

## **Practices and Challenges of Preschool Leadership and Management in Public and Private Kindergarten in Jijiga City Administrations**

Yigzaw Haile (PhD) and Bashir Hussien (MA)

**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed at examining the practices and challenges of Leadership and management in the Public and Private Kindergartens of Jijiga City Administration. To this end, a mixed research design was used and questionnaire, interview and FGD were used to collect data for the study. 8 Public ‘O’ class (preschool) and 12 private kindergartens were purposely and randomly selected respectively. All teachers (eighty-two preschool teachers) responded to the questionnaires. In depth semi structured interview were conducted with 4 public and 8 private kindergarten Preschool directors, Ethiopian Somali Regional Education Bureau’s Planning Department Head and Education Officer at the City Education office level respectively. In addition, 4 Focus Groups Discussion (2 each in Public and Private Preschools) were conduct with a total of 28 participants (8 PTA members, 16 preschool teachers and 4 Preschool directors). Percentage and thematic analysis were used to analyze quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The main findings include Private Kindergarten Preschool directors’ used more Authoritarian leadership style while Public preschools directors were democratic leaders. Similarly, both used facilitative leadership style as some point though unintentionally. In addition, they were not adequately trained in the area of leadership in early childhood education and lacked experienced in the teaching profession. Thus they feel incompetent and lack of confidence. The Preschool directors faced significant challenges including lack of experience and preschool qualification, Lack of training and knowledge of preschool curriculum; and community engagement between preschool management and parents. Consequently, the proper preschool implementation and quality of the program has greatly influenced. The study recommended that directors shall be assigned for preschools, preschool directors must be provided with proper training and development opportunities on the area of preschool leadership and management, intensive training on how to lead and manage preschools, familiar with preschool curriculum and keep quality of preschool program.

**Key Words:** Preschool leadership, Management, Practices, Challenge

Date of Submission: 02-12-2017

Date of acceptance: 23-12-2017

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background**

Since 2000, leadership in early childhood education services have expanded considerably. Globally, due to growing interest and improved preschool leadership, preprimary education enrolment increased by almost two-thirds, and it rose by almost two and half times in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. The global pre-primary gross enrolment ratio increased from 27% in 1990 to 33% in 1999 and 54% in 2012 and, if it continued to rise at the 1999–2012 rates, would reach 58% by 2015. However, there are wide differences among regions. While the ratio was 74% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 89% in North America and Western Europe in 2012, it was only 20% in sub-Saharan Africa and 25% in the Arab States (UNESCO, 2015).

New approach of leadership in early childhood education and learning was started since 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. The first infant school was opened in German by Prince Pauline in 1802 (Rusk, 1993 cited in Adane (2008). The crossing of leadership in early childhood education from Europe to the rest of the world periodically spread and resulted in the opening of kindergartens to different countries in the following years.

In the earlier period leadership in Preschool education in Ethiopia was basically through elder brother/sisters and faith based institutions namely Abiat school of the Orthodox Church, Mosques, madarasa and missionaries... for the sake of maintaining the moral values and serving the religious purpose. According to Aregash (2005) in Ethiopia the first modern leadership in kindergarten was established by French railway workers in 1908 at Dire Dewa. International communities and foreigners were main contributors and managers to introduce kindergarten in Ethiopia. As cited by Adane, in 1963 the community service based kindergartens

were established by the government in different parts of the country namely RasDestaSefer of Addis Ababa, Debrezeit, Debrebirhan, Hawasa and Asmara (UNICEF, 2007) as cited by Adane (2008).

In Ethiopian education system, preschool education leadership and management education was not an issue for a long time. When we look back to the concern and attention given to early childhood education and care there has been little work done. The 1994 Education and Training Policy states that pre-primary education helps children to get ready for primary school and the program takes three years and gives children to express their feelings, investigate their environment and learnt number. This policy, while decentralizing the education sector, furnishes a great opportunity for the leadership in private kindergarten schools to appear and flourish. The policy put forward the need for holistic approach in early age as “kindergarten will focus on all round development of the child in preparation for formal schooling”. Ministry of Education has taken the leadership role and accountability for regulating and monitoring, curriculum development, setting standards for play and learning and teachers’ qualification and accreditation of early childhood education. According to the program the expected outcome are promotion of child centered teaching, the child’s holistic learning and assigning of qualified teachers required for these education level (MoE, 2010).

Improving preschool leadership and quality of preschool education is always an issue everywhere and any time. The only difference from country to country is the target intended to be achieved i.e. the purpose. At present the government of the FDRE has taken multi-pronged measures to improve quality of preschool and leadership and education in the country. Preschool education has become one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality of education and reduction of drop out and repetition rates in later stages of schooling and it is believed to lead to higher enrollments of students (MoE, 2010).

