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**Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early Childhood
Care and Education in Semi-Remote Areas of Egypt:
A Study of Policy and Provision**

Wafaa M S Salama

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Education
Durham University

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Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early Childhood
Care and Education in Semi-Remote Areas of Egypt:
A Study of Policy and Provision

Wafaa M S Salama, PhD
University of Durham, 2017

Abstract

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) provision is an underdeveloped service in the Egyptian context and predominantly an urban phenomenon, it is also one which has been markedly under researched. This thesis applies a mixed-method quantitative-qualitative sequential approach to identify and consider the relationship between socio-demographic factors and ECCE provision in the semi-remote setting of Egypt's region of North Sinai. In addition, it seeks to uncover the perceptions of ECCE stakeholders (parents, care practitioners and policy makers) towards the existing ECCE policy and provision.

The findings indicated that the socio-demographic characteristics of parents and their children, in addition to the economically disadvantaged condition of the semi-remote area affected the availability, accessibility and quality of ECCE. More specifically, children's age and health alongside parental characteristics such as education, marital status, income, employment and family structure, significantly impacted childcare arrangements. Furthermore, localised contextual factors, such as neighbourhood poverty and infrastructure were also found to be affecting childcare provision. The data suggest that the top-down approach to ECCE policy design and implementation is to be rendered inappropriate and ineffectual in dealing with the socio-demographic realities associated with ECCE provision in North Sinai.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Illustrations.....	ix
List of abbreviations	xi
Declaration.....	xiii
Acknowledgments	xiv
Dedication	xv
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	2
1.2 Research Problem and Context of the Study	4
1.3 Purpose and Rationale.....	6
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Research Design and Data Collection.....	9
1.6 Research Limitations.....	10
1.7 Chapter Outline.....	11
Chapter Two: Literature Review	14
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 Egypt: Country Context	16
2.2.1 Geographic Location and History.....	16
2.2.2 Remote and Semi-Remote Areas.....	18
2.2.3 Socio-Economic Status	19
2.3 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)	24
2.3.1 ECCE in Egypt	25
2.4 Types of ECCE	28
2.5 The Significance of Early Years	30
2.6 Factors Affecting ECCE Provision	31
2.6.1 Familial Factors	33
2.6.2 Child Factors.....	41
2.6.3 Context Factors.....	44
2.7 Understanding Demographics of ECCE in Semi-Remote Areas	47
2.7.1 The Ecological Model.....	47
2.7.2 Forms of Capital Model	50
2.7.3 Other Models	54
2.8 Summary	59

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology	60
3.1 Introduction	61
3.2 Research Stagey: Rationales.....	61
3.2.1 Purpose	62
3.2.2 Paradigms (Philosophical Assumptions).....	63
3.2.3 Pragmatics	67
3.2.4 Politics.....	68
3.3 Mixed Methods Research Design	69
3.4 Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Design: Overview and Rationale.....	72
3.5 Target Population and Geography of the Research	78
3.5 Ethical Considerations	82
3.6 Summary	83
Chapter Four: Quantitative Data Collection, Analysis and Results: Phase I....	84
4.1 Introduction	85
Part I: Data Collection and Analysis.....	85
4.2 Survey Method.....	85
4.3 Questionnaire Aims.....	87
4.4 Questionnaire Variables	89
4.5 Questionnaire Design	91
4.5.1 Format and Layout	92
4.5.2 Number of Questions and Order	93
4.5.3 Content	93
4.6 Pilot Study of the Questionnaires	94
4.6.1 Questionnaire Validity.....	96
4.6.2 Questionnaire Reliability.....	98
4.7 Target Respondents/Sample	102
4.8 Survey Questionnaires Administration	103
4.9 Data Analysis: Statistical Techniques.....	104
Part II: Quantitative Results	105
4.10 Parent Participants' Demographic Characteristics	105
4.11 ECCE Provision in Semi-Remote Areas as Experienced by Parents	116
4.12 Socio-Demographic Factors and ECCE Provision: Cross-Tabulation Analysis	124
4.13 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Semi-Remote Areas and ECCE Provision: A Childcare Practitioners' Perspective	127
I-ECCE Provision: Quality Factors	127
II- Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Semi-Remote Areas.....	131

4.14 Summary.....	136
Chapter Five: Qualitative Data Collection, Analysis and Results: Phase II....	137
5.1 Introduction	138
Part I: Qualitative Data Collection Techniques	139
5.2 Semi –Structured Interviews	139
5.2.1 Interview Protocol Development	140
5.2.2 Interview Protocols Piloting	142
5.2.3 Selection of Interviewees	143
5.2.4 Conducting the interviews	146
5.3 Policy Document Analysis	148
Part II: Qualitative Data Analysis and Results.....	151
5.4 Thematic Network Analysis	151
5.4.1 The Implementation of the Thematic Network Analysis	152
- Stage One: Reduction and Breakdown of Interview Texts	152
- Stage Two: The Exploration of the Text Stage	155
- Stage Three: The Integration of the Exploration Stage	156
5.5 Global Themes and Sub-Themes Emerged	158
5.5.1 Salient Socio-Demographic Factors	158
- Child Factors	158
- Family Factors	160
- Contextual Factors	164
5.5.2 ECCE Services	171
- Care.....	171
- Educational	174
- Recreational	178
- Obstacles to Quality ECCE Services	179
5.5.3 Parenting	191
- Domestic/ Physical Care	191
- Social, Intellectual, and Emotional Care.....	194
5.5.4 Policy Response	198
- Budget and Subsidies	198
- ECCE Program	203
- Legislations	207
5.6 Summary	214
Chapter Six: Discussion of the Results.....	215
6.1 Introduction	216

6.2 Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Results	216
6.3 Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting ECCE Provision in Semi-Remote Areas.....	218
6.4 Stakeholders' Perspectives on the ECCE Policy	233
6.5 Ecological Model of ECCE Provision in Semi-Remote Areas	241
6.6 Summary	245
Chapter Seven: Implications and Conclusion	247
7.1 Introduction	248
7.2 Implications	248
7.3 Recommendations	250
7.4 Suggestions for Further Research	252
7.5 Conclusion	253
References	255
Appendices	289
Appendix A: Informed Consent Forms	290
Appendix B: Participants' Questionnaires	295
Appendix C: Interview Schedules	323
Appendix D: Qualitative Data	333
Appendix E: Laws and Decrees.....	349
Appendix F: An Arabic Summary of the Research Findings Sent to the Research Participants	365

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Elements of the worldviews and their stances	64
Table 3.2 Characteristics of the research participants	81
Table 4.1 Parents' reliability statistics	99
Table 4.2 Practitioners' reliability statistics	99
Table 4.3 Parents' questionnaire: Item mean, variance and Cronbach's Alpha if deleted.	100
Table 4.4 Practitioners' questionnaire: Item mean, variance and Cronbach's Alpha if deleted.....	101
Table 4.5 Target and actual sample size of the questionnaires	104
Table 4.6 Participants' demographic characteristics: Age	106
Table 4.7 Participants' demographic characteristics: Marital status	106
Table 4.8 Demographic characteristics: Parents' general health and disability status.....	107
Table 4.9 Participants' demographic characteristics: Number of children	108
Table 4.10 Participants' demographic characteristics: Number of pre-school children.....	109
Table 4.11 Participants' demographic characteristics: Gender of pre-school children.....	110
Table 4.12 Parents' demographic characteristics: Education level	110
Table 4.13 Parents' demographic characteristics: Job status	112
Table 4.14 Parents' demographic characteristics: Household income	113
Table 4.15 Parents' demographic characteristics: Family structure.....	114
Table 4.16 Parents' demographic characteristics: Accommodation status.....	115
Table 4.17 Main Purpose of Using Formal Childcare	116
Table 4. 18 Optimal age for formal childcare	117
Table 4.19 Hierarchy of children's needs in formal childcare.....	119
Table 4.20 Source of information for formal childcare	120
Table 4.21 Formal childcare and parents involvement.....	121
Table 4.22 Childcare sufficiency and geographical access.....	122
Table 4.23 Childcare subsidies.....	123
Table 4.24 Childcare obstacles	124
Table 4.25 Significant association between socio- demographic factors and ECCE provision according to Chi-Square test.....	125

Table 4.26 Non-significant association between socio-demographic factors and ECCE provision according to Chi-Square test	126
Table 4.27 ECCE quality factors	129
Table 4.28 Total number of pre-school children, schools and classes	130
Table 4.29 Children's age categories in formal childcare	131
Table 4.30 Effects of parents' education level on child enrollment in formal childcare	132
Table 4.31 Effects of parents' work status and work nature on child enrollment in formal childcare	133
Table 4.32 Effects of household income on child enrollment in formal childcare .	133
Table 4.33 Effects of poverty on child enrollment in formal childcare	134
Table 4.34 Poverty manifestations in formal childcare settings	134
Table 4.35 Impact of geographical location on childcare provision	135
Table 4.36 Gender discrimination and formal childcare enrollment	135
Table 5.1 Interview protocols structure	142
Table 5.2 Characteristics of the participants of the first group (Mothers)	144
Table 5.3 Characteristics of the participants of the second group (Practitioners) ..	145
Table 5.4 An example of a coded text segment.....	154
Table 5.5 Global and organizing themes of the participants' interview texts	156
Table 6.1 Key stakeholders and their main concerns	233

List of Illustrations

Figure 1.1 Kindergarten total enrolment rate across the different governorates, in Egypt 2009/10	5
Figure 2.1 Maps of North Africa and the Middle East, Egypt, and Sinai.....	16
Figure 2.2 Pre-university education systems in Egypt	26
Figure 3.1 Major mixed methods designs	73
Figure 3.2 Proposed research design	75
Figure 3.3 Map of Sinai	79
Figure 4.1 Distribution of parent participants according to age.....	107
Figure 4.2 Distribution of parent participants according to marital status	107
Figure 4.3 Parents' general health and disability status	108
Figure 4.4 Distribution of parent participants according to number of children.....	109
Figure 4.5 Distribution of parent participants according to number of pre-school children.....	109
Figure 4.6 Parents' education level	111
Figure 4.7 Parents' job status	112
Figure 4.8 parents' demographic characteristics: Household income	113
Figure 4.9 Parents' demographic characteristics: Family structure	114
Figure 4.10 Parents' demographic characteristics: Accommodation status	115
Figure 4.11 Main purpose of using formal childcare	117
Figure 4.12 Optimal age for formal childcare	118
Figure 4.13 Hierarchy of children's needs in formal childcare	119
Figure 4.14 Source of information for formal childcare	120
Figure 4.15 Formal childcare and parents' involvement	121
Figure 4.16 Childcare sufficiency and geographical access	122
Figure 4.17 Childcare obstacles	124
Figure 5.1 Global themes emerged in the current study	157
Figure 5.2 The thematic network of salient factors theme	170
Figure 5.3 The thematic network of ECCE services theme	190
Figure 5.4 The thematic network of parenting theme.....	197
Figure 5.5The thematic network of policy responses theme	213
Figure 6.1 ECCE decision making process and choices	222
Figure 6.2 Youm 7 newspaper advertisement for the admission results to the state distinguished kindergarten in Giza	227

Figure 6. 3 Private kindergarten class (North Sinai)	238
Figure 6.4 Public kindergarten class (North Sinai)	238
Figure 6.5 Ecological model of ECCE provision in semi-remote areas	244

List of Abbreviations

ARE	Arab Republic of Egypt
BCE	Before the Common Era
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
ERSAP	Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program
GNP	Gross National Product
IBE	International Bureau of Education
IDSC	Information and Decision Support Center
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MIC	Ministry of International Cooperation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
NCERD	National Centre for Educational Research and Development
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NHES	National Household Education Survey
NHES	New Hope Ethnographic Study
NICHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NSAF	National Survey of America's Families
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
SD	Socio-Demographic
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRA	Social Research Association

UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (known currently as United Nations Children's Fund)
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
US/USA	Unites States of America
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Education Forum
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed entirely by me as a result of my original research while in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University. All the published work consulted in the research report is clearly attributed and I have acknowledged all the sources of the research.

Wafaa Salama

wafaa salama

Durham, UK (February, 2017)

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First and Utmost Praise be to God

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Last but not least, it is a fact ever present in everything in the universe that perfection is a divine attribute. Although many hours of meticulous thinking and continuous work have gone into doing this research and writing its report, it is more or less a human endeavour.

Dedication

To all those I love and passed away

I think continually of those who were truly great...
The names of those who in their lives fought for life...
Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honor.

“I Think Continually of Those Who Were
Truly Great”, Stephen Spender, 1933¹

¹ Partington, A. (Ed.) (1997). Oxford concise dictionary of quotations (pp.312-313, 3rd ed.). Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

While demand for childcare services may be rising, policy responses are not automatic, in terms of either level of provision or policy design (Jenson & Sineau, 2001, p. 14).

1.1 Overview

Early Childhood Care and Education, henceforth ECCE, refers to services and activities which provide children with care, in addition to offering purposeful learning opportunities. They include a wide spectrum of settings, institutions, individuals, policies, regulations, standards, and benchmarks. The significance of ECCE for children's linguistic, cognitive, social, and emotional development as well as well-being is widely recognized (Connell & Prinz, 2002; Iram & Butt, 2004; Montie, Xiang & Schweinhart, 2006, Bower et al., 2008; Lewis, 2008). Moreover, studies, such as those of Piotrkowski, Botsko and Matthews (2000), Lewis (2003), and Conley (2010), have indicated that children who receive attentive pre-school care and education are likely to be more successful in schooling and later educational achievement than their counterparts who do not.

Institutional ECCE started to spread "in the 19th century when industrialization and urbanization began to break up traditional family structures with fathers as breadwinners and mothers as caregivers" (Burger, 2013, p. 11). Due to the changing role of women and their entrance into the workforce as well as the increase in the social factors of migration and lone mothers (Melhuish & Petrogiannis's, 2006), ECCE becomes crucial. With the changes in the society and lifestyles, a shift has emerged from the old view of ECCE as a simple support for working mothers (Kang, 2006) to a more rights based view of ECCE as an integral part of children's rights to develop and have a better life in the future (Chawla-Duggan, Datta & Etsey, 2013). Children are increasingly viewed now as citizens with full rights (Martin, 2000) after a long time of being marginalized due to their subordinate position in society (Daniels-Simmonds, 2009; Corsaro, 2011). They are as adult citizens "in their own right, with their own concerns, priorities and aspirations" (Rogers, 2004, p.134).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 reaffirmed the equal and inalienable rights of the children. It proclaimed also that children are entitled to special care and assistance in every country, in particular in the developing countries (Detrick, 1999). Children's protection, care and education, whether provided by parents, public or private bodies according to appropriate legislative and administrative measures, are genuine rights and the best interests of the children shall be a primary consideration. Those commitments are stated clearly in Article 2 and 28 of the UNCRC,

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

Article 28 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity (Detrick, 1999, p. xxiii, & xxxiv).

ECCE can be argued to ideally address the issues of protection, care and education arising from the rapid and continuing evolution of children's rights. Shehadeh (2008) indicates that ECCE services target children from age three. However, Gupta (2009) extends the scope of ECCE services and age range to include "health and hygiene, nutrition, development of cognitive, physical, social and emotional aspects as well as care and stimulation from birth to entry into the primary school" (p. xiii).

All parents have to make decisions concerning their children care and education and subsequently manage childcare choices. According to Gammage (1999), "it avers that social and economic change is now so fast that there is urgent need to address the question of how we provide love and care for our children from birth" (p.162). Some parents might believe in "home as haven" ideology and then choose family care settings for their children, as opposed to centre based care, simply because a family care setting is more 'homelike' than centre-based care (Rapp &

Lloyd, 1989). Other parents, in particular in countries with universal childcare, would increasingly prefer to send their children to centre-based care as early as possible. In addition to parents' beliefs and welfare policies, there are many socio-demographic factors which affect parents' childcare choices.

Based on the body of research that has been done concerning parental choices and socio-demographic factors (Kuo, 2004; Sylva, Stein, Leach, Barnes, & Malmberg, 2007; Cerny, 2009; Liu, 2010; Kahn & Greenberg, 2010; Moran, 2014), this study aimed at re-examining some of the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE, but from a new dimension. It focused on semi-remote areas with their peculiarities using more in-depth measures. Though it is often assumed that there is a relationship between socio-demographic factors and ECCE provision, the study also sought to uncover how such relationship was reflected in ECCE policies and stakeholders' perspectives towards those policies.

1.2 Research Problem and Context of the Study

ECCE has been increasingly incorporated in national and international agendas boosted by the global movement of 'Education For All' (EFA). This movement was led by the UNESCO and emphasized in Jomtien, Delhi, Amman, and Dakar conferences in 1990, 1993, 1996, and 2000 respectively. Since then, governments are encouraged to formulate

early childhood care and education policies within the context of national EFA [Education For All] plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programs for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal systems" (UNESCO, 2006, p.15).

Depending on prevalent cultural beliefs and values, countries vary greatly in ECCE provision "in terms of content, age groups covered, duration in years and number of hours attended" (UNESCO, 2006, p.39). ECCE does not only vary among countries, but also in some countries it varies among districts within those countries. In the context of Egypt, while the government has declared its commitment to the EFA movement and ECCE, significant disparities among areas and unmet needs of children and families can be identified. The following figure (1.1) shows obvious

differences in enrolment rate in kindergartens across the different governorates in Egypt at the time the research commenced.

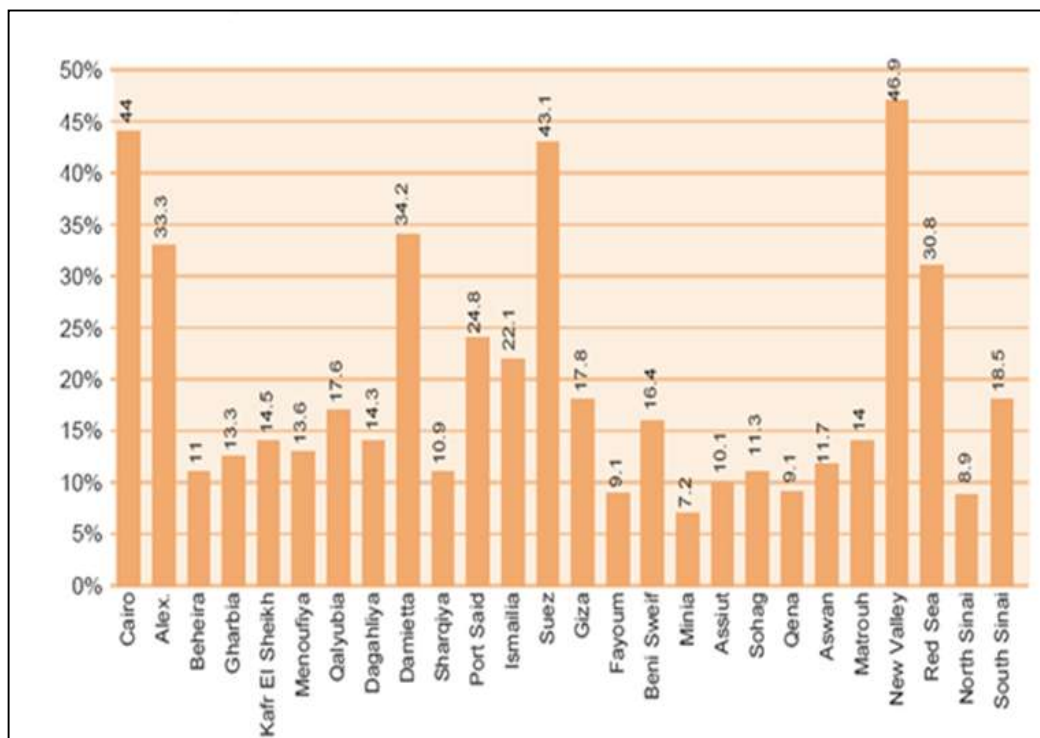


Figure 1.1 Kindergarten total enrolment rate across the different governorates, in Egypt 2009/10 (Ministry of Education, 2011, p.25)

As can be seen from the above figure, The New Valley and Cairo, for instance, have the highest enrolment rates (46.9 and 44.0 per cent respectively), while Minia and North Sinai have the lowest (7.2 and 8.9 per cent respectively). The data revealed also significant differences among the four governorates in terms of total population, rural-to-urban population density gradient, poverty index, and economic status. Further, one might hypothesize that many other socio-demographic factors, such as income, family size, gender, education, and occupation are influencing those differences and can help to explain much of the inequality in ECCE provision.

Attending ECCE in the Egyptian context is also largely associated with where the child lives. According to El-Kogal and Krafft (2015), “where a child lives geographically is also associated with his or her chance of attending ECCE.... Children living in the urban governorates have particularly high rates of attendance, especially when compared with children living in rural areas” (p.115). More

specifically, children in rural Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and the frontier governorates are significantly less likely to attend ECCE than children in urban governorates. The structure of the system of care and education can be argued to contribute to the greater inequality in children's chances of attending ECCE, as well as the deep rural-urban contrast in family services.

ECCE Policy and practices do not seem also to pay close attention to the prevailing sociocultural factors especially in frontier semi-remote governorates; including strengths and limitations of Bedouin culture. The Bedouins, as desert dwellers, are traditionally nomads who have preserved their way of life and succeeded to keep most of their traditions alive (Losleben, 2003), as those who live in Sinai Peninsula. They live in tribes which exist as a social formation of solidarity among its members and a base for social, economical and political cooperation. However, it is not considered to "be a closed social system, but rather an indirectly ruled administrative division or dependency of the state" (Marx, 2015, p. 52). North Sinai has many tribes and sub-tribes, among them Tarabin, Sawarkeh, Remeilat, Biadeyia, and Fawakheria (Shoqeir, 1991). It is quite often to find three-generational families dwelling the same house; grandparents, parents, and children.

The Bedouin society is characterized by endogamous marriage, big family size, and close family connections (Ibrahim, 2012). Although the majority of the Bedouins in North Sinai have integrated in modern urbanization in terms of ceasing wandering and living in permanent settlement, endogamous marriage, polygamy, and traditional jobs continue to exist. Moreover, there are no significant changes to men's and women's household roles. Childcare is the mother's responsibility which is shared with other women in the family due to the family oriented style of living for the Bedouins. With the increase of immigrant families from Egypt's mainland to Sinai Peninsula and living with the Bedouins in the same areas, an essential change took place in the attitude of the Bedouins and the other residents to ECCE.

This research originated from a personal curiosity with the way socio-demographic factors affects ECCE in semi-remote areas of Egypt. One of the important but relatively less investigated areas of childcare and education research in Egypt is the study of the disparities in ECCE provision in terms of the affecting

socio-demographics and stakeholders' perspectives on the existing ECCE policy and its response to those factors. ECCE is even under-investigated in the whole Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as proven in a meta-analysis review of evidence on the benefits of early childhood interventions in 23 countries worldwide (Nores & Barnett, 2010), in which no representative country from the MENA region was included (Krafft, 2015). Most of the studies conducted in the Egyptian context and reviewed by the researcher focused on improving skills or abilities for young children depending on cause and effect relationships. More specifically, some studies examined the effects of a certain type of education, such as the effects of museum education on deepening kindergarten children's cultural heritage (Abdellatif, 2009), and the role of music education on developing some linguistic skills for pre-school children (Bagdadi, 2009) and the concept of happiness (Atar, 2011). Other studies tackled some sort of activities or strategies, such as the study of activities based on parents' involvement and their impact on developing some thinking skills for kindergarten children (Bashier, 2010), and the impact of early intervention strategies on special needs kindergarten children (Qashqari, 2011).

In essence, very little research has been conducted on ECCE in Egypt especially that in semi-remote areas, a gap in the research which this thesis seeks to address. For the purpose of this study one semi-remote area has been selected for in-depth investigation, namely North Sinai Governorate¹. It is located in the northern part of Sinai Peninsula, north east of Egypt. It is bordered in the east by Gaza Strip of Palestine and Israel. It covers approximately 2.75 per cent of the total area of Egypt and because of its location; it is the home of the biggest Bedouin population in the country. It has five main centres, Bir-Alabd, Rafah, Sheikh Zewaid, Hassana, and Nekhel, in addition to its capital city El-Arish. Due to the geography of the place featuring vast desert, aridity climate, and long distance far from central populous governorates, North Sinai has its unique semi-remote nature.

1.3 Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of the current study is to identify the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in the semi-remote setting of Egypt's region of North

¹ See map of Egypt and Sinai in Chapter 2 Figure 2.1.

Sinai. In addition, it seeks to uncover the perceptions of the stakeholders (parents, care practitioners, and policy makers) towards the existing ECCE policies and their response to the influential socio-demographic factors. The importance of socio-demographic factors lies in the fact that they can significantly affect family and children's life. ECCE policy is "often part of much wider policy agenda....., interweaving early years developments with other linked social goals" (Baldock, Fitzgerald & Kay, 2005, p.39). Giamouridis and Bagley (2006) highlight the role of policies, in particular educational policy, in responding to changes in the society. More specifically, they emphasize how important it is to place the country's educational policy in its wider political, cultural, and socio-economic context. The examination of the impact of socio-demographic factors on ECCE provision in the study involves the analysis of the ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) of ECCE in semi-remote areas as well as cultural, social, economic (Bourdieu, 1986) and family capitals (Diamond & Gomez, 2004) which intersect, overlap and affect childcare provision.

A significant aspect of the study is the nature of the investigation itself, which combines orientations from different fields of enquiry; education, sociology, anthropology, and policy studies. It updates and enlarges the evidence of the effects of socio-demographic factors on ECCE provision, in particular in semi-remote areas. Furthermore, the inclusion of multiple methods of data collection makes it possible to obtain insights into parenting culture in terms of ECCE arrangements and practices. In short, the study tries to make an original contribution to its field of knowledge by profiling the provision of ECCE in Egypt in general and remote areas in particular, and stakeholders' (mothers, practitioners and policy makers) perspectives towards the ECCE policy and its response to the influential socio-demographic factors.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions posed in the current study were informed by insights from the review of relevant literature (discussed in details in Chapter Two). More specifically, invaluable suggestions were gleaned from research on equality, quality, access and attendance of ECCE (Habibov, 2012; Marshall, Robeson, Tracy, Frye & Roberts d, 2013), studies on childcare provision and socio-demographics (Cerny,

2009; Liu, 2010; Liu & Anderson, 2012), and work on ECCE policies and state welfare (Dawson, 2008; Kaga, Bennett & Moss, 2010; Pellegrino, 2010).

The research questions focused on two broad variables; socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision and stakeholders' perspective on ECCE policy. Accordingly, the study had two exploratory questions as follow:

1. What were the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in North Sinai as a semi-remote area in Egypt?
2. What were the perspectives of the stakeholders (parents, care practitioners, and policy makers) in relation to the existing ECCE policy and its response to the socio-demographic factors?

1.5 Research Design and Data Collection

The choice of the research design in this study was entirely operationalized by the notion of 'fitness for purpose', argued by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), to provide in-depth analysis and interpretation of data regarding the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in terms of childcare arrangements and activities, and stakeholders' perspectives on ECCE policy and its response to the identified socio-demographic factors. Accordingly, a mixed methods research design was adopted to address the research problem and the related research questions. Mixed methods research combining quantitative and qualitative data (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) can be distinguished from multi-method studies employing only quantitative or qualitative data, or both but with no evidence of mixing (Bryman, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

This choice was driven by philosophical assumptions, ontological and epistemological stances, regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The research addresses a real-life problem which exists in a specific social and physical context with its features and peculiarities. More specifically, the research is social, demographic and educational in character and therefore neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative data allows a more sophisticated and complete answer to the research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The quantitative data in the study were collected using a survey method. It was used to collect data concerning the predominant socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in semi-remote areas of Egypt. In order to explore in depth and elaborate on the results of the survey method of the first quantitative phase, interviews with selected participants namely, mothers, practitioners and policy makers were conducted in the second qualitative phase. Another source of data in this phase was the analysis of policy documents and related legislations. The qualitative data were analysed using a thematic network method which combines inductive and deductive reasoning as well as description and interpretation. The thematic findings of this phase helped to reflect accurately the content of the entire data of the study.

1.6 Research Limitations

The limitations of the research included those limitations imposed by the size and characteristics of the sample, research context and other compelling factors in the course of the research. The study was limited to using survey method, interviews and document analysis. The choice of these methods was for practical and fit to purpose reasons. According to the time scale of this research project as well as access and willingness issues, the survey sample consisted of 250 parents and 100 childcare practitioners. Access to some elite policy makers to be interviewed was not granted due to their busy work schedules. In addition, unwillingness of some of the mothers and care practitioners to participate further in the research limited the number of the interviewees. This was mainly due to the research climate in the Egyptian context featuring lack of interview experience, fear of privacy violation, and avoidance of sensitive questions.

Due to security reasons after the 2011 revolution in Egypt, not all areas in North Sinai were accessible for research purposes. Terrorist attacks by Islamist militants meant a state of emergency was imposed by the government. Therefore, the data collection was limited to the accessible areas in the 6 main centres (El-Arish, Bir Alabd, Sheikh Zewaid, Rafah, Hassana and Nekhel) of North Sinai governorate¹.

¹ Please see the description of the sites of data collection in details in the section tackling context of the study in chapter 2.

The third method of data collection in the study, document analysis, was limited to the following documents due to their availability, ease of access as well as their relevance:

- The 2000 decree no. 65 of the Ministry of Education which regulates work in kindergartens as a preliminary stage for primary schooling,
- The 2003 Labour Law No 12 to identify working mothers' rights concerning childcare and legal provisions during pregnancy and following childbirth,
- The amended Child Law No. 126 of 2008 to identify child rights concerning care and education,
- The 2008 decree no. 335 of the Ministry of Education for regulating the opening of nursery classes for the private and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sectors.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This thesis is organized in seven chapters followed by a list of references and appendices. Each chapter is prefaced by a quotation which encapsulates the content of the chapter. Chapter one is the introductory chapter and provided an overview of the study. It includes description of the context of the study, research problem, purpose and rationale. It delineates research questions as well as research design and data collection scenario. This is followed by research limitations and delimitations which set the boundaries of the study. The chapter concludes with a chapter outline.

Chapter Two constitutes the literature review upon which the study gleaned insights. It is organized into three sections, each of which complements the other. The first section is a general contextual background to the research giving a brief concentrated outline of Egypt's geographical location, socio- economic and cultural context, as well as care and education system and related policies. The second section outlines types of ECCE and highlights why early years education is important. Further, it reviews the different socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE. The third section discusses the pertinent theories which help explain the impact of socio-demographic factors on childcare provision as well as policy responses. This includes "Bronfenbrenner's ecological model" (Bronfenbrenner,

1993), Bourdieu's forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), the “preferences-and-constraints model (White & Klein, 2002), and several choice making models.

Chapter Three provides the research design and methods. The chapter sets out the rationales that underlie the choice of the research design. It reviews the epistemological and ontological assumptions underpinning the different research designs. Next, it discusses the pragmatic assumptions of doing ‘real-world’ research using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a mixed methods design and moves on to review mixed method research designs, including definition, philosophy and types. Detailed description is given to the sequential explanatory design adopted. Finally, the chapter provides description of the target population and geography of the research, along with closing comments on the ethics of the study.

Chapter Four presents the quantitative data collection and analysis of the first phase of the mixed methods research design. The chapter provides a discussion of the survey method and survey climate of the Egyptian context. Next, it reviews the questionnaires’ objectives, design, and piloting. It describes also the sampling technique, respondent subjects, questionnaire administration process, and data analysis plan. Subsequently, the data obtained from the questionnaires reported descriptively concluding with a brief summary including key findings.

Chapter Five presents the collection and analysis of the qualitative data; the second phase of the mixed methods sequential explanatory design. Here the interview schedules, interviewees, and piloting process are discussed. This is followed by a description of the processes of transcription and coding of the interview and policy document analysis data. Then, the chapter discusses the emerged themes and provides the thematic networks for them. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the main qualitative findings and a summary of the whole chapter.

