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Pitfalls on Child Study: Experience of Prospective Teachers of Dessie College of Teacher Education

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Abstract

This study aimed to describe the pitfalls of child study project work during practicum IV by graduating regular trainees in Dessie College of Teacher Education. The research design was descriptive survey type, and data were obtained from 214 (30 %) trainees. Questionnaires in the form of checklists and Focused Group Discussions were used in the study. Moreover, percentages, cross-tabulations, frequencies and graphs were employed. The results showed that the trainees' knowledge of the principles of child study is not adequate enough. Furthermore, Trainees' awareness of the criteria for selecting the subject to be studied in child study project is adequate enough. However, trainees' knowledge regarding the types of children's behavior to be studied indicates that, except the intellectual and social background, the rest (physical & personality) aspects are not adequately treated in the study. It is recommended that Amhara Education Bureau include a chapter on "child study" in psychology courses which allow trainees to do certain project practically before the time of practicum.

Keywords: Pitfall, Child, Child Study, Practicum, Teachers, Instructors, Prospective Teachers

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Introduction

"To teach you, I must know you. 'I pray for all of us the strength to teach our children what they must learn and the humility and wisdom to learn from them so that we might better teach (Delpit, 1992).

In the Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society, it is stated that the child-study movement arose in the last decade of the nineteenth century in several Western countries and was inspired by a number of social reform movements that aimed to improve the health and welfare of children (Jrank, 2008).

Arguably, to see the children progress and be happy is every practitioner's ultimate aim and one that gives us tremendous satisfaction and reward. Therefore, we need to be prepared to examine our practices closely to ensure that we are inadvertently supporting and not compounding children's learning opportunities. Suppose we aim to provide appropriately for all children within our settings. In that case, we should be prepared to capitalize on observational approaches' value and practical usefulness and ensure observation is a regular activity (QCA, 2000).

In any teacher education program, therefore, anywhere in the world, one will find a large part of the curriculum given to subjects such as child study, child development and child psychology (Maynard, 1966). Maynard further argued:

> *For many years education of teachers was concerned with the skill of arranging and presenting knowledge rather than studying the children. He meant that the subject matter is considered as more important than studying the children; however, unless we know how a child learns, we cannot know how to teach him, no matter what the subject matter may be. So we study the child's thinking and learning. Whatever form of professional preparation is given, it must heighten teachers' awareness of individual*

> *problems &recognition of the limitation of the class lesson approach to teaching. An emphasis on child study seems as good way of achieving these aims. (p.6)*

According to Gentry and Hooper (2016), the child study process includes the following objectives: a) analyse the children's learning and behavioural characteristics and needs b) assess aspects of the curriculum, teaching methods and materials, and school and home environmental factors that influence the children's learning and adjustment and c) develop, implement, and monitor written instructional modifications in the regular education program to improve the children's performance. Examples of modifications include individualised programming within classes, changing class placement, assigning the student to alternative or compensatory programs involving building specialists, and rescheduling subjects. Similarly, though the objectives of the child study movement were many, the main objective was to develop scientific pedagogy to provide the ways of experimental psychology to produce in finding all information about the child: sensory capabilities, physical characteristics, humour, play, religious ideas, memory, attention span, and so forth (Davidson & Benjamin, 1987).

Farrant (1980) stated that we also know it is very difficult to teach any kind of subject matter unless the child has some interest in it or curiosity about it. This fact is obviously of great importance in selecting teaching material and approach. Both Farrant and Maynard recommended that no amount of book knowledge will produce these qualities, which are related more to how they learn than what they learn, more to what they do themselves than what is done to them. Maynard posited that as teachers, we should be interested in every aspect of their behaviour from which we can gain clues about their attitudes to life and the people around them. We want to know what makes us quite different from any other child we have ever met since only this knowledge will reveal the child's needs as a person and a scholar.

Therefore, good teachers are always learning about their students how they see the world, how they think, express them and learn. Knowing and caring about students as learners helps

teachers form relationships, earn students' regard, decide what and how to teach, assess student understanding, communicate with families about student progress (Brandis, 2005).

Many scholars, including Maynard (1966) and Farrant (1980), suggest that while you are at teachers' college, however, you are likely to be asked to produce a 'Child Study' on a particular child, whom you may choose for yourself during a period of teaching practice.

According to these scholars, two methods of writing a child study exist. In one, the collected information is set out under classified headings. When this is done, conclusions about any educational problems the child may have, their causes and suggested treatment can be written.

In the second method, a diary is kept which is recorded all researcher's meetings with the child, what researchers did and what researchers learned from these meetings, about his physical, mental and personality characteristics and what you learned about his general background. The diary method ensures that no details are omitted. Still, it makes it more difficult to make an objective assessment since the information is not so clearly laid out in the questionnaire style of presentation (p. 61). Similarly, Mindes (2011) explained the three most common methods for recording observations as: anecdotal notes, running records, and logs or notebooks. Furthermore, Hodson (1986) warned that knowing what to observe, how to observe it, and describing the observations are all theory-dependent.