Provision of a comprehensive early intervention by the preschool leadership is one of the effective means to end educational disparities in societies and children who received quality Preschool intervention stay in schools longer, are likely to finish high school, less likely to repeat grades and placed in special education (Dedeoglu&Alat, 2012). Moreover, Ige (2011), conclude that:

*Effective Leadership in Early childhood education is an important stage in the life of an individual. Education being provided at this age serves as the foundation on which future education rests. At this stage, proper attention needs to be given to a child since a house that is built on rock withstands the test of time while the one built on sand or shaky foundation will collapse like house of cards.*

Researches about effective Preschool leadership practices revealed that success relies on Preschool directors’ dedication and passion about early childhood care and education. In most of the effective preschools better leadership is characterized by a clear vision, especially with regard to pedagogy and curriculum, which was shared by everyone working within the setting. All the most successful Preschool leaders, in terms of child outcomes, demonstrated a strong Preschool educational focus, valued adult child interaction and supported their staff in developing better ways of engaging children. This was done through ongoing professional development (Blatchard and Laura, 2006). The identified challenges connected with developing proper Preschool leadership and management in skills were lack of trained Preschool principals and teachers related to the profession and absence of relevant continuous training. In addition to these, low status and pay of Preschool principals, teachers and other professionals were identified as particular challenges connected with developing leadership in Kindergartens.

According to the researcher’s knowledge, a thorough study was not carried out so far in the area of Preschool leadership and Management and for this reason, there is a need for an in-depth understanding of the existing Preschool Leadership practices and styles, Leadership challenges encountered by Preschool principals’ and suggesting ways to improve leadership and management in Preschool education and quality leadership brought in the preschool leadership and management. Hence, the finding of this research will help as a base line for concerned bodies to focus on the importance of leadership skill for preschools and improve early childhood education.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Existence of a strong Preschool Leadership and management in ensuring access to good quality pre-primary education has an enormous impact on a child’s primary education outcomes, with effects often lasting into later life (Berlinski et al., 2009). However, due to limited availability of strong preschool leadership, progress in access has been uneven, with considerable difference between urban and rural areas, rich and poor families and communities, and thriving and deprived regions within countries. Considerable inequity also remains in families’ access to good quality pre-primary education (Britto et al., 2014). Discrepancies are found between the expansions of preschools and preschool leadership vacuum in terms of consistency and appropriateness of instruction, which are not generally apparent in kindergarten (MoE, 2015).

According to MoE (2010), lack of detailed policy support and training of teachers by the federal government and the fact that regional governments played no role in the establishment and supervision of pre-schools meant that the participation rates in such preschools were inevitably low. This identified a number of

weaknesses in the system: lack of dedicated preschool Leaders and Managers, lack of qualified preschool teacher, limited preschool teachers training and development, lack of a standard curriculum, lack of culturally relevant storybooks, low teacher salaries and thus high turnover, the use of English as a medium of instruction, and most importantly, a lack of awareness of the importance of preschool education (MoE, 2010).

Preschool directors' leadership styles, qualities, knowledge, qualification, and training in the field of early childhood education and care are very critical for the effectiveness of the schools. All the challenges of preschools settings can be tackled with the skillful leadership of the Preschool directors. Therefore, focusing on the child learning, appropriate curriculum, conducive Preschool structure and environment, ensuring effective communication among staff and parents are all results of the excellent leadership ability of the Preschool directors while inspiring the whole staff effort and commitment. A research on effectiveness of preschools leadership revealed that the higher the qualification of the Preschool directors, the higher the quality of the curriculum experiences, the better the school structure and relationship with and between staff and parents (Sylvae et.al, 2004).

Tsegaye Sayfu (2014) in his research on practices and challenges of pre-primary education in Addis Ababa Lafto Sub City, identified shortage of trained manpower, high employee turnover, lack of teachers' training opportunity, low teacher's salary and limited parental care as some of challenges facing leadership in pre-primary education in Lafto Sub City. Moreover, the government insufficient support made negative impact on KGs education and the education office has no sufficient budget and manpower to support all kindergartens education. This forced the office to give emphasis only to government owned KGs. To this end, therefore, conducting a research exploring practices and challenges of leadership in Public and Private Kindergartens in Jijiga City Administration was essential to understand the Preschool leadership practices, styles, challenges and ways to improve and bring quality Preschool Leadership and management and enhance the professional experience of the Preschool directors' in particular and for improvement of early childhood education in general.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. What are the leadership practices of public and private kindergartens in Jijiga city administration?
2. What are the challenges of leadership in selected Public and Private Kindergartens in Jijiga city administration?
- 3.

