚገኙ የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ዙሪያ ያላቸውን እውቀት፣ አመለካከት፣ ትግበራና የሚያጋጥሟቸውን ችግሮች በተመለከተ መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ነው። ከዚህም በተረፈ የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን እውቀት፣ አመለካከትና ትግበራ አሁን ያለበትን ሁኔታ በአፀደ ህፃናት ት/ቤት ርዕሰ መምህራንና በከተማ አስተዳደሩ በኩል ለሚደረጉ የስልጠና እና የተለያዩ ድጋፎች ዙሪያ አስተሳሰብ ለመመርመር ነው።

ለዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ የተመረጠው (ሽው) አጥኝው እርሰዎ የሚሰጡት መረጃ ለጥናቱ መሳካት ይረዳል ብሎ ስለሚያምን ነው። ስለዚህ ይህን መረጃ በትክክለኛነትና በታማኝነት እንዲሰጡን በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ። ከቃለ-መጠይቁ የሚገኘው መረጃ ሚስጥር የሚጠበቅና ለዚህ ጥናት ብቻ የሚውል መሆኑን አረጋግጣለሁ።

“ስለትብብርዎ ክልብ አመሰግናለሁ”

ሀ) ያታ..... ለ)የት/ት ደረጃ..... ሐ) የስራ ልምድ.....

1. የእናንተ አፀደ ህፃናት ት/ቤት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ አተገባበር አሁን ያለበትን ሁኔታ እንዴት ይገመግሙታል? ለምን እና እንዴት?
2. የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ስለማስተማር ዘዴ ባላቸው በቂ ባልሆነ እውቀትና አመለካከት የተነሳ አተገባበራቸው ይደናቀፋል ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?

3. የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴን ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ ምን አይነት ሚናዎችን ያከናውናሉ ብለው ያስባሉ? ምንምን ያከናውናሉ?
4. ለአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴ ዙሪያ በእናንተ ትምህርት ቤት በኩልም ሆነ በከተማ አስተዳደሩ ምን አይነት ድጋፍና ስልጠና ተሰጥቶ ያውቃል? በምን አይነት መልኩ?
5. የአፀደ ህፃናት መምህራን በጨዋታ ማስተማር ዘዴን ለመተግባር የሚያደናቅፏቸው ዋና ዋና ችግሮች ምን ምን ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን እና እንዴት?

Appendix “E”; Observation Check List

Bahir Dar University

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences

Department of Psychology

Early Childhood Care and Education Program

Observation checklist for preschool teachers’ practice of play based instruction

Classroom and outdoor observation checklist

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

No	Items	Alternatives		Remark
		sufficiently available	Sufficiently unavailable	
I.	Organization of indoor and outdoor play materials			
1	Availability of developmentally appropriate play materials			
2	Proper organization of learning centers			
3	Availability of indoor play materials			
4	Availability of outdoor play materials			
5	Play materials are selected to suit children’s developmental level			
6	The arrangement of play materials enhance children’s cooperative play			
7	The supply of play materials provide sufficient opportunities for play			
II.	Details in the classroom instruction	Yes	No	Remark
1	Supervision / guiding/ of children’s during indoor and outdoor play			
2	Provision of concrete play and learning			
3	Sufficient time allocated for play			

4	Adequate space for play			
5	Employ child-centered instruction using through mother tongue language			
6	KG teachers perform multidimensional roles in line with their interaction in children's play			
7	KG teachers understand child's ZPD by providing appropriate play materials			
8	Arrange the classroom based on interest of the child			
9	Setting up play centers and activities			
10	Face difficulties in implementing play based instruction			

Comments.....

Appendix “F”; Document Analysis

Documents Reviewed

- Checklists principals use
- School minute (time table/schedule)
- Lesson plan preschool teachers prepare and use
- Number of preschool teachers in the school
- Number of children’s in one class
- preschool teachers qualification
- Availability of learning (play) materials in the classroom