Chapter Six contains the interpretation and discussion of the results. It starts with the evolution of the research questions. Guided by each question, the quantitative and qualitative findings are then presented and discussed in terms of the previous research findings in the literature under two main headings: the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in semi-remote areas and

stakeholders' perspectives on the ECCE policy. A discussion of the findings was next provided from a systems perspective, featuring the results within an ecological model. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the main points discussed.

Chapter Seven is the last chapter in the study which highlights the conclusion of the study. The chapter first introduced the implications this study led to. Then, research recommendations and suggestions for further research followed. The chapter ended with a general conclusion of the whole thesis.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Childcare research strategy “should consist of a careful articulation of the relationship between the developmental goals set for child care, the environmental processes relevant to attaining these goals at home and in child care, and the interaction between these processes and personal characteristics of children” (Rosenthal, 1994, p. xii).

2.1 Introduction

A fundamental question of this research from the outset was: what are the factors that affect childcare provision in semi remote areas? Or, in terms used by Bronfenbrenner (1993), what are the socio-ecological subsystems that affect childcare provision in semi-remote areas? According to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, there are five socially organized ecological subsystems that impact the child directly or indirectly (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Whilst this research is not merely a case study of the ecological systems in which Egyptian children and their families are situated, it is also an analysis of stakeholders perspectives towards childcare policies which are endemic in Egypt, becoming obsolete in some instances and likely to remain so until alternative and more effective policy responses are implemented.

This chapter is organized into three broad sections. The first section sets the scene for the research by describing the context of the study. This includes an overview of Egypt’s geographical location, socio- economic and cultural context, as well as care and education system. It reviews also ECCE policy in place in the Egyptian context. The second section outlines types of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and highlights the significance of early years. Further, it reviews the different socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE. The third section discusses the theoretical frameworks that can explain the impact of socio-demographic factors on childcare provision as well as policy responses, It draws on “Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993), Bourdieu’s forms of capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, Bourdieu, 1986), the “preferences-and-constraints model (White & Klein, 2002), consumer choice and heuristics and biases models (Chaudry, Henly &

Meyers, 2010). This theoretical framework is also supported by previous studies which link with the current study's purpose, variables and rationale.

2.2 Egypt: Country Context

2.2.1 Geographic Location and History

Egypt, officially The Arab Republic of Egypt, is a country with a distinguished geographical and historical position. It is located in northeastern Africa; however, its Sinai Peninsula is considered part of west Asia (See Figure 2.1). The total area of Egypt is 1,001,450 square kilometers (386,660 square miles) (IDSC, 2008).



Figure 2.1 Maps of North Africa and the Middle East, Egypt, and Sinai

Egypt is one of the most populous countries in North Africa and the Middle East, with an estimated population of over 93.3 million as of August 2016 (United Nations Statistics Division, 2016) compared to over 72 million in the 2006 census. The structure of the population includes a large youth population under the age of 18 (38 percent); 12.3 percent of them are children under 5 years (Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS), 2015). Only approximately only 6% of the total land space of Egypt is inhabited forming one of the nine most densely populated countries in the world (UNESCO Bureau of Public Information, 2003). Due to the aridity of the climate and the spread of desert, the majority of the population inhabit the Nile River valley and delta, and along the Suez Canal, Mediterranean and Red seas. More than half of the population lives in rural areas, while the rest of the population dwells in urban and less urban areas. The most densely-populated areas are greater Cairo, Alexandria and some other major provinces in the Nile delta and valley. North Sinai where the research took place has a limited population of 429.700 people (CAPMAS, 2015).

Egypt has one of the oldest civilizations in the world and, as described by McGregor (2006), it has one of the proudest national histories. The history of the country has been influenced largely by its geographic location which in turn has affected the country's national identity. In terms of geopolitics, Egypt has a strategic position as a transcontinental country and, therefore, it has suffered from a long history of foreign intrusion. This can be traced back to the Hyksos invaders around 1790 B.C.E (Gabriel, 2001) and continued with the Roman, Ptolemaic/Greek, Persian, Arab, Ottoman/Turkish, French, British and later the US strong economic and political hegemony (Cook, 1999). Despite the fact that several groups have gained control of Egypt, the Arabs were the most influential. Their influence can be seen in every aspect of daily life, such as the language, religion, culture, values and attitudes.

Accordingly, with a rapidly growing population, maldistribution of inhabitants to the land space, increasing social change, and sharp impacts of globalization, Egypt is increasingly facing a socio-economic challenge. Understanding the socio-economic and political context in which children and their families live is crucial for research on childcare (Lamb & Ahnert, 2006).

2.2.2 Remote and Semi-Remote Areas

Remote and semi-remote areas are those areas situated at some distance from centres of urban population (Cloke, 2013). They are characterized by less population, services, facilities and infrastructure. Consequently, they are not attractive for residents and continuously lose population. Egypt as one of the driest and sunniest countries in the world, most of the areas are desert. There are two main deserts which make up the Egyptian desert region. These are the Eastern desert located to the east of the Nile River and extends up to the Red Sea and across Sinai Peninsula, and the Sahara desert to the west of Nile River. The desert areas are mostly uninhabited except for sporadic settlements in North Sinai, South Sinai, Central Sinai, Red Sea, Al-Wadi Al-Jadid, and Marsa Matruh Governorates. However, the majority of the population dwell along the Nile river valley, Mediterranean and Red Sea coast. This has created vast remote and semi remote areas.

Remote and semi remote areas experience complex challenges regarding the provision of ECCE services, where many pre-school children are left behind. Drawing a map for ECCE services at the national level shows disparities in pre-school enrolment between rural and remote areas on one hand, and urban areas on the other hand (National Centre for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), 2015). According to Egypt education programme profile at the UNICEF Website, ECCE in Egypt is underdeveloped and mainly an urban phenomenon with 23.7% of children aged 4-5 enrolled in pre-schools (UNICEF, 2016). This is far from the national goal of 60% enrolment which the government failed to achieve by 2015 as planned before (NCERD, 2015). Consequently, there is a high dropout rate from basic education, which can be attributed to one or more of the following reasons; never enrolling in preschools, coming from poor families, living in remote rural communities, working children, and children with disabilities (UNCIEF, 2016).

Therefore, a future vision suggested by the NCERD recommends that great efforts should be exerted in rural, far away, and disadvantaged areas to bridge the gap between those areas and urban areas in terms of enrolment rates. Another important aspect of this vision is to achieve an earlier recommendation for the conference of developing the primary education curricula in 1993 to include the two years of kindergarten in the compulsory basic education (NCERD, 2015).

2.2.3 Socio-Economic Status

The Egyptian economy has passed through several stages with sharp changes since the late fifties of the 20th century. It has transformed from “the Arab socialist system to the economic ‘open door’ policy at the beginning of the 1970s and, subsequently, the stage of the free economy governed by market mechanism” (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1998, p.5). As a result, Egypt has suffered for a long time from a structural imbalance in the economy.

The economy has, therefore, gone through a series of structural reform to rectify the imbalance and develop. Since the 1990s, a series of national plans with the support of International Monetary Fund (IMF) has helped Egypt improve its economic performance and reach a better macroeconomic stability. One of the effective economic improvement programs was the ‘Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP)’ which aimed at eliminating “the internal and external disequilibria caused by many years of high inflation, intolerable fiscal deficits, lack of competitiveness in world markets and soaring degrees of external indebtedness” (Al-Mashat & Billmeier, 2007, p. 4).

The most influential of the economic structural reforms in terms of their direct effect on people’s life was privatization. Many large-scale industries have moved into the hands of foreign investors creating “a problem of new ownership structure with social and economic implications which are becoming worrisome to governments and general public” (OAU, ECA & UNIDO), 1997, p.50). As claimed by the OAU et al.’s report, privatization constitutes a threat to national efforts to “empower indigenous people and narrow disparities in society” (p.50). More specifically, privatization in Egypt has affected the education sector from nurseries to universities with the spread of foreign and private institutions that attract the elite and aim mostly for profit making.

During the course of economic reform in Egypt, two major worldwide crises have been influential, namely the world food crisis in 2007/2008 and the financial crisis that followed, with an impact up to the present time. These crises caused global turbulences as well as limited national growth. Like many other countries,

Egypt was hard hit with the unprecedented hike in the prices of food, energy, and other primary goods witnessed in 2007-2008. The impact of the price shock was most pronounced on the middle and lower income groups of the Egyptian society, who spend on average some 45 percent of their incomes on food items; reaching some 60 percent for the lowest quintile..... By mid 2008, the hike in global prices had coincided with the first round of the global financial crisis, featuring a dual challenge of a price hike fueling domestic inflation and a slump in global demand undermining growth and triggering a resurgence of unemployment in Egypt (Ministry of Finance-Macro Fiscal Policy Unit, 2009, pp. 2-4).

It can be argued here that the economy in Egypt and many underdeveloped countries has been affected by the credit crunch mainly because its weakness, rather than being involved directly in worldwide banking activities of subprime lending and mortgages which are considered the immediate and major trigger of the credit crunch. In this respect, Lawrence (2009) is of the opinion that

Those countries which have increasingly integrated into the global economy, carried out liberalization reforms in finance and trade, for example, will be most affected by the impending recession, especially when they have just suffered from the short-lived but significant oil shock (Lawrence, 2009, pp. 283-284).

Egypt's macroeconomic status, defined as "the behaviour of the economy as a whole...with booms and recessions" (Dornbusch & Fischer, 1981, p.4), over the last six decades can be chronologically summarized as follows (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1998; Gutner, 2002; Shechter, 2008, Ministry of Finance- Macro Fiscal Unit, 2009):

- 1952-1966 Socialist economy and nationalization of big enterprises after the 1952 revolution.
- 1967-1973 Inter-war periods with Israel featuring weak economy directed towards military purposes.
- 1974-1981 Open door policy in economy to encourage foreign investment and trade.
- 1982-1990 External debt crisis and national programs for re-scheduling and debt reduction with the IMF and Paris Club.
- 1991-2006 Economy reform programs to move towards free economy.

- 2007-2008 Direct impact of world food and oil crisis due to heavily dependent on imports.
- 2008-2011 Some impact of the world financial crisis featuring domestic inflation and a slump in national growth.
- 2011-present January 2011 and June 2013 mass uprising and changing of political regimes which caused cut of the economic growth, high inflation, deterioration of public services and resurgence of high unemployment rates.

Focusing more on the last four years, Egypt witnessed the mass uprisings of 2011 and 2013. They were, at least in part, fuelled by the country's economic deterioration and social injustice. (Ersado & Gignoux, 2014). The 2011 revolution marked a challenging transition phase with "low foreign direct investments (FDI), a high budget deficit, a high debt rate, a high unemployment rate, a high poverty rate, and a low standard of living" (Abdou & Zaazou, 2013, p.92). Accordingly, improving a highly centralized economy with the above mentioned deficits was not an easy matter, particularly with the lack of transparency and increasing corruption in governmental and business sectors. According to the corruption perceptions index (CPI)¹ 2014, Egypt ranks 94 out of 175 with a score of 37; whereas the United States ranks 17 and the United Kingdom 14 (Transparency International, 2015). In addition, "the relationship between governmental and economic variables that are potential antecedents of slow provision of quality ECCE in the Arab States needs to be analyzed further" (Shehadeh, 2008, p.20). This is particularly important with the limited availability of household income and expenditure surveys, and the paucity of observations on individuals' circumstances in Arab countries (Hassine, 2011).

In spite of the many endeavours exerted to improve the country's socio-economic status, there are still ongoing challenges to confront, in particular poverty. Generally, speaking, income poverty has not declined significantly nor has children's well-being improved (UNICEF, 2010). Statistically, the poverty rate

¹The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries based the degree of corruption of the public sector as perceived by business people and country analysts. The corruption index scores between 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (highly clean).

reaches 25.2 per cent of the population, with 4.8 per cent of the population (4.32 million) living under extreme poverty conditions. The poverty rates of 17 per cent in Lower Egypt and 51.4 per cent in Upper Egypt reveals significant regional disparities” (El Rafai, Kamal, Mohamed, Nour Eddin & Mohamed, 2014, p. 1).

According to one of the few reports that explored poverty and deprivation of children in Egypt, many children were found to be deprived of appropriate housing conditions and, those under five years old among them, suffered from health and food problems (UNICEF, 2010). Generally speaking, life in Egypt is “characterized by major class and rural-urban differences that affect all families” (Sherif-Trask, 2006, p.67). Urban areas are overcrowded with high levels of pollution, traffic, housing and health problems, whereas rural areas are more affected by poverty that is most prevalent.

Changes in the economy are linked with changes in the society and vice versa. Social change refers here to any alteration in the society, its institutions, groups, and collective behaviours. Although the majority of the populations in Egypt are of similar heritage, culture, and religion, the Egyptian society is not completely homogeneous. During the history the society has been, and continues to be, subject to several changes and transformations. A more insider view of the national identity in Egypt may reveal a mixture of national identity orientations; Egyptian Easternism, Egyptian Islamic nationalism, Egyptian Arab nationalism and integral Egyptian nationalism (Gershoni & Jankowski, 1995). This makes Egypt “a country at odds with itself, struggling with a multitude of social and cultural inconsistencies ... a nation suffering the disquiet of cognitive dissonance” (Cook, 1999, p.6).

Gender roles are clearly defined in Egyptian society and family culture; the male breadwinner and female homemaker. This is contrary to the universal breadwinner model adopted in many developed countries promoting men’s and women’s equal participation in the labour market (Ciccio & Bleijenbergh, 2014). In Egypt there is a strong belief for the mother’s main role is to care for and nurture children. Although a sizable portion of women work or have a role in some home based work activities which support the household income, the majority do not have a job. The distribution of university-educated people by gender reveals also a gap in favour of men. This is

in addition to high illiteracy rates in the society in general, and among women in particular, where more than half of female population are illiterate (Economic & Social Commission for Western Asia, 2003). The high illiteracy rate of girls, in particular in rural areas, “may be due either to cultural factors or to the unavailability of schools in their neighbourhoods, as well as to poverty” (UNICEF, 2010, p.45). Therefore, education has been, and continues to be, critical to personal development and the development of the country.

In Egypt, education is “pervasively shaping its religious, social and political character” (Cook, 1999, p.6). It significantly affects social mobility, the level and distribution of income (Hua, 1996), personal socioeconomic status and most importantly quality of life. Education, occupation and income are a combination of measures which determines personal socio-economic status (SES) (DeFleur, 2010). They are commonly used to group individuals into a social class. The correlates of parents’ low socio-economic status (SES), such as no or low education, poverty, and poor health, and those of low neighbourhood SES, such as lack of resources, inadequate housing, and poor quality of life, affect children. This is in addition to the country’s socio-economic status which is characterized by a weak economy, with underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in housing, transport and public services.

While the country has a potential to develop, there remain social and economic challenges which adversely affect ECCE. These challenges include (i) increasing demand on early childhood care and education and the necessity to accommodate the burgeoning juvenile population, (ii) limited allocations amounted from the Gross National Product (GNP) to early childhood care and education which lead to a severe overburdening of personnel, facilities, and resources, (iii) low quality and commitment of staff (United Nations Development Programme & The Institute of National Planning- Egypt, 2004; Ministry of Education- Egypt, 1992).

Understanding the concept of ECCE, how it is developed in Egypt and its future course to alleviate the challenges at both individual and societal levels will constitute the content of next section.

2.3 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

The terms Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Early Childhood Care (ECE), Early Childhood Education (ECE) are all interrelated and may refer to similar notions. According to the international encyclopedia of ‘Early Childhood Education’, the term Early Childhood Education (ECE) may refer to:

a form of applied child development, purposeful and targeted early intervention, or any of an array of services designed to support the learning and development of children in the first years of life...., services provided during the period from birth to the age of compulsory schooling (New & Cochran, 2007, p. xxv).

New and Cochran (2007) extended the scope of early care and education policies and programs to target not only pre-school children but also school age children as well:

Early care and education policies and programs involve the provision of (a) childcare to preschool-aged children, and care before and after school to school-aged children ...; (b) other child development focused and early educational experiences to preschool-aged children; and (c) child development, child care, and early education information made available to the parents of preschool-aged children (p. xxv).

As ECCE has been defined widely and broadly, it becomes necessary from the outset of this research to provide an operational definition for the term as it applies to this study. It refers here to provisions of quality early care and education arrangement for children from birth to the age of compulsory schooling.

The early years of a child’s life are acknowledged to be the most crucial period of laying the foundations for lifelong learning and development (Barnett, 2011; Nores & Barnett, 2010; Horsley & Ciske, 2005). There is a universal rich heritage of practices for caring, stimulating development and inculcation skills in children. They are true expression of the tradition of valuing the early years of a child’s life. However, the demographics of child care have been increasingly changing worldwide with the dramatic increase in maternal employment. This coincides with the recent global-wide demographic, economic, social and political trends which “have increased the need for comprehensive ECCE policies and programmes”, as

expressed by the UNESCO EFA global monitoring report (UNESCO, 2007, p.17). In spite of the socio-economic challenges facing ECCE in Egypt as described in the previous section, the government has been trying to promote early childhood education as detailed below.

2.3.1 ECCE in Egypt

Formal early childhood education in Egypt can be traced back to the early nineteenth century with the opening of a small number of *mubtadiyan* schools, later known as *ibtida'i* (means primary) (Heyworth-Dunne, 1939). Primary education is the first compulsory phase of the national system of pre-university education, since pre-school education is not universal yet nor included as part of the formal education system.

According to Article 19 of the constitution, “Education is compulsory until the end of the secondary stage or its equivalent. The State shall provide free education in the various stages in the State's educational institutions according to the Law” (Egyptian Government, 2014, p. 10). This is also stated clearly in the Education Act No. 139 of 1981 which stipulates that “all Egyptian children, both male and female, have a right to basic education, which the State has an obligation to provide free of charge” (United Nations, 1998, p.19). Little separate attention is given to pre-school education as it is not obligatory and parents have the right to send their children to nurseries and kindergartens if they wish. However, the Child Act No. 126/2008 referred to the role of pre-school centres to: (i) care for children socially and develop their abilities and talents, (ii) help children develop physically, emotionally, and ethically, (iii) meet children’s artistic, recreational and play needs, and (iv) build partnerships with parents to support children’s development.

Figure (2.2) below summarises the pre university education system in Egypt. It has four stages: (1) Pre-school education is for 2 years and is not obligatory, (2) the primary stage is universal and free for every child between 6 to 12 years of age, (3) the preparatory stage is a further three-year period of education and forms with primary education what is referred to as basic education, (4) the secondary stage is three years of secondary school education.

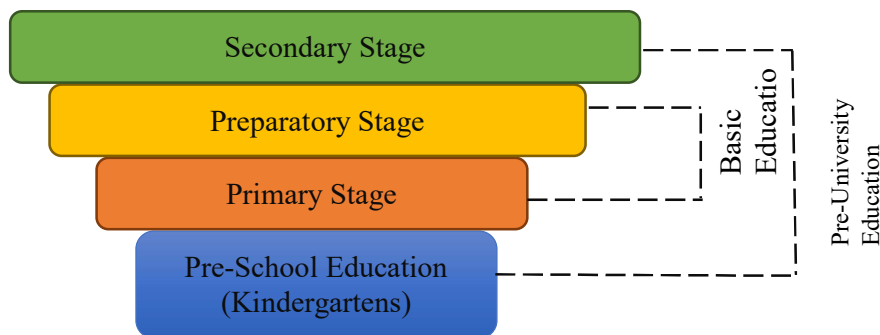


Figure 2.2 Pre-university education systems in Egypt

ECCE was not part of the education system until the early 1990s when the Ministry of Education (MoE) formally introduced a pre-school (kindergarten) level within the general education system (Nassef & Osman, 2000). Kindergartens are one or two years of pre-primary classes for children from 4 to 6 years of age. They have formal curricula and fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Almost half of them are State run, and the rest privately run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious schools, or private individuals. Parents have to pay monthly fees for kindergartens, which are relatively lower in public kindergartens than those of the private sector (UNESCO IBE, 2006).

Nurseries are not officially included in the education system and they are for children from birth to 4 years of age. They aim to provide children with care and protection while their parents at work. They are mostly privately owned and run under the supervision of the General Department for Family and Childhood of the Ministry of Social Solidarity. With the limited number of licensed kindergartens, many nurseries have extended their services to cater for children up to 6 years of age (Janssens, Van Der Gaag & Tanaka, 2001).

There are a number of official bodies and authorities which are in charge of the planning, licensing and supervising ECCE institutions (UNESCO IBE, 2006):

- *Ministry of Education (MoE)*
It is responsible for supervising kindergartens, and planning and implementing national curricula.
- *Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS)*
The Ministry of Social Solidarity is in charge of licensing daycare centers and nurseries of non-governmental organizations.
- *Ministry of Health (MoH)*
Primary health care activities are provided mainly by the Ministry of Health.
- *National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)*
It is responsible for putting plans and national strategies as well as submitting evaluation reports to the Governorate.
- *Nurseries Affairs Committee*
It functions at the governorate level and aims at discussing the implementation of plans and providing support.
- *Ministry of International Cooperation (MIC)*
It helps in securing grants from donors and international organizations including those specified for promoting pre-school education.

Several personnel are involved in ECCE in the Egyptian context. Besides, mothers, grandparents and relatives who are the main caregivers for majority of Egyptian children, the key personnel include:

- *Ministry of Education staff*
They are tertiary level graduates and the majority of them are specialized (either Faculties of Education or Faculties of Kindergartens graduates) (UNESCO IBE, 2006).
- *Private and non-governmental organizations nursery staff*
They are mostly non-specialized high school or university graduates.

Early childhood care and education in a formal setting has become an essential component of family life in many countries. Although formal childcare still faces slow progress in Egypt due to different factors which are under investigation here,

there have been crucial changes in family culture in terms of roles, habits, activities, and beliefs, which would lead to further increase and development of childcare services in the near future. The next section will discuss types of early childhood care and education and their availability in the Egyptian context.

2.4 Types of ECCE

When parents seek care for their children, they might have a number of choices to make depending on their circumstances and surrounding context. They can decide to arrange care by a relative, by an unrelated adult in a home setting, or in a childcare centre. This refers to the two main types of childcare. It is either home-based, such as the care provided by parents, grandparents, relatives, childminders and nannies, or centre-based care which is provided by nurseries, kindergartens, or out-of-school clubs (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2004).

Parental care, as a subtype of home based care, refers to the care provided by parents, mothers mostly for their children. Another subtype is 'kith and kin' which is given by family members such as grandparents, older siblings, or other relatives or neighbours. Family childcare is deeply rooted in the Egyptian context where grandmothers play a prominent role in providing childcare and supporting maternal employment, especially for low income families. According to Igel (2011), cited in OECD, 2012, p.220), in countries with limited state welfare support for families with children, grandparents are among the key providers of childcare. Other relatives, such as aunts and sisters in law are also childcare providers in the Egyptian context. As a first-hand information provider, the researcher herself, as an Egyptian mother in North Sinai, used to leave her first son, from age 9 months to 3 years old, with her mother, the grandmother of the child, during her working hours.

Non-relative home based care is another type of care which takes place in the caregiver's home by childminders or the child's family home by nannies or babysitters. This type of care is used with children of mixed ages and parents have to pay for such services (Anderson, Ramsburg & Scott, 2005; Huston, Changa & Gennetian, 2002). Registered childminders are self-employed childcare professionals who work in their own homes caring for other people's children (Huston et al., 2002). They care for a small number of children in their home-setting and sometimes

take children for outings to the park or library. The researcher could not find any availability of childminding profession in the Egyptian context, nor it is regulated by any formal body. This could be due to safety and logistical issues. Nannies are license exempt home based care where parents employ nannies to care for their children in their parental home (Anderson et al., 2005). This type of care is common in Egypt in areas with high socio-economic status due to its cost.

Nurseries are one type of centre-based care. They look after children from birth up to 4 years or more depending on the context. They tend to be more affordable for parents. Nursery classes operate during school hours and mainly during term time, although there are some exceptions particularly private nurseries where they run all year long (Grigg, 2001). Kindergarten, the other type of centre-based care, aims at preparing young children for primary schooling. It can be traced back globally to the beginning of the 1900s, but the 1960s witnessed its widespread use in particular in the United States and other first-world countries (Parker & Knitzer, 1972; Phillips, McCartney, & Sussman, 2006). The introduction of public Kindergartens in Egypt started in 1990 after an educational reform. Notwithstanding, kindergartens, run privately or by non-governmental organizations, were already present in many Egyptian cities before that date, enrollment increased significantly following the Ministry of Education commencement of public kindergartens (Nassef & Osman, 2000). Enrollments grew over time worldwide with governmental initiatives to include kindergartens as part of the formal education system.

The types of ECCE discussed above reflect different cultural threads. In contemporary Egypt, two main cultural threads are behind parents' choice of ECCE setting; traditional and global. The traditional cultural thread, holding values against early care by non-family members, supports the decision of parents of not sending young children to any formal care (Lowe & Weisner, 2004; Zinsser, 1991). As female participation in the labour force is quite low in Egypt, children under the age of 4 are usually cared for by their mothers, older siblings, and grandparents (Krafft, 2011; Janssens et al., 2001). However, the global cultural thread, as a collective mode of values accepted and generalized globally, promotes the view that "it has become normative for children to attend some type of early education before entering kindergarten" (Magnuson & Shager, 2010, p.1186). This cultural thread is

more prevalent in urban cities where both parents are more likely to be educated, employed and earning a high income. Irrespective of the type of care chosen by parents for their children, a child's success in life in general and in schooling in particular is significantly determined at a very young age. This highlights the importance of early years which is the focal point of next section.

2.5 The Significance of Early Years

The early years of children's lives are regarded the golden years of development and learning. The popular sayings that 'learning begins at birth' and 'early years are learning years' have proven to be true axioms by solid research (UNESCO, 2007). Therefore, quality early years' provision has been seen by many as a necessity for children and in turn for the whole society (Barnett, 2011; Arnold, 2004; Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2012).

More specifically, ECCE can have a great impact on child's cognition and brain development, behaviour, health, and school progress. According to Gilgun (2010), infants and young children's interactions with care providers can provide stimulation to promote optimal brain development. Young children encode stimulation experiences "that in turn will help them develop verbal skills and other capacities that enhance their brain's healthy development and their social and emotional development" (p.40). This highlights the importance of the surrounding environment on promoting children's active development. Two essential conditions have been identified in this respect:

First is the need for stable and loving relationships with a limited number of adults who provide responsive and reciprocal interaction, protection from harm, encouragement for exploration and learning, and transmission of cultural values. Second is the need for a safe and predictable environment that provides a range of growth-promoting experiences to promote cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and moral development (Shonkoff & Philips, 2000, p. 413).

Children's behaviour is another area of improvement due to care and education (Nores & Barnett, 2010). Research evidence shows also that ECCE can have important long term effects on reducing rates of anti-social behaviour and even crime in the society (Barnett, 2011). In addition to being a good start for young children to be enrolled in a formal ECCE setting at the individual level, ECCE is also beneficial

at the institutional level in terms of increasing school enrollment, decreasing dropout, and improving achievement (Arnold, 2004; Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2012). In the context of Egypt, ECCE has a significant impact on reducing the probability of dropping out during basic education as well as improving school performance in terms of increasing test scores and decreasing repetition. Accordingly, expanding ECCE “would be an important and effective policy for improving educational outcomes” (Krafft, 2015, p. 127).

2.6 Factors Affecting ECCE Provision

The task of choosing a childcare arrangement is often a difficult and complicated one for parents. Numerous factors may play decisive roles in their decision. Multiple work, care, child and family factors, cost-benefit calculations, and social and cultural patterns of thinking may all influence parents’ choices. Furthermore, decisions themselves may not be static, but may fluctuate from one child to the other or from one year to the next. Understanding the modes and factors through which parents make childcare decisions provides policymakers with a better understanding of parents’ patterns of thinking, leading to more accurate subsidies and policy decisions.

Saraceno (2011) points out that different social groups have different definitions of “normative” when it comes to childcare arrangement. Issues such as quantity, quality, and nature of childcare vary socially and geographically, and different opinions exist as to the importance of centre care (as opposed to maternal care) in different societies - differences that must be accounted for when determining social and welfare policy. The factors that underlie parents’ choice of childcare settings are neither arbitrary, nor should they be imposed in a top-down manner. As Saraceno argues that,

childcare needs and the issue of proper childcare cannot be reduced to a simplistic alternative between family (mother’s) care and non-family care. On the contrary, they involve multiple dimensions and actors. Both policies and research should therefore take more seriously the multi-layered and differentiated context in which childcare needs arise (p.79).

For this reason, as well as the others listed below, policymakers and childcare officials must understand the processes through which parents make their ECCE choices if they are to best understand and accommodate parental expectations of childcare.

Pestoff (2006) is of the opinion that citizen-based co-production of welfare services must be encouraged, if societies are to continue offering care services. Any situation of co-production will require parents to make active choices of the type of childcare that they expect the state to sponsor. Greater parent involvement necessitates greater understanding of choice patterns. As such, it is important to know how childcare decision-making is made. This is exemplified in Scandinavian countries, for instance, where there is a large degree of co-production (parental involvement) in childcare services, and in which parents choose the type of facility based upon their expectations as acting as co-producers. This co-production process "provides parents with greater insights into the quality of the services and gives them influence on decisions of how to run the childcare facility" (p. 510). This could be juxtaposed to many other countries, where parents have limited interference with childcare policies or the services provided.

Clearly enough, the whole process of ECCE, starting from parents' early decisions through the actual service and to post service experience, is bound by pertinent factors. There are several factors that affect ECCE provision in any given context. Those factors are tackled in the literature under different labels:

- internal and external (Kisitu, 2008),
- proximal and distal (Bratsch, 2008; Dunn, 1993),
- ecological systems (Liu, 2010; Bronfenbrenner, 1979),
- demographic (Sajaniemia et al., 2014), and
- socio-demographic factors (Lovasz, 2014; Ng'ondi, 2012).

According to the orientation of the current research, the term socio-demographic factors is found to be the most appropriate to describe the family, child, and context factors which are the main focus of the present study. This section of the chapter reviews research on socio-demographic factors and ECCE provision, indicating what

has been done in this area, how, and where information gaps exist in the pertinent literature.

From the outset of this section, a conceptual analysis of the terms demography and social demography is needed to comprehend their specific usage. Demography is the study of human populations in terms of dynamics, size, structure, and distribution, and how populations change over time. However, social demography, as one paradigm of demography, is concerned with the analysis of social and cultural factors related to the characteristics of population. It includes macro-demography, a large scale study of systems, cultures and societies, and micro-demography, the study of the individual and the family (Sharma, 2007).

Socio-demographic factors can account for significant disparities in childcare provision. In consideration of the dynamic nature of those factors in any given context, there is a continued need to study those factors and the impact of changes on them, as well as the overlap between them. Previous studies in this section are collated and reviewed according to three categories of factors; familial, child, and context. The review will help to locate the current study and argue for its particular emphasis.

2.6.1 Familial Factors

Children are affected by three major contexts: family, out of home settings, such as nurseries, schools and clubs; and peer groups (Collins et al., 2000). Variations exist in the interpretation of who constitutes a family. It might consist of one or two parents living with their children along with or without any other family members, such as a grandparent, an uncle, an aunt, or other members of the extended family. Familial factors are those that involve the structure and status of the family as well as the value system.

More specifically, familial factors are typically classified into one or more of the following categories: socioeconomic status (including education, employment, and income), family structure, and parent or family values and beliefs. The majority of the research reviewed in this area focuses partially on one or more of these categories. However, few studies have explored all these factors holistically. Although fragmentally studying one or more of those categories could be enough for

a research purpose, studies of this kind might not be able to capture the nuanced and realistic interaction between factors as argued by Moran (2014). Kim and Fram (2009) preferred also to study parents' care choices from a person-centered, holistic perspective, rather than relying on "variable-centered approaches that treat parental priorities as distinct and isolated" (p.77).