### **1.4. Objectives**

1. To assess the leadership practices of public and private Kindergarten in Jijiga City administration.
2. To examine the challenges of leadership in public and private kindergartens in Jijiga city Administration.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Study Area**

Jijiga is a city in eastern Ethiopia and the capital of the Somali region of the country. Located in the Fafen Zone approximately 600 km from Addis Ababa at 100 km east of Harar Town and 70 km west Wajale town at the border with Somalia, this city has an elevation of 1,609 meters above sea level. The city is located on the main road between Harar and Kebribayah. Jijiga was a city of Hararghe province, but with the adoption of the 1995 Somali constitution it became the capital of the Somali Regional State. The total projected population of Jijiga City is estimated at 149,431 for two 2009 EFY (CSA, 2016).

### **2.2. Design**

A mixed-approach design uses the strengths of both methodologies to provide a broader perspective on the overall issue. By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, the researcher gained in breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration, while offsetting the weaknesses inherent to using each approach by itself.

### **2.3. Participants**

According to the Jijiga City Administration's Education Office reports, there were eight public and 58 private registered kindergarten schools in Jijiga City. However, among the registered private kindergarten schools, 20 were not functional and only 38 were active and providing services. In total, there were of 4,175 students enrolled in all active KG schools 2008 of them being girls. In addition, there were a total of 242 teachers of which only 13 were female teachers.

The sample size for the study was, therefore, 82 teachers from both public and private kindergartens, 14 schools' directors, Jijiga City Education Office Head and REB's Planning Department head bringing the total to 108 respondents. From the total of 38 active Private kindergarten schools, 12 schools (33%) were randomly selected while all the eight existing public kindergartens were selected purposively. Hence, the research studied

20 out of 46 functional kindergarten schools in Jijiga City Administration. 98 (40%) of all 242 teachers were randomly selected for the study. All 13 female teachers (2 in public and 11 in private KGs) were targeted purposively since the number of female teachers was very small. To maintain equal chance of selection of male teachers in the selected 20 schools, proportional sampling method was employed. In addition, 14 KG schools' directors (33%) were randomly selected. Given the resources implications for large sample, the researcher chose 33% as the minimum required for a representative sample. Region Education Bureau Planning Department Head and Jijiga Administration's Education Office Head were also purposively selected for direct interviews.

#### **2.4. Instruments**

The questionnaires which were prepared by the researcher, contained mostly closed ended and few open ones. All of the closed ended questionnaires were constructed in the form of Likert scale. Part one contained the background information of respondents. Part two questions were about the style of leadership which is composed of 20 items with Agree = 3, Undecided = 2 and Disagree = 1 options. Part three contained questions regarding the Preschool leadership challenges with 13 items with five options as Very High = 5, High = 4, Average = 3, Low = 2 and Very = 1. Besides, FGD and interview were used to explore the leadership practices and challenges of both public and private preschools.

#### **2.5. Data Analysis**

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages whereas thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data.

#### **2.6. Ethical Consideration**

Discussion was made with the participants on the purpose of this research. They have confirmed to participate and other issues like confidentiality and written agreement were discussed.

### **III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **3.1. Preschool Leadership and Management Practice in Public and Private Preschools**

##### **3.1.1 Qualification and Experience of Respondents**

The study revealed that majority (84.1%) of the preschool teachers were male while only remaining 15.9% were female (figures taken from the tables in this study was not included throughout the finding of this section). This information reveals that female gender had an inadequate gender representation among the preschool teachers. To ascertain details about existing leadership in preschools in Jijiga City, the study sought to find out whether all KGs and '0' level education had dedicated preschool. The results showed 100% of '0' level teachers (16) responded have preschool directors while 84.8% (56) private KGs teachers responded have preschool directors. The study further found out that 15.2% (10) of the responds replied had no preschool directors in their preschools and the majority agreed had directors. Here worth noting is the fact that although 100% of the '0' class (preschool class) teachers responded had preschool directors, they referred to the primary school directors to which the zero class is attached however, there were no dedicated directors only for preschool education in the public schools in sampled in this study. The existence of dedicated preschool directors in Private Kindergartens is a very positive and encouraging development in the ECCE program in Jijiga. During a Focus Groups Discussions, one of the PTA representative in a public Preschool, comments:

*"Sending a child to public preschools (0-class) is not better than keeping that child at home as there are not dedicated Preschools Leaders and even teachers. What we call Preschool teacher here are primary school teachers who have multiple lessons to deliver per day to which the '0' Class session is one. Most of the times, children remain idle and even fight sometimes. 65% of the time they remain unattended to unfortunately"*