Regarding reflection on child study, according to Brandis (2005), child study oral presentation includes briefly describing the setting where you are getting to know your study child; Say why you chose the student. What were your first impressions; Give a verbal portrait of researcher' child study.

According to Blatchford et al. (1987), in the systematic observation in British infant schools, it was found that there were low level of children's active involvement of tasks (i.e., asking questions); teachers infrequently used individual instruction; 'off task' behaviors occurred in

less than 10 percent of all observations; and children exhibited low level of disruptive behaviors and inappropriate behaviors towards teachers. The study showed that teachers rarely used criticism, praise, discipline, etc.

In line with the importance of observation, several researchers such as Booren, Downer and Vitiello (2012), Podmore and Luff (2012), Willan (2005), and Palaiologou (2008) confirmed that naturalistic observation is an ecologically valid method that is used to assess children's behaviour.

Giardiello, McNulty and Anderson (2013) found that to have effective practices of child study, early childhood educators want to learn new ideas and be willing to examine new procedures. In their study the above researchers found that the individual children observation, assessment and planning is encouraging. This study further revealed that because some children are not observed regularly, it is difficult to get information about the current needs, interests and abilities.The study also found that most practitioners perceived observational child study as challenging.

According to Forman and Hall (2013), the following are some of the reasons that teachers offer when asked about the value of watching and listening to children: If I watch the children play, I can discover their interests; by observing children, I can assess their developmental levels; I look to see what strategies children use to attain their goals; observing children helps me know what skills the children need to practice; and when I observe children at play, I learn a lot about their personalities.

With regard to the knowledge of the child observation criteria, Motallebzadeh and Samir (2016) indicated that an increase in teaching experience increases teachers' awareness of the classroom observation criteria. The study further showed that a high percentage of Iranian EFL teachers are aware of the classroom observation criteria. Moreover, Ahtee et. al. (2009) found that teachers' role as a facilitator of learning is gaining more emphasis in the school

environment. Teachers' awareness concerning the purpose of observation, the principles of observations and the possibilities of observation offer for pupils is crucial. Similarly, Haury (2002) show that scientific observation requires skills associated with collecting and interpreting data.

Regarding the types of children behaviour to be studied, Forman and Hall (2013) identified the following domain of children's behaviors: their interests and preferences; their levels of cognitive and social development; their strategies for creating desired effects; their skills and accomplishments and; their personalities and temperaments.

In light of this idea, the intending teachers in DCTE, especially on the 4th phase practicum, 3rd-year trainees are directly involved in the teaching activity and produce child study reports in primary schools. The child studies they produce seem to be more like the one mentioned in the first method. Finally, this study ends up with reflection and written report evaluation of the trainees by their trainers. During the reflection time, it was observed that the trainees' work seems to be more of filling the format given to them with little or no knowledge and skills in conducting child study. Hence, the researchers are motivated to see whether the trainees are conducting this study with adequate knowledge and skill of child study or not.

Research questions

The main purpose of the study, therefore, was to answer the following basic questions:

1. To what extent are objectives of child study considered in trainees' child study?
2. Which principles of child study are considered in the trainees' child study?
3. How do trainees identify the subject of the study?
4. What behaviors of the children are treated in the trainees' study?

5. How do trainees explore, analyze and summarize the data to reach conclusion?

6. To what extent are the research ethics respected by trainees in their child study?

Objectives of the study

This study aimed to describe the pitfalls of child study project work during practicum IV by 3rd year-regular trainees in Dessie College of Teacher Education. Therefore, the study aimed to meet the following objectives;

1. Explore the trainees' level of using the objectives of child study in their study.

2. Explore the trainees' degree of implementation of the principles of child study.

3. Identify how trainees select the subject of their study.

4. Identity the aspects of the children's behavior that are considered in their study.

5. Examine the extent to which the data are organized, analyzed and summarized to reach conclusion.

6. Identify the extent to which research ethics are considered in the process of their study.

Significance of the study

The following contributions are expected of the result.

1. It helps teachers of the college in the preparation and evaluation of student teachers during practicum.

2. It can inform the college in general and the professional science department in particular for the consideration of topic or a course "how to conduct child study".

3. It helps trainees know how to deal with children in their carrier with social maladjustment, academic, behavior problems, etc.

4. Initiate a panel discussion among teachers for a better understanding of the conceptual framework of child study.

5. Help primary school children enjoy learning in an environment where their needs and problems are adequately considered.

6. It can serve as a springboard for further study towards bringing quality training in the college.

Delimitation of the study

The study is delimited to see only pitfalls committed by the 3rd year-regular student teachers of the college from their point of view. It did not consider the evening program and views of mentors of primary schools involved in the program because of the time and resource constraints facing the researchers.