A family's socioeconomic status refers to the position of a family and its members within the hierarchical structure of the society (Mueller & Parcel, 1981). It is based on parents' education level, occupation, and income which jointly affect social rank in the community. Education is overwhelmingly viewed as having a long lasting impact on one's life. According to Mirowsky and Ross (2003), "education's beneficial effects are pervasive, cumulative, and self-amplifying" (p.200). There is a consensus in the literature that families with highly educated parents often give better care for their children. In the study of Iram and Butt (2004), a mother's education level was found to be a significant determinant of child-care quality. Educated mothers "tend to provide better home health care and hygiene, and are more likely to seek help when a child is ill" (p.235). In the context of Egypt, a mother's degree of education, in particular in rural areas, is a significant factor in reducing child mortality (Aly & Grabowski, 1990). The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (2007), cited in Jack and Gill (2010), indicated also that "by the age of three, children of parents without educational qualifications are already a year behind children of parents with a university degree on a measure of 'school readiness'" (p.376).

Some other studies also investigated the relationship between parents' educational level and care arrangements. The study of Hirshberg, Huang, and Fuller (2005) revealed that parents with a higher educational level, who work longer hours and have higher income, are more likely to choose a centre based care for their children. Their choice can be attributed to the fact that they require such provision in order to work longer hours. As parents with a higher education level are more likely to work in better jobs for longer hours and earn more. Similarly, the study of Joy and Kahn (2011) indicated that under-enrollment in childcare centres is not simply attributable to the immigration status of parents in some countries such as the U. S., but it is more likely associated with low maternal education, employment, and

income. “Immigrant children may be under-enrolled because their families systematically and significantly differ on these characteristics” (p.67).

This viewpoint is supported by the findings of the cross-national study of Krapf (2014) which showed that in Finland, a country with pluralistic family support, highly educated mothers were more likely to use non-family childcare than those with lower levels of education. This also applied to Western Germany, Eastern Germany was excluded due to the small size of the sample, where “children had access to, or were excluded from, childcare based on their mothers’ education levels” (p.36). However, this was not the case in Sweden where mother’s education did not significantly affect childcare usage.

Concerning the Egyptian context, Krafft (2011) indicated that family background, in terms of wealth and parents' education, was skewed more toward ECCE in favour of the highest wealth level families. Youth coming from wealthy economic backgrounds were more than four times more likely to have attended ECCE than those from poorer economic backgrounds. It would appear from previous research that parents with higher levels of education and financial resources are capable of providing early childhood care and learning environments for their children that enhance the development of their academic skills and support their future academic success. Magnuson and Shager (2010) claim that

children from disadvantaged backgrounds enter school less prepared than their more advantaged peers might not be so troublesome, if they quickly made up the ground..... Early academic disparities persist or are even exacerbated during the early school years, and ultimately culminate in important differences in rates of high school graduation and later employment (pp.1186-1187).

With the increase in maternal employment, parents with children generally need flexible, affordable and quality childcare. Maternal employment with higher household income increases the likelihood of a child being in non-parental care (Kahn & Greenberg, 2010; Greenberg & Kahn, 2011). Waldfogel (2007) argues that “any effects of parental work will likely operate through influencing family environments, in particular income, parenting, and home environment, and childcare and after-school care” (p.64). The influence of parental work on child care is limited to families with working mothers in Egypt, as 84 percent of women are not

employed (UNICEF, 2010, p.27). Although the female labor market participation rate has increased slightly in the last decade, in particular in urban areas, men's participation greatly exceeds women's, in particular in rural areas (Hassine, 2011). These employment patterns can have long-term consequences for children's care and education.

The employment of parents is also related to the welfare and childcare subsidy system. This subsidy system is linked to parents' income with the intention to help low-income families with young children with childcare expenses (Giannarelli, Sonenstein & Stagner, 2006). It might intend also to increase employment rates among mothers (Dowd, Levit & McGinley, 2012, p.35). Johnson, Martin, Brooks-Gunn (2011) found in their study that parents who care for multiple very young children and those who have less income and do not receive subsidies, rely more heavily on social networks, family, and friends to provide free childcare.

Household income, as combined income of both parents, varies from one family to another, from urban to rural areas, and from one region to another, as well as over time. It can be used as an indicator of standard of living and consequently it can affect the timing of entry into formal care. Studying the timing of entry into formal care, Colby (2012) examined the effects of income and public assistance on timing of entry into non-maternal care for infants and toddlers during the first three years of a child's life for a cohort of 2064 mothers. Findings of the study indicated that income and public assistance affect the timing of entry into care more than the type of care arrangement used. The study also found that mothers with higher incomes prior to birth and who have jobs that provide benefits like paid maternity leave could delay the demands for non-maternal care because they are able to stay home with their children longer.

Familial factors are interrelated and interdependent and some studies tackled those factors holistically. In this respect, Torquati, Raikes, Huddleston-Casas, Bovaird, Harris (2011) examined the role of a number of factors, including family income, parents' education, parents' perceived constraints in selecting childcare type (family childcare, centre-based infant care, and centre based preschool care) in predicting the quality of the childcare program. Observations were completed in 359 centre- and home-based childcare programs and surveys were received from 1313

parents whose children were enrolled in these programs. Findings of the study revealed that family income is a significant predictor of observed program quality, possibly because low-income parents do not access enrichment programs such as Head Start/Early Head Start, and likely because they are unable to use the best quality of care available in the market, which normally costs more, as higher-income parents are able to do.

In a cross-national study, Habibov (2012) examined factors associated with ECCE in four countries in Central Asia; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Drawing on a set of nationally-representative surveys, the study explored factors associated with access to and frequency of attending ECCE. Findings from the study showed that two variables, namely, higher education of mother and the wealth index were significant for the four countries. The lower education level of mothers and the lower wealth index in the household reduced the likelihood of ECCE attendance in all countries. Whereas, mothers with higher education backgrounds and wealthier families were more likely to have their children enrolled in ECCE programs.

In exploring the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE, Huston, Chang, and Gennetian (2002) examined the variations in a number of factors, such as family structure, human capital and resources, ethnicity, and personal beliefs and social circumstances, which could predict the amount and type of childcare used. 762 families participated in the study and data collected from three random-assignment experiments. A further follow-up assessment of the childcare variables was carried out at 18 months (New Chance), 24 months (New Hope), or 36 months (Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)) after random assignment. Findings of the study revealed that maternal educational background predicted use of center-based childcare. This result is consistent with the results of the studies of Krafft (2011), Torquati et al. (2011), and Habibov (2012) mentioned above. It shows that parents with higher levels of education used more centre care. Another significant finding is that the family structure variable in which an adult at home predicted home-based care by relatives. Relative care is provided by grandparents, siblings, or other relatives in the child's home or in their home. In some contexts, parents sometimes pay for such care. In spite of the importance of other factors such as education and

income, a family structure featuring more adults living together as part of the household, could lead to a lower need for centre-based care, in particular for children under three years of age.

The attitudes and beliefs of parents are another pivotal factor in predicting the type of care use. Mothers' attitudes and beliefs concerning women's work and family were related to both the likelihood of using care and the type of care used. In Minnesota Family Investment Program group of Huston et al.'s (2002) study, mothers whose beliefs and attitudes tended to prioritize family over work used less childcare in general and less centre-based care in particular. However, those whose beliefs balance family and work were more favourable of using childcare and centre-based care.

The availability, affordability, and desirability of quality childcare are all matters of great concern for parents as argued by Vandenberg, De Visscher, Nuffel, and Ferla (2008). In general terms, parents desire high quality ECCE provision for their children, however many of them often do not use those quality places due affordability, availability and family demographics issues (Ceglowski, 2004; Jinnah & Walters, 2008). Vandenberg et al. (2008) are of the opinion that access to and use of quality childcare is an interactional process determined by a group of factors which affect parents' preferences and decisions. In their study, they examined a large number of independent variables, including socio-economic variables, family composition, ethnicity, and parents' care preferences, and the dependent variable the availability of childcare. They explored also the possible interconnections between these factors. The results showed that quality childcare was distributed unequally, favouring higher-income groups. High-quality childcare provision was not used by low-education level parents, ethnic minority parents, and to a lesser extent - to single-parent families. This was mainly due to the unavailability issue of such quality care in their neighbourhood than parents who were better off. Irrespective of the availability issue, the study indicated also that ethnic minority and low-educated parents attached less importance to the quality of the infrastructure of ECCE centres. This can be explained by Peyton, Jacobs, O'Brien, and Roy (2001) who reported in their study that parents showed great concern for the quality of ECCE provision. However, practical issues such as cost

and flexible service hours often blunted their first considerations of quality. Furthermore, parents “do not choose childcare from a menu of high quality child outcome but rather define quality within the context of the family and its particular circumstances and options available to them”, as Ceglowski’s (2004) study revealed.

Similarly, Kim and Fram (2009), using data from the National Household Education Survey (NHES) of Early Childhood Program Participation in 2005, examined factors affecting parental choice of care arrangement. 4570 subjects participated in the survey and seven indicators of childcare priorities (i.e., location; cost; reliability; learning activities; spending time with other children; operation hours; and number of other children) used in latent class analysis. Based on the analysis of the data, four classes of parents were identified. Class 1 parents (35%) who were usually from a socio-economically disadvantaged background, ranked all seven indicators as very important. They were ethnic minorities, less educated, and single parents who relied on welfare. Class 2 parents (18%), who were mostly working mothers with young children, prioritized practicality factors. While class 3, parents (9%), of mixed characteristics, did not rank any indicators as highly important. Finally, class 4 parents (37%), the highly educated parents with high income, dual-parent household and older children, emphasized the importance of learning and quality-related factors. The findings of the study revealed that the more mothers hold higher education degrees, the more their childcare choice is likely placed on learning and quality bases. Similarly, higher income is also a strong predictor of parents prioritizing learning and quality for their childcare choice. Moreover, no significant links were found between parental choice patterns and child’s gender, parent age, ethnicity, the number of parents in the household, and previous or current subsidy use.

The results of the study of Peyton, et al. (2001) and Yuen (2015) fit with previous evidence that mothers with certain socio-economic status (SES) tend to emphasize practicality or convenience in their childcare choices. According to Peyton, et al.’s (2001) study, there are a number of demographic and family factors that affect the selection of a particular type of care. The selection process relied on the grounds of quality, practicality, or preference for a specific type of care arrangement. Mothers in high-income families and those who worked fewer hours

were more likely to focus on the quality of the child-care arrangement rather than on practical concerns such as cost, location, and hours of operation. However, those mothers prioritizing practical concerns were found less satisfied with the quality of their child's care. Meanwhile in Yuen's (2015) study, mothers of lower SES were more likely to consider dropping-off and picking-up their children from kindergartens within walking distance and 15 min of travel time than mothers of higher SES who were more likely to consider kindergartens temporally distant from home and use school buses, domestic workers, or relatives.

Miller, Votruba-Drzal, Coley (2013) similarly addressed a broad range of characteristics of children, parents, family and community and their associations with parental preferences and availability of childcare. Findings of the study found significant associations between parental education, income, employment and working hours and type of ECCE selected. For instance, families using centre care were generally more socioeconomically advantaged in terms of income and education. However, families with low or average income and low levels of education, were welfare receipts favouring parental care or Head Start. Head Start was a program specifically implemented in the U. S. to provide early childhood education, health, and nutrition services for children from low-income families. Preschool children enrolled in Head Start program are thus from the most disadvantaged families with lower rates of marriage and employment, lower levels of education and income, and the highest rate of welfare receipt.

The studies reviewed above show the overlap between familial factors affecting childcare provision and the extent of this overlap with other factors such as child-based factors which will be discussed in the next section. The review also reveals the multifaceted nature of the process of childcare provision in which parents' preferences and decisions play a role. Factors such as marital status, education, socioeconomic status, occupation, income, household size, and type and place of residence were found to account for disparities in childcare provision. In countries where universal ECCE exists, socio demographic factors have a lesser effect on ECCE (Zachrisson, Janson & Nærde, 2013; Sibley, Dearing, Toppelberg, Mykletun & Zachrisson, 2015).

The next category of factors in the discussion of socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE focuses on child based factors.

2.6.2 Child Factors

Child factors refer to a group of progressively changing and stable characteristics which could have an effect on childcare provision. Changing factors include age, health, and physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, while stable characteristics include the child's gender, race and ethnicity. Based on these factors, children not only move across multiple types of care over time, but the care they experience could vary accordingly.

The child's age is one of the progressively changing factors and has been proven to be one of the most predictive factors in childcare provision (Sylva, Stein, Leach, Barnes & Malmberg, 2007). In general, non- maternal childcare increases as children grow up and go to school; a trend that coincides with parenting beliefs in the Egyptian context. Pungello and Kurtz-Costes (1999) indicate that younger children are more likely to experience family care while older children are more likely to experience centre care. Children, particularly those under 3 years old, are usually placed in a childcare setting when both parents are working and they cannot provide care for their children. Age restrictions might be problematic here for parents whose children are too young to be enrolled for a certain childcare setting, such as prekindergarten and centre based care programs (Sandstrom, Giesen & Chaudry, 2012). Some other parents might send their pre-school children, particularly those older than 3 years, to a non-parental childcare setting for school readiness purpose and promoting their development.

Child's age is at the central of parents' beliefs when it comes to send their children to out of home care. According to Bernstein (2012),

child care beliefs can vary with children's ages. It could be that parents felt less conflicted about "preschool" care, because children were not only older when they started, but the assumption is also that such a setting will help prepare children for kindergarten (pp.42-43).

Some parents believe that their young children should be in their own care or other family members (Pungello & Kurtz-Costes, 1999; Bernstein, 2012; Kim & Fram, 2009). This choice coincides with the ‘home as haven’ ideology as argued by Rapp and Lioyd (1989). Thus, the belief in ‘the home as haven’ “may mediate the relationship between the child’s age and mother’s care preferences” (Pungello & Kurtz-Costes, 1999, p. 77).

In this respect, the study of Early and Burchinal (2001) found significant relationships between the selection of care and a child’s age. More specifically, the study showed that families prefer their young children to be placed in informal, home-based childcare settings with relatives or friends, whereas families of older children prefer a caregiver with specialized training for the purpose of school readiness. Furthermore, the study indicated that while a majority of infants and toddlers are cared for exclusively by their parents, most pre-schoolers are in some type of non-parental care for at least 10 hours per week.

The research literature suggest that the need for care also varies with the age differences of the children, their number in the family and mothers’ engagement in out-of home activities. For example, Leibowitz, Waite, and Witsberger (1988) argued that “two closely spaced children may call for a different joint decision about childcare than two widely spaced pre-schoolers” (p.206). Further, “women with more children and younger children are less likely to work”, while “women whose children are widely spaced are more likely to work” (p.212) and are therefore more likely to use non-maternal childcare.

Age is not the only controlling factor in preferring non-maternal childcare availability, as argued by Meyers, Heintze and Wolf, (2002), but also affordability, children’s developmental needs and the educational aspect of care can contribute to childcare choices. For example, ECCE settings for infants might not always be available in particular in disadvantaged areas suffering from poverty and deteriorations in services and infrastructures (Sandstrom et al., 2012; Phillips & Adams, 2001). Caring for infants can be more expensive than for older children (Phillips & Adams, 2001; Krapf, 2014; Greenberg & Kahn, 2011); thus parents try to find alternatives. Further, specific childcare selection may “reflect appropriate responses to children’s developmental needs” (Hiedemann, Joesch, & Rose, 2004, p.

154). Or the “parental concern with the educational component of care” (Johansens et al., 1996, p 764), which increases with the age of the child, is the motive behind parents’ decision of sending their older children rather than the younger ones for the purpose of school readiness (Piotrkowski, Botsko & Matthews, 2000).

There is also an overlap between a child’s age and familial factors affecting childcare. Johansen, Leibowitz and Waite’s study (1996), for instance, found that mothers’ preference of certain childcare settings which offer educational activities for their children was associated with mothers’ college degree. However, this association was only true for mothers of children over 3 years old. Another familial factor associated with child’s age was living close to family members. The study showed that mothers who live close to their own mothers were less likely to choose centre care and this association was only significant for mothers of children younger than 3 years old. A further example of association was mothers with higher income who were more likely to choose in-home care over other type of care if their children were under three years old.

From an early age, the stereotypes of masculine and feminine characteristics of children could interfere with childcare choices in some contexts. Krafft (2011), for instance, found that there had also been, especially for young children, a gender gap in ECCE attendance in the Egyptian context. Male children were found more likely to attend ECCE than females. This might be explained in terms of the values of the society and culture norms tied to masculinity which have been generally seen as superior to those associated with femininity. However, the gender gap was then diminished with school entry, as it is compulsory by law that parents send their children to primary school irrespective of gender. According to Uttal (1997), child gender for some ethnic groups may play a role in choosing a specific care setting. Hiedemann et al. (2004) research also found that childcare decisions are also related to child gender. In contrary, Kim and Fram (2009) did not find a significant link between child’s gender and selecting childcare arrangements. Similarly, child gender was non-significant in centre-care enrolment, whereas child’s age was a significant predictor of centre-care in Miller et al.’s (2013) study. With conflicting results concerning the influence of gender on childcare, one may conclude that child gender

influences various aspects of family dynamics depending on other factors of ethnicity, culture and context.

Children's general health and disability appear from the research to be other important characteristics for parents when considering the choice of a childcare setting for their children. This could be due to the fact that disabled or ill children need specialized childcare (Darling, 1987) or it could be that children who have a health condition might find themselves limited in engaging in activities with their healthier peers (Lukemeyer, Meyers & Smeeding, 2000). Children's health conditions could be physical or behavioural, including sleep and feeding problems.

According to a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010), there are "considerable gaps in childcare provision particularly for disabled children, older children, out-of-school and holiday options and childcare for those working atypical hours" (p.4). Moreover, policies and procedures concerning the childcare of ill or disabled children need further improvement, including eligibility determination, and a much stronger referral system (Kasprzak, et al., 2012). The care of disabled children is complex, requiring contributions from health, social care and education authorities. The ultimate goal of intervention programs for children with disabilities is to enable them to be active and successful participants during the early childhood years in all settings (Kasprzak, et al., 2012).

Obviously, child based characteristics investigated in the studies above are claimed to be influential in childcare utilization. However, their influence along with other family factors on childcare provision arguably depend on the context within which these factors are embedded (Zachrisson et al., 2013). The next part of this section thus extends the discussion to reflect in more detail on context factors.

2.6.3 Context Factors

Context factors are the third and last group of relevant socio-demographic factors that affect ECCE provision. They comprise of neighbourhood and community factors, which in turn include socio-economic status of the neighbourhood, built environment, and access to services, transport and amenities. Neighbourhood factors, known also as community-level factors, are dominant

factors that can determine ECCE services. Different theoretical models¹ were developed to study the relationship between community characteristics and childcare and development, including the Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1993) ecological model, neighbourhood resource theory (Connor & Brink, 1999), and relative deprivation theory (Higgitt & Memken, 2001). According to Higgitt and Memken (2001), such theories and models help to

conceptualize neighborhoods as varying along four general dimensions: physical infrastructure (e.g., types and quality of housing, use and arrangement of space), socio-demographic characteristics of the population (e.g., income and education levels), institutional resources (e.g., health and social services, child care centers, community centers, churches), and patterns of social organization within the neighbourhood (p.36).

Socio-economic status of the neighbourhood can be discussed in terms of poverty, residential stability, ratio of adult men and women, and the ratio of children under the age of 11 (Queralt & Witte, 1998). Neighbourhood disadvantage is typically exemplified in neighbourhood poverty, the percentage of one parent households, and the concentration of same level of education and employment of residents (Sampson, Morenoff & Gannon-Rowley, 2002). Several studies have argued that economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods are characterized by fewer resources, poor services (Mayer & Jencks, 1989; Jencks & Mayer, 1990) and shortage of quality childcare facilities (Burchinal et al., 2008). Due to the convenience of location, parents in poor neighbourhood choose low quality childcare settings for their children (Sandstrom et al., 2012) or to use informal care arrangements.

According to Harden, Monahan and Yoches (2012), neighbourhood social disadvantage is related to lower childcare quality. Disadvantaged neighbourhoods generally have fewer resources and facilities for children (Wilson, 1987, 1997). They might feature five risk factors as argued by Carta, Greenwood, Baggett, Buzhardt, and Walker (2012) that could affect children: (1) single parent, (2) teenage parents, (3) unemployed, (4) having lower education qualification, and (5) dependence on public assistance.

¹ Those theories are discussed in details in the next section "Theories of Understanding Demographics of ECCE".

In addition to the characteristics of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, Ellen and Turner (1997) have identified six mechanisms of neighbourhood conditions that may influence children directly or indirectly in those areas. These include quality of local services, socialization by adults, peer influences, social networks, exposure to crime and violence, and physical distance and isolation. Therefore, understanding neighbourhood conditions and characteristics is important when planning for childcare provision in terms of policy formation.

Several studies have found a relationship between neighbourhood poverty and childcare availability (Fuller & Liang, 1996; Hirshberg, Huang & Fuller, 2005). The study of Mulligan et al. (2005) found that childcare arrangements vary according to poverty level and geographic location. The study of Burchinal, Nelsonb, Carlsons and Brooks-Gunn (2008) also showed that neighbourhood characteristics relate to the type of childcare used by families with toddlers and pre-schoolers. Using a longitudinal sample, the researchers assessed childcare choices (i.e., whether they chose care in centres; childcare homes by non-relative, by relatives, and by parents). Findings of the study revealed that centre care quality was lower in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and higher for publicly funded programs. Furthermore, neighbourhood structural disadvantage was more negatively related to quality when mothers had less education. The findings provide further evidence that public programs of kindergarten and Head Start may be especially important to ensure that children living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have access to the types of childcare that promote school readiness. Ha and Ybarra (2014) indicated also that poverty as a neighbourhood characteristic was significantly associated with less use of centre-based care than parental care in their study. In addition, high quality care is more limited in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This can be supported also by Queralt and Witte's (1998) study which showed that communities with high levels of child poverty and public assistance are more than twice as likely to have no centre care available for their young children, than communities with low levels of child poverty and public assistance.

In short, many factors as reviewed earlier are strongly associated with the likelihood of children receiving non-parental care. Receipt of formal childcare was highest among children aged 3 to 4 as this is the age when children are entitled to

free or subsidized early education in most countries. However, non-parental care was lowest among 0- to 2 years old children, as grandparents and older siblings were the most commonly used informal childcare providers. Children's ethnic background in contexts with multiple ethnicities was also associated with the likelihood of receiving formal childcare in favour of some ethnic backgrounds. Children in two parents' and lone parent families differ in attending formal and informal childcare depending on context with welfare policies and universal access. Parents' employment and higher income are also strong predictors of using formal childcare than non-working families with lower incomes. Besides, the socio-economic status of the neighbourhood including adequate built environment, and access to services, transport and amenities will lead to enhanced opportunities for childcare and development. The main theories and models used to conceptualize the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE are discussed in the section below, with particular on emphasis on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model.

2.7 Understanding Demographics of ECCE in Semi-Remote Areas

This section takes another perspective in understanding demographics of ECCE, incorporating insights from a number of theoretical models. Exploring the particularities of these models, including the ecological systems, forms of capital, neighborhood resources and relative deprivation, constraints, preferences, and social interactions, can determine the most appropriate theoretical lenses to understand demographics of ECCE in semi-remote areas.

2.7.1 The Ecological Model

As the Egyptian society is more a hierarchical one with a clearly stratified structure, children and their families are greatly affected by individual contexts within communities as well as social positions. One of the models that hold the most ground in explaining the contexts around the child is Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This model focuses on the interrelationships between individuals and surrounding social and physical environments. More specifically, Bronfenbrenner's model postulates five different strata that surround and influence the growth of the child (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). It can be argued that they are four with the last being a separate, yet parallel, arena of influence:

- **Microsystems** are the innermost layer of Bronfenbrenner's model closest to the child and include the immediate settings, such as home, nursery or school, as well as the particular people engaged in those settings, such as parents, teachers and care practitioners.
- **Mesosystems** refer to the interrelations between the various microsystems that affect the child directly such as the nursery, school, home, or religious place.
- **Exosystems** are an extension of mesosystems, and include larger, social structures, both formal and informal. While these do not directly impinge upon the developing child, but rather, encompass the immediate settings in which the child lives, they nevertheless indirectly influence what occurs on the microsystem level. These structures include the major institutions of the society, such as the neighbourhood, the mass media, government agencies and informal social networks.
- **Macrosystems** are even broader areas of influence, and include cultural patterns, laws, regulations, economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, all of which have some sort of manifestation on the micro-, meso-, and exosystems levels.
- **Chronosystems** refer to the parallel time dimension in which the various systems around the child operate. This parallel time may witness events such as birth of a sibling, entering school, illness, marriage, divorce, etc. The main characteristic of these experiences or events is that "they alter the existing relation between person and environment, thus creating a dynamic that may instigate developmental change" (Bronfenbrenner, 1992, p. 201).

While Bronfenbrenner primarily addressed the general issue of human development, he also applied his theory to specific settings, including that of childcare. Bronfenbrenner, in applying the bio-ecological model to the framework of childcare, criticized earlier approaches to childcare for lacking a sense of context 'setting', and an appreciation of interpersonal dynamics between the child and the surrounding microsystems, as well as a fixation on the child as the experimental subject, rather than seeing him or her as being situated within larger frames of reference (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Phillips et al. (2006) summarized the major trends of research used Bronfenbrenner's circles of influence in childcare. Concerning microsystem of childcare, they indicated that research on this area can be classified into three categories: between-groups studies comparing children in childcare with children in exclusive parental care, within-group quality studies focusing on family related childcare factors to examine children in different childcare arrangements that vary in quality, and large scale studies which go beyond the limits of the first two types of studies to explore moderators and mediators of effects in childcare.

Childcare mesosystem research focuses on interconnections between childcare and family contexts. Four kinds of research can be identified in this respect: studies of family selection variables such as demographics, attitudes and personality, of childcare, studies of the predictive power of the family and its effects on children's development across childcare contexts, studies of childcare as a family support, especially families at risk, and studies of family moderators of childcare effects as those examining the effects of high-quality childcare on protecting children from the negative effects of familial factors.

As childcare is highly conditioned by other systems and circumstances in the communities that surround it, those conditions become points of interest for further research. Those aspects include childcare as an adult workplace (childcare workforce) and the regulatory structures of childcare, such as program standards and benchmarks. Finally, childcare macrosystem as a broader framework of public policies and attitudes that affect childcare has attracted also increasing interest due to childcare being embedded in a broader array of education, family, tax and income policies.

In Short, the ecological model recognizes the situated nature of child development. It highlights also the interdependency of systems and subsystems, which organize themselves to function as a totality in which every element affects and is affected by the others. It is not surprising, then, that demographics of ECCE in semi-remote areas cannot be adequately understood without considering the systems around the child and their interconnections which constrain or potentiate children's ECCE chances, in particular in those disadvantaged areas and for those low income

families living there. Accordingly, it has been adopted in the current study to interpret the research findings.

2.7.2 Forms of Capital Model

Children, parents and childcare practitioners, as discussed above, relate to each other in ever-widening circles of influence, from microsystems, through mesosystems to macro-and chronosystems. In a sense, all of these context circles affect children's development and well-being from infancy through the pre-school years and beyond. The important work of the French philosopher and sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), has brought to light hidden, yet extremely influential structures that influence not only how child-rearing decisions are made, but the very potential for their growth. While accounting for the significance of social, cultural and physical aspects of childcare provision, Bourdieu's forms of capital are claimed to better help understand the resources available to childcare in more advantaged areas and for children of the middle class families, which is not the case in the current study. Middle class families have power and authority and their ECCE choices reflect their class values and life style.

To understand how Bourdieu's structures apply to childcare, we first must understand several key concepts in Bourdieu's writing: *Habitus*, *Doxa* and *Forms of Capital* (Bourdieu, 1986; Grenfell, 2007; Grenfell, 2008). Living within a 'field' or 'context' results in a system of social structures as well as frameworks of perception, thought and action. This is called *Habitus*. Bourdieu applies here the term 'embodied' to stress the fact that habitus does not operate on the conscious level, but is the cognitive framework within which a person functions and interprets social values and reality. *Habitus* generates practices, beliefs, perceptions, and feelings (Bourdieu, 1993, p.87). In education and care terms, habitus would determine the choices that parents make for their children's childcare, based upon underlying values that they themselves may not be fully aware of or able to be objectively critique. *Habitus* creates *Doxa*, which are the deep-seated, intuitive knowledge shaped by experience that influence a person's actions and thoughts (Deer, 2014). It is a person's *doxa* that enables him to successfully navigate between his habitus and the field in which he moves. *Forms of Capitals* are social constructs; such as

economic, human, social, and cultural. They “are not static categories. They change over time, across geography, and with social context” (Bauder, 2006, p.37).

All these forms of capital exist in all communities and are regarded as basic components to account for children’s life. Economic or financial capital is embodied in material forms of money and at the family level it presents the economic capabilities of a family which can be measured by parents’ wealth or income (Wang, 2002). Generally, families with rich financial capital, they invest more in their children by providing quality ECCE. Parents’ education or specialized skills as well as investing in children’s care and education are forms of human capital that will result in significant returns (Kaba, 2013). Cultural capital refers to the various forms of non-material, significant and valuable resources that enable a person to adapt to and succeed within his particular context. To Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital is a mechanism for social reproduction and through education social capital can be added to cultural capital. Social capital here is a source of family support and “a community with high social capital enjoys the benefits of close family ties and access to resources through networks” (DesBaillets, 2008, p.5).

Many discussions of Bourdieu’s theory focus on the cultural capital accrued by children. For instance, Lareau (2003) examined the long-term repercussions of class differences in parenting styles upon children's orientation and subsequent academic success. Bourdieu pointed out that cultural capital is maintained and transmitted by myriad subtle skills. Many of these will play a role in parents’ successful application of capital in educational settings. Lareau indicated that parents who understand the ‘rules’ of the school playing field can manipulate them to their advantage and successfully apply their own cultural capital. The author discussed different areas in which a parent might successfully apply or misapply cultural capital, such as in the case of shared habitus between parent and school staff, or the failure or success of parents to accommodate to rigid applications of rules of school staff or administration. The author not only discussed how cultural capital is accrued and transmitted among families, but how capital is activated through parental choice and scholastic intervention. For instance, the parent’s own appropriate habitus and use of cultural capital can successfully enable them to choose and navigate a school system for the benefit of their children -- something that a parent with less cultural capital,

or different cultural capital, might not be able to do so successfully. While discussing mostly primary and secondary grade situations, her application of Bourdieu's theories would apply on childcare level, as well.

Among Bourdieu's central assumption is that children with high cultural capital gain preferential attention from educators, which both promote their status within the privileged class system. Because habitus starts to be acquired at a very early age and is embedded within the individual's native culture or "field," it should, according to Bourdieu begin to manifest in educational settings from the earliest grades on. He writes:

the initial accumulation of cultural capital, the precondition for the fast, easy accumulation of every kind of useful cultural capital, starts at the outset, without delay, without wasted time, only for the offspring of families endowed with strong cultural capital; in this case, the accumulation period covers the whole period of socialization (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 49).

If cultural capital is so central to the successful economic and social advancement of individuals, the natural question to ask is whether or not educational institutions can provide cultural capital in compensation for children coming from lower income, or culturally deprived backgrounds. Kisida, Greene, and Bowen (2014) claim that cultural capital can be gained from extra-familial settings, such as school visits to museums, art galleries, etc. This is particularly true of disadvantaged children, who were not exposed to these sources previously. Thus, it may compensate for family habitus that failed to provide cultural capital to its members. However, they conclude that "we also cannot determine if the change in students' disposition toward cultural activities will effectively translate into embodied cultural capital or lead to the acquisition of objectified or institutional cultural capital. Students may be showing an interest in cultural activities because they find the activities enjoyable, but they may not acquire the skills needed to decipher cultural codes" (p. 292).