In contrast, parents in Private Kindergartens feel confident that, preschool children:

*'are at least attended to and closely monitored and care for. Private Schools owners' economic progress depends on how well they care for, develop and teach young children As Parents we have a strong position to demand quality services and value for our money. To some extent more accountability is seen in the Preschool Leaderships in the private sector.'*

With regard to the teaching work experience of the preschool directors, responded agreed majority of the preschool directors had a range of years of experience ranging from 2 – 3 and 3 - 4 years with 20.7% in each of the categories making a total of 41.4%. A significant number of teachers particularly from the private preschool had either less than one-year (15.9%) or 1-2 years (15.9%) totaling 31.8% of school directors having less than 2 years' experience. The research found that this was a big concern given raised by parents, Regional Official and the teachers during the FGDs and interviews. Likewise, high mobility and teachers' turnover that could closely be related with this was also mentioned as one of the challenges of preschool education and leadership Jijiga City. Different educators in the preschool field have different perspectives. For example, Rodd (2008), oppose the idea of early child hood teachers being a Preschool director without adequate training. He

said it is not appropriate to assign teachers before they adjust themselves and feel confident to be on leadership position. He described the teachers who are directly promoted to the Preschool directors' position as 'ill prepared'. Rodd disagree with the misconception that one's successes as a preschool teacher naturally translate in to successful leader since teaching and leading are different skills. Conversely, Sadik (2014), argue that preschool teachers have many of the skills that a leader require such as experience of supporting children and adults (parents). Waniganayake.et.al (2010), reported that many of kindergarten Preschool directors identify the role of working with as well as managing adults is difficult. This is because those people promoting the teachers need to understand and consider how to prepare teachers to make the change from managing children to managing adults.

During interviews with the Preschool directors, most of the preschools directors confirmed they didn't have training in the area of leadership and early child hood education. For this reason, their involvement in the kindergarten as instructional leaders might be very difficult. It describes the nature of kindergarten setting where coordinating and creating collaborative working environment is vital. On the other hand, it shows that the significance of the leadership role and outcome is underestimated in the KGs setting by this fact.

One of the preschool directors had to say this:

*"Preschool education is the start live for any child and requires special skills set and qualifications to maximize benefit for our young children. However, our senior managers and leaders did not make connections yet between the learning and development outcome for early child learning and the management skills required to achieve. This led to significant gap in recruiting professionally qualified ECCE leaders and providing more opportunities for Preschool directors"*

### **3.1.2. Preschool Teachers Response on Practices Leadership Styles in Public and private Kindergartens**

69% of the Preschool teachers in Public schools 'disagree' that the majority of preschool directors'rely on punishment' compared to 58% in the Private Preschools responding 'Agree'. Frequent punishment is not an issue in the early childhood settings. As Shakshaft (2007) identified that preschool administrations need to focus more on communication, relationship and motivating of teachers. However, the significant number (58%) of Preschool teachers in Private Kindergarten suggests that Private preschool directors rely more on punishment. This should not have been the ideal case except the rare and reasonable cases that might need preschools use reasonable level of punishment.

One of the teachers during the FGD sessions, showed that

*"Use of punishment by Preschool Leaders and Managers significantly impacts on teachers, students and other staff's motivations and should not be entertained particularly in Private Preschools. More consultative and dialogue approach would have been more productive than punish Teachers or anyone. It does not support delivery of quality result"*

Preschool directors providing frequent orders and directions, the Private Preschool teachers' response revealed that most of the times preschool directors 'gave orders and directions'. 74% of these teachers agreed that preschool directors provided orders and directions frequently and only a handful of the respondents disagreed (8.0%). In Comparison, Preschools from the studied public Preschools disagreed (69.0%) that Preschool Leaders and Managers gave orders and directions. The same was confirmed in the interviews with parents, teachers and directors where they confessed that due to the workload and also sometimes pressures of meeting deadlines, they tend to give orders and directions more frequently to other teachers.

71.0% agreed and 63% disagree on the role of preschool leaders and management decision in different preschool activities for private and public schools respectively. This showed that Private Preschool Directors are more authoritarian than the Public Preschools. This could be related to the fact that the value for money in Private Schools dictates leaders to exert more pressure for Preschools Teachers to deliver on assigned duties by compulsion.

Regarding to group decision making, creating motivation and desire among teachers and consulting staff and taking their ideas into considerations, 100% of preschool teachers responses indicated Preschool directors 'give emphasis to group decision making' and 'create motivation among teachers' while 56.0% 'Agree' they 'consult staff and take their ideas into considerations. However, in the Private Preschools, teachers responded 85.0% 'Disagree' to items 4 and 82.0% 'Agree' to item 4 and 5 and respectively. This indicated that preschools directors do consider and employ all of this styles at different times although more authoritarian in Private and more democratic in the Public Preschools.