Therefore, the findings and conclusions are based only on the experience of 3rd-year regular trainees.

Materials and methods

Since the study attempted to secure data on regular 3rd-year trainees' experience of child study, the descriptive survey research design was employed to examine the nature of pitfalls committed by the target population, questionnaires in the form of checklists and Focused Group Discussions were used in the study with samples of trainees and instructors.

Population and sampling

The target population in this study was the third year regular trainees of the Dessie College of Teacher Education in the 2012 Academic Year. There were 712 trainees in the college and all were assigned to 23 primary schools of South Wollo Zone to do their practicum. Believing

that the population is uniform, 214 (30 per cent) trainees were selected as a sample using stratified sampling techniques.

Instruments

This study's major data gathering instruments were a checklist type questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A self-constructed and administered structured checklist questionnaire that required the students to answer "Yes" or "No" for each statement was employed to collect quantitative data from the study participants. The questionnaire was prepared in English and was translated to Amharic and again back to English with the help of one English teacher and two teachers of developmental psychology to check the consistency of the original meaning. The questionnaire had four parts. The first part was about the respondents' demographic characteristics (sex, age and year level); the second part consisted of 11 checklist statements to measure knowledge of the objectives of the child study. The third part contains eight checklist statements seeking "Yes" or "No "answers about the extent to which the child study is conducted with the knowledge of the principles of child study. The fourth part consists of statements that measure behaviors such as physical aspects (12 statements), intellectual (12 statements), personality (12 statements) and social aspects of behaviors (12 statements) included in the child study. The last part of the questionnaire consists of 5 items that dealt with essential information that could be considered in the summary of child study.

The sample trainees were given a checklist prepared in line with the basic questions of the research to evaluate their child study experience. In addition to this, FGD, with 20 purposefully selected 3rd-year trainees and seven teachers in the seven streams/departments of the college, was also conducted to get a deeper understanding of how trainees conduct child studies. This was done as follows. Initially, the three researchers identified trainees who have difficulty understanding the objectives, principles and behaviors of child study in five streams in the orientation session. Then, the researchers, in the first week of child study, the

researchers selected four trainees purposely in the five streams who seemed confused about child study.

Before using all the instruments, two teacher educators, who had taught developmental psychology for at least 5 years in the college, were asked to assess the face validity of the checklists and FGD guide for the appropriateness of content and relation to child study theoretical foundation. The inter-rater reliability was calculated using the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient, which was found to be adequate (i.e., 0.82). Ford (cited in Ewing & Whittington, 2009) believed that the reliability of such instruments depends on the raters' utilization of the instrument.

Methods of data analysis

All trainees were given code numbers one up to 214. First, the frequencies of responses observed across each part of the questionnaire for the trainee were summed and then divided by the total sub responses and multiplied by a hundred to acquire percentages of child study reflection and portfolio. Therefore, cross-tabulations, frequencies, and graphs were employed. Each part on the checklist was systematically calculated to indicate the extent of the trainees' performance of the child study experience. The FGDs, which were recorded and transcribed thematically, were triangulated with the trainees' checklist results to validate the overall responses and to find out the type of pitfalls committed by the trainees. Data obtained from the checklist about participants' background information, trainee's knowledge of the objectives of child study, principles of child study; behaviors to be studied in the child study; and essential information that could be considered in the summary of child study were analyzed using percentage and graphs. However, data obtained from FGD were analyzed using narrations and words.

Results

It is recalled that this study aims at describing the pitfalls of child study committed by the 3rd year-regular student teachers of the education college of Dessie. In this section, in addition to demographic characteristics of respondents such as sex, age, and year level, the following themes are presented in order in tables and graphs:

- Knowledge of Objectives of Child Study;
- Knowledge of the Principles of Child Study;
- Awareness of the Criteria for Selecting Children in the Child Study;
- Knowledge of the Types of Behavior Studied;
- Essential Information Considered in the Summary of Child Study; and
- Trainees' Consideration of Child Research Ethics

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of trainees

	Variables		**Number**	**Percentage**
1	Sex	Male	90	42.06
		Female	124	57.94
		Total	214	100
2	Age	15-20 years	120	56.07
		21-25 years	85	39.72
		26-30 years	9	4.21
		Above 30 years	0	0
		Total	214	100
3	Year Level	1st year	0	0
		2nd year	0	0
		3rd year	214	100
		Total	214	100

As shown in Table 1 above, the majority (124 out of 214, 57.94 %) of the students were females, and in relation to the age of students, the majority (120 out of 214, 56.07 %) of the students were in the age range between 15-20 years. Hence, the mean age of students was 19.41. Besides, all of them [i.e., 214 out of 214 (100 %)] of students were third-year students.