Indeed, some studies have shown that cultural resources (i.e. cultural capital) might be an influential factor in educational attainment than economic capital (i.e. funds committed to further children's educational attainment) (Graaf, De Graaf, and Kraaykamp, 2000). This is significant, since it implies that parental background and

assumptions (*habitus*) may have a greater effect on children's education than even policies meant to eliminate economic barriers to education or preschool. When an educational system rewards elitist or high-brow cultural activities or behaviour (such as linguistic styles, aesthetic preferences, styles of interaction (*habitus*)), then children with low cultural capital may suffer fail to excel socially or academically, even when placed in culturally higher institutions. Graaf et al. (2000) used the Dutch system, in which education is primarily free, to show that even when economic restrictions are eliminated, other factors work to maintain privileged behaviour and subsequent success among students. However, they also conclude that, in the Netherlands at least, it is parents' reading behaviour that brings advantage to children's educational success, beyond any other form of cultural capital, such as highbrow activities. They also concluded that parents' cultural capital has a particular beneficial effect on students from middle and lower-class socio-economic backgrounds. Children from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to do better at school regardless of the level of cultural capital received from their parents.

Other researchers however have called this assumption into question. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is not only gained at extremely early stages of life, it is always situated within the greater framework of family and immediate society. As Kogler (2011) writes

“[Bourdieu] rather assumes that agents acquire, in the context of early childhood socialisation, a social *habitus* that pre-schematises their perception, thought and action by internalising structural features of their social environment... These *habitus* formations or schemes are socially differentiated, since they are acquired and shaped by the social situation within which agents grow up, and thus reflect or represent the economic, educational, cultural, gendered etc. relations that define the respective social environments. Those objective conditions are nonetheless transformed into embodied schemes and skills that enable agents to smoothly adjust and react to the present” (p. 287).

If this is the case, it may be unlikely for a school or day care centre to imbue its embedded forms of cultural capital. This would be especially true when the cultural capital of parents differs radically from the surrounding culture, as in the case of immigrant families.

Bourdieu's concepts of fields, habitus and capitals also manifest themselves geographically, distinguishing between communities. In this respect, Ball, Vincent, Kemp, and Pietikainen (2004) compared two contrasting London neighbourhoods, which they defined as either inclusivist (stressing community and universal values) and exclusivist (stressing individualist and closed values). In the more inclusivist community, parents were more open to send their children to community nurseries, where they would meet and interact with different types of children (within the overall framework of 'middle class families') – an option not favoured by the exclusivist community. The authors feel that this reflects the difference between a 'new middle class' who tends to be more socially open than the 'traditional middle class', who sets stronger boundaries and "relative social exclusivity from the earliest stages of their children's care and education" (p.495).

In short, Bourdieu's theory of capitals has significant implications in care and education settings. However, the theory is predominantly applied to those with power and tend to perpetuate class values and lifestyle.

2.7.3 Other Models

In literature there are many models which can be used to understand decision-making procedures. Significant among them are the consumer choice model, the heuristics and biases model, and the social network model. These models can be applied to a wide array of situations in which human beings make choices or decisions, including parental choices of childcare settings.

Consumer Choice Model. Chaudry, Henly and Meyers (2010) reviewed all the three models (in addition to a fourth, of their own), and explained how they can be applied to explain childcare decisions. According to the consumer choice model, consumers make decisions based on the theory of constrained optimization; that is, by weighing the trade-offs between alternatives relative to their preferences. The benefits of using this model for understanding the decision-making process lies in the fact that it is well structured, easily analysed, empirically testable, and has a predictive capacity. Consumer choice models are especially useful in explaining and predicting changes in the type of care that families choose in light of cost-benefit

issues. For example, in predicting that higher-income families make greater use of a more expensive, formal centre-based care, and put greater emphasis on the quality of care, whereas lower-income families put a premium on utilitarian values, such as time, and location. Similarly, it would predict that a decrease in day-care prices, such as childcare subsidies, results in great enrollment by low-income families in centre-based care.

Accordingly, the consumer choice model is likely the most prevalent framework used by researchers in order to understand parental choices in this area. For instance, Peyton et al., (2001) examined the various factors that influence parental decisions when choosing a childcare setting – whether it is home, extended family, or child centre care – as well as subsequent maternal satisfaction with the care received. The authors categorized reasons for choosing care settings under the categories of quality, practicality, and preference for a specific type of arrangement. Findings revealed significant influence of family income in choosing a childcare option, with higher-income families being more inclined to choose care based upon quality, whereas mothers in high stress situations (such as low-income households) tend to base their choices on pragmatic factors. While not explicitly using a consumer choice model, the types of questions posed by the authors to mothers suggest that they naturally gravitated to this model. For instance, questions asked concerning the perceived importance of such factors as quality of care providers, quality of environment/equipment, quality of program, fees, hours, location, availability, preference for a relative to provide care, preference for a home environment, and preference for a centre environment: all of which can be located on cost-benefit axis.

Furthermore, even though they do raise the issue of the influence of maternal sensitivity and parenting stress on childcare choices, for the most part, they consider these factors negligible in parents' preference for one aspect of childcare over another (such as choosing quality care over pragmatic factors). Thus, they concluded,

overall, the present study adds to the existing literature on child care choices by examining conditions that are related to mothers' child care decisions. The results point to the need to enhance mothers' abilities to be knowledgeable consumers of child care (p. 206).

Heuristics and Biases Model. Albeit the predominance of the consumer choice model in understanding parental childcare choices, other studies have come to recognize the centrality of non-rational models by which people often make significant life choices. According to Haselton, Nettle, and Andrews (2005), human beings mediate their perception of the world through a set of socially constructed images. The process follows here innate, subconscious mechanisms for perceiving, and interpreting reality— mechanisms that do not necessarily follow logical rules, such as relied upon by the consumer choice models. These ‘cognitive biases’ often express themselves through heuristic choices. Pescosolido (1992) lays out the principles by which people make decisions based upon non-rational factors, and the way in which social interactions and social networks provide the means through which individuals learn about and are able to deal with challenges in life. According to him, it is the framework of social interaction, rather than individual action that results in choices and decisions that are intertwined in social life, and carry their own inner rationality to instigate social action.

Chaudry et al. (2010) suggested the heuristic framework as a way to account for biases and non-rational factors in the parental decision making processes about childcare. The framework contributes to understanding the role of subjective interpretation in making determining decisions, and cognitive biases that include the predisposition to favour familiar factors or the influence of prior knowledge of a particular class or category to aid in decision making. The authors stated that, at least as of the publication of their whitepaper in 2010: "there has been no formal application of a heuristics and biases framework within the child care decision making literature, either at a conceptual level or empirically" (p.10).

Social Network Model. A third way of understanding parental choices is through the social network framework, defined by Chaudry et al. (2010) as a “framework of decision making [that] considers how individual decisions are shaped by social interactions and the resources embedded within them” (p. 17). The authors also examined four areas in which this approach influences childcare choices: (1) social networks as a source of information; (2) social networks as a system of support (both in terms of decision making, and actual childcare, thus influencing other choices); (3) Social networks as sources of social status and social credentials

for their members; (4) the pressure social networks exert on their members, and the values and behaviour that such networks favour.

Duncan and Irwin (2004) stated that household economic decisions are not always made on standard, individualized rational factors. Rather, studies of working mothers have determined that values and the decisions based upon them are often socially patterned according to class and ethnicity. Rather, "Cost-benefit type economic questions are not separable from these social and moral decisions" (p.392). These types of choices are reflected in the values that working class mothers look for first in childcare, such as emotional, development or group issues. This is as opposed to middle-class mothers, who based childcare choices in terms of educational and social development. The authors concluded that mothers evaluate the suitability of childcare options on factors other than mere affordability and availability. Top-down, cost-benefit theories do not take into account the relational and socially moral negotiated frameworks in which child-rearing decisions are made.

Meyers and Jordan (2006) reviewed and compared literature on both individual consumption choices and models of socially constructed or situated patterns of action, and concluded that both approaches are present in parental decision-making. When viewed from the perspective of consumer choice models, childcare decisions can be seen as a matter of labour supply and consumption choices, with the mother weighing factors such as work benefits against childcare costs, which include such issues as hours of employment, work schedules, parental characteristics, and socio-demographic variations. However, such choices are rarely made based upon information about preferences and alternatives alone, or personal cost/benefit analysis, but entail "a variety of shortcuts to simplify and rationalize their choices", which develop through "repeated interactions within a social environment" (p.59).

Albeit the different approaches of these concepts, Chaudry et al. (2010) find a common thread among them in that they both entail trade-offs and accommodation. In the first case, the choice is between optimal program quality and convenience of location, hours, and cost, and in the second case, it is the accommodation to limited, imperfect and socially constructed information about alternatives and resources. In both cases, the result is often socio-economic stratification in childcare arrangements.

Several researchers have tried to combine the various approaches discussed above. Kim and Fram (2009) examined parental choices from a person-centered, holistic perspective. Citing numerous other studies, they listed the factors that contribute to parental decision making such as: (1) what they consider is best for the child; (2) cost and convenience; (3) parent and child characteristics; (4) characteristics of childcare services, and (5) questions of availability. While they recognize non-rational factors in the decision making process and seek to explore these patterns through a holistic lens, for the most part, they seem to be analysing data following a consumer based approach, in that they regard the primary constraints on decision-making as availability, access and cost. Where cost is not a factor, such as among higher-income family, the greatest proportion of parents choose care-centres based on the quality of learning and care. On the other hand, they also identified the large group of parents that make decisions based upon practical considerations: "when a mother is working outside the home, parents are more likely to be in the 'practicality-focused' class than in either the 'learning and quality-focused' or the 'something else' class" (p.88).

Finally, in addition to presenting a comprehensive discussion of all the three models, Chaudry et al. (2010) offer a fourth model, which they called the Accommodation Model, inasmuch as it recognizes both the validity and the interwoven nature of the other three models. For instance, they demonstrated how the consumer choice framework also functions within a social framework, by limiting the number of choices available for parents, both in terms of geographical considerations, and due to the opportunities or constraints imposed upon an individual through the mediation of social interactions. Similarly, social circumstances influence heuristic decisions as to the effectiveness or favourability of various programs.

As argued by Chaudry et al. (2010), different frameworks for childcare choice can be regarded as complementary, rather than competing, and that "different frameworks may be most useful for particular research questions and for different methodological approaches" (p.31). Accordingly, the current study did not depend exclusively on any of these models in the interpretations of the results; however, they

helped in understanding some aspects of the stakeholders' perspectives in relation to ECCE arrangements.

2.8 Summary

In this review of literature, a number of themes and theoretical orientations related to the purpose of the study were explored. The main purpose of this literature review was to describe the context of the study as well as the theoretical models which provide explanation for ECCE policy and provision, along with previous studies. This included an overview of Egypt's geographical location, remote and semi-remote areas, socio- economic and cultural context, as well as care and education system. It reviewed also ECCE policy in place in the Egyptian context. It was important to highlight also at this stage the significance of yearly years and the different socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE along with the available types of ECCE.

The theoretical frameworks, including Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, Bourdieu's forms of capital, consumer choice model, heuristics and biases model, social network model and finally the accommodation model, were discussed in the last part of the chapter. They are believed to provide theoretical lenses to understand demographics of ECCE provision and stakeholders' perspectives.

The following chapter highlights the research design and methods of data collection chosen in the current study and the rationale behind this choice. It describes the mixed method design, including definition, philosophy and types. Special attention is then given to the sequential explanatory design adopted in the present research, particularly its advantages and limitations. The target population and geography of the research, along with closing comments on the ethics of the study constituted the content of the rest of the chapter.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

The core meaning of mixed methods in social inquiry is to invite multiple mental models into the same inquiry space for purposes of respectful conversation, dialogue, and learning one from the other, toward a collective generation of better understanding of the phenomena being studied (Greene, 2007, p.13).

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter elaborated the theoretical framework of the current study and reviewed the pertinent literature. It has strengthened the knowledge claims of the study and given some insight into the possible ways of exploring them. This chapter goes further and looks at the particular research design adopted in the study and the methods of data collection. It discusses first the research design and methods rationale through the lens of the pragmatic assumptions of doing ‘real-world’ research. It focuses then on the mixed methods used in the study, paying more attention to the sequential explanatory design. The final section highlights the target population and geography of the research, along with closing comments on the fundamental ethical principles of the study. Subsequently, chapters four and five discuss phase 1, quantitative data collection tools and analysis, and phase 2, qualitative data collection tools and analysis, respectively.

3.2 Research Strategy: Rationales

The research strategy, as “a general orientation to the conduct of the social research” (Bryman, 2004, p. 20), gives details of the research design and methods of data collection, and explains how it will help answering the research questions, and what kind of data to expect to obtain. According to Brannen (2005), there are three kinds of rationales, referred to as ‘three Ps’, that underlie the choice of research strategy. These include: paradigms (philosophical assumptions), pragmatics and politics. This study adds a fourth ‘P’, ‘Purpose’, as it is arguably the starting point for all research. This section outlines those rationales in more details.

3.2.1 Purpose

Research design, as a blueprint detailing the research process and the appropriate methods to be used, is entirely operationalized by the notion of ‘fitness for purpose’ as argued by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). The core of this notion is that

Researchers should select research methods based on the purposes of the research study and on their research questions. It is only within the context of the research purpose that any methods can be judged “weak” or “strong”. These judgements are based on whether they fulfil the purpose of the study and the research questions that necessarily must drive the study” (Ridenour & Newman, 2008, p.64).

Allowing the notion of fitness for purpose to drive the choice of research design and methods of data collection is claimed to result in higher quality research (Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

Accordingly, research purpose is recalled briefly at the outset of this chapter in order to express generally what this research is intending to achieve and look at how the purpose affects the way of conducting this particular research. The main purpose of the study is to better understand the socio-demographic factors affecting Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Egypt and uncover stakeholders’ perspectives towards the ECCE policy. The specific research objectives by which the purpose of the research is to be achieved are:

- to determine the socio-demographic factors (child, family and context related factors) affecting ECCE provision in North Sinai as a semi-remote area in Egypt;
- to identify stakeholders’ (parents, care practitioners, and policy makers) perspectives concerning the ECCE policy and its response to the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in North Sinai.

The purpose of the study is thought to be most attainable through a descriptive design using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative data collection

methods). Due to the nature of the research, which is specifically social and educational in character and addresses complex questions, different kinds of methods are needed. Neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to meet the purposes of the study mentioned above. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods for this piece of social research will allow for a much more sophisticated and complete analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The choice of mixed methods was also driven by philosophical paradigms or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

3.2.2 Paradigms (Philosophical Assumptions)

Social research is underpinned by philosophical assumptions about the knowledge claims it seeks to investigate. According to Brannen (2005), researchers need to develop a research frame of reference, which is driven chiefly by such assumptions. Those assumptions, referred to as paradigms (Kuhn, 2012) or worldviews (Creswell, 2003), differ in five elements: ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, and rhetoric (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). These elements determine our perspective of what and how we can know and investigate social phenomena.

The table (3.1) below is an overview of the research paradigms and their philosophical stances as provided by Creswell and Clark (2011). As can be seen, each worldview element is interpreted differently across philosophies. Ontology is concerned with “what we believe constitutes social reality” (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8). Ontological claims are viewed “the starting point of all research, after which one’s epistemological and methodological positions logically follow” (Grix, 2002, p.177). Positivists view reality “like the world of natural phenomena, as being hard, real and external to the individual” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.8). However, constructivists are of the opinion that “social actors negotiate meanings about their activity in the world. Social reality therefore consists of their attempts to interpret the world” (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p.131). In this study, the researcher began with reality gained from the empirical approach about the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE and policy responses to them. In addition to representing multiple realities, they are

“constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation” (Creswell, 1998, p.76). This provides more than one perspective of examining the phenomenon under investigation.

Table 3.1

Elements of the worldviews and their stances

Worldview Element	Post Positivism	Constructivism	Participatory	Pragmatism
Ontology	Singular reality	Multiple realities	Political reality	Singular and multiple realities
Epistemology	Distance and impartiality	Closeness	Collaboration	Practicality
Axiology	Unbiased	Biased	Negotiated	Multiple stances
Methodology	Deductive (Quantitative)	Inductive (Qualitative)	Participatory (Usually Qualitative)	Combining (Quantitative and Qualitative)
Rhetoric	Formal	Informal	Advocacy & change	Formal or informal

Adapted from: Creswell and Clark (2011, p.42)

Related to the beliefs about the nature of reality are the “epistemological beliefs concerning what it is possible for one to know” (Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher & Perez-Prado, 2003, p.20). Epistemology refers to “the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be” (Blaikie, 2000, p.8). It questions the nature of knowledge, the extent of that knowledge and the way it can be acquired. In educational research, epistemology “refers to how educational researchers can know the reality that they wish to describe” (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p.85). In this respect, two forms of epistemology, objectivist and subjectivist, can be identified. Positivism is closely related to the objectivist epistemology, where social phenomena are viewed to occur independently from social actors. Thus, knowledge claims stem from empirical approaches employing quantitative methods. Those methods value data received from the senses and treated logically and mathematically (Cohen et al., 2007).

Conversely, interpretivism is epistemologically linked to subjectivism and in turn to constructivism philosophy, where meaning is constructed by the individuals themselves, and obtained and interpreted by qualitative methods. Constructivism asserts that knowledge is actively built rather than being just received. Individuals “build their own knowledge and their own representations of knowledge from their own experience” (Martin & Loomis, 2007, p.63). Researchers adopting this view and qualitative methods in turn “are more concerned to understand individuals’ perceptions of the world. They seek insight rather than statistical analysis” (Bell, 1993, p.5).

Purist researchers believe that quantitative and qualitative methods encompass incompatible epistemological and ontological assumptions about research and therefore cannot be brought together in a research design (Rosseman & Wilson, 1985). Thus, they tend to choose one approach for their inquiry which is best sought to answer their research questions. However, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) have rejected this rigid dichotomy and rather viewed epistemology as a continuum. This could be argued to be closer to the concept of pragmatism; a position akin to that of the researcher herself.

Pragmatism is “a deconstructive paradigm that debunks concepts such as ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ and focuses instead on ‘what works’ as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 713). It draws on many ideas using diverse approaches, valuing both objective and subjective knowledge (Cherryholmes, 1992). Pragmatism as a research paradigm has become “a third choice that embraces superordinate ideas gleaned through consideration of perspectives from both sides of the paradigms debate in interaction with the research question and real-world circumstances” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 73). It values both subjective and objective knowledge and encourages the use of diverse approaches to research on the basis of ‘what works’ (Cherryholmes, 1992; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007).

The third element is axiology which refers to the philosophical assumptions of value. More specifically, it refers to the role of values in inquiry (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.7). Underlying a researcher’s philosophical assumptions are a set of value assumptions which guide the research. Axiology is important as values can

affect the research results and the conclusions to be drawn. Post-positivists tend to be unbiased in their research, using accountability checks to eliminate any bias. In contrast, constructivists believe that the evidence they collect are neutral and contingent on their interpretation. Being cognizant of the current research standpoint, the researcher acknowledges the values, attitudes and biases that could potentially influence the conduct and outcome of research. This might be manifested in research praxis in terms of “(a) what questions are asked or not asked in ...[the] research;(b) what type of data is or is not collected; and (c) the type of methods, measurement, analysis, and interpretation that shape our understanding of the research process” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p.171). This leads to the methodology choices that are bound by the researcher’s value choices.

Methodology refers to the strategy or plan of action which links the choice of research methods to the required outcomes (Crotty, 1998). This can be distinguished from research methods which refer to the specific techniques of data collection and analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Quantitative methodologies and their specific methods are deductive reasoning based and employed in “hypothesis-testing research” (Newman & Benz, 1998, p.18, citing Kerlinger, 1964). Deduction is a process to “explicate the consequences (more crucially the testable consequences) of conjectures proposed as answers to a question or problem under investigation” (Levi, 2012, p.77). Qualitative methodologies and their methods, on the other hand, are grounded in inductive reasoning and used to describe the phenomenon under investigation and explain why it happens. Induction is regarded here as a verification process “on the basis of which conjectured answers to the given question are eliminated” (p.77). Mixed methods research is also influenced by the abduction reasoning mode, which can be viewed as a “process of forming explanatory hypothesis” (Peirce, 1998, p.216). It serves the task of hypothesising potential answers to the research question. It could be regarded also as a combination of induction and deduction.

Accordingly, the mixture of inductive, deductive, and abductive inference is valued in mixed methods research based on a pragmatic view of using all the methods that are necessary to answer the research questions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), further noted that the logic of inquiry encompasses the use of

“induction (or discovery of patterns), deduction (testing of theories and hypotheses), and abduction (uncovering and relying on the best of a set of explanations for understanding one’s results) (p.17).” A mixed method approach in the study, therefore, presents a logical and intuitive appeal hence provides a platform for bridging the divide between qualitative and quantitative paradigms.

The final element rhetoric is concerned with the style of language of research (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). It is an essential element for the community of scholars and researchers who need to communicate and share their knowledge. Positivists and post-positivists tend to adopt quantitatively rhetorical structures to maintain objectivity in writing research accounts (Betz & Fassinger, 2012, p.261). On the other side, constructivists adopting a qualitative approach in their research are more likely to use a language to express subjective meanings and experiences. This research uses both language orientations as its design combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Applying the above paradigms to the current research, the ontology of ECCE in the Egyptian context and the epistemological assumptions about the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE require a pragmatic approach to knowledge which considers multiple perspectives and standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research. Therefore, the use of a descriptive design based on mixed methods in this study is an acknowledgment of the different worldviews and the need for a design to seek answers to complex questions which require more than purely quantitative or purely qualitative study. This design values the strengths of the paradigmatic integrity of qualitative and quantitative methods and tries to integrate them at the data collection, analysis and interpretation levels (Wray & Kumpulainen, 2010).

3.2.3 Pragmatics

This research built knowledge on pragmatic grounds, as argued by Creswell (2003). A pragmatic rationality lets the researcher choose a certain research design and methods of data collection, “if the research questions and practicalities of the research context suggest” them (Brannen, 2005, p.10). Those practicalities may include available resources, time allocated for the research, access to research

subjects, setting or the place where the research takes place, and stakeholders' perspective and permission.

Particular as this research was undertaken in a semi-remote area, it had certain characteristics and imposed certain requirements. These included: (1) a number of parents with difficulties in reading and writing were unable to answer the questionnaires by themselves, (2) geographically isolated communities in smaller towns and villages, (3) parents' limited knowledge of the culture of research and its importance, and (4) many services less accessible, such as transportation, community centres, and databases.

Accordingly, a tailored mixed methods design was used to answer the research questions in the current study based on pragmatic grounds. The researcher conducted first a survey research where two delivery modes for the questionnaire, hardcopy mode and interview based questionnaire mode, were used. This was followed by interviews with selected participants to explore issues in greater depth.

3.2.4 Politics

The fourth rationality for research design and methods choice "relates to the politics of the research and the researcher" (Brannen, 2005, p. 10). As argued by Babbie (2014), social research has an inevitable political dimension which involves studying people's political beliefs. This research studies political decisions in ECCE which become "authoritative policy" for a category of the population (Hague & Harrop, 2004, p.3). Dealing with issues of income, number of children, employment, profession and education level, which are political in nature, is highly pragmatic and requires using a mixed methods research design. According to Hague and Harrop (2004), "the necessity of politics arises from the collective character of human life. We live in groups that must reach collective decisions" about their life (pp.3-4). A family discussion of which nursery to enrol pre-school children in is an example of a group seeking to reach decision which becomes a political action and affect all the members of the group.

As far as the context of the study is concerned, clearly the political structure in Egypt has changed considerably since 2011. The change of the political regime

coincided with economic difficulties, security threats and terroristic attacks particularly in North Sinai. At the family level, family politics are regarded as part of the country's political landscape with women's employment and childcare at the core; as a tool to organize family's life.

3.3 Mixed Methods Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design for collecting, analysing and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed methods research is viewed as the 'third methodological movement' (Tashakkorri & Teddlie, 2003) after the quantitative/qualitative debate of the 1980s; commonly referred to as 'paradigm wars' (Denzin, 2009, p.10). The debate was fuelled between the two traditions based on the beliefs that quantitative and qualitative research are distinct with regard to their underpinning philosophies and methodological assumptions to the extent that the two paradigms are seen in sharp opposition (Pring, 2000) and competing not complementing each other. However, Newman and Benz (1998) argued that this distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is a false dichotomy or as expressed by Pring (2000) false dualism and there should be a qualitative-quantitative research continuum. This can be supported by Byram and Feng (2004) who view quantitative and qualitative research as two ways of collecting and analysing data rather than being two opposing paradigms of thinking that cannot meet. They are connected by logical configurations commonality and overlap. Thus, mixed methods research has become an adequate stand-alone research paradigm (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) and it helps bridge the gap and schism between the two old traditions (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It combines elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches for the purposes of breadth and depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Reviewing several definitions of mixed methods research reveals that there is little agreement. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), many definitions for mixed methods "have emerged over the years that incorporate various elements of methods, research processes, philosophy, and research design" (p.2). For them, mixed methods can be viewed more as a methodology rather than as methods. In

Contrary, Gorard (2013), claims that Creswell and Plano Clark's perspective is "about research methods not really about research design" (p.6).

For Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007), mixed methods research is "an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research)" (p.112). Creswell and Clark (2007) defined it as a procedure for collecting and analyzing data by means of mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods. Creswell (2008) stated that the basic assumption behind mixed methods is that "the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, in combination, provides a better understanding of the research problem and questions than either method by itself" (p. 552).

Mixed methods research normally combines quantitative and qualitative methods (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This can be distinguished from multi-method studies employing only quantitative or qualitative methods, or both but with no evidence of mixing (Bryman, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Newman and Benz (1998) provided the notion of the qualitative/quantitative research continuum, as opposed to a dichotomy which separates the qualitative and quantitative constructs in research. This dichotomy is argued to be not "consistent with a coherent philosophy of science and, further, that the notion of a continuum is the only construct that fits what we know in a scientific sense" (p.7).

The main goal of mixed methods research is "to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both [quantitative and qualitative approaches] in single research studies and across studies" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp. 14 -15). Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) are of the opinion that

There are times when qualitative research may be best, because the researcher aims to explore a problem, honor the voices of participants, map the complexity of the situation, and convey multiple perspectives of participants. At other times, quantitative research may be best, because the researcher seeks to understand the relationship among variables or determine if one group performs better on an outcome than another group..... Research problems suited for mixed methods are those in which one data source may be insufficient, results need to be explained,

exploratory findings need to be generalized, a second method is needed to enhance a primary method, a theoretical stance needs to be employed, and an overall research objective can be best addressed with multiple phases, or projects (pp. 7-8).

As argued by Ridenour and Newman (2008), research methods “can play different roles in providing evidence: they have different functions” (p.64). For Rossman and Wilson (1985), mixed methods design could fulfil three main functions by means of integrating data; corroboration, elaboration, and initiations. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) expanded those functions to five based on reviewing published research studies employing mixed methods designs: triangulation, complementarily, development, initiation, and expansion. Corroboration, for Rossman and Wilson (1985), and triangulation, for Greene et al. (1989), refer to the same function which is seeking convergence of the results obtained from different methods and establishing their validity. Elaboration or complementarily function is to offer rich interpretations from different perspectives and clarification of the results. Initiation function aims at discovering paradoxes and contradictions in non-convergent data (Blaikie, 2009). Development function refers to using results from one method to help inform other method(s). Finally, expansion function seeks to expand the breadth of the research by using different methods for different inquiry targets.

Accordingly, the main functions of using mixed methods design in the current study were development and elaboration. Data from the survey of socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision were used for a development function to inform the interview method. Data from the interviews and document analysis were utilized to elaborate and provide rich details of stakeholders’ perspectives on socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision and how the existing ECCE policy responds to them.

While employing a mixed methods design, three decisions needed to be made with regard to priority, implementation, and integration (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Priority refers to the order in which emphasis was placed on the different research methods. In other words, whether quantitative or qualitative methods were given more emphasis in the study. Implementation refers to

whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis would take place sequentially or concurrently. Eventually, a decision needed to be reached concerning how to integrate the quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide answers the research questions.

3.4 Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Design: Overview and Rationale

There are several types of mixed methods designs depending on the mechanism of direction, namely sequentially, one method follows the other, or simultaneously, different methods are employed concurrently. These types include convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential and embedded designs as depicted in the Figure (3.1) below. Within each type, there are also various possible designs as discussed by Plano-Clark, Huddleston-Casas, Churchill, O'Neil Green, and Garrett (2008), Creswell, Plano-Clark and Garrett (2008), Creswell (2009), and Gray (2009).

The convergent parallel design, referred to also as triangulation design, is used when quantitative and qualitative research methods are conducted separately yet concurrently and research findings drawn from both methods merged at the point of interpretation. In explanatory sequential design, quantitative and qualitative methods are implemented sequentially (quantitative and then qualitative), where qualitative findings are intended to help interpreting or contextualizing quantitative results. Qualitative and then quantitative research methods are implemented in this sequence in exploratory sequential design. The qualitative strand is exploratory in this model and followed by further quantitative inquiry and analysis. In the embedded design, either qualitative or quantitative methods are used with a secondary strand of the other type of methods embedded as an enhancement. The secondary method can be used concurrently or sequentially (Plano-Clark, Huddleston-Casas, Churchill, O'Neil Green, & Garrett, 2008).

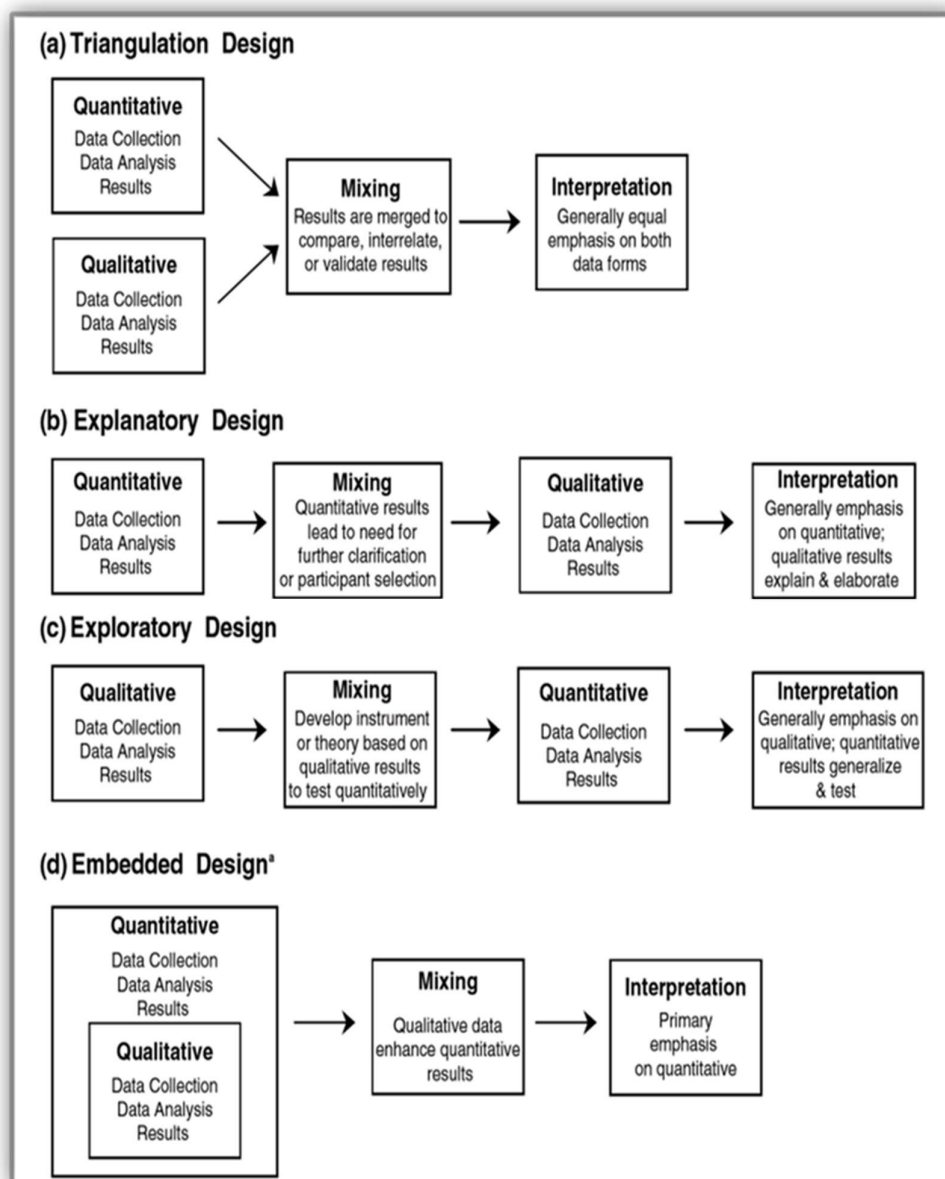


Figure 3.1 Major mixed methods designs (Plano-Clark, Huddleston-Casas, Churchill, O'Neil Green, & Garrett, 2008, p. 1551)

This study adopted the sequential explanatory design, known also as qualitative follow-up design (Morgan, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), as the sequence quantitative and qualitative of data collection and analysis was viewed to serve the purpose of the study and its specific objectives. In the first phase, quantitative data about the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE was collected using a survey method. The collected numeric data was analysed using descriptive and discriminant

function analysis. The findings of this phase intended to provide a general understanding of the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE in semi-remote areas in Egypt. Then, the second qualitative phase with selected participants followed to explain the quantitative results. In that phase, qualitative data using interviewing method was collected and analysed to explore the stakeholders' perspectives in relation to the existing ECCE policy and its response to the socio-demographic factors.