With regard to whether Preschool leaders and managers 'give complete freedom to staff', 'motivate and empower staff' and 'solve problem by him/herself, respondents from Public Preschools responded 69.0%, 63.0% and 38% 'Agree' respectively to the three items compared to 82.0%, 64.0% and 54.0% respectively from the Preschool teachers respondents in the private Preschools. Majority teachers confirmed that men leadership style tends to be more authoritarian and dictatorship compared to women leadership style which tends to be democratic and participatory (Shakshaft 2007). This idea was strengthened by the interviewees' in the sense of

kindergarten setting needs to care and respect every professional so that they feel supported and valued. Shakshaft (2007), have the same opinion that leadership in the preschool should emphasize on teachers motivation, empowerment, satisfaction and morale. Leaders do this by using their personal qualities which command respect and promote feeling of trust.

Concerning Preschool directors solving problems by their own, it means there are times where Preschool directors prefer solve problems by their own because they may lack freedom or confidence to share matters in early childhood development in which they are not expert at it and the culture of solving problems in teams did not develop well among the Preschool directors and staff. As Blachford and Manni(2006) reflected early childhood leaders need to exercise effective communication in the form of dialogue rather than monologue, consultation and reflection. This is a clear evidence of the situational factors force preschool directorsto give freedom for teachers who are well experienced and more responsible to be more free and independent.

A private school director who happened to be the owner of the Preschool stated this during the interview:

*“although we encourage to be more independent and free to make decisions, as managers, we should always have to be on top to avoid completion and conflict of interests. If the decision or action from the so called ‘complete freedom’ for preschool teachers seems to affects the desired results, we need to intervene. It goes without saying that teachers have to be guided and should play by our rules- the rules of the school.”*

Furthermore, in Focus Group discussions, Preschool directors were asked and responded that kindergarten heterogeneous staff combinations requires providing order and direction consistently. As there are baby sitters, assistant teachers, playground supervisors and cleaners who need frequent orders and guidance. But as teachers are matured and professionals they rarely need guidance and frequent orders. However, Preschool directors gave frequent orders and direction for new teachers who need continuous follow-ups until they get along well with the system and the setting. This indicates that Preschool directors treated teachers with less autocratic style; however, they exercised autocratic style on others. Hence, they were situational leaders.

This is because, managing and leading in kindergarten setting is characterized by the experience and environment provided for the children; the relationship between teaching staff and non-teaching staff, teachers and administration and between adults and children Waniganayake (2013).

During the interviews, one preschool director strengthened the fact that:

*“leading in the KGs is a challenging task, it needs to have an excellent communication skill to work with diversified early childhood staff combination whom we need equal respect and value for. Accommodating all differences and to bring them together and inspire the whole staff for common purpose is not a simple task”.*

Preschool directors also believed that the mismatch between parents’ expectations and school performance is one of the biggest challenges that affect effective preschool leadership.

In the interview sessions, preschool directors revealed that senior managements are usually experienced managers and aged people who are not flexible. They are “I know” type who are trained with strong belief of “controlling” managing system. Others are owners of the school (investors) whose focus is mostly on returns of the school. Whereas in the 21st century, school leadership requires the managements stand together, speak the same language, and exercise equal freedom of decision with respectful and trustworthy environment so as to lead the teachers and help each children to have a successful life.

A preschool director is the person in charge of managing a childhood education program, including overseeing hiring, budgeting and policy making. A successful preschool director must be committed to making decisions almost every time providing a safe and healthy learning environment in which children can learn, explore, imagine and discover new skills. Good directors have the organizational skills necessary to make decisions and manage day-to-day operations, as well as the interpersonal skills needed to interface between employees, parents and children. On the same wave length, the study explored the decision making roles of the preschool directors and teachers were expected to respond to questions on whether their preschool directors made decisions, 62% of all preschool teachers agreed that preschool director ‘makes difficult decisions in times of scarce resources’ while only 11% disagreed. Likewise, 67% agreed their preschool directors ‘remained positive in times of difficulty and change’ while 18% disagreed. This implies that often time preschools director makes most of the decisions and show significant leadership in day to day decisions of operating the preschool.