Knowledge of objectives of child study

Research question 1:- Asked the trainees if they conduct child to study with the knowledge of a list of 11 objectives identified from the literature, which could be rated as "yes" or "no" by 214 trainees. The total trainee responses were calculated by multiplying the number of statements in the checklists headings by the total number of trainees that results in total responses.

Table 2. Summary of results of frequency, percentage and total responses of child study dimensions

No	Research question items	Frequency & Percentage		N	No of Items	Total Responses
		Yes	No			
1	Knowledge of the objective of child study	1498 (63.61%)	856 (36.39%)	214	11	2354
2	Knowledge of principles of child study	1177 (68.25%)	535 (31.25%)	214	8	1712
3	Awareness of the criteria of selecting Children in the Child Study	856 (57.1%)	642 (42.9%)	214	7	1498
4	Knowledge of behaviours to be studied in the child study					
	• Physical aspect of behaviours	856 (33.4%)	1712 (66.6%)	214	12	2568
	• Intellectual aspect of behaviours	856 (66.6%)	428 (33.4%)	214	6	1284
	• Personality traits	1819 (65.4%)	963 (34.6%)	214	13	2782
	• Social behaviours	2461 (71.8%)	963 (28.2%)	214	16	3424
5	Essential Information that could be considered in the summary of child study	749 (70%)	321 (30%)	214	5	1070
6	Research Ethics of Child Study	822 (48.01%)	890(51.99%)	214	8	1712

Out of 2354 total responses from trainees, 1498 (63.6%) of the responses were rated as “Yes” and 856 (36.4%) as “No”. However, this is not clearly supported by FGD results as a few trainees hardly mention some objectives of the child study.

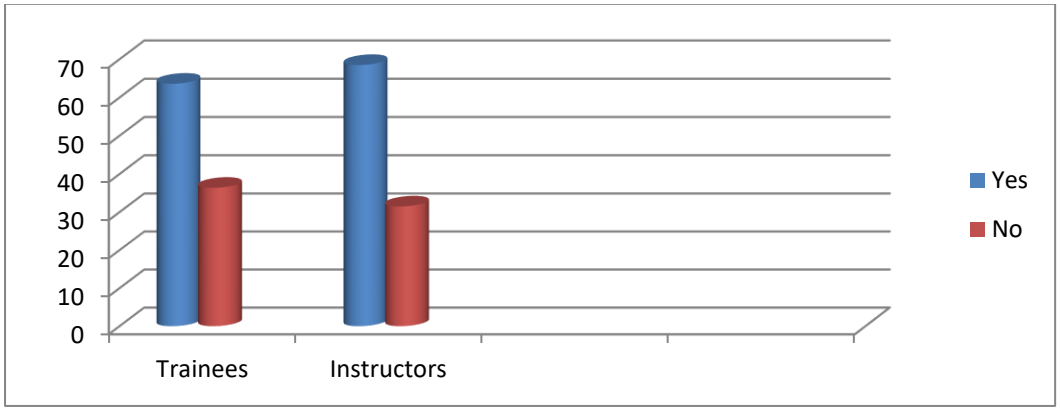

Figure1. Response on "conducting child study by knowing objectives" in percentage.

Knowledge of the rinciples of Child Study

Research question 2:-requires knowing the extent to which the child study is conducted with the knowledge of principles of child study obtained from the literature. Accordingly, out of 1712 total responses to be rated by trainees, 1177 (68.25%) of the responses were rated as "Yes" and 535 (31.25%) as "No". Although the responses obtained through the checklist indicated that the trainees conducted the study with some knowledge of the principles, the FGD result indicated that none of the participants indeed mention at least one of those principles.

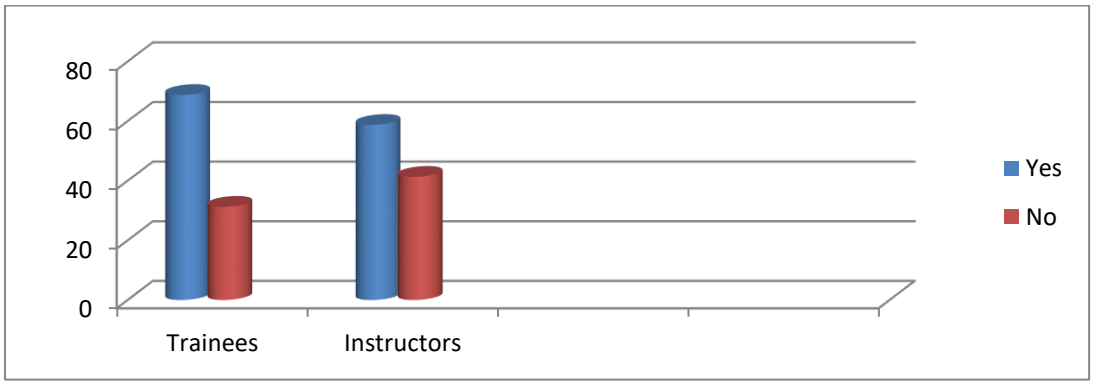

Figure 2. Response on "conducting child study by knowing principles" in percentage.