The figure (3.2) below summarizes the two phases of data collection and analysis conducted in the study.

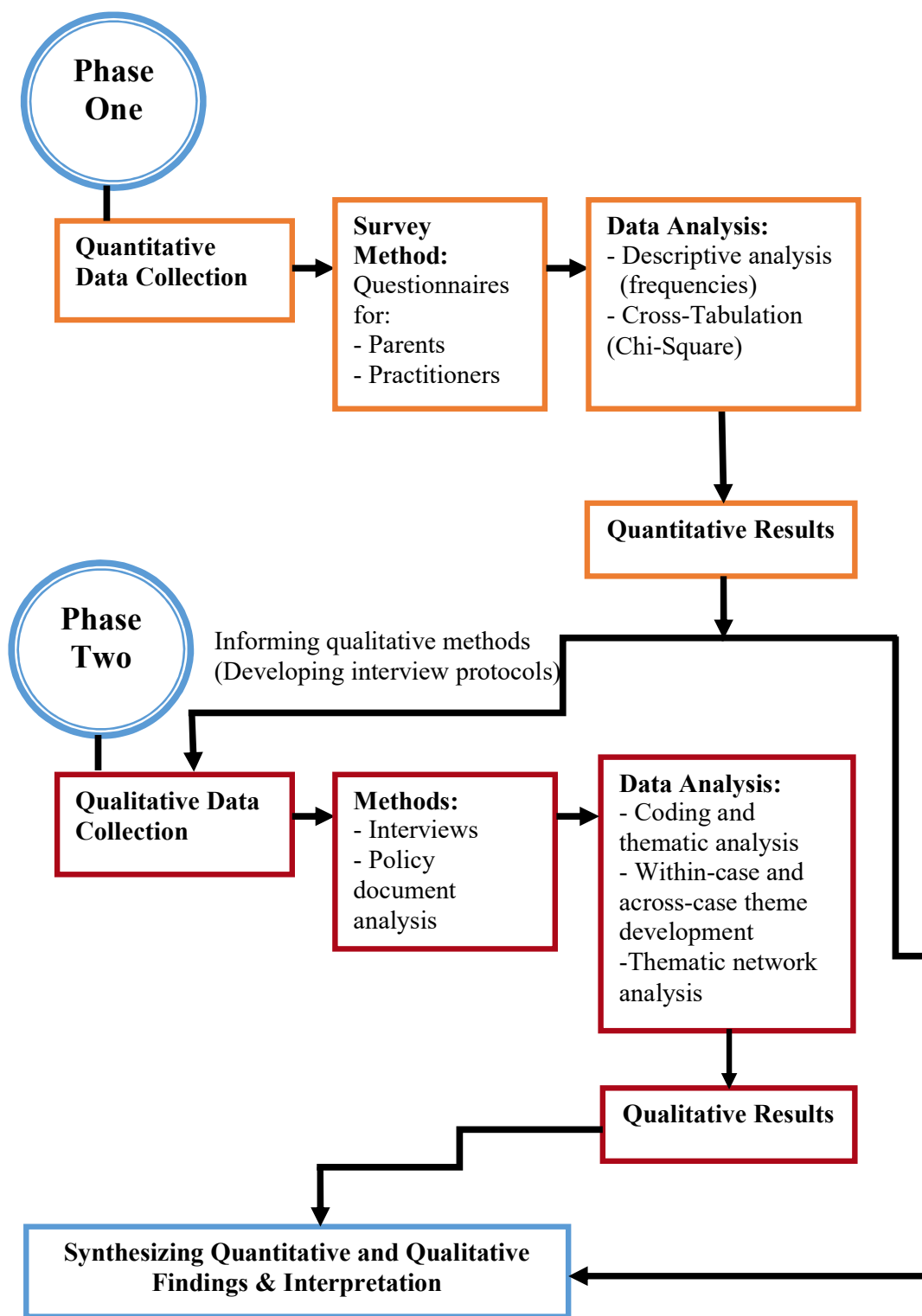


Figure 3.2 Proposed research design

As shown in the figure above, the quantitative and qualitative methods were mixed first at the intermediate stage of the research process, where significant quantitative findings were selected to inform the design of the qualitative phase for the purpose of expanding and enriching the research results. Further mixing then occurred following the collection and analysis of the qualitative data in the second phase, where findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases were synthesised to provide holistic, coherent and contextualised results.

As argued by Creswell et al. (2003), the sequential explanatory design can prioritize the quantitative aspects of the study over the qualitative aspects. However, advocates of the interpretive approach may view “the quantitative component as in the service of the qualitative component, which is considered primary” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p.106). No doubt, the two phases are equally important and connected in the intermediate stage in the study. The quantitative data provided a general understanding of the research variables, whereas the qualitative data refined and explained in depth the statistical results of the first phase (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). One of the most important strengths of this design was the flexibility of the second phase of the research process to adapt the suitable qualitative approaches based on what was learned from the initial quantitative phase.

There were two explanatory design variants: follow-up explanations variant and participant-selection variant. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2011), the follow-up explanations variant is the prototypical and common design, where priority is given to the first quantitative phase and the subsequent qualitative results in the second phase are used to explain the initial quantitative data. The participant-selection variant is used when nature of the research requires the priority to be placed on the second, qualitative phase instead of the initial quantitative one. “This variant is used when the researcher is focused on qualitatively examining a phenomenon but needs initial quantitative results to identify and purposefully select the best participants” (p.86).

Several examples of mixed methods studies adopting a sequential explanatory design can be found in different disciplines of social sciences literature (e.g. McGraw, Zvonkovic & Walker, 2000; Weine et al., 2005; Morris, 2009; Heap, 2010;

Hartnell, 2011; Zhu, 2011). The following short review of studies is provided to underline the increasing importance of mixed methods research in social enquiries. It highlights also the complexity of contemporary social problems which requires profound understanding of phenomena, trends, as well as individual stories and explanation. McGraw, Zvonkovic and Walker (2000), for example, used an explanatory design to examine women's lived experience on work and family processes. The initial quantitative phase is followed by a qualitative phase employing in-depth interviews with selected respondents from the first quantitative survey stage.

Significant to the studies reviewed above is the emphasis on the sequential explanatory mixed methods design as a valid route for conducting social research. This is particularly important as some of the studies have the same rationale as this research in adopting that design. Mixed methods design is advocated in the above reviewed studies for many reasons, mostly importantly the weaknesses of the qualitative or quantitative approach when used by itself. Qualitative research is criticized for being subjective, personalistic, and its findings are tendentious (Stake, 2010, p. 29). The subjective elements of qualitative research may affect the validity and reliability of the study. Also due to the limited scope of qualitative research, the results are likely to be difficult to generalize. Besides, qualitative research may take longer in collecting and analysing data (Bryman, 2004; Huysamen, 1997; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

However, one of the major points of critique against quantitative research lies in the fact that it "is not apt for answering why and how questions" (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Collins, 2007, p. 215), which are crucial in the study of social sciences and humanity (Willie, 1994). Therefore, quantitative research cannot provide in-depth information regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Some of the results cannot also be generalized unless the sample size is large and representative. Moreover, some of the results produced are statistically significant, but probably difficult to interpret (Poynter, 2010, p.155).

As discussed above, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches have their strengths and weaknesses and therefore, a mixed methods approach is seen as a means of maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses. The most prominent

feature of this approach is “its methodological pluralism or eclecticism, which frequently results in superior research (compared to mono method research)” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.14). It takes advantage of using various research approaches and allows comparing and validating results (Ruel & Arimond, 2003). Accordingly, the present study employed a mixed methods research design which best fits the nature and purpose of the study.

3.5 Target Population and Geography of the Research

The target population in this study constituted three categories of participants; parents, nursery and kindergarten practitioners, and policy makers. The participants were located in North Sinai in Egypt, a semi-remote governorate. It encompasses the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula. It is bordered in the east by Gaza strip and Israel which made it different from the other frontier governorates in Egypt. The total population of North Sinai was over 434 thousands as at 2015 (CAPMAS, 2016). After the 1973 war with Israel and Camp David Accords of 1978, a significant economic activity of the Bedouin tribes in the eastern part of North Sinai is goods smuggling with Gaza.

The main research sites were El-Arish, Beir El Abeid, Sheikh Zwaïd, Rafah, Hasana, and Nekhel. Except El-Arish which is the capital city of North Sinai, the other areas are considered non-urban areas with distinctive features of Bedouin and rural communities. The areas chosen in El-Arish were at the outskirts of the capital (see the map below figure 3.3 where the capital city El-Arish is marked with a yellow dot and the 5 other areas marked with green dots). These research sites were intimately-known communities for the researcher as she lived in North Sinai for more than 15 years. This made the researcher aware of the Bedouin culture and life style, as well as being able to understand their accent.

As an insider researcher, being a mother in North Sinai and a local primary school teacher, the research was driven by that experience. Malterud (2001) referred to the importance of the researcher's background and position which can affect what he/she chooses to investigate. This is arguably true as the researcher chose the topic and context of the study based on her personal experience with the problems of ECCE in North Sinai as well as the different socio-demographic factors that could

affect ECCE in that context. Being also a female researcher made it easy to contact the mothers who are the main child carers, as the Bedouin community is very conservative and a male researcher would have found it difficult to approach them in this particular instance.



Figure 3.3 Map of Sinai
(Source: touregypt.net, 2015)

Concerning choosing the research participants, two sampling methods were adopted; one for each phase of the research. Random sampling, known also as simple random sampling (SRS) (Babbie, 2013), was selected for the survey method in phase one. According to Gravetter and Forzano (2009), in random sampling, “each individual in the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected” (p.134). It was the appropriate technique to reach a large number of respondents (parents and care practitioners) to the survey. In addition, the research purpose did not require use of a stratum or subset of the target population. In this sense, all individuals have equal opportunities of being chosen and the choice of an individual does not affect other individuals of being selected or not. This process eliminates any systematic bias (Moore & McCabe, 2006).

In the second phase of the study, generic purposive sampling was adopted for the selection of subjects for the interviews. Generic purposive sampling is mostly used in a mixed methods context, where findings from a quantitative method for instance might guide the selection of a purposive sample for a qualitative data collection (Bryman, 2004, 2012). The purposive sample focuses on information-rich cases which yield “insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations” (Patton, 2002, p.230). Selecting subjects purposively for the second phase of this study was based on subjects’ certain attributes, personal knowledge and information collected about them, as well as their willingness to participate further. The parent participants were selected purposively to ensure variation in marital status, age, number of children, source of income, and education level. The practitioner participants were chosen also to represent varied qualifications and years of experience. Selected policy makers were invited for follow up interviews based on their rich experience and position held.

The characteristics of the participants of the two phases, applicable to each category, are summarized in the table (3.2) below:

Table 3.2

Characteristics of the research participants

	Parents	Practitioners	Policy Makers
Socio-Economic Status (SES)	Varied including high SES, middle SES, and low SES.	---	---
Marital Status	Varied including married, divorced, and widowed.	---	---
Age	Varied from under 20 years old to over 40 years old.	---	---
Educational Background/Qualification	Varied from no qualification to university degree.	Varied from high school qualification to post-graduate qualification	---
Work/Profession	Varied including unemployed, professionals, technicians, administrative employees, and Labourers.	---	---
Experience in Working in Child Care	---	Varied from 1 year to 22 years of experience.	---
Involvement in Policy Making	---	---	Regional (micro policies).

As shown in the table above, parent participants (n=250) varied in terms of age, socio-economic status, marital status, educational background and work. The practitioner participants (n=100) also had different qualification levels and work experience. Questionnaire respondents were limited to parents and practitioners and the total number of participants depended on the number of kindergarten and nurseries in each area of the chosen governorate and the willingness of the participants to complete the questionnaire.

The policy maker interviewees (n=4) in the second phase of data collection were selected based on their involvement in regional micro policies. Parents (n=13) and childcare practitioner (n=7) interviewees were selected from the questionnaire respondents on the grounds that would represent the research interests. A further description of the research sample as a subset of the target population is provided in the next two chapters discussing quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The focus of this section is to highlight ethical considerations relevant to social research, as well as ethical demands for mixed methods researchers using both qualitative and quantitative research settings as discussed by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009). The research has been conducted according to the code of practice and ethics guidelines of the Social Research Association (SRA) to protect research subjects and ensure high quality standards for the research (SRA, 2003)¹.

Three permissions were sought from Ministry of Education for gaining access to state kindergartens, Ministry of Social Solidarity for gaining access to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and private nurseries, and Ministry of Health and Population for gaining access to family and community centres. All were granted after following all the bureaucratic procedures.

An informed consent letter was developed for all participants of the research (please refer to the see Appendices). The letter was attached as page one at the beginning of the questionnaire to inform the participants of the purpose of the study, questionnaire structure, expected results as well as their right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any point in the study. A final note was also added at the end of the questionnaire to ask participants if they would like to participate further in the study and be interviewed, to put a tick mark and write their names and contact details. A thank you gift, 3 children books, was promised to be given for all interviewees. The interviews with the participants were conducted in a normal social setting (work office, nursery and centre's reception and parents' house) and audio recorded using computer software (Audacity), after their consent. Note taking was also used during

¹ Please refer to the following URL for the complete ethical guidelines of SRA: <http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ethics03.pdf>

interviews with participants (one policy maker and one mother) who refused the audio recording.

The rights of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants had been granted. Identities of the participants involved in the study were kept strictly confidential and no personal information was retained. Pseudonyms were used with the interviewees too. Participants were given enough time to complete the questionnaires without rushing them. This was in addition to allowing interviewees to review the interview transcripts and a commitment to send a copy of the research results if they were interested. It was essential also to ensure the comfort of the participants and make the interview sessions relaxing and interesting. Early adequate considerations were given to any source of potential inconvenience that might face the participants. This helped ensure participants' motivation and control the factors that influence voluntary co-operation with the researcher as argued by Tyler (2011). Further detailed description of ethical aspects will be provided in the following two chapters as I move into the discussion of methods of data collection and research tools.

3.7 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research design employed in the study. The design incorporated two phases of mixed methods explanatory design, conducted in a quantitative, then qualitative sequence. Four kinds of rationales, purpose, paradigms, pragmatics, and politics, underlie the choice of that design. This pragmatic mixed method design with the two sequential stages is believed to provide the nuanced exploratory data that the research is trying to explore both general socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision and policy, as well as a rich in-depth look at the perspectives of the stakeholders and the people that are impacted upon by these factors. Characteristics of the target population and geography of the research have to be taken into consideration within the ethical guidelines of conducting such social research. The following chapters four and five discuss phase 1, quantitative data collection, analysis and results, and phase 2, qualitative data collection, analysis and results respectively.

Chapter Four

Quantitative Data Collection, Analysis and
Results: Phase I

Chapter Four

Quantitative Data Collection, Analysis and Results: Phase I

Quantitative research offer different ‘calibrations’ of the social world (Ritchie, 2003, p. 34).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the quantitative data collection and analysis of the first phase of the mixed methods research design employed in the current study. This phase aimed at identifying the top influential socio-demographic factors affecting early childhood care and education (ECCE) provision in North Sinai, as a semi-remote area in Egypt. To meet this aim and fulfil a balance with practical considerations such as the research time-frame and the amount of data required from a sizable sample, a survey method was used via self-administered questionnaires.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. Part one provides a discussion of the survey method in relation to the socio-demographic peculiarities and survey climate of the given context. Next, it reviews the questionnaires’ objectives, design, and piloting. Then, it describes the sampling technique, respondent subjects, questionnaire administration process, and data analysis plan. In part two of the chapter, the data obtained from the questionnaires are reported descriptively to indicate general tendencies and trends, and to interpret the relationship between variables. Based on the results from the survey method, interview protocols were designed for the qualitative phase of this mixed methods enquiry¹. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary including key findings.

Part I: Data Collection and Analysis

4.2 Survey Method

A survey is a popular and useful method of collecting data in social research. According to Hutton (1990), it is a “method of collecting information by asking a set of pre-formulated questions in a predetermined sequence in a structured

¹This is discussed thoroughly in the next chapter.

questionnaire to a sample of individuals drawn so as to be representative of a defined population.” (p. 8). However, survey research is not only limited to questionnaires; but it could make use also of other techniques, such as focus groups, and observations, depending on research objectives and orientation. The particular features of these techniques in survey research are “the form of the data and the method of analysis” (De Vaus, 2002, p. 3). Survey data are mostly quantitative in nature and presented in tabular and graph forms. The typical scenario for survey data analysis is

one where ... data are obtained from the sampled population units and these data, together with auxiliary information about the population, are used to make an inference about either a characteristic of the population or a parameter of a statistical model for the population (Chambers, 2003, p.277).

Questionnaire technique was used in the quantitative phase of this mixed methods research design on the basis of 'fit for purpose'. Gillham (2000) points out that questionnaires have the advantage of being:

- Relatively low cost in both designing and administering,
- Less restricted in terms of location and time to fill in,
- Adequately targeting a sizable sample,
- Less biased, although they might reflect assumptions and presuppositions of their developers,
- Highly respecting confidentiality and anonymity, and
- Straightforward in data collection and analysis, in particular close-ended questionnaires.

However, survey burden in general and survey climate in particular may influence participation (Groves , 2002). Survey burden encompasses challenges for target subjects to participate in surveys including questionnaire length, time and effort on the part of the respondents (Biemer & Lyberg, 2003). Survey climate refers to “a state of various populations’ willingness to participate in surveys” (Biemer & Lyberg, 2003, p.92). This kind of willingness depends mainly on prevailing traditions and cultural practices, survey questions, and privacy issues. However, willingness can change overtime with change in the above factors. In the Egyptian context, in particular in non-urban areas where illiteracy level is high, the response

rate to questionnaires can be low. Egypt has an adult illiteracy rate of 34% according to the World Bank (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2013, p. 72). Even in urban areas with the majority of the population is educated; response rate might be affected by the survey climate in the Egyptian context. As argued by several scholars, survey-taking climate may differ between and within societies and affect response rates (Lyberg & Dean, 1992; van de Vijver & Ph Mohler, 2003).

With the survey climate of semi-remote areas in Egypt featuring lack of survey culture, avoidance of sensitive questions, and fear of privacy violation, low response rates to survey questions in the current study, in particular among parents, were expected. Therefore, the researcher followed a number of procedures to insure adequate levels of response. First, questionnaires were distributed to a large number of respondents more than the requested number in several localities. For instance, 400 parents' questionnaires were distributed with a target return number from 200 to 300 questionnaires. The actual return number was 250 questionnaires with a percentage of 62.5%. Second, the researcher distributed the childcare practitioners' questionnaire first with a covering letter explaining the aim of the survey. Then, the researcher kindly asked childcare practitioners to help in distributing the parents' questionnaire based on their trust with parents. The researcher was available in drop in and pick up times to explain the questions to parents whenever needed to make sure they understood them and urge them to complete the questionnaire in her presence if they had the time. Saunders et al. (2009) indicates that stating a clear purpose for the survey, explaining its questions if necessary, and getting the questionnaires completed in meetings can significantly improve response rates.

4.3 Questionnaire Aims

Providing a precise statement of the questionnaire aims is important as it reflects one of the purposes of the study, determines the specific variables to be addressed in the questions, and response options. According to Brace (2013), the process of developing the questionnaire starts with turning "the objectives of the study into a set of information requirements, and from there to create questions to provide that information and then to turn those into a questionnaire" (p.10).

The main purpose of the questionnaires of the quantitative phase of this research was to identify the socio-demographic factors affecting early childhood care and education provision in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability of quality service. More specifically, they aimed to:

1. Identify parents' socio-demographic characteristics, including
 - Marital status,
 - Family structure,
 - Educational Status,
 - Employment status,
 - Income, and
 - Housing.
2. Explore culture-related socio-demographic factors, including traditions.
3. Collect information about children's related socio-demographic indicators and measures, including
 - Age,
 - Gender,
 - Number of siblings, and
 - Child health and disability.
4. Explore context characteristics, including
 - Neighborhood socioeconomic status,
 - Effects of geographic location and distance to different urban infrastructures such as nurseries, schools, parks, clubs, and public transport stations.
5. Identify demographic trends of North Sinai as a semi-remote area in Egypt in terms of:
 - Marriage and divorce,
 - Fertility, and
 - Internal migration.
6. Explore childcare policies and other related policies, including
 - Subsidies policies,
 - Women leave policies,
 - Care and education policies.

7. Identify ECCE quality indicators, including
 - Nursery class ratio
 - ECCE Staff qualifications,
 - Materials and resources.
8. Specify childcare arrangements and activities in semi-remote areas.

4.4 Questionnaire Variables

Socio-demographic factors were treated as independent or predictor variables in the current study, because they could cause or influence ECCE provision, the dependent variable, in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability. The independent variables were identified through analysis of related literature outlined in Chapter Two. Those variables were built into questions in the two questionnaires with some variations according to the target respondents. For the parents' questionnaire, it tackled the following variables and sub variables:

➤ *Parents related variables*

- Parents' age,
- Marital status,
- Health status,
- Disability status,
- Education,
- Occupation,
- Employment status,
- Work logistics and environment,
- Income,
- Housing ,
- Family structure.

➤ *Children related variables*

- Age,
- Gender,
- Health,
- Disability.

➤ *ECCE variables*

- Care arrangements,
- Care activities,
- Optimal age,
- Childcare subsidy policy,
- Geographical location of care venues,
- Childcare news source,
- ECCE obstacles including expenses, low quality service, and insufficient care venues,
- ECCE policy.

The practitioners' questionnaire examined the following variables and sub variables:

➤ *Quality related variables*

- Qualification,
- Years of experience,
- Class size,
- Staff ratio.

➤ *Nursery related variables*

- Mission statement,
- Facilities,
- Care information sources,
- Activities for disabled children,
- Distance from home.

➤ *Children related variables*

- Age,
- Gender,
- Children's care rights.

➤ *Parents related variables*

- Involvement in non-parental care,
- Work status,
- Income,

- Education.
- *Neighbourhood related variables*
 - Neighbourhood socioeconomic status.
- *ECCE obstacle variables*
 - Expenses,
 - Low quality service,
 - Insufficient care venues,
 - ECCE policy.
- *ECCE Improvement variables*
 - Increasing efficiency of care providers,
 - Regular inspection,
 - Financial support for families,
 - Increasing staff salary,
 - Upgrading resources.

4.5 Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire is not merely as a list of questions, it is a scientific tool with standardized questions developed in line with the specific objectives of research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), the major steps in constructing a questionnaire are “justification, defining objectives, writing questions, deciding general and item format, and pretesting” (p.263). Brace (2013) argues that “questionnaires are written in many different ways, to be used in many different situations and with many different data-gathering media” (p.1). More specifically, designing a questionnaire depends on whether the research is aiming to collect qualitative information or quantitative data or both. Therefore, questionnaire construction is divided into three types: structured; semi-structured; and unstructured. Cohen et al. (2007) indicate that

between a completely open questionnaire that is akin to an open invitation to 'write what one wants' and a totally closed, completely structured questionnaire, there is a powerful tool of the semi-structured questionnaire The researcher can select several types of questionnaire, from highly structured to unstructured (p. 321).

Structured questions, often referred to as closed questions, are questions with a set of optional answers and respondents are asked to choose the most closely matched to their views and opinions. On contrary, unstructured questions, or open-ended questions, do not have list of potential responses to choose from. Respondents can express their opinions and ideas in their own words without restrictions. The third type, semi-structured, is a mix of structured and unstructured questions in order to avoid the weaknesses of each category. The major weakness in closed questions is that they may encourage bias by offering the respondents alternatives that might not have come to their mind. On the other hand, open-ended questions might be considered as difficult to answer and take time to complete and analyze (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

4.5.1 Format and Layout

The quantitative phase of the research design relied on self-administered survey questionnaires for primary data collection. They encompassed a mix of structured and unstructured questions using different formats. These included multiple choice, asking either for one option or all that applies, dichotomous answers like “Yes” and “No”, and open-ended questions. Some closed questions in the questionnaires had an open-ended “Other or Specify” option to let respondents express themselves. As some participants might have different socio-economic status and demographic characteristics, a choice of “Not applicable” (NA) was also included where necessary.

The researcher considered the following points when constructing the questionnaires:

- 1- Attaching a covering letter to inform the respondents of the research aims, expected results and assuring confidentiality.
- 2- Reducing the effect of choosing socially-desirable responses by using anonymous questionnaires as no personal details were asked.
- 3- Giving clear instructions of how to complete the questionnaire.
- 4- Including notes category to give respondents extra information and help.
- 5- Asking only one thing at a time with the possibility of having several questions to measure one variable.

- 6- Opening questions have been set to be easy to answer to encourage the respondents.
- 7- No further questions asked than needed as respondents might get bored and give less thoughtful answers.

4.5.2 Number of Questions and Order

The parents' questionnaire consisted of 36 questions, which were organized into five sections (see Appendices). Practitioners' Questionnaire contained 22 questions. Concerning the order of the questions, the researcher considered the following when organizing the questions in the questionnaires:

- Questions follow a logical order.
- Questionnaires begin with factual, non-controversial questions.
- Questions measuring a certain variable are grouped together.

This helped to encourage respondents to answer all the questions and smooth the way to move from the easy questions first to the more difficult or controversial ones later.

4.5.3 Content

The parents' questionnaire had five sections, each of which focused on a group of variables. The demographic questions constituted the first section of the questionnaire. They were designed to elicit information regarding the participants' age, marital status, health status, and education level. The second section tackled the factors contributing to the economic status of the family as well as neighbourhood factors such as poverty. The third section focused on the participants' housing, family structure, and location. Section four was devoted to children's characteristics and their care and education. This included children's age, gender, health, disability, regular childcare activities and arrangements, reasons for that choice, ideal age for enrolling children in nurseries, benefits of enrolling children informal childcare, parent involvement in their childcare and education, and childcare obstacles. Eventually, section five focused on working mothers and their choice of childcare arrangement as well as the suggested changes in their work environment to support

childcare. Particular attention was given to the order of the questions in the questionnaire. Earlier questions, those related to parents' demographics, socio-economic status and children's demographics, provided context for the questions that followed related to childcare arrangements and childcare obstacles.

The practitioners' questionnaire contained 22 questions and was less structured although followed a clear narrative. First two questions provided information regarding the participants' qualification(s) and experience. Next questions asked about the factors contributing to quality ECCE provision such as staff ratio, class size, nursery facilities and parent involvement in formal care in the nursery or kindergarten. Some questions focused on nursery or kindergarten characteristics, age of kids accepted, and purpose of the nursery or kindergarten. Also, there were a number of questions which covered child and family characteristics like gender, parents' work, education level, and family income. Some other questions were about neighbourhood characteristics including, community poverty, and geographic location, as well as reasons for parents choosing a formal childcare arrangement. The rest of the questions focused on current childcare obstacles and how to improve childcare provision.

Both questionnaires might be considered to include a number of sensitive questions, in particular those requiring the identification of obstacles and shortfalls in ECCE system or those dealing with familial issues of income, employment and health. Tourangeau and Yan (2007) state,

sensitive questions is a broad category that encompasses not only questions that trigger social desirability concerns but also those that are seen as intrusive by the respondents or that raise concerns about the possible repercussions of disclosing the information (p.859).

Respondents vary in their perception of sensitive issues. Therefore, the invitation letter to participate in the survey (page 1 of the questionnaire) assured confidentiality guaranteeing nondisclosure.

4.6 Pilot Study of the Questionnaires

Developing a valid and reliable questionnaire is essential in survey data collection to reduce measurement error. According to Groves (2004), measurement

error could be associated with “a particular method of data collection and /or a particular question” (p.18). It is “a component of variance in the observed values of indicators, not corresponding to variability in the true values of the underlying measures” (p.18). In other words, it is the “discrepancy between respondents' attributes and their survey responses” (Groves, 1987, p. 162). Therefore, a pilot study was required in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaires used in the current study. A pilot study “may be particularly crucial in relation to research based on the self-completion questionnaire” (Bryman, 2004, p.159), as in the current study.

More specifically, the purpose of piloting the questionnaires was to get direct feedback from respondents and professionals about:

- i) Clarity and lack of ambiguity of the questionnaires' purpose as expressed in the covering letter, questionnaires' format, instructions, and questions' wording in English and after being translated into Arabic.
- ii) Validity of the questionnaires and ability of questions to discriminate across respondents.
- iii) Reliability of the questionnaires by calculating Cronbach's Alpha.
- iv) Questionnaire completion time to ensure to be contained within 15-20 minutes by calculating the mean of the time taken by the respondents in the pilot study.
- v) Perceived time-cost of answering the questionnaires to ensure their practicality.

The pilot study included:

- Experts' review of the questionnaires.
- Administering the questionnaires on a small scale sample (22 parents and 12 practitioners) other than the main sample. In order to ensure no crossover, the piloting sample was chosen from Al Qantarah Sharq; a city that administratively falls under another governorate, Ismailia, but closely located to North Sinai Governorate.
- Respondents' feedback sheet about the positive and negative aspects of the questionnaires.

Based on the piloting study, the questionnaires had been modified as discussed under validity and reliability sections below.

4.6.1 Questionnaire Validity

Validity of the instrument is vital to its effectiveness and usefulness. It, in simple and broad words, indicates that the research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Monison, 2007). There are many techniques that can be used to determine whether a measure is valid or not. Face validity measures whether the instrument superficially and apparently reflects the content of the topic(s) in question (Bryman, 2004,p.73); content validity helps in determining whether the measure exhaustively and comprehensively covers the topic(s) that it is supposed to cover (Cohen, Manion & Moirison, 2007,p.137); and jury validity whereby the measure is judged by some experts in the field in terms of suitability of its content and, accuracy of its language, and its clarity and lack of ambiguity. In this sense, jury validity includes face and content validity.