### **3.1.3. Response of Preschool Teachers to Challenges of Preschool leaders and Managers in Public and Private Preschools**

There is a growing body of evidence that school leadership has an impact on student outcomes second only to the influence of teachers in the classroom (Hattie, 2003; Leithwood et al, 2006; Tooley, 2009; Day et al, 2009; New Leaders for New Schools, 2009; Day et al, 2010; Barber et al, 2010). A recent RAND Corporation report found that nearly 60% of a school's impact on student achievement is attributable to leadership and

teacher effectiveness, with Preschool directors accounting for 25% of a school's total impact on achievement. Furthermore, the report found that, while effective teachers have a profound effect on student outcomes, this effect soon fades when the student moves on to another teacher, unless the new teacher is equally effective (New Leaders for New Schools, 2009). In order for students to have high-quality learning every year, whole Preschool setting must be high functioning, and this means they must be led by effective Preschool directors.

Preschool teachers responded that 'inappropriate coaching, training and evaluating of preschool teachers' was one of the biggest challenge for both public and private schools scoring 57% of the all the responses (23% very high and 34% high). Related with this was the fact that 'Absence of ECCE leaders and managers contributes to significant Curriculum problems' with 56% respondents agreeing to it. Likewise, an additional 53% agreed that 'poor preschool leadership and management led to insufficient ECCE teaching and learning materials'.

Since teacher quality is the most important in-school factor in relation to early child development and educational achievement, the extent to which school leaders are successful in driving teacher effectiveness is another major measure of their success as leaders. Developing human capital for their schools involves leaders in hiring quality teachers, evaluation and professional development, retention, leadership development, providing instructional leadership and, ultimately, dismissing staff members who are not performing. High-performing leaders need, however, to do more than understand theories of leadership or what makes effective teaching; they also need to be able to take effective action to achieve student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. Teachers tend to concentrate and deliver their duties diligently when are very well motivated including having access to educational opportunities, conducive teaching and learning environment and when under an enabling leadership.

Concerning teachers' incentives, 54% of all teachers felt that lack of preschool leader and managers leads to 'lack of incentives for school teachers' while 57% felt that 'inappropriate coaching, training and evaluating of preschool teachers'. During interviews with teachers, parents, school directors and educational officials unanimously agreed that lack of teachers' development opportunities for preschools was a significant challenge for the whole program as availability as well as accessibility of such services was very much felt. A report from McKinsey and Company (Barber et al, 2010) points out that not only is the role of preschool leadership important, it is becoming more critical as the international trend towards devolution of preschool management to the school level, and the evidence that this is increasingly more important to the success of the system, becomes widely accepted. In addition, preschools in themselves are becoming more complex, with effective leadership required to ensure young people acquire the skills and knowledge needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Pre-school curriculum should follow and incorporate play as teaching method as Chazzan (2002) (as cited Wood and Attfield, 2005) explained positive view of the functions of play in this way:

*Playing and growing are synonymous with life itself; playfulness speaks creativity and action change and responsibility of transformation. Play activity thus reflects the very existence of the self, that part of the organism that exists both independently and interdependently, that can reflect up on itself and be aware of its own existence. In being playful the child attains a degree of autonomy sustained by representations of his inner and outer worlds (Wood and Attfield, 2005).*

Preschool leaders and managers were not able to follow what teachers are doing and how learning are going on in the schools though it was supposed to ensure young children properly grow and learn. They couldn't effectively lead and manage as well as address some of the challenges voiced by parents and teachers. The problems stated by respondents are: public preschools, children (0 Class) are taught like adult with more of teachers centered, limited play materials and lack of preschool Curriculum in the schools. Besides, preschool leaders and managers did not address the issue of language instruction in schools. The respondents justified that Amharic speaking teachers are assigned to teach Somali speaking children and such practice hampered meeting the needs and expectations of preschool standards in the country. In addition, leaders and managers were unable to identify what type of teaching materials to be used in any of the preschools and how to use to ensure the developmental and cultural appropriate preschool practice. Furthermore, preschool leaders were unable to solve lack of appropriate schemes and services available for preschool children with special needs (brail and sign language etc), limited access to wash facilities, school environment are crowded, dusty and noisy particularly in the public schools. Similarly, Private schools are said to be more benefit oriented and not strict on meeting standards given the education structure is not so strong to monitor. As Ethiopian Somali Planning head of the education bureau stated:

*"Therefore, without a well-resourced and structured management of the preschool education at the REB bureau level, the myth about the preschool education will be solved soonest"*

Inconstant to the above finding, the developmental characteristics of children of pre-school age call for the curriculum that involves a variety and balance of activities that can be provided in the context of project work (Katz and Chard, 1989 as cited in Haile, 2010). They further noted that, a good preschool curriculum

provides activities that include opportunities for children to learn by observing and experimenting with real objects, balance of child-and teacher initiated activities.