Awareness of the criteria for selecting Children in the Child Study

Research question 3:- asks sample trainees if they were well aware of the criteria to select the subject to be studied.

Out of a total of 1498 trainees' responses, 856 (57.1%) are rated as "Yes" whereas 642(42.9%) as "No". Here relatively, the FGD result confirms the checklist result described above in contrast to other study parameters indicated in questions 1 & 2.

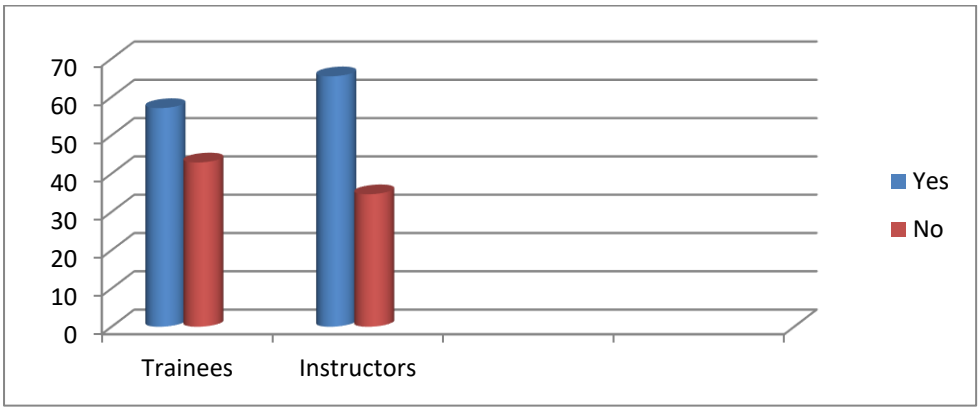

Figure 3. Response on "conducting child study by knowing the selection criteria" in percentage

Knowledge of the Types of Behavior Studied

Research question 4:- asks respondents whether the child study is conducted with the knowledge of types of behavior to be studied on the child. Under this question, the child study needs to accommodate four types of behavior. These are physical, intellectual, personality and social background. To know that each behavior is fully treated, there is a list of characteristics that describe each behavior which the respondents are required to evaluate their inclusion in the child study report.

In the first section of this question, the trainees were asked to rate as "Yes" or "No" on the 12 lists of characteristics of physical aspects to be included in the child study. From a total of 2568 trainees' responses, 856 (33.4%) were rated as "Yes" whereas 1712 (66.6%) as "No". The FGD result also indicates that the physical aspect of the child is not well described in their child study.

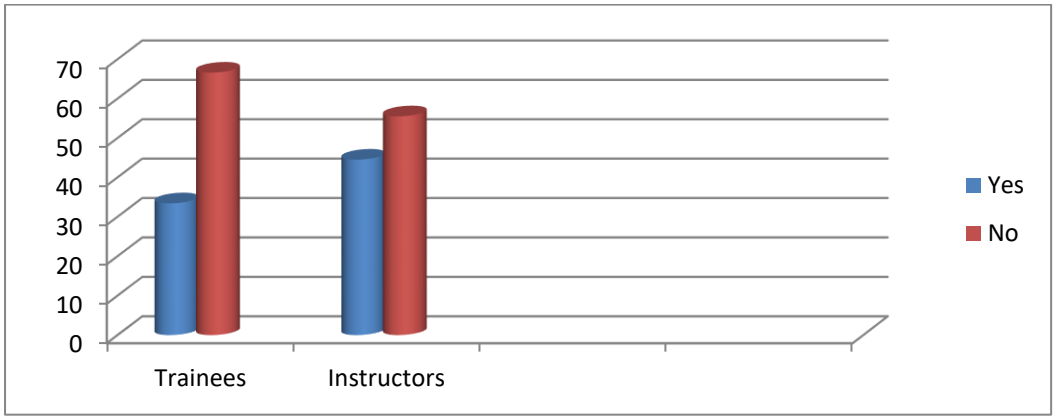

Figure 4. Responses on "the extent of physical aspects of the child" to be included in the study in percentage.

In the 2nd section of this question, trainees were required to rate as "Yes" or "No" the given six list of intellectual characteristics that can be included in the study.

From 1284 total trainee responses, the trainees rated 856 (66.6%) as "Yes" and 428 (33.4%) as "No". The FGD result also supports the checklist result that they try to accommodate most of the characteristics in the literature.