The content and construct validity of the survey questionnaires in the current study were established by submitting the questionnaire to a number of jury members. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to a group of 7 experts (Suez Canal University staff at Faulty of Education and Faculty of kindergartens in El-Arish, North Sinai) specialised in the field of early years care and education and asked them to judge the questionnaire in terms of:

1. Its suitability at superficial level (face validity) to the topics in question.
- 2.Comprehensive nature of the content, to what extent the questions in the questionnaires (content validity) comprehensively cover the variables examined in the research and whether the survey items seem relevant to the issue they are aimed to collect the information about, and if the instrument was well-designed.
3. Its clarity and lack of ambiguity in terms of its format, items, wording, and instructions.

Based on the jury feedback, the researcher made some changes in the format and wording of some questions. For example:

In the practitioners' questionnaire, the question about staff qualifications was:

- What qualification(s) do you hold?

The format of this question has been changed to multiple choices and respondents have to choose from: (a) no qualifications, (b) secondary school certificate or lower, (c) intermediate degree¹, (d) university degree or higher.

This was followed by a pilot trial of the first version of the questionnaires with the results obtained summarized below:

- The average completion time of the questionnaires was about 20-25 minutes.
- Some questions were not able to gather the data sought (For example, the question mentioned above about staff qualifications was not enough to know if the staff were specialized in ECCE or not if they hold a university degree. So, a new question needs to be added: Do you have a qualification in ECCE?)
- The guiding examples in the notes were very helpful for the respondents.
- The structure of the questionnaire could be improved by reducing the open-ended questions and increasing the close-ended questions.
- The questionnaires seemed to be able to capture the specific socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE. For most of the questions, there was a high variance in the responses.

In light of the results of the pilot study, the researcher did the following general changes²:

1. Reducing the number of questions from 43 (including questions and sub-questions) to a maximum of 36 in the parents' questionnaire and 22 in the practitioners' questionnaire, so as to bring the completion time down to 15-20 minutes. Questions were ranked according to their importance/relevance as weak, medium, or high. Weak questions were removed from the questionnaire.

¹ Second level of vocational education.

² Please refer to appendices for the versions of the questionnaires before and after piloting.

2. Questions were simplified wherever possible.
3. In some multiple choices questions, the number of possible answers was reduced.

The specific changes to the wording and format of the questionnaires can be summarized below.

1. Parents' questionnaire:

- Divorced mothers did not provide any information about their ex-husbands. So, 'if applicable' was added in the choice options.
- Some questions were changed to multiple choice format in order to have more accurate answers, as some respondents did not give any answer to those open ended questions.
- In questions 7, 8, 18 and 19 some choices were removed.
- Questions 24, 26, 27 and 28, were changed to multiple choices to encourage respondents to answer.
- Question 33 devoted to working parents only was rephrased to allow non-working parents who were willing to work in the future to answer it.

2. Practitioners' questionnaire:

- Change to the wording of question 4 (what is the age of the children in your nursery? Changed to what is the age group of children attending your nursery?). This change allowed the researcher to know the age range each nursery accepts.
- Questions 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, and 18, were changed to multiple choices to encourage respondents to provide specific answers.

4.6.2 Questionnaire Reliability

Validity and reliability are closely related to each other. In other words, validity presumes reliability and thus, a valid measure is a reliable one. However, a reliable measure is not necessarily a valid one. Therefore, reliability is a pre and insufficient condition of validity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Bryman, 2004). Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument provides accurate, stable and repeatable results. Chandra and Sharma (2004) quoted several definitions for reliability from many scholars, each of which refers to the internal

consistency of a measurement and its scores. Indices of reliability show the extent to which the numerical data collected through a particular measurement procedure are consistent and reproducible. A reliable method provides similar results if it is applied to a similar group of respondents over the time and under the same circumstances (De Vaus, 2002; Bryman, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Monison, 2007). Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a well-known test of reliability as internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951). It provides an estimate of the internal consistency of the instrument scores from a single administration in contrary to test-retest reliability. Cronbach's Alpha gives a score of between zero and one, with 0.7 and above score is an indication of acceptable reliability.

The reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaires were assessed by Cronbach's alpha α coefficient. Reliability analysis showed satisfactory results (Cronbach's α coefficient = 0.805) for the parents' questionnaire and (0.822) for the practitioners' questionnaire, as shown in the tables below. Thus the researcher ensured that the questionnaires are reliable. It can be argued that this high coefficient came as a result of the validity of the questionnaire as validity presumes reliability, as indicated above.

Table 4.1
Parents' reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.805	.733	52

Table 4.2
Practitioners' reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.822	.813	50

Concerning the individual items of the questionnaires, any item with zero variance was removed from the scale as the determinant of the covariance matrix is

zero or approximately zero. Question 25F, 31, and 34B in the parents' questionnaire in this particular instance were removed. The following tables 4.3 and 4.4 show scale Mean, Variance and Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for all items in the questionnaires except deleted items.

Table 4.3

Parents' questionnaire: Item mean, variance and Cronbach's Alpha if deleted

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	112.00	187.714	.813
Q2	113.45	178.641	.801
Q3	112.73	183.446	.806
Q4	112.45	178.641	.801
Q5	113.32	181.942	.805
Q6	113.32	174.132	.797
Q7	110.27	187.255	.813
Q8	110.23	180.851	.807
Q9	111.09	167.706	.793
Q10	113.09	177.325	.802
Q11	112.77	181.232	.806
Q12	111.09	168.848	.800
Q13	112.95	172.712	.795
Q14	112.68	178.418	.803
Q15	112.68	169.370	.794
Q16	112.36	179.671	.804
Q17	112.23	164.660	.789
Q18	113.09	197.896	.824
Q19	111.86	180.409	.810
Q20	112.82	179.203	.804
Q21	112.41	178.063	.804
Q22	112.73	188.494	.812
Q23	112.73	188.494	.812
Q24	112.05	168.331	.790
Q25A1	113.27	183.922	.807
Q25B2	113.23	184.660	.808
Q25C3	112.86	177.933	.800
Q25D4	112.77	185.232	.809
Q25E5	112.91	181.610	.805
Q26	111.23	177.136	.801
Q27	112.55	184.355	.807
Q28A1	112.59	165.682	.788
Q28B2	112.18	171.394	.792
Q28C3	112.23	170.565	.791

Q28D4	112.32	166.608	.787
Q28E5	112.18	171.394	.792
Q29	110.73	160.779	.782
Q30	112.18	186.727	.813
Q32A1	113.18	187.299	.811
Q32B2	113.09	181.515	.805
Q32C3	113.18	177.775	.800
Q32D4	112.86	187.361	.811
Q32E5	112.64	184.147	.807
Q33	111.05	129.665	.768
Q34A	112.91	175.420	.797
Q34C	112.82	182.537	.806
Q34D	112.64	183.385	.806
Q34E	112.86	188.028	.812
Q34F	112.82	179.299	.802
Q34G	112.64	183.290	.806
Q35	110.05	139.188	.776
Q36	111.77	167.994	.808

Table 4.4

Practitioners' questionnaire: Item mean, variance and Cronbach's Alpha if deleted

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	82.50	97.545	.818
Q2	83.67	94.606	.811
Q3	82.83	84.879	.802
Q4	82.42	101.902	.831
Q5	82.92	88.447	.801
Q6	82.92	88.447	.801
Q7	83.83	92.515	.806
Q8A	84.25	104.023	.828
Q8B	84.00	104.727	.831
Q8C	84.00	104.727	.831
Q8D	83.42	98.629	.818
Q8E	83.50	98.455	.818
Q9B	83.50	99.364	.820
Q9C	83.75	110.205	.841
Q9D	84.08	107.720	.836
Q9E	83.50	101.000	.823
Q11A	83.58	96.629	.815
Q11C	83.92	92.629	.807
Q11D	83.83	92.515	.806
Q11E	83.83	92.515	.806
Q11F	84.17	105.061	.831

Q11G	83.83	110.879	.842
Q12A	83.83	92.515	.806
Q12B	84.25	101.114	.823
Q12C	83.83	92.515	.806
Q12D	83.83	92.515	.806
Q12E	83.50	98.636	.818
Q12F	83.75	110.205	.841
Q13	82.75	89.659	.820
Q14A	83.67	96.242	.814
Q14B	83.75	93.477	.808
Q14C	84.08	107.356	.835
Q14D	84.17	105.788	.832
Q15	83.42	101.902	.824
Q16	83.33	95.333	.814
Q17	83.75	104.023	.841
Q18	82.92	89.174	.804
Q19	82.25	82.932	.802
Q20	83.25	99.295	.830
Q21A	83.75	91.841	.805
Q21B	84.17	102.152	.825
Q21C	83.75	92.932	.807
Q21D	83.83	92.515	.806
Q21E	83.50	99.182	.820
Q21F	83.58	98.811	.819
Q22A	84.25	100.568	.822
Q22B	83.83	91.970	.805
Q22C	83.92	92.629	.807
Q22D	84.25	99.659	.820
Q22E	83.92	92.629	.807

4.7 Target Respondents/Sample

Sekaran (2003) describes a research population as an entire group of people, events, or things of interest that a researcher endeavours to investigate. The sample is a subset of that population or a small selected portion of it. The size of the sample must be sufficient enough to represent the population under investigation. If the size is inadequate, there might be a sampling error (Sekaran, 2003, p.266). According to Roscoe (1975), sampling sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. A large sample, however, was beyond the scope and nature of this study, particularly in view of time and resource constraints. The sample size depends on two key factors: first, the degree of accuracy required for the sample, and

secondly, the extent to which there is variation in the population with respect to the key characteristics of the study (De Vaus, 1996).

The target population of this phase constituted two categories of participants; parents, and nursery and kindergarten practitioners. The participants were located in North Sinai, Egypt. The main research sites were El-Arish, Beir Elabeid, Sheikh Zwaid, Rafah, Hasana, and Nekhel. The areas chosen were at the outskirts of the regional capital. The sampling method adopted in this phase of data collection was the random sampling, known also as simple random sampling (SRS) (Babbie, 2013). This choice, as explained in the previous chapter, was based on grounds of reaching a large number of respondents without a need for a stratum or a set of the target population.

4.8 Survey Questionnaires Administration

For the first quantitative phase, a cross-sectional survey design, which implied the data would be collected at one point in time (Creswell, 2002; McMillan, 2000), was used. The survey questionnaire was a paper and pen one due to the survey climate and respondents' characteristics where online questionnaire was not possible. Main modes of questionnaire administration used in the study were:

- Face-to-face questionnaire administration, where the researcher presents the items orally to the respondents who cannot read and write (This was limited to five participants who told the researcher that they cannot read and write and might not find a relative who can read it for them).
- Paper-and-pencil questionnaire administration, where the items are presented on paper.

Cohen et al (2007) stresses the importance of gaining access and the need for asking permission in order to conduct the research. "Investigators cannot expect access to a nursery, school, college, or factory as a matter of right. They have to demonstrate that they are worthy, as researchers and human rights, of being accorded the facilities needed to carry out the investigation" (p.55). The researcher gained three consents; the first two from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Solidarity to have access to kindergartens and childcare centres, and the third one from the Ministry of Health to have access to health centres.

The data collection took place between March 1 and July 30, 2013. The procedure was complicated due to distributing the questionnaires in five different areas in North Sinai which are geographically distanced from each other. To decrease the response rate error and solicit a relatively high response rate of the survey, a three-phase follow-up sequence was used (Dillman, 2000): (1) the questionnaires were distributed after a verbal explanation of the purpose of the study and the questionnaires when necessary; (2) the researcher urged the participants to complete the questionnaires during her presence; and (3) the researcher called the nursery and kindergarten helper /managers every other week to remind parents to complete the questionnaires. Table (4.5) shows number of questionnaires distributed and actual number completed.

Table 4.5

Target and actual sample size of the questionnaires

Category	Sample Size		Return Rate
	Distributed	Responded	
Parents	400	250	% 62.5
Care Practitioners	140	100	% 71.42

4.9 Data Analysis: Statistical Techniques

The researcher used SPSS version 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical data analysis software for the analysis of data gathered from the questionnaires. The data collected were tabulated and thus analysed using several statistical techniques according to the nature of the variables and purposes of the research.

Choosing the correct data analysis technique to analyse the data was one of most difficult parts of the research process. When making this selection, a number of different factors have to be considered, such as the type of question, the type of coding, the type of scale, the nature of the data for each variable and the assumptions that must be met for each of the different statistical techniques. Identifying the data analysis techniques used in other related studies helped in choosing the correct ones. The statistical data analysis techniques used in the study include:

1. The frequencies and percentages were used to describe the characteristics of the sample.
2. Cross-Tabulation was used to examine the interrelation between the socio-demographic variables and find interactions between them. More specifically, Chi-Square test for independence was used to determine whether one variable is contingent on a second variable.

Part II: Quantitative Results

The aim of this section is to present and discuss the overall results of the two questionnaire surveys. It focuses on the socio-demographic characteristics of parent participants and their impact on ECCE. It also presents views of the practitioner participants concerning the influential socio-demographic factors on ECCE provision. 250 parents and 100 practitioners constituted the sample of the survey study. The responses were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), as well as inferential statistics to infer population parameters based upon sample statistics and to identify relationships within the data (inter-correlations, and cross-tabulation).

4.10 Parent Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Parent participants in the questionnaire survey were compared on the following demographic characteristics. It should be noted that the questionnaires were all completed by mothers (n248), except only in two cases where the questionnaires were completed by fathers. The questionnaire did not mainly target mothers, but as fathers in the context of the study were the main breadwinners for their families, they left the burden of childcare and education for the mothers as experienced by the researcher in the nurseries, kindergartens, and health centres where the questionnaire administration took place.

- *Parents' Age*

In this study, parent participants fell into four age groups: (1) 20 years and under, (2) 21 to 30 years, (3) 31 to 40 years, and (4) 41 to 50 years. The most typical age range for parents with pre-school children in the research sample was 21 to 30

years (44%) followed by 31 to 40 years (34.0%), and 41 to 50 years (12%). The least represented category was 20 and under (8%) (Table 4.6 & Figure 4.1).

Table 4.6

Participants' demographic characteristics: Age

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
20 and Under	20	8.0	8.0
21-30 years	110	44.0	52.0
31-40 years	90	36.0	88.0
41-50 years	30	12.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The figures above are similar to the national proportions. According to Egypt census data, the age from 15 to 40 constitutes 49.85% of the population and age 41 to 59 is 12.36% of the population (Egypt Census Portal, 2006). The distribution of parents by age can be used to illustrate the effects of ageing on ECCE.

- *Marital Status*

Marital status is considered as parents' personal asset in the Egyptian context. According to Barnes and Bynum (2007), marital status is one form of human capital that can influence childcare. Table 4.7 and figure 4.2 depict that the majority of the respondents were married 84.4%, whereas 12.0 % were divorced, and 3.6% were widowed. Single parent was not included as an option as it is not common in Arab countries and unlikely to be admitted to by parents. Although the Arab world is undergoing major social changes, marriage and family formation are deeply rooted cultural values.

Table 4.7

Participants' demographic characteristics: Marital status

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Married	211	84.4	84.4
Divorced	30	12.0	96.4
Widowed	9	3.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

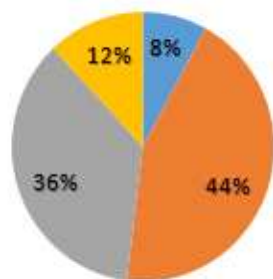


Figure 4.1 Distribution of parent participants according to age

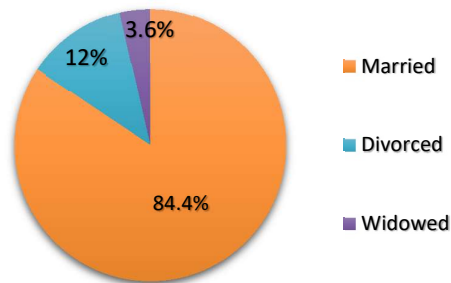


Figure 4.2 Distribution of parent participants according to marital status

- *General Health and Disability Status*

Parents are the child's first carers and educators and therefore their general health and disability status are important in ensuring that they are able to provide their children with the best possible care. According to the results of the questionnaire (Table 4.8 & Figure 4.3), 10% of the respondent parents and 3.6% of their spouses had some sort of health problem. In addition, 1.6% of the respondent parents and 4% of the spouses had a disability condition.

Table 4.8

Demographic characteristics: Parents' general health and disability status

		Participant Parent Frequency	%	Cumulative %	Spouse Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Health Status	No Health Problems	225	90.0	90.0	202	80.8	80.8
	Having Health Problems	25	10.0	100.0	9	3.6	84.4
	Not Applicable	-	-	-	39	15.6	100.0
Disability Status	No Disability	246	98.4	98.4	201	80.4	80.4
	Having a Disability	4	1.6	100.0	10	4.0	84.4
	Not Applicable	-	-	-	39	15.6	100.0
Total		250			250		

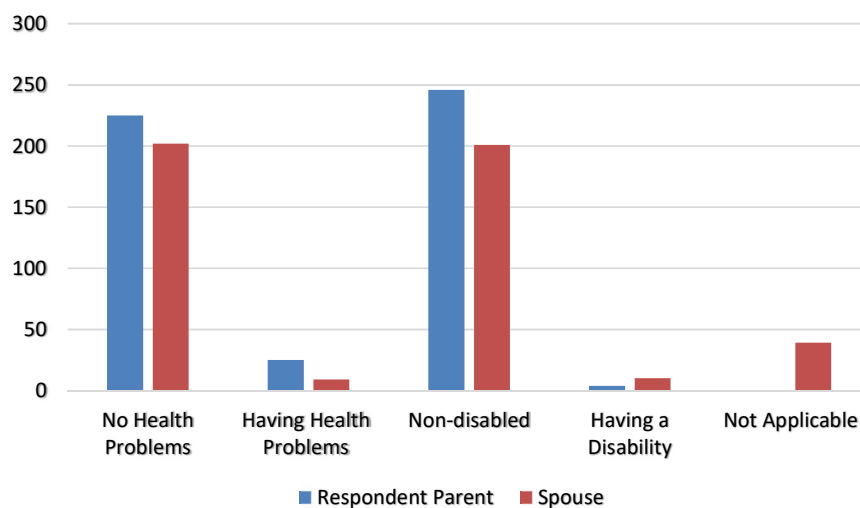


Figure 4.3 Parents' general health and disability status

- *Number of Children*

Table 4.9 shows that 34% of the sample had two children. Nevertheless, parents with three children (19.2%) and those with four children or more (24.8%) constituted the majority of the sample 44%. Parents with one child comprised 22% of the sample (Figure 4.4). These figures show that in Egyptian society relatively big families are common with a high fertility rate 2.5% (State Information Service-Egypt, 2014).

Table 4.9

Participants' demographic characteristics: Number of children

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
One Child	53	21.2	22.0
Two Children	87	34.8	56.0
Three Children	48	19.2	75.2
Four or More	62	24.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

- *Number of Pre-School Children*

Results of the survey (Table 4.10 & Figure 4.5) reveal that 47.2% of the sample had one child under six years old, 38% had two children, 14.4% had three children, and only 0.4% had four pre-school children or more

Table 4.10

Participants' demographic characteristics: Number of pre- school children

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
One Child	118	47.2	47.2
Two Children	95	38.0	85.2
Three Children	36	14.4	99.6
Four or More	1	0.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

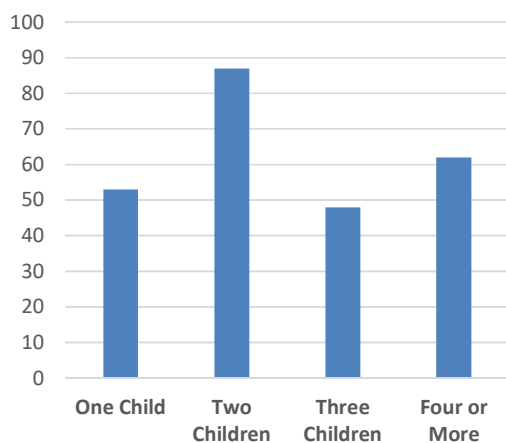


Figure 4.4 Distribution of parent participants according to number of children

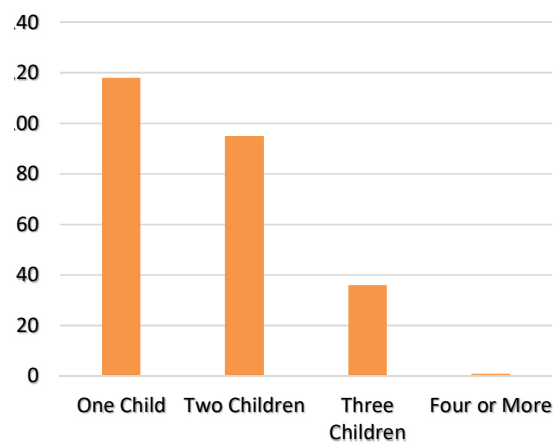


Figure 4.5 Distribution of parent participants according to number of pre-school children

- *Gender of Pre-School Children*

Children's gender might shape attitudes and beliefs related to their access to care education equality. Therefore, it was an interest of the current study to investigate the correlation between gender, childcare and education arrangements in semi-remote areas. The table 4.11 below shows that 45.2% of the parents had male

pre-school children, 22.4% of them had female pre-school children, and 32.4% had both genders.

Table 4.11

Participants' demographic characteristics: Gender of pre- school children

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Male	113	45.2	45.2
Female	56	22.4	67.6
Both	81	32.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

- *Education Level*

The findings presented in table 4.12 and depicted in figure4.6 show that slightly less than half of the sample 47.6% held a 4 years university degree or higher. However, 29.2% had intermediate higher education, whereas 11.2 % had secondary school certificates, 7.2% basic education, and 4.8 did not hold any qualifications. Similar orientation of results was true with the spouse's education level. 37.2% held a 4 years university degree or higher, 19.6% had 2 years intermediate higher education, 19.2% had secondary school education, 6.8% just got basic education, and 1.6 were without any qualifications. The education level of the spouse was not applicable for 15.6% of the sample as the participants were divorced or widowed.

Table 4.12

Parents' demographic characteristics: Education level

	Participant Parent Frequency	%	Spouse Frequency	%
No Qualification	12	4.8	4	1.6
Basic Education	18	7.2	17	6.8
Secondary Education	28	11.2	48	19.2
2 Years Intermediate Higher Education	73	29.2	49	19.6
4 Years University Degree or Higher	119	47.6	93	37.2
Not Applicable	-		39	15.6
Total	250	100	250	100

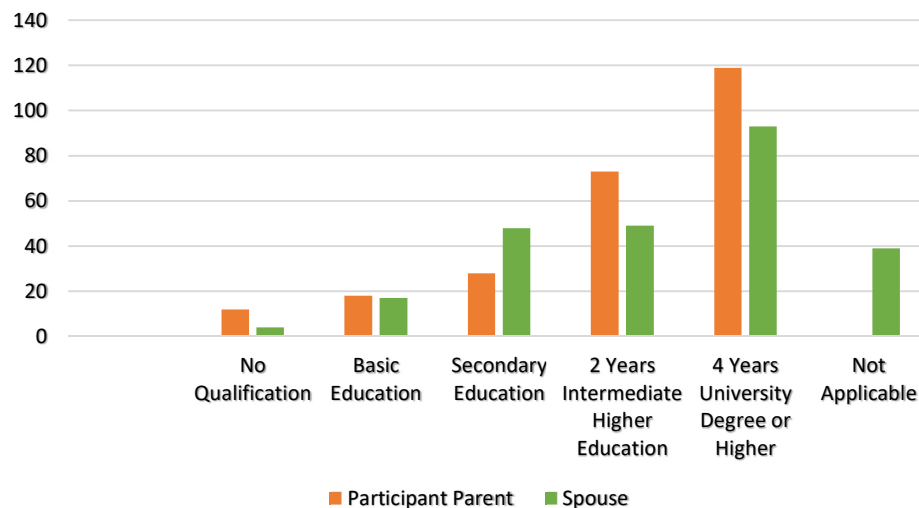


Figure 4.6 Parents' education level

As depicted in the figure above, the majority of the participants and their spouses had tertiary level education.

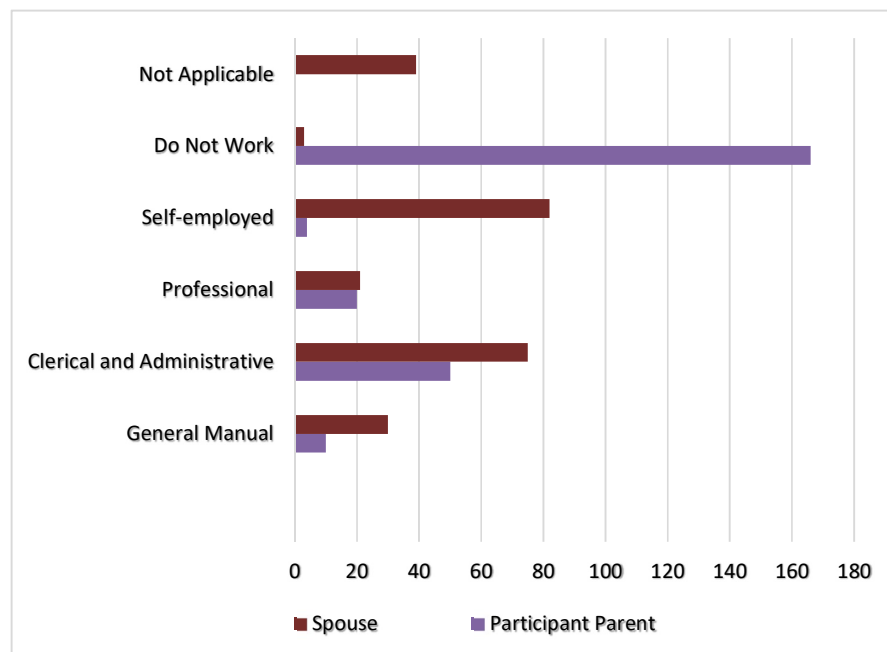
- *Parents' Job Status*

Parents' job status is closely linked to socio-economic status. The majority of the participants' mothers were unemployed 66.4%. However, only 1.2 of the spouses were unemployed. At least one parent was working as there was no one single case where both parents were not working. The employment status of the spouse was not applicable for 15.6% of the sample as the participants were divorced or widowed. As is clear from the table 4.13 and figure 4.7, the nature of work varied for both the participants and their spouses. However, the majority of the working mothers, 20%, were doing clerical and administrative work. Then, 8% were working as professionals, 4% in general manual jobs, and 1.6 were self-employed. The majority of the husbands 32.8 were self-employed and 30% in clerical and administrative jobs. However, the rest were 12% in general manual jobs and 8.4% professionals. Only 1.2% of the parents were not working.

Table 4.13

Parents' demographic characteristics: Job status

	Participant Parent Frequency	%	Spouse Frequency	%
General Manual	10	4.0	30	12.0
Clerical and Administrative	50	20.0	75	30.0
Professional	20	8.0	21	8.4
Self-employed	4	1.6	82	32.8
Do Not Work	166	66.4	3	1.2
Not Applicable	-	-	39	15.6
Total	250	100	250	100

*Figure 4.7 Parents' job status*

- *Household Income*

Among the important factors that could influence childcare are household income and expenditure. 47.6% of the sample were earning a medium income from

£1000 to £3000 Egyptian pounds¹. A sizable part of the sample 23.6% was earning less than £1000 which is a moderate income with current household expenditure. However, 18.4% was getting from £2000 to £3000 which is considered above average income. Only 10.4% was earning more than £3000 (Table 4.14 & Figure 4.8).

Table 4.14

Parents' demographic characteristics: Household income

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Less than £1000	59	23.6	23.6
From £1000 to £2000	119	47.6	71.2
From £2000 to £3000	46	18.4	89.6
More than £3000	26	10.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

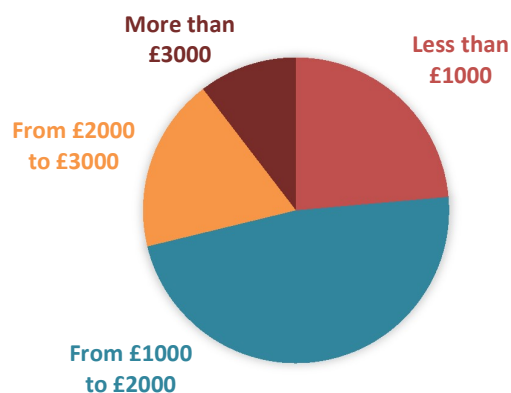


Figure 4.8 Parents' demographic characteristics: Household income

- *Family Structure*

All families have a structure which is composed of members, their roles, rankings, rules and communication dynamics. The typical structure of the family

¹ £1 Egyptian pound (EGP) = 0.124 USD and 0.0810 GBP as of October 26, 2015 according to the online foreign exchange tool at XE.com.

may change with new circumstances such as divorce, death, illness, new-borns, disability, geographic relocation, and financial situation. The current study tried to identify the relationship between the number of adults of the family who were currently living in the same house and childcare arrangement. The table 4.15 below shows that the majority of the participants, 66.4%, had only 2 adults at home; typically the mother and father. However, 12% had three adults and a slightly similar 11.2% had four adults. The percentage of one adult at home and more than four was the same 5.2%. These figures reveal that Egyptian society has been inclining towards intensive urbanization with the decline of the number of extended family living in the same house.

Table 4.15

Parents' demographic characteristics: Family structure

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
One adult	13	5.2	5.2
Two adults	166	66.4	71.6
Three adults	30	12.0	83.6
Four adults	28	11.2	94.8
More than Four	13	5.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

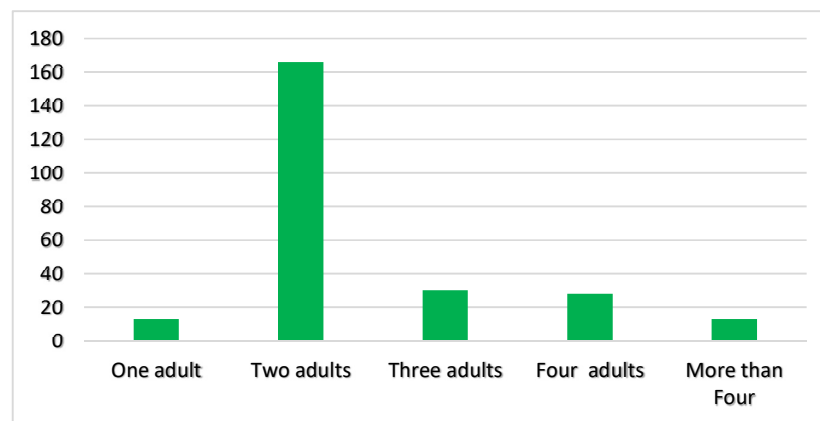


Figure 4.9 Parents' demographic characteristics: Family structure

- *Accommodation Status*

Responses obtained from the sample (Table 4.16 & Figure 4.10) showed that 42.4% of the parents owned their properties. In the rental accommodation category, 30.0% were renting private homes, whereas 8% were living in social/state rental accommodation. Moreover, 19.6% of the parents were living in the house of their family or spouse's family.

Table 4.16

Parents' demographic characteristics: Accommodation status

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Owned Housing	106	42.4	42.4
Private Rented Housing	75	30.0	72.4
Public/Social Rented Housing	20	8.0	80.4
Your Family or Spouse Family's Housing	49	19.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

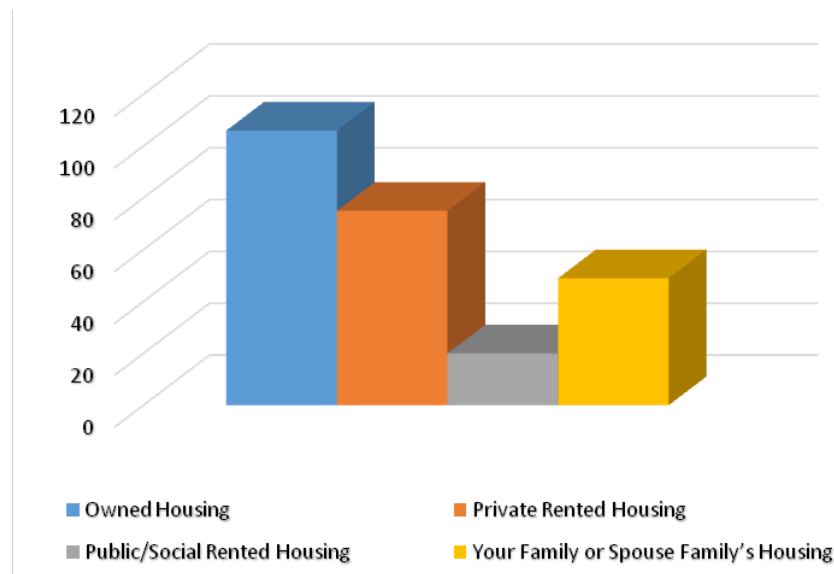


Figure 4.10 Parents' demographic characteristics: Accommodation status

After describing statistically the demography of the family and demographic trends in North Sinai, the next section presents the descriptive analysis of ECCE provision in North Sinai as viewed by the parents' sample.