In the study it was indicated that 54% of preschool teachers agreed 'low community and parent awareness on the importance of preschool education' was one of the leadership challenges in the preschool education in both public and private preschools. Likewise, 53% agreed that lack of parent follow up for their kids while about 40% also agreed lack of active communication with the stakeholders including parents in the preschool education program was a significant challenge for leaders. Lack of parents follow up for their kids, Lack of active communication with all stakeholders (Parents, teachers, children, government), Poor medium of instruction and supervision, Poor planning and management of the pre-school, Lack of commitment to achieve preschool set goals, Low community and parent awareness on the importance of preschool, Inappropriate coaching, training and evaluating of preschool teachers education, Low respect for and status of pre-school teachers, Poor pre-school's resources management, Poor management, control and record of children behaviors. This was attributed to lack of leadership and managers commitment to engage with parents. This is not consistent with MOE expectation and standard. MOE (2009) gives the responsibility to parents and care givers as they are important persons to inculcate life Preschool directors, spiritual and moral values development. But when we see experience of some parents they do not pay attention to education of their children. They simply leave the responsibility to teachers only. In relation to this idea Haile (2010) state "The parent involvement in the pre-schools has been low as compared to the numbers of children found in pre-schools. Limited numbers of parents have made contact with the teachers about their children's learning." The current findings also against other findings in sense that parents play a major role in a successful pre-school education through proper understanding of their children and assisting them as when required". Parents also try to understand the child's natural curiosity and accordingly allow him or her to explore, investigate and learn freely. They also furthermore, explained that home and school are two worlds for pre-school children, where total development takes place and homeschool relationships have an essential role to play in promoting children's educational progress. Parents and teachers must work together for better understanding of each other, guided the children cooperatively for more improved welfare of them. Home-school relationship can be improved through, home visits, parents, interviews, and meetings, parents' participation in school programs and developing material for parents (Chowdhury and Choudhury, 2012).

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Kindergarten Preschool directors' in Private Preschools tend to be more authoritarian in their style of leadership than public preschools. On the other hand, both showed were using facilitative leadership at some point, however, they were not independent and confident leaders. Rather, they were seen as dependent on instructions and directors from higher preschool managers and owners particularly in the private preschools. One main reason related with exercise of one type of style could be related with the knowledge base and experience of Preschool directors. Preschool directors and teachers' competency in the area of early childhood development and education is very essential. However, show that most of the teachers had experience between 2 – 4 years only and were not qualified ECCE leaders. Furthermore, the result also indicated that preschools education did not have a dedicated leader or managers in Public Preschool despite indicating had preschool directors. except in some Private preschools. As a result, they feel incompetent and lack confidence in the area of leadership.

Preschool leaders and managers need to be empowered to make significant decisions and be more confident and independent in the overall operations of the Preschools. Thus, the Preschool directors and teachers need quality intensive capacity building trainings and support in the area of ECCE and preschool leadership. Likewise, higher authorities should ensure recruitment of preschool leaders is based on formal ECCE qualification and experience. When preschool leaders and managers are not competent to manage such schools they tend to leave frequently leading to high turnover negatively impacting quality of Preschool Education. As to their challenges, the absence of on job training, guidelines and clear expectations and insufficient school budgets were the Preschool directors' challenges related to their kindergartens. There is lack of encouragement and trust from the top management and private school owners. Kindergarten Preschool directors did not have full freedom and power in decision making. Hence, there is top down hierarchical structure. It means, the leadership was not distributed and Preschool directors were not fully empowered. Thus, the Preschool directors' need full trust and empowerment from the senior management. There was no professional support provided in the area of leadership in the form of training or workshop by the education offices cluster supervisors or early childhood experts. The supervisors and early childhood expert themselves do not have skills and knowledge either in the area of leadership or early childhood education.

Moreover, lack of contextualized Somali ECCE curriculum, extremely limited availability of qualified workforce that lead Private schools to hire teachers from other neighboring regions leading to significant language barriers between teachers and students challenges the quality of teaching and learning process hence



the inability of the ECCE schools to meet the needs and expectations of preschool standards in the country. Poor partnership building among all stakeholders, low community awareness on the importance of early childhood education and lack of government-owned independent preschools were some of the challenges significantly stressed by the respondents as a major setback for the leadership and management of preschools education program in Jijiga and Somali as a whole.