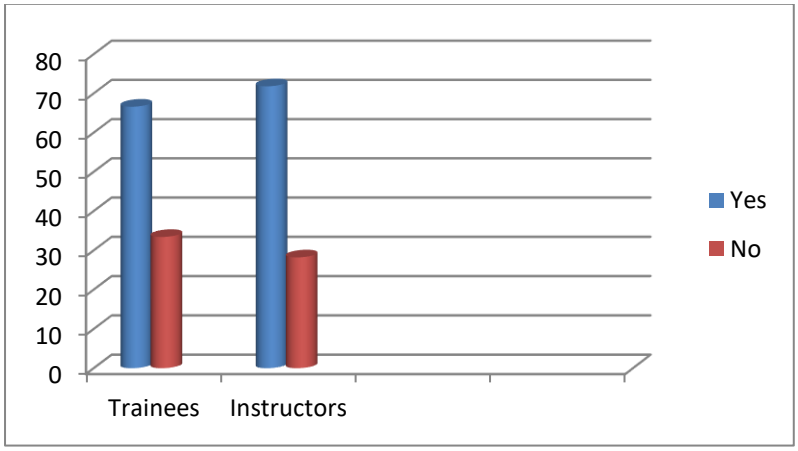

Figure 5. Responses on "the extent of Intellectual aspects of a child" to be included in the study in percentage.

In the 3rd section of the question, trainees were asked to rate as "yes" or "no" a list of 13 characteristics that belong to personality traits.

From 2782 total trainees' responses, 1819 (65.4%) trainees were rated as "Yes" and 963 (34.6%) rated as "No". The FGD result indicates that the trainees didn't include many of the personality traits in their child study.

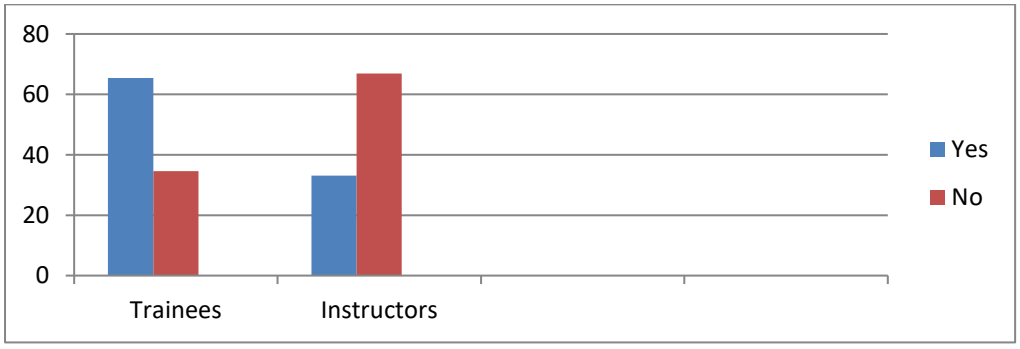

Figure 6. Responses on "the extent of personality aspects of the child" to be included in the study in percentage

In the 4th part of question 4, the respondents are given a list of 16 characteristics of social background of the child that could be included in the study.

From a total of 3424 trainees' responses, 2461 (71.8%) trainees rated as “Yes” and 963 (28.2%) as “No”.The FGD reflection also supports the above variation obtained from the checklist. It means that much of the study's social background information was well treated.

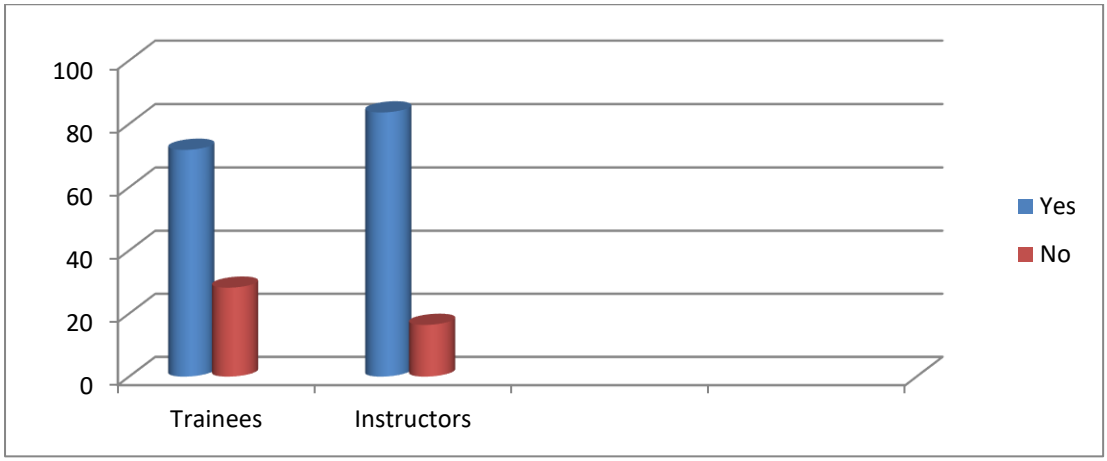

Figure 7. Responses on “the extent of social background aspects of child” to be included in the study in percentage.

Essential Information Considered in the Summary of Child Study

Research question 5:- is about essential information that could be considered in the summary. The respondents were given a list of 5 points to be rated as yes or no.