4.11 ECCE Provision in Semi-Remote Areas as Experienced by Parents

ECCE provision refers to parents' access to appropriate childcare which is not only geographically convenient but also meets quality standards, is available for the right age range, and at an affordable price or subsidized. This section presents the descriptive analysis of ECCE provision in North Sinai, a semi-remote county in north east of Egypt, as experienced by a sample of parents.

- *Main Purpose of Using Formal Childcare*

The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire results (Table 4.17 & Figure 4.11) showed that 72% of the parents already sent or will send their children to a formal childcare setting for the purpose of school readiness. However, 12% only used or will use a formal childcare setting to take care of their children during their absence, whereas 16% used or will use formal childcare for both school readiness and caring of their children during their absence at work.

Table 4.17

Main purpose of using formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Caring during parents' absence	30	12.0	12.0
School readiness	180	72.0	84.0
Both	40	16.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

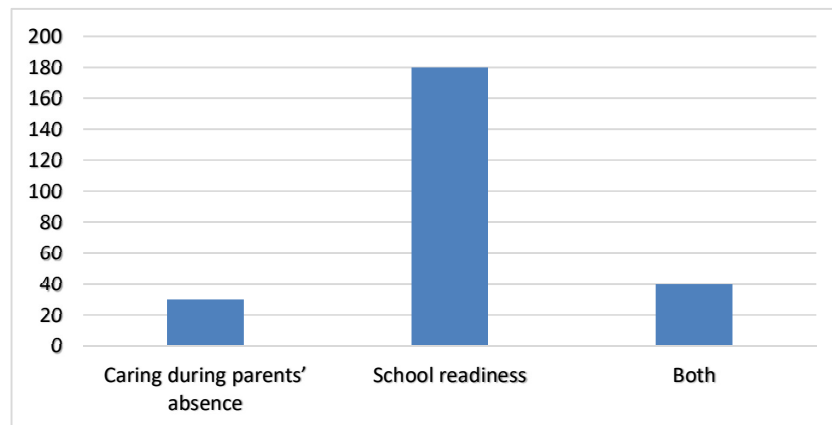


Figure 4.11 Main purpose of using formal childcare

- *Optimal Age for Formal Childcare*

The *optimal age* to place one's child in a formal childcare setting as expressed by parents is summarized in the table (4.18) below. 48% of the parents surveyed thought that the ideal age to send their children to formal childcare is from 3 years and 43% from 4 years. While the category from 1 and 2 years, only 6.8 % found it as a good age to leave their children with someone rather than the parents or immediate family members. Only 2.0 % of the participants accepted the idea that a child less than a year can be looked after by someone rather than the mother or immediate relative in a childcare setting.

Table 4.18

Optimal age for formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Less than a year	5	2.0	2.0
From 1 to 2 years	17	6.8	8.8
From 3 to 4	120	48.0	56.8
From 4 to 6 years	108	43.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

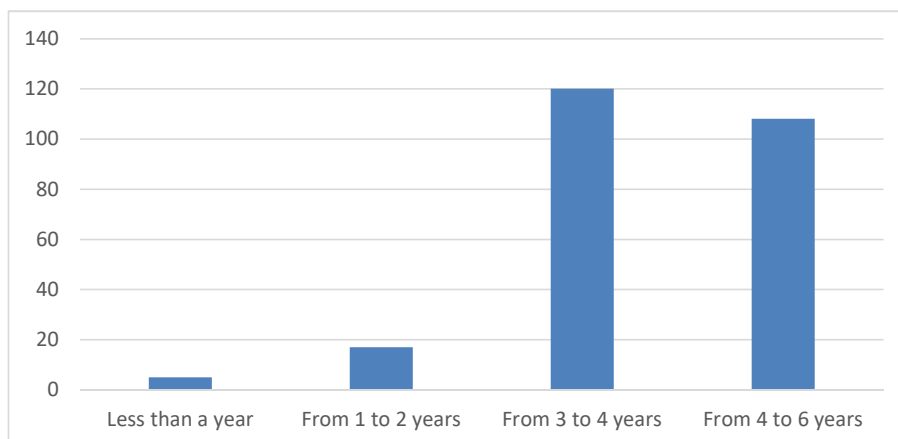


Figure 4.12 Optimal age for formal childcare

These results agree with those obtained concerning parents' perspective of the purpose of formal childcare as well as mother's work and her traditional role in the Egyptian context to stay at home and look after her children and to rely on a close next of kin to look after her young children, in particular babies. In the next phase of this mixed methods study, the researcher tried to interview a number of mothers to identify the real reasons behind their concept of optimal age and whether it is culturally and traditionally driven one or it is related to demand and supply matter. Although the supply of childcare has increased, the availability of childcare service, particularly for infants and children with special needs, is still inadequate as expressed by the research participants.

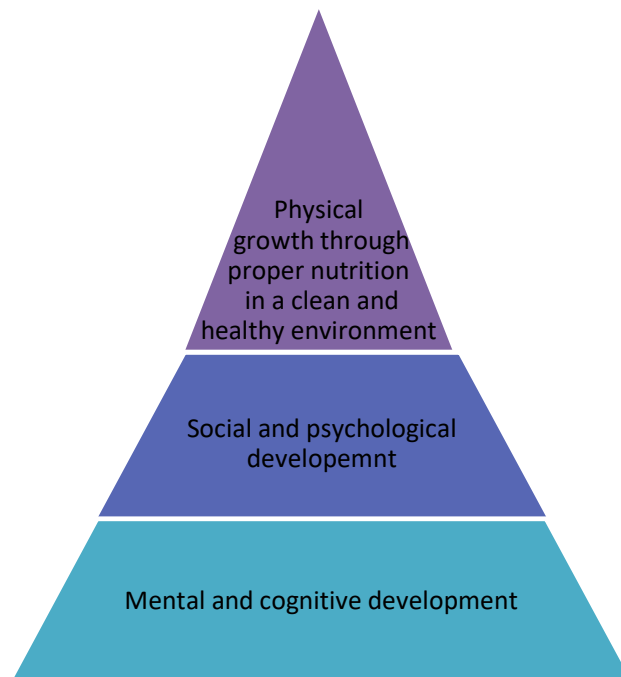
- *Hierarchy of Children's Needs in Formal Childcare*

The majority of parents expressed in the question above that they used or will use formal childcare for the purpose of school readiness. 52% of the sample indicated that the priority needs of children in formal childcare are mental and cognitive development. However, social and psychological development comes second in the hierarchy of children's development needs with 29.2%, whereas the physical growth through proper nutrition in a clean and healthy environment ranks third with 18.8% (Table 4.19 & Figure 4.13).

Table 4.19

Hierarchy of children's needs in formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Social and psychological development	73	29.2	29.2
Physical growth through proper nutrition in a clean and healthy environment	47	18.8	48.0
Mental and cognitive development	130	52	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

*Figure 4.13 Hierarchy of children's needs in formal childcare*

- *Source of Information for Formal Childcare*

Parents who used formal childcare had been asked about their source of information about childcare. A percentage of 58 of the sample expressed that they depended on informal source such as friends, 24%, colleagues at work 13.6%, neighbours 10.8%, and relatives 9.6% for information about childcare, including

information about nearby nurseries, quality level, fees, facilities and staff.. Newspapers, public bulletins and advertisements attracted 10% of the sample, whereas only 0.8 of the parents depended on a governmental body to seek information. 31.2% of the parents did not answer this question and chose ‘Not Applicable’ as they did not use formal childcare.

Table 4.20

Source of information for formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Friends	60	24.0	24.0
Neighbours	27	10.8	34.8
Relatives	24	9.6	44.4
Colleagues at work	34	13.6	58.0
Newspapers, public bulletins and advertisements	25	10.0	68.0
Governmental Body	2	0.8	68.8
Not applicable	78	31.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

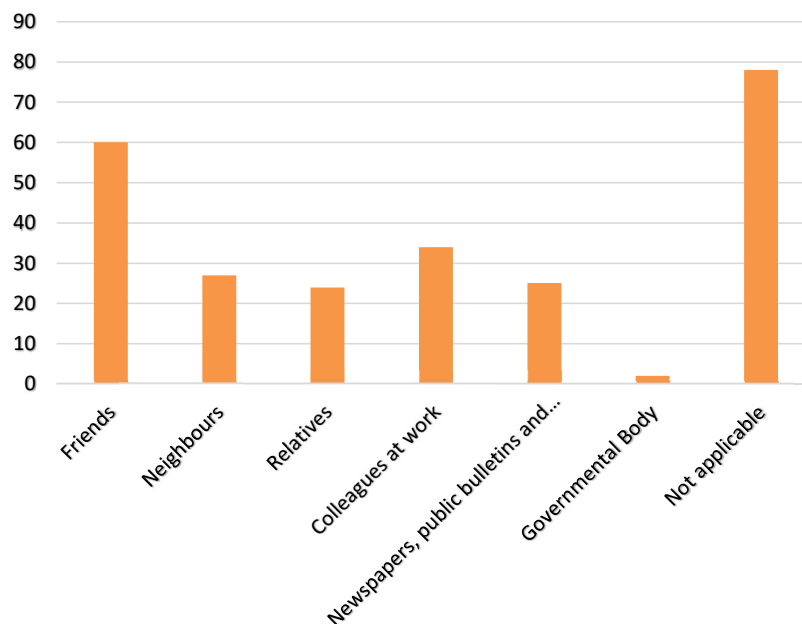


Figure 4.14 Source of information for formal childcare

- *Formal Childcare and Parents' Involvement*

The level of involvement of parents in their children's formal care varied across participants. The results showed that 24.4% of the parents referred to no involvement at all, 24% limit their involvement to receiving regular reports and newsletters, and 11.2% did regular visits to their child classrooms, where as 9.2% met with nursery staff regularly. Parent involvement in formal childcare was not applicable for 31.2% of the sample who did not send their children to any formal childcare settings.

Table 4.21

Formal childcare and parents' involvement

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
No Involvement	61	24.4	24.0
Regular Meetings with Staff	23	9.2	33.6
Receiving reports and news letters	60	24.0	57.6
Regular visits to classroom settings	28	11.2	68.8
Not Applicable	78	31.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

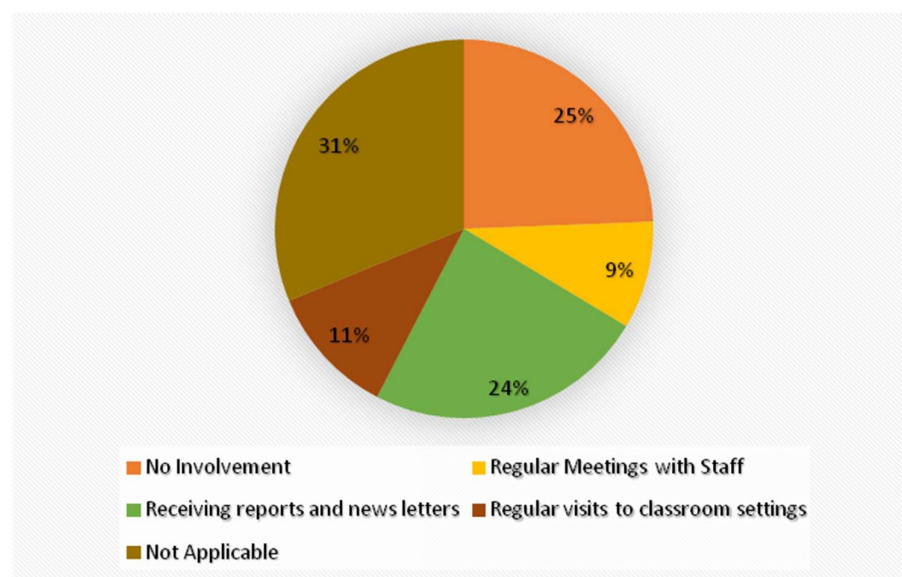


Figure 4.15 Formal childcare and parents' involvement

- *Childcare Sufficiency and Geographical Access*

Sufficiency of pre-school childcare places and geographical access to care services are crucial to meet parental demand. Findings of the parents' questionnaire (Table 4.22) revealed that 22% of the participants had childcare places in their catchment areas which did not need a means of transportation. 49.2% of the sample confirmed that they had childcare places for their children in nearby nurseries but considered some kind of transportation was still necessary. However, 28% of the parents viewed the nearest childcare places as very far and transportation essential.

Table 4.22

Childcare sufficiency and geographical access

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Within a short distance, no need for a means of transportation.	55	22.0	22.0
Not very far, but it needs a means of transportation.	123	49.2	71.2
Very far and it needs transportation.	72	28.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

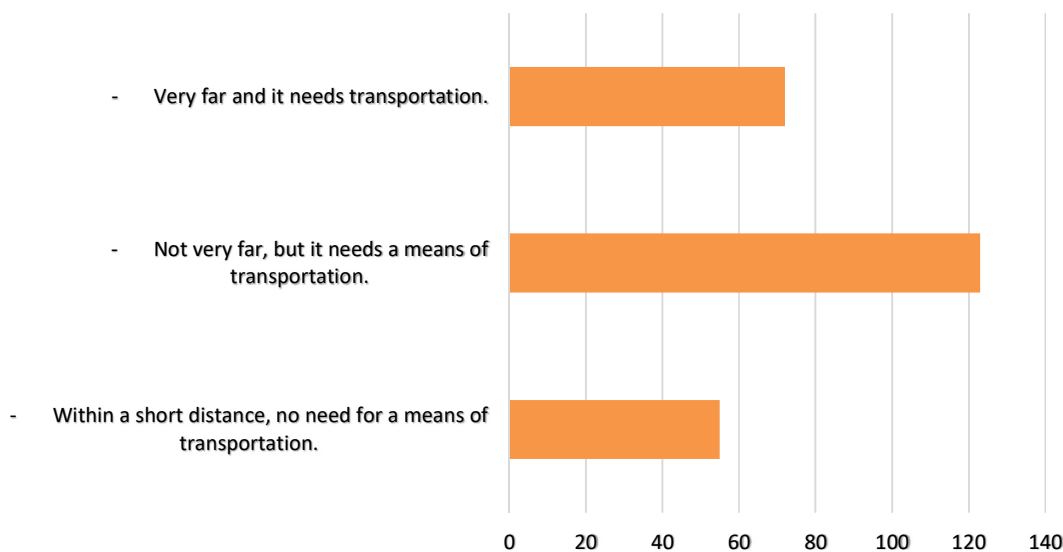


Figure 4.16 Childcare sufficiency and geographical access

- *Childcare Subsidies*

Working and non-working families have the chance to benefit from a childcare subsidy in public state nurseries according to Article 31 and 55 of Child Act126/2008. 16.8% of the parents received the childcare subsidy in the form of low cost public nurseries and kindergartens. However, the majority 83.2% did not get any sort of subsidy. This was mainly due two main reasons: (i) using informal and private childcare settings, (ii) some parents did not use any kind of formal childcare.

Table 4.23

Childcare subsidies

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Yes	42	16.8	15.2
No	208	83.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

- *Childcare Obstacles*

Parents were asked to indicate all the real obstacles to childcare in their areas. Results showed that poor service, including small classes, large number of children, unqualified carers, and lack of resources, were most predominant with 49.6%, followed by expensive fees with 48.8%, insufficient childcare places in catchment areas with 40%, no use of open door policy and non-parental involvement in nursery services with 16.4%, and other obstacles, came last with 1.6%. Participants who chose other mentioned state kindergartens which did not accept children with special needs as one of the obstacles.

Table 4.24
Childcare obstacles

	Frequency	%
Poor service	124 out of 250	49.6.
Expensive fees	122 out of 250	48.8
Insufficient childcare places in catchment areas	100 out of 250	40.0
No use of open door policy and non-parent involvement in nursery services	41 out of 250	16.4
Other	4 out of 250	1.6

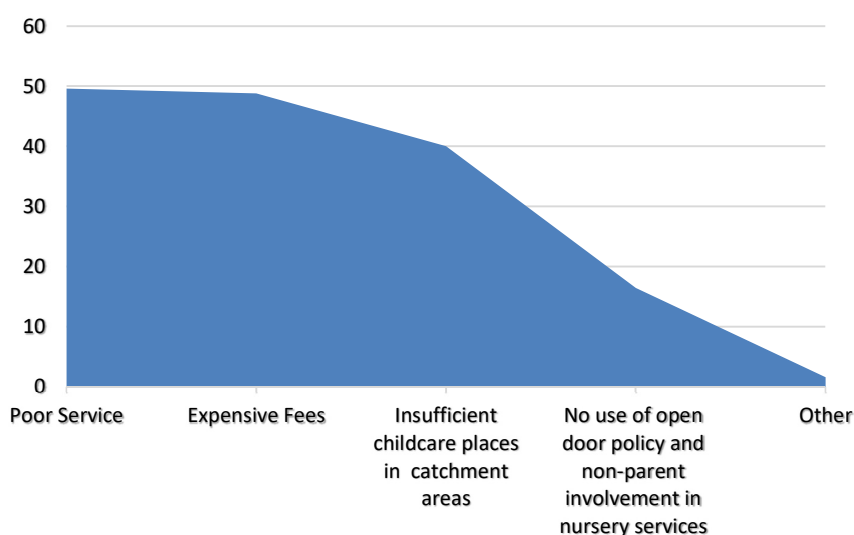


Figure 4.17 Childcare obstacles

The relationship between the demographic variables discussed above are analysed in the next section.

4.12 Socio-Demographic Factors and ECCE Provision: Cross-Tabulation Analysis

This section presents the cross-tabulation and bivariate analysis which examined the relationship between the socio-demographic variables. First, Chi-Square tests for independence were used to determine any existence of relationships between the

variables investigated. A chi square with values less than .05 is the conventionally accepted threshold of statistical significance and therefore the possibility that no association exists between the independent and dependent variables will be rejected. The following table 4.25 shows the significant values between the independent and dependent variables in the current study.

Table 4.25

Significant association between socio- demographic factors and ECCE provision according to Chi-Square test

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Family structure (Number of adults in the household)	Childcare arrangements	56.046	28a	.001
Living close to relatives	Childcare arrangements	15.975	7a	.025
Financial support	Childcare arrangements	18.860	7a	.009
Financial support	Childcare activities	20.394	5a	.001
Household income	Childcare arrangements	64.148	21a	.000
Mother's education	Childcare arrangements	52.942	28a	.003
Father's education	Childcare arrangements	75.402	35a	.000
Father's work	Childcare arrangements	93.817	35a	.000
Mother's work	Childcare arrangements	74.848	28a	.000
Marital status	Childcare activities	18.695	10a	.044
Marital status	Childcare arrangements	46.344	14a	.000
Mother's age	Childcare arrangements	46.310	21a	.001
Mother's health	Childcare arrangements	18.172	7a	.011
Mother's health	Childcare activities	21.140	5a	.001
Number of children	Childcare arrangements	45.695	21a	.001
Number of pre-school children	Childcare arrangements	46.876	21a	.001

a. Number of cells that have expected count less than 5.

The chi-square test confirmed the type of childcare arrangement, including private nursery, public nursery, babysitter, grandparents or relatives providing care, staying with older siblings, neighbour's care, parental care, was significantly associated with the following socio-demographic factors: mother's age, marital status, number of children, number of pre-school children, mother's health, mother and father's work, mother and father's education level, household income, living close to relatives, family structure, and financial support. An example of the significant association between independent and dependent variables in the current research can be drawn from mother's education level and type of childcare

arrangement. Mothers with poor education level (high school or less) were less likely to send their children to formal childcare than those who had intermediate or higher education degree (43.1% vs. 63.5%).

Childcare activities, including religious and moral lessons, literacy learning, recreational activities, rehabilitation activities for children with special needs, domestic fun and social activities, were also significantly associated with the following socio-demographic factors: mother's health, marital status, and financial support. For example, mothers with health problems were likely to engage their children in domestic caring activities than those with no health problems (68%vs 25.7%).

Table 4.26

Non-significant association between socio- demographic factors and ECCE provision according to Chi-Square test

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Family structure (Number of adults in the household)	Childcare activities	30.723	20a	.059
Living close to relatives	Childcare activities	2.456	5a	.783
Distance between home and nearest nursery	Childcare arrangements	19.492	14a	.147
Household Income	Childcare activities	19.358	15a	.198
Mother's education	Childcare activities	25.624	20a	.179
Father's education	Childcare activities	29.629	25a	.238
Father's work	Childcare activities	30.642	25a	.201
Mother's work	Childcare activities	27.244	20a	.129
Mother's age	Childcare activities	21.418	15a	.124
Mother's disability	Childcare activities	7.325	5a	.198
Mother's disability	Childcare arrangements	11.024	7a	.138
Number of children	Childcare activities	9.326	15a	.860
Number of pre-school children	Childcare activities	16.220	15	.368
Children's Gender	Childcare activities	9.629	10a	.474
Children's Gender	Childcare arrangements	18.662	14a	.178

a. Number of cells that have expected count less than 5.

The chi-square test did not find significant associations between the independent factors, distance to nursery, mother's disability, and children's gender, and the dependent factor childcare arrangement. The default position of no relationship between the independent factors, family structure, living close to relatives,

household income, mother's education, father's education, father's work, mother's work, mother's age, mother's disability, number of children, number of pre-school children and children's gender, and the dependent variable childcare activities, was proved (Table 4.26).

In the next section, the socio-demographic characteristics of semi-remote areas as perceived by childcare practitioners are described statistically.

4.13 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Semi-Remote Areas and ECCE Provision: A Childcare Practitioners' Perspective.

There is wide variability of childcare provision across Egypt in terms of availability, accessibility and quality. Practitioners' perceptions of the socio-demographic factors that affect childcare provision were important for understanding this variability. A socio-demographic characteristics and childcare quality survey was returned by 100 childcare practitioners/ caregivers in five areas in North Sinai governorate which viewed as semi-remote areas. The responses of the sample were analysed below under two headings: quality factors and socio-demographic characteristics.

I- ECCE Provision: Quality Factors

The first section in the practitioners' questionnaire aimed to measure childcare structural quality including, education level of the practitioners, qualification in childcare, their experience, the number of children cared for in a class, and child-to-staff ratio. With regard to the education level of the care service providers in the study, the majority 53% had earned a Bachelor's degree of whom only 9% had a certificate in early childhood care and education; 32% earned 2 years intermediate higher education degree; 13.0% had secondary school qualification; and only 2% had a Master's degree.

Experience was a key factor in providing quality childcare along with specialized qualification. More than half of the sample (54%) had total years of experience in the 1-3 category, followed by 30 respondents (30%) in the 4-8 years category. 8% had more than 8 years of experience and the same percentage, 8%, had less than one year of experience. Class size was also another indicator of childcare

quality. Although the sample was drawn from semi-remote areas, class sizes showed high density with 42% for a class size from 20 to 30 children, 34% for classrooms from 10 to 20 children, and 8% for classes with more than 30 children. Only 16% of the classes had 10 children or less (Table 4.27).

Table 4.27

ECCE quality factors

Qualification	Freq.	%	Qualification in Childcare	Freq.	%	Experience	Freq.	%	Class Size	Freq.	Staff Ratio	Freq.	%
Secondary School Qualification	13	13.0	Yes	9	9.0	Less than a year	8	8.0	10 Children or Less	16	1 to 10 Children or Less	16	16.0
2 Years Intermediate Higher Education Degree	32	32.0	No	91	91.0	From 1 to 3 Years	54	54.0	From 10 to 20 Children	34	1 to 20 Children	34	34.0
4 Years University Degree	53	53.0	-	-	-	From 4 to 8 years	30	30.0	From 20 to 30 children	42	1 to 30 Children	42	42.0
Post-Graduate Degree	2	2.0	-	-	-	More than 8 years	8	8.0	More than 30 children	8	1 to more than 30 Children	8	8.0
Total	100			100			100			100		100	

Comparing the class size results of the questionnaire with data collected from the Directorate of Education regarding the number of children enrolled in nurseries and kindergartens in 2013/2014 (Table 4.28) showed there were large class sizes in the different areas of North Sinai due to the limited number of classes. The average class size was 29 children in El-Arish, 22 children in Sheikh Zwaid, 37 children in Beir Elabeid, 28 children in Rafah, 26 in Nekhel, and no nursery classes in Hasana.

Table 4.28

Total number of pre-school children, schools and classes (North Sinai Directorate of Education, 2013)

		Public Schools	Public Language Schools	Private Schools	Private Language Schools	Total
El-Arish	Schools	25	3	3	2	33
	Classes	53	11	6	4	74
	Children	1662	356	80	107	2205
Sheikh Zwaid	Schools	6	1	0	0	7
	Classes	11	4	0	0	15
	Children	191	141	0	0	332
Beir Elabeid	Schools	13	1	0	0	14
	Classes	26	2	0	0	28
	Children	968	88	0	0	1056
Rafah	Schools	4	1	0	0	5
	Classes	10	2	0	0	12
	Children	265	82	0	0	347
Nekhel	Schools	0	1	0	0	1
	Classes	0	2	0	0	2
	Children	0	53	0	0	53
Hasana	Schools	0	0	0	0	0
	Classes	0	0	0	0	0
	Children	0	0	0	0	0

Generally speaking, class size was closely related with staff ratio. However, the results presented in table 4.25 above showed only one staff member per class irrespective of the number of children¹. The staff to child ratio was calculated by dividing the number of children by the number of staff present in the class. 84% of practitioners indicated that the staff ratio in their work place is 1 to 20 children or more. Only 16% had 1 to 10 children or less. In general, younger children needed to be more closely looked after and required a higher adult to child ratio.

II- Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Semi-Remote Areas

Socio-demographic characteristics of semi remote areas as perceived by childcare practitioners were extracted from their responses to the socio-demographic survey. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistic techniques.

1. *Children's Age Categories in Formal Childcare*

Table 4.29 summarizes children's age categories in formal childcare according to practitioners' work place policy. Public kindergarten classes accept children aged 4 and over, while private kindergartens can accept from three and half years old. 45% of the practitioners participated in the survey worked with this age group 4 to 6 years old. While 27% of the sample were working in nurseries with toddler classes from 2 years up to 6 years. 18% were employed in private nurseries which accept children from 3 months up to school age. Finally, 10% of the sample were working in infant nurseries from 3 months up to 2 years.

Table 4.29

Children's age categories in formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
From 3 months to 2 years	10	10.0	10.0
From 2 to 6 years	27	27.0	37.0
From 4 years to 6 years	45	45.0	82.0
From 3 months to 6 years	18	18.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

¹ This is an important finding that was investigated further in the interviews with the practitioners.

The above results coincide with the results obtained from the parents' questionnaire presented earlier regarding optimal age. The majority of the practitioners worked with children up to school age to prepare them for school.

- *Parents' Education Level*

Sixty per cent of the practitioners viewed parents' education level as greatly affecting child enrolment in official childcare. 27% considered it affected parents' decision to some extent. However, 10% and 3% respectively viewed education level as having a minimal or no affect on child enrolment in official childcare.

Table 4.30

Effects of parents' education level on child enrolment in formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
To a very little extent	3	3.0	3.0
To a little extent	10	10.0	13.0
To some extent	27	27.0	40.0
To a great extent	28	28.0	68.0
To a very great extent	32	32.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

- *Work Status*

Work status and work nature were two variables viewed by the sample as having an effect on child enrolment in formal childcare in the region. 69% of the practitioners considered, to a great extent (33%) and very great extent (36%), work status as impacting on childcare enrolment in formal childcare. Also, a sizable portion of the sample 42% viewed work nature as having a great effect (21%) and very great effect (21%) on childcare enrolment. 21% and 41% respectively of the practitioners considered work status and work nature have some extent effect on enrolment. However, 10% and 17 % of the sample viewed work status and work nature respectively as having a less likely effect on childcare enrolment in formal childcare.

Table 4.31

Effects of parents' work status and work nature on child enrolment in formal childcare

	Work Status		Work Nature	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
To a very little extent	2	2.0	5	5.0
To a little extent	8	8.0	12	12.0
To some extent	21	21.0	41	41.0
To a great extent	33	33.0	21	21.0
To a very great extent	36	36.0	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0

- *Household Income*

Household income was viewed by more than half of the sample as a more likely factor to affect childcare enrolment. 19% of the practitioners were of the opinion that to a great extent income has an effect on enrolment. However, 37% viewed the effect to a great extent, 32% to some extent, 9% to a little extent, and 3% to a very little extent (Table 4.32).

Table 4.32

Effects of household income on child enrolment in formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
To a very little extent	3	3.0	3.0
To a little extent	9	9.0	12.0
To some extent	32	32.0	44.0
To a great extent	37	37.0	81.0
To a very great extent	19	19.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

- *Neighbourhood Characteristics: Poverty and Poverty Manifestations*

One of the important neighborhood characteristics that affect ECCE is poverty and its manifestation (Mayer & Jencks, 1989; Ellen & Turner, 1997). This factor differs from one place to another and is closely related to household income and

GNP gross national product (Fuller, Kagan, Caspary & Gauthier, 2002). As shown in table 4.33 below, 27%, 31% and 24% of the practitioners pointed out that poverty affected childcare enrolment which varies from some extent to a very great extent respectively. 17% viewed it has a little or even very little impact on enrolment.

Table 4.33

Effects of poverty on child enrolment in formal childcare

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
To a very little extent	7	7.0	7.0
To little extent	11	11.0	18.0
To some extent	27	27.0	45.0
To a great extent	31	31.0	76.0
To a very great extent	24	24.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

The practitioners were asked to choose all that apply concerning the manifestations of poverty on formal childcare settings. The manifestations are summarized in the Table 4.34 below:

Table 4.34

Poverty manifestations in formal childcare settings

	Frequency	%
Children suffer from malnutrition	44 out of 100	44%
Lack of attention to personal hygiene	55 out of 100	55%
Child's behaviour and his relationship with his peers	56 out of 100	56%
Negative effect on academic attainment	19 out of 100	19%
Other	5 out of 100	5%

56 % of the sample viewed the child's behaviour with classmates as the first manifestation, followed by 55% for the lack of attention to personal hygiene, 44% for malnutrition, 19% for less academic achievement, and 5% for other manifestations.

- *Geographical Location of Childcare Setting*

Practitioners pointed out that the geographical location of childcare settings affected families' access to childcare services. This perspective varied from some extent 34%, a great extent 16%, to a very great extent 24%. However, 15% and 11% of the practitioners respectively viewed little and very little effect of geographical location on children's access to childcare provision in their areas.

Table 4.35

Impact of geographical location on childcare provision

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
To a very little extent	11	11.0	11.0
To a little extent	15	15.0	26.0
To some extent	34	34.0	60.0
To a great extent	16	16.0	76.0
To a very great extent	24	24.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

- *Gender Discrimination*

As shown in the table below (4.36), 95% of the sample indicated that they did not experience any gender discrimination practiced by parents in enrolling their children in formal childcare. However, only 5% admitted that there was some sort of discrimination practiced by parents against female children.