The study recommended that preschool directors and teachers must be provided with proper training and development opportunities and teachers' recruitment and promotion to the Preschool directors' position must be based on knowledge, experience and expertise in ECCE. The REB and MOE should therefore, devise Preschool directors' developing programs particularly on improved leadership skills and early childhood education in the form of encouraging, facilitating and sponsoring Preschool directors to continue their study should also be a priority for school managements. The MOE/REB must show commitment and leadership in providing technical support and guiding role by urgently setting up a strong, well-resourced and dedicated unit to manage and oversee the planning, management and implementation of the ECCE program strong and ensure availability and accessibility of a structured and contextualized Somali preschool curriculum that is applicable to all Preschools in the City and the Region as a whole. Finally, the REB and Jijiga City Administration's Education Office must support the preschool management in improving and strengthening partnership among all ECCE stakeholders creating more partnership, parents, communities, preschool teachers, preschool directors, private sectors, donors, INGOs, UN agencies and involving policy makers in the raising awareness and providing visionary leadership in the ECCE were also suggestions made from the study.

#### REFERENCE

- [1]. AdaneKitessa(2008) Practice of Early Child Education: The case of two Selected v Kindergartens in Oromia Region, Addis Ababa University, MA Thesis. Unpublished.
- [2]. AregashAmare (2005) Status of Childhood Care, Development and Education in Ethiopia. Unpublished discussion paper. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015.
- [3]. Barber, M., Whelan, F. & Clark, M. (2010), Capturing the Leadership Premium, McKinsey & Company, <http://mckinseyonsociety.com/capturing-the-leadership-premium/>
- [4]. Britto, P. R., Yoshikawa, H., van Ravens, J., Ponguta, L. A., Reyes, M., Oh, S., Dimaya, R., Nieto, A. M. and Seder, R. (2014). Strengthening systems for integrated early childhood development services;
- [5]. Bruneforth, M. (2015). EFA's status and achievements by 2015: national, regional and global projections.
- [6]. CSA.(2013). Population Projection of Ethiopia for All Regions at Woreda Level from 2014–2017, Addis Ababa.
- [7]. Dedeoglu, N.C., &Alat, Z. (2012).Harmony between Turkish early childhood and primary mathematics education standards.Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 12(3), 2280- 2288. Retrieved November 8, 2012 Education", London School of Economic. Forum, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. June 6-8
- [8]. Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q. & Brown, E. (2010), 10 Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership, College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services
- [9]. Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q., Brown, E., Ahtaridou, E. &Kington, A. (2009), The Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes: Final Report, UK Department for Children, Schools and Families Research
- [10]. Hattie, J. (2003), Teachers Make a Difference, What is the Research Evidence? Australian Council for Educational Research
- [11]. Ige, A. M. (2011). The Challenges facing early childhood care, development and education in an era of universal basic education in Nigeria. Early Childhood Education Journal, 39(2), 161-167: DOI: 10.1007/s10643-011-0443-3. Retrieved November 8, 2012
- [12]. Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A. & Hopkins, D. (2006), Successful School Leadership: What it is and How it Influences Pupil Learning, Nottingham, UK: National College for School Leadership and Department for Education and Skills
- [13]. Ministry of Education (2010).Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP IV): program Action Plan
- [14]. Ministry of Education (2010): Strategic Operational Plan and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education in Ethiopia; (unpublished policy document)
- [15]. Ministry of Education (MOE 2010) Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP IV) 2010/2011 – 2014/2015 2003 EC – 2007 EC) Addis Ababa Federal Ministry of Education Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- [16]. New Leaders for New Schools (2009), Principal Effectiveness: A New Principalship to Drive Student Achievement, Teacher Effectiveness, and School Turnarounds, New York, NY: New Leaders for New Schools
- [17]. Rodd, J. (2008). Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism (4th ed.). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen &Unwin.

- [18]. Shakeshaft, C. (2007) *Women in Educational Administration*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- [19]. Sylva, K. et.al.(2004), *The Effective Provision of Pre- Schools Education (EPPE) Project: Final report. A Longitudinal Study*.
- [20]. UNICEF (2007). *Children and the Millennium Development Goals: Progress towards a world Fit for children* accessed from <http://www.unicef.org/publication/fields/childrenandtheMDGs.pdf>
- [21]. UNESCO (2015).*EFA Global Monitoring Report. 2000-2015: Challenges and Achievements*. Second edition, UNESCO Publishing.
- [22]. Waniganayake, M. (2013).*Leadership in early childhood in Australia: A National review*.
- [23]. Waniganayake, M. (2010).‘*Leadership in child center: is it Just another job? Special Issue: management and Leadership. Australian Journal of Early Childhood*.28(1).
- [24]. Wood and Attfield (2005).*Quality Early Childhood Education and Child Care from Birth.a cross-national analysis of governance. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 1308, pp. 245-55. performance. Journal of Public Economics, Vol. 93, No. 1-2, pp. 219-34.*

IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Yigzaw Haile "Practices and Challenges of Preschool Leadership and Management in Public and Private Kindergarten in Jijiga City Administrations." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. vol. 22 no. 12, 2017, pp. 74-83.