From a total of 1070 trainees' responses, 749 (70%) trainees were rated as “Yes” and 321 (30%) as “No”. The FGD result, however, contradicts the checklist response.

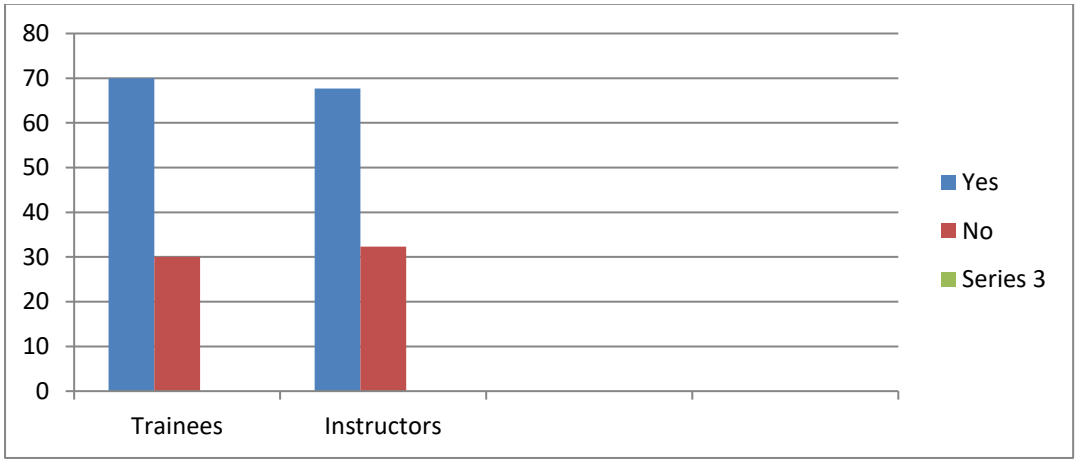

Figure 8. Responses on "the extent of inclusion of essential summary points" in the child study in percentage.

Trainees' Consideration of Child Research Ethics

Research question 6:- asks whether the trainees considered research ethics to the required level. To know this, a list of 8 ethical points was rated as "yes" or "no".

From 1712 trainee responses, 822 (48.01%) trainees rated as "Yes" and 890 (51.99%) as "No". The FGD result also indicates that many of the ethical aspects are not well respected in the child study report.

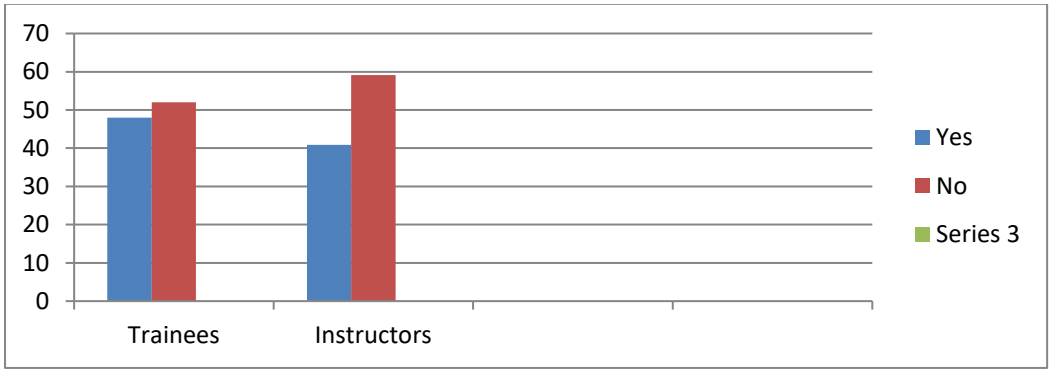

Figure 9. Response on "the extent to which the research ethics are properly considered" in the child study in percentage.

Discussion

The result of the present study disclosed that the trainees' knowledge of the objectives of child study could not be taken as reliable as the FGD did not support the checklist result. The difference in the results of the checklist and FGD might be because of the response set given by the trainees on the checklist questionnaire. The trainees' knowledge of the principles of child study too is not as adequate enough. This result contradicts the findings of Gentry and Hooper (2016). They indicated that the child study process includes the following objectives: a) analyse the student's learning and behavioral characteristics and needs, b) assess aspects of the curriculum, teaching methods and materials, and school and home environmental factors that influence the student's learning and adjustment and c) develop, implement, and monitor written instructional modifications in the regular education program to improve the student's performance. Examples of modifications include individualized programming within classes, changing class placement, assigning the student to alternative or compensatory programs involving building specialists, and rescheduling subjects.

Moreover, Ahtee et al. (2009) found that teachers' role as a facilitator of learning is gaining more emphasis in the school environment. Teachers' awareness concerning the purpose of observation, the principles of observations and the possibilities of observation offer for pupils is crucial. Furthermore, Hodson (1986) warned that knowing what to observe, how to observe it, and describing the observations are all theory-dependent.

About the knowledge of child behaviour, the finding of this study revealed that trainees' knowledge regarding the types of children's behavior to be studied indicates that, except for the intellectual and social background, the rest (physical & personality) aspects are not adequately treated in the study. This result is consistent with Forman and Hall (2013).Their study identified the following domain of children's behaviors: their interests and preferences, their levels of cognitive and social development; their strategies for creating desired effects; their skills and accomplishments; and their personalities and temperaments.

Regarding the selection criteria of children, the present study's findings showed that trainees' awareness of the criteria for selecting the subjects to be studied in child study project is adequate. Motallebzadeh and Samir (2016) indicated that an increase in teaching experience increases teachers' awareness of the classroom observation criteria. The study further showed that a high percentage of Iranian EFL teachers are aware of the classroom observation criteria. Moreover, Ahtee et al. (2009) found that teachers' role as a facilitator of learning is gaining more emphasis in the school environment, teachers' awareness concerning the purpose of observation, the rules governing observations and the possibilities of observation offer for pupils, are crucial. Similarly, Haury (2002) shows that scientific observation requires observers' assumptions and domain knowledge to influence skills associated with collecting and interpreting and data.

Regarding what to be included in the child study summary, this study found that all the responses from the checklist indicate that it is in accordance with points required in the literature. However, the FGD did not support it. This result agrees with Maynard's (1970) and

Farrant (1980) results. According to these scholars, there are two methods of writing a child study. In one, the collected information is set out under classified headings. When this is done, conclusions about any educational problems the child may have, their causes and suggested treatment can be written. This must be based on the information collected. In the second method, a diary is kept in which is recorded all the researchers' meetings with the child, what you did and what the researcher learned from these meetings, with regard to the child's physical, mental and personality characteristics and what the researchers learned about child's general background. The diary method ensures that no details are omitted. Still, it makes it more difficult to make an objective assessment since the information is not so clearly laid out in the questionnaire presentation style. Gronlund and James (2013) also indicate that as an intentional teacher, the researcher will want to plan systematic observations so that you can document each child's unique qualities, interests, developmental strengths and needs, as well as uncover their cultural practices, approaches to learning and play preferences throughout the school year.

The trainees' ability to maintain research ethics in the course of the study wasfound to be a big problem. The present study contradicts the finding of Schenk and Williamson (2005).They found that children should be informed about the limitations of confidentiality before participating in the research to enable them to give fully informed consent. Similarly, Cree and colleagues (2002) show that when conducting child study, children's need for participating in the study should be identified since they may show their dislike in other ways, such as crying or refusing to engage with materials or the researcher.

Conclusions

This research aimed to investigate the pitfalls committed during child study by regular 3rd-year trainees of DCTE. The study used a descriptive survey research design where 30% of the target trainees and instructors were involved as data sources. In addition, FGD was conducted with 20 purposefully selected regular 3rd-year trainees. The data obtained through written

questionnaire and FGD were described in percentage and words so that data source triangulation was used to validate the result of the analysis. In the entire instrument analysis there was no hundred per cent "yes" or "no" to all the questions, which means that the trainees have some gap of knowledge to do child study. Based on the analysis the following conclusions were made:

1. The trainees' knowledge of the objectives of child study cannot be taken as reliable as the FGD didn't support the checklist result.

2. The trainees' knowledge of the principles of child study too is not as such adequate.

3. Trainees' awareness of the criteria for selecting the subject to be studied in child study project is adequately enough.

4. Trainees' knowledge regarding the types of children's behaviour to be studied indicates that, except for the intellectual and social background, the study's rest (physical & personality) aspects are not adequately treated.

5. Regarding what is to be included in the child study summary; all the responses from the checklist indicate that it is in accordance with points required in the literature although the FGD didn't support it.

6. Trainees' ability to maintain research ethics in the course of the study is found to be a big problem.

Limitations of the study

Although the present study revealed important findings that can be used as input for policy makers and actual classroom practice, such results are too limited to give a comprehensive picture of the current practice of child study as one component of practicum in all Teacher Education institutions in Amhara Regional state. This study is only limited to third year

regular training program at Dessie College of Teacher Education. The data sources are also limited only to third-year trainees; regular school mentor teachers, children's parents, school principals, and supervisors were not included. Document reviews were not used to get more valuable data. Therefore, further research, which includes large areas, different audiences, various data sources, and other teacher education colleges, is recommended.

Recommendations

1. The college needs to include a chapter on “child study” in psychology courses, allowing trainees to do certain projects practically before practicum.

2. The instructors at the college need to give continuous support and follow up on the fieldwork period before the final report submission.

3. Trainees should be given appropriate orientation and a better prepared format when they go out for practicum.

4. The teacher’s preparation program of the college ought to give equal emphasis on how to teach as that on what to teach.

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