Table 4.36

Gender discrimination and formal childcare enrollment

	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Yes	5	5.0	5.0
No	95	95.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

4.14 Summary

In this quantitative phase of the research, two questionnaires were administered on a sample of 250 parents and 100 childcare practitioners. The descriptive analysis of the data indicated that the socio-demographic characteristics of parents in addition to the economically disadvantaged condition of semi-remote areas affected the availability, accessibility and quality of ECCE in North Sinai, as a semi-remote area. More specifically, the results showed that parents' characteristics, including education, marital status, mother's age, income, employment and family structure, significantly affected childcare choices and preferences. However, context factors such as class-size, high staff to children ratio, unqualified carers and lack of resources were significant predictors of the quality of childcare. Other context related factors, such as neighbourhood poverty and infrastructure were among the factors affecting childcare provision.

The following chapter analyses the data of the second phase of the mixed methods sequential explanatory design employed in the current study. It is the qualitative data analysis phase which aims at consolidating the statistical data presented in this chapter by linking them with the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and policy document analysis.

Chapter Five

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Phase II

Chapter Five

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Phase II

The text based, interactive, flexible, and naturalistic methods used by qualitative researchers arise from their concern to explain social phenomena from the point of view of the people in the study (Avis, 2005, p.14).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the second phase of the mixed methods sequential explanatory design: the qualitative data collection and analysis phase which explains and follows up the statistical results obtained in the first quantitative phase. More specifically, this phase aimed at consolidating the statistical results of the previous phase, and linking them with the results of interviews and policy document analysis. The interviews and policy document analysis focused on eliciting detailed data on socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in North Sinai, mothers' care and education practices, and stakeholders' perspectives on ECCE policy and its response to the socio-demographic factors. The analysis of the data followed a thematic network method which combines inductive and deductive reasoning as well as description and interpretation. The rich thematic findings of this phase helped to reflect accurately the content of the entire data of the study.

The chapter starts first with a description of the qualitative data collection instruments, including interview protocol development and policy document analysis techniques. The validity and reliability of the data collection instruments are then discussed along with a description of the pilot study procedures. Next, the interviewees and the documents selected for analysis are described. The chapter discusses also the procedures of applying the thematic analysis method in the current study, including transcribing the interview texts, coding them, identifying themes, and constructing thematic networks. Finally, the chapter concludes with a general summary. The results of this phase will be integrated with the previous phase and interpreted holistically in chapter six.

Part I: Qualitative Data Collection Techniques

In policy-related research, “almost all likely sources of information, data, and ideas fall into two general types: documents and people” (Bardach & Patashnik 2016, p.87). Accordingly, the qualitative data collection techniques in this phase were in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews with purposefully selected groups of participants and policy document analysis (please refer to the interview schedules and copy of the analysed documents in the appendices).

5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are widely used in social research. According to Cohen et al. (2000), interviewing may serve three main purposes:

First, it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives.... Second, it may be used to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. And third, the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking (p. 268).

The present study employed semi-structured interviews with the purpose of providing an adequate degree of informality in which case respondents would feel confident and relaxed enough to reveal their views. An important point taken into consideration in conducting the interviews was to avoid dominating the interviewees by imposing the researcher’s ideas on theirs as advised by Rubin and Rubin (2005). In other words, the topics related to the study were explored and discussed thoroughly in a less- guided manner (Holliday, 2007).

Interviewing different groups of informants was essential to the current study, and included parents, childcare practitioners, and policy makers. Subsequently, interviewing styles varied according to the personality differences of parents, professional experiences of care practitioners, and being members of the ‘elite’, in the sense of possessing power or influence, as policy makers.

5.2.1 Interview Protocol Development

The semi-structured interview protocols were designed to explore in depth the results of the first quantitative phase. According to Boyce and Neale (2006), “the primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods” (p.3). Those protocols contained a series of qualitative questions to guide the interviews (refer to appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 for the interview schedules). The content of the questions were grounded in the results of the statistical analysis of the first phase which had revealed the significant socio-demographic factors that influence ECCE provision in North Sinai. This process was in accordance with the mixed methods sequential explanatory design (Creswell et al, 2003) adopted in the study.

Generally speaking, when constructing the interview questions, careful attention was given to phrasing the questions in a way that allowed the participants to freely express themselves in depth. Most of the questions used in the interviews were constructed as open-ended questions with follow up prompts if necessary to encourage and guide the interviewees to expand and elaborate their responses. Some of the questions were close-ended questions with follow-up prompts, such is why and give example, for the purpose of reducing monotony and encouraging participants to be involved more in the interview.

The structure of the interview protocol consisted of three main parts: opening, questions, and conclusion. The interview opening served four main purposes: (1) introducing the interviewer and interview stages, (2) stating the purpose of the research and expected outcomes, (3) reconfirming confidentiality and informed consent, and (4) stating interviewee’s rights and expressing thanks for participation.

The interviews main questions, prompts and examples were organized according to a number of categories. The first interview protocol (Mothers’ Interview Questions) consisted of five categories of questions (please refer to the appendices). The first category of questions asked the participants basic information, including to talk about themselves, their occupation, education, and children. The aim of these questions was two-fold: to serve as an ice-breaker (Hatch, 2002) and to obtain some

details about the case. The second and third categories of questions focused on the factors found statistically significant in the first phase in influencing and predicting ECCE provision. The fourth and fifth categories of questions tackled ECCE activities, policies, obstacles and future plans. A number of probing questions were added to each open-ended question to ensure all aspects of the socio-demographic factors and ECCE provision were discussed during the interview.

The practitioners' interview protocol consisted of six categories of open-ended questions (refer to appendix 4.2). The first category of questions covered areas such as qualifications, experience, and job satisfaction. This was the start in order to attract the attention of the interviewee at this early stage of the interview. This is then followed by questions to understand the results of the first quantitative phase related to work environment in the field of early years care and education. The third category of questions tackled communications with parents and their involvement in their children official care. The fourth category of questions focused on the socio-demographic factors found to be statistically significant and predicting ECCE provision. The last two categories of questions, five and six were related to ECCE policies, obstacles and future plan.

The policy makers' interview protocol included five categories of questions (refer to appendix 4.3). The first category of questions focused on general information about early childhood care and education in North Sinai. The second category of questions posed to understand ECCE policies which assist ECCE provision. The third category of questions tackled ECCE Quality. Questions of the fourth category focused on the socio-demographic factors found to be statistically significant in predicting ECCE provision. The fifth and final category of questions dealt with ECCE obstacles and how to overcome them.

The following table (5.1) summarizes the structure of the interview questions for the three groups of participants.

Table 5.1

Interview protocols structure

	Parents	Practitioners	Policy Makers
Number of Questions and Sub-questions	12	16	19
Categories of Questions	1- General demographic information. 2- Childcare arrangement and socio-demographic factors. 3- Activities mothers undertake for caring for your children. 4- ECCE policies 5- ECCE Obstacles and future plan.	1- Qualification, experience, accommodation and general satisfaction. 2- Work environment. 3- Parents' involvement and communication. 4- Socio-demographic factors and ECCE. 5- ECCE policies. 6- ECCE Obstacles and future plan.	1- General information about ECCE in North Sinai. 2- ECCE Policies. 3- ECCE Quality Standards. 4- Factors affecting ECCE provision. 5- ECCE Obstacles and future plan.

The interview conclusion was the final part of the interview schedule where the researcher thanked the interviewees again for their time and participation and asked them if they had any questions for the researcher or any comment.

5.2.2 Interview Protocols Piloting

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main interviews in order to make sure that the questions in the protocols had been phrased and structured in such a way as to generate valid answers. The questions were piloted on three participants: a mother, a nurse and a kindergarten principal. The pilot interview process with the three participants resulted in making some changes in the phrasing of certain questions, their ordering, and the potential need to be able to provide interviewees with more

examples and prompt questions. Examples of changes to the interview procedures included:

- Changing the questions about basic family details from direct questions about specific details which might be too subtle or too personal for some parents to disclose to others, to a more general question such as ‘could you please talk me through some of the basic information about you and your family?’.
- Adding more examples and prompt questions to the mothers’ interview protocol. These prompt questions were about her extended family, her husband’s extended family, and the activities mothers undertake for caring for young children.
- Providing more examples of different policies and regulations that could affect childcare.
- Questions about ECCE obstacles reordered to be the last questions in order to come after building a rapport with the interviewees, in particular with policy makers.

The piloting process with one of the mothers helped the researcher to adopt the idea of bringing an assistant with her during the interviews with mothers to look after their young children. In this way a small crèche was established whereby the mother was able to concentrate on the interview without distraction.

5.2.3 Selection of Interviewees

Purposive sampling or selective sampling was used to select the interviewees to ensure variations among the participants. According to Daniel (2011), it “is a nonprobability sampling procedure in which elements are selected from the target population on the basis of their fit with the purpose of the study and specific inclusion and exclusion criteria”(p.87). The sample of this phase included three groups of participant: mothers, childcare practitioners, and policy makers. The first group of interviewees were thirteen mothers who had previously participated in the survey. They had been selected on the basis of their positive answer to the question of whether they would like to be contacted again for a further interview. The

selection process considered also the demographic variation among the participants in terms of education, employment, marital status, number of pre-school children, and residency factors. The following table (5.2) summarizes the main characteristics of the participants of the first group (the mothers)¹:

Table 5.2

Characteristics of the participants of the first group (Mothers)

Residency		Marital Status		Number of Pre-School Children			Education		Employment Status	
With or Next to Extended Family	Far from Extended Family	Married	Widowed or Divorced	One Child	Two Children	Three OR More	Intermediate Level	Higher Education	Employed	Unemployed
8	5	11	2	3	2	8	7	6	7	6

The mothers who participated in the interviews were of different ages and their education, employment, marital status, and number of pre-school children also varied.

The second group of interviewees were seven nursery/kindergarten staff who also participated in the survey of first phase. This group was purposefully selected based on their consent to participate in follow-up interviews as well as representing different professional characteristics, including different qualifications, years of experience, and place of work. The following table (5.3) summarises the main characteristics of the second group of participants:

¹ Please refer to the appendices for the detailed description of each participant of this group.

Table 5.3

Characteristics of the participants of the second group (Practitioners)

Code	Qualification	Experience	Position and Work Place
Practitioner 1	Secondary school qualification	10 years	Teacher at a nursery affiliated to a non-governmental organization
Practitioner 2	Post-graduate education	1 year	Director of a private center for children with disabilities
Practitioner 3	Secondary school qualification	2 years	Secretary at a private nursery
Practitioner 4	2 years intermediate education degree	22 years	Teacher at public kindergarten
Practitioner 5	4 years university degree in early childhood education	1 year	Teacher ¹ at a public kindergarten
Practitioner 6	4 years university degree in early childhood education	20 years	Teacher at a nursery affiliated to a non-governmental organization
Practitioner 7	4 years degree in education	5 years	Deputy head teacher at a public nursery

The third group of interviewees were four policy makers. Inviting policy makers to be interviewed was a hard process as most of the persons asked said that they had no time. This limited the number of participants in this category. This group included four persons; three from the following bodies respectively: supervisory department-Ministry of Education North Sinai, Centre of Motherhood and Childhood, Ministry of Social Solidarity North Sinai, and Education Directorate, Ministry of Education North Sinai, as well as a manager of a private nursery school.

¹ The job title teacher is the one used in Egypt in nurseries and schools. The personnel involved in childcare and education in Egypt includes:

- MoE staff: The majority are specialized (either Faculties of Education or Faculties of KGs graduates or the old 2 years school of teachers graduates).
- NGO staff: High school or university graduates (mostly non-specialized).

An informed consent form and the interview protocol were given to the policy makers a week before the interview took place. However, for the other participants, they were given them on the same day of the interview. In order to retain confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees, the researcher used codes to protect the biographical identification data. After the study was completed, the participants received a summary of the findings (please refer to the appendices for a copy of this summary).

5.2.4 Conducting the Interviews

This section describes the four steps of conducting the interviews:

1. Introducing myself and the purpose of the interview was important to establish a rapport and a comfortable atmosphere before asking the main questions. I also made sure to mention at this stage that the data collected in this interview would be used for the purpose of research only and any information given would be kept strictly confidential and no personal information retained. The interviewee was shown the computer software Audacity and told that a recording would be made of the conversation and this helped guarantee the interviewee's consent before starting the interview. This was essential as Bernard (1988) stresses that an interviewer should not rely on memory only and recording should be used in order not to miss any important information.
2. During the interview, the main questions that needed to be clarified in depth would come first with probes. The researcher allowed the interviewees to expand any answer and some of the interviewees started using storytelling to give their full experience. The prompt questions were necessary as indicated in the interview schedule. The interviewer also used frequently, non-directive and non-specific probes, such as for example, "Could you elaborate on that, please?"
3. The interviewer ended the interview session by asking the interviewee if he/she wanted to ask any questions and if he/she wanted to receive a copy of

the transcript. The researcher also asked for any other comments or suggestions that the interviewee might want to raise. Then, the interviewer expressed thanks for the time spent for the session.

4. The interviewer made notes after each interview and recorded the interviewee's impressions of the interview session, commenting particularly on the interpersonal interaction for consideration later at analysis stage. According to Merriam (1998), these reflections might contain insights suggested by the interview; verbal or non-verbal.

All the interviews were conducted and recorded with the interviewees' consent, except two participants (one mother and one policy maker) who preferred no recording resulting in note taking being used instead. However, this did not have an impact on the data from these two interviewees when compared with the data obtained from the rest of the interviewees.

The interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy by listening to the audio recording and comparing it with the transcribed text. The researcher did not find any difficulties in the Arabic transcription of the data as the participants and the researcher were native speakers of Arabic. Although some of Bedouin participants were using their Arabic accent with its own special vocabulary and usage, the research faced no problems in understanding, as she lived close to Bedouin communities for 15 years and was familiar with those language usages.

The transcription was then integrated with the notes taken and all translated from Arabic into English. The translation was verified by a colleague who was working as an English language teacher with the researcher at a local school in North Sinai from 2002 to 2005. Minor changes were recommended by the colleague, concerning some phrases and changes had been made. As there were no technical terms, the interpretation of meaning was straight forward. The only challenges of translation were translating some colloquial expressions from Arabic into English. This required to translate them from colloquial Arabic to standard Arabic, then translating them

into English to get the actual meaning of those expressions. An example from the data which shows the translation process is below:

- Mother said in colloquial Arabic (transliterated in roman alphabet):
Banakha yeroha alrawda.
- The standard Arabic translation of the same sentence (transliterated in roman alphabet):
Ibn akhey yazaheb ela alrowda.
- The English translation of the standard Arabic sentence:
My nephew goes to the nursery.

As argued by Nes, Abma, Jonsson, and Deeg (2010), interpretation of meaning is the core of qualitative research. Accordingly, the thematic analysis was carried out on the translated data as it is fully conveyed the meaning. The closer the meanings as expressed by the participants and the meanings as interpreted in the findings, the more valid the qualitative findings become.

5.3 Policy Document Analysis

With the aim of providing integrated services for the development of children and reserving their rights, the Egyptian government has enacted a Child Law and other national child care and education policies to lay down the way for a sound foundation for children's well-being. Since 1980's this goal was claimed to be at the centre of the nation's policy agenda. In 1996, the first national conference for the Egyptian Child was held to promote public awareness of children's rights for care, development and education (NCCM, 2000).

Despite the legislations and policies in place, the implementation process is always criticized as not achieving the targets. The implementation of those policies is very much conditioned by available data about the actual number of children attending the existing ECCE provisions, adequate institutional capacity, setting and using quality standards, and the understanding of the importance of ECCE among all stakeholders. Although ECCE services have been steadily increasing and improving in Egypt, many of the areas mentioned above are facing critical issues due to high

poverty rate and low income for many families, insufficient government support, as well as the unequal opportunities between urban and rural areas for ECCE (UNESCO, 2006). Accordingly, “increased government provision of free, high-quality kindergarten and nursery programs to children from disadvantaged backgrounds is particularly important” (Krafft, 2012, p. 4).

However, this requires to address some ECCE policy gaps in the Egyptian context. More specifically, ECCE policy needs to focus on addressing issues of ensuring equitable access to ECCE for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regional disparities, the differences in cost and quality of ECCE between public and private sectors, and the impact of socio-demographic factors on ECCE. The first step in studying these policy gaps is to examine the relevant existing policy documents.

In the current study, the second method of data collection in the qualitative phase was policy document analysis. According to Bardach and Patashnik (2015), the likely sources of information in policy research are documents and people. Bowen (2009) states five roles for document analysis: (1) understanding the context of the written text, (2) generating factual interview questions, (3) providing research with supplementary information and insights, (4) tracking changes and development of policy structure, and (5) corroborating research evidence. Although these roles are overlapping, they emphasize some of the functions of document analysis in qualitative policy studies.

For the purpose of the current study, policy documents refer to laws, decrees, and legislative proposals emanating from three bodies in Egypt: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Solidarity and National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. All potentially relevant documents¹ published since 1989² which have had, or seem likely to have, a significant impact on ECCE were considered for analysis. This included:

¹ Please refer appendix no. 8 for a copy of the analysed documents.

² The year 1989 features the formal introduction of a further pre-school level, kindergartens, within the general education system according to decree no. 208 issued by the Ministry of Education.

- Ministry of Education Decree No. 208/ 1989.
- Child Law No. 12/ 1996 amended by Law No. 126/2008 by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood,
- Ministry of Education Decree No. 65/2000 concerning planning and organizing physical environment in the kindergartens.
- The Labour Law No 12/ 2003 (It provided working women with special legal provisions during pregnancy and following childbirth),
- Ministry of Education Decree No. 202/2005 concerning experimental language schools with kindergarten classes.
- Ministry of Education Decree No. 335/2008 concerning permitting NGOs and private institutions to open kindergarten classes,
- Egypt's Constitution of 2014
- Ministry of Education Decree No. 285/2014 concerning language schools and distinguished language schools with kindergarten classes.

Some of the documents, in particular, the Ministry of Education decrees, were referred to by the interview informants and were chosen on this basis, whereas the rest were led to by other documents. The documents were selected for detailed analysis on the basis that they had:

- significant implications for early childhood care and education,
- a potential impact on continuity of care provision,
- policy particulars which have been implemented or have some possibility of being implemented in the near future, and not been superseded by more recent policy documents.

The data obtained from the documents was used to provide background information prior to conducting the interviews. While, the overall data obtained from the policy documents supported the building of the thematic networks and interpretation of the results. The technique used in analysing the documents partially inspired by Atkinson and Coffey (2004) and focused on: (i) the style in which the document was written, (ii) the kind of language used, along with its words and phrases, and (iii) the structure of the document and choosing a descriptor for each

part. The various strands of policy that featured in the analysed documents were organized along with the data obtained from the interviews under four thematic headings which will be discussed later in the chapter:

- 1- Salient socio-demographic factors
- 2- ECCE services
- 3- Parenting
- 4- Policy response.

Part II: Qualitative Data Analysis and Results

The qualitative data from the two sources, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, were analysed concurrently using the method of thematic analysis. The emerged themes helped to dispel the stereotype of childcare provision in semi-remote areas of Egypt.

5.4 Thematic Network Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis aims at “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data” (p.79). A theme is an idea that recurs in or pervades the data and relates to the research questions, and makes up some level of patterned meaning within the data set. Although identifying the linkages between emerging themes is the core of thematic analysis, it is flexible in the way themes can be identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, consistency in identifying the themes following a certain way would result in consistent results.

As the themes emerged during the analysis, a network was built in the form of a web of themes organized to represent meanings. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), thematic network is a technique of identifying themes and developing a graphical representation of the linkages between the emerging themes. Thematic networks can be developed using the following procedures framework (Attride-Stirling, 2001):

1. Identifying Basic Themes (Lowest-Order Statements)

Basic themes can be defined as the simple statements in the text. They give fragmented meanings and cannot represent the whole text. Once the basic themes put together, they will form an organizing them and therefore, they can represent meaning beyond the immediate meaning of each basic statement.

2. Grouping Basic Themes

This is the process of grouping together basic themes and organizing them under the heading ‘Organizing Themes’. Those organizing themes represent the main ideas in the text.

3. Grouping Organizing Themes

This is the procedure of putting together the organizing themes under a unified theme called the ‘Global Theme’. It is the kernel of thematic analysis and can summarize the whole text. Depending on the complexity of the text and its data, there could be more than one global theme.

Applying these procedures to the qualitative data in the current research created a hierarchy order of themes. However, this hierarchy did not give deep insight into the data; it was important that the researcher built bridges between the components of the entire data set and drew evident implications. The researcher managed the data using a research log to keep all the research notes as well as the demographic and other characteristics of the participants in one place.

5.4.1 The implementation of the Thematic Network Analysis

The implementation of the thematic network analysis followed Attride-Stirling’s (2001) three-stage model:

- Stage One: Reduction and Breakdown of Interview Texts

This stage has two main steps as follows:

A. Generating initial codes

Reading the translated transcriptions of the data more than one time was the initial step in the process of coding the interview texts. This step aimed at identifying the initial codes from the data corpus (interview texts). It was very important to highlight the meaningful text segments in which codes could be applied. Guided by the research questions in general and the interview questions in particular, the coding process focused on recurrent words and phrases in the text.

The texts, interviews data, were fragmented into a number of segments. These fragmentations were words, or phrases or sentences. They were given labels and coded with salient topics guided by the research questions. The researcher tried to limit the codes with explicit boundaries. This helped the researcher not to code every single sentence and to focus on the main ones. Once all interview data was coded, a number of themes were identified from the coded text segments. An example of the process of coding is provided in the table (5.4) below. It is an extract from an interview with a mother.

Table 5.4
An example of a coded text segment

Data Extract	Codes	Basic Themes	Organizing Themes
I have 2 boys; four years and two and half years old. I am a house wife, recently registered in an open education program to get a university degree and to find a good job. I have 2 years intermediate Higher Education degree .My husband is the sole source of income. I try to do all my responsibilities towards my family and my study does not affect my husband and children. I have lectures two days a week. I usually leave my children with my mum, but she is not available at all times. She is also an old woman and children sometimes make her feel tired. Sometimes my husband has to stay with them or to leave them with a friend. But this is again just temporarily and not every week.	children	Basic Demographic Information	Participant Characteristics
	Wife		
	Education	Domestic Caring	Childcare arrangement
	Domestic		
	Granny		
	Husband	Informal Care	
	Friend		

Coding was carried out manually by writing notes on the text segments and using highlighters to indicate potential patterns. The process of coding was carried out in a cyclical way, where all the data were initially coded and collated. The codes were then matched with data extracts that represent them. The codes identified from the three categories of interview transcripts were combined in one list in the appendices.

B. Identifying themes

After the whole data were analyzed systematically for all potential codes, the data from the three groups of interview texts with the same codes were collated

together to form basic themes. The aim of this step was to reduce the amount of data and organize them in a more manageable set of basic "themes" that precisely summarized the whole text (please refer to the appendices). During this process, the researcher discarded some themes which were not relevant and did not serve the purpose of the research, such as:

- Child-centered teaching techniques,
- Syllabus themes and topics, and
- Bullying at nursery or school
- Stage Two: The Exploration of the Text Stage

This stage is characterised by describing and exploring themes. It has two steps:

A. Organizing themes

In this step all the basic themes were put together in groups of organizing themes. The themes were organized on the basis of tackling similar issues. The organizing themes enhanced the meaning of the basic themes and helped in forming the main assumptions (please see table 5.4 above).

B. Identifying the global themes and constructing the thematic networks

The global themes were identified by further abstracting from the organizing themes. They “distill the overarching point of the text into a single statement.... And they articulate the deeper meaning and complexity of the data” (Martin & Hanington, 2012, p.178). The following table (5.5) summarizes the four global themes which emerged from the study and their organizing themes.

Table 5.5

Global and organizing themes of the participants' interview texts

Global Themes	Organizing Themes
Salient socio-demographic (SD) factors	Child factors
	Family factors
	Context factors
ECCE services	Care
	Education
	Recreation
	Obstacles to quality ECCE services
Parenting	Domestic / Physical care
	Social, Intellectual, and Emotional care
Policy response	Budget and subsidies
	ECCE program
	ECCE legislations

- Stage Three: The Integration of the Exploration Stage

In this stage thematic networks emerged. They were developed starting from the basic themes, moving to organizing themes, and ending with global themes. The thematic networks were then presented graphically as a web-like structure emphasizing the integration and relationships among the themes to interpret the patterns and draw conclusions.

Applying this three stages model in the current study produced five global themes, which can be described as interrelated and interconnected as visualized in the figure below (Figure 5.1).

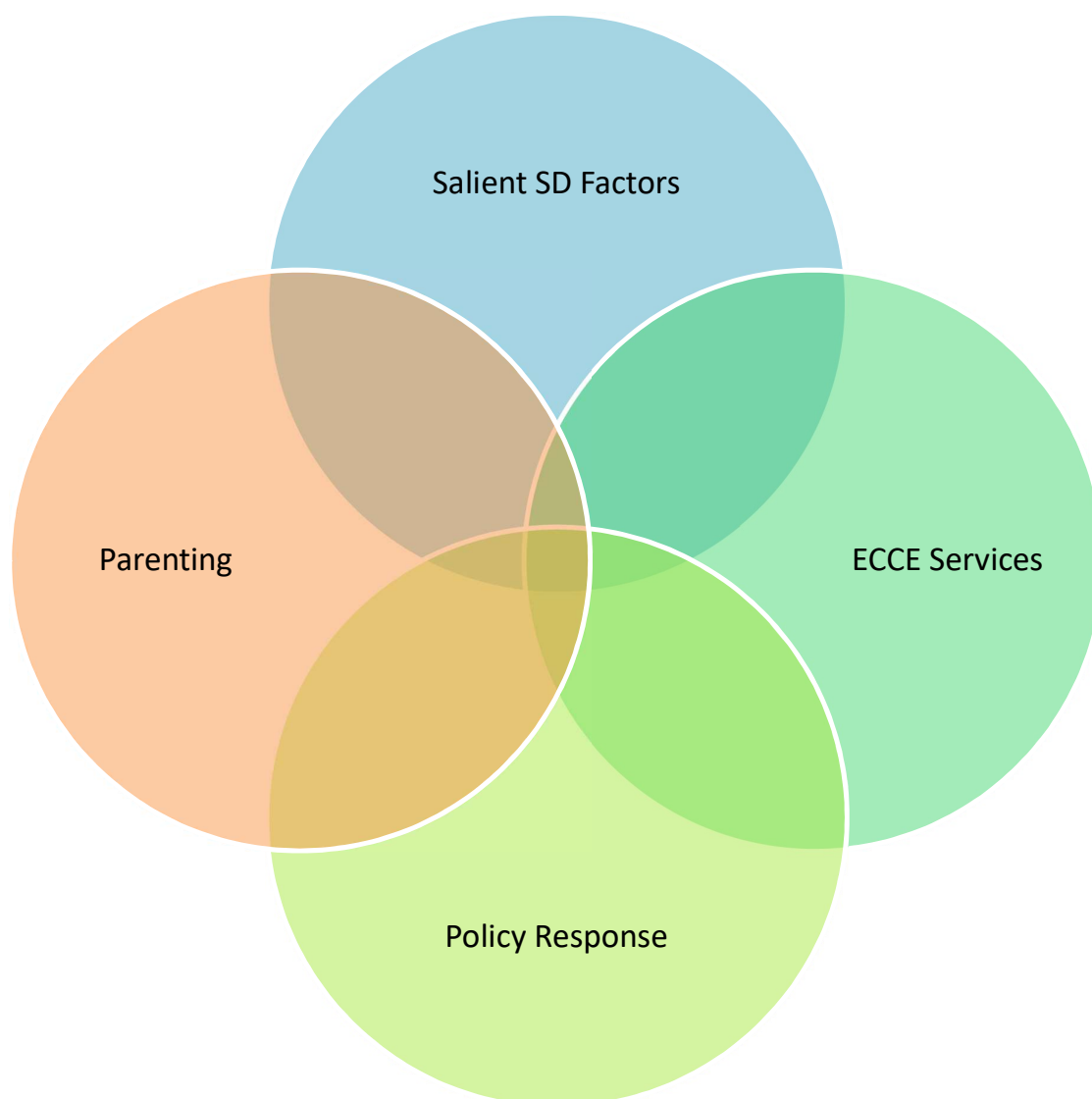


Figure 5.1 Global themes emerged in the current study

5.5 Global Themes and Sub-Themes Emerged

5.5.1 Salient Socio-Demographic Factors

The first global theme is the 'Salient Socio-Demographic Factors'. These were the factors found to affect ECCE provision. The thematic network of this global theme includes three organizing sub- themes: (i) child factors, (ii) family factors, and (iii) contextual factors.

2. Child Factors

The use of various forms of early childhood care and education varied in the Egyptian context according to child-related factors, including child's age and health. Child's age was found to be a significant factor in determining childcare arrangement. Under three years old, children were less likely to be in formal childcare in semi-remote areas for different reasons. However, children aged four years and older may be enrolled in formal childcare mostly due to parents' aim to help their child be school ready and the marginal fees paid in public kindergartens. The following extracts from the interview data support these findings:

Mother (Amina ¹):	My older son is in a private kindergarten. But my younger one did not go to any nursery as I did not find a place that I feel secure and safe for him at that age (two years and half).
Mother (Alla):	I do not think I will send my youngest child before the age of four like all his brothers. I will send him only to kindergarten to be ready for school. It is close by and cheap.
Mother (Mentallah):	My older child is enrolled at the nursery attached to my work. I took my baby with me too to my work place as no one to look after him at home and there is no place for babies in the nursery at work. I do not live close to my parents that is why I have to take the baby every day with me to work.
Mother (Sabah):	I do not think I will apply for any work until my son becomes fours years old and is ready to start his first year of

¹ Mothers' names used in the quotes are pseudonyms.

kindergarten. Before that age, I do not think there is a suitable place for my baby in North Sinai.

Mother (Entisar): I take my four months baby with me to my work after I tried to bring a babysitter to stay with my three kids at home. But it was expensive and also she could not handle caring for the three of them at the same time. I tried to leave my two older daughters with my sister in law at home as she is a housewife. However, after couple of weeks, she found it difficult to care for them any longer as she has her own child as well. I had to enroll them in a nearby nursery but the problem was “who is going to pick them up as the nursery finishes early by 1pm?” My father, the kids’ grandfather, was helping to bring them home but again not every day.

When young children have health problems, frequent ailments or disabilities, parents cannot obviously think of a formal childcare in the Egyptian context. This is mostly due to the refusal of formal care places to accept those children as they do not have any facilities for them. Also caring for children with disabilities or severe health problems require continuous care and attention from parents, particularly with the lack of childcare providers specially trained to handle children with disabilities or with special health or developmental needs. Two mothers in the study with such children, ranging from speech delays to attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, found it challenging to find a childcare centre for their children and consequently parents or relative care at home was used where children’s needs could be met. At the time of the study, in North Sinai, there was only one school for children with disabilities (intellectual, visual and hearing impairments), but it did not have any nursery classes. There was also one non-governmental centre which accepted pre-school children with disabilities, or other medical conditions such as epilepsy or asthma. However, it was located in the capital city El-Arish and its monthly fees were 250 Egyptian pounds which was considered expensive for most of the families compared to normal centres. Further, even for those who could afford the fee, the centre capacity was only 25 children meaning; there was a long waiting list. Illustrative examples are provided by the following extracts:

- Mother (Amina): My older child attended a nursery at age three but I could not enroll his youngest brother till the age of five, because he had a speech delay. This caused him to be angry and impatient with other people. So, it was hard to enroll him in any nursery.
- Practitioner 2: Our fees are 250 pounds per month. We have 100 children in the waiting list, because of space and limited fund we could not accommodate more children. In the evening we offer intervention service for children with speech delays and communication problems.
- Practitioner 3: (Previous worker in a public nursery): I worked for a month and half as a class teacher (for kids from age 2 and half till 4 years). The class had also two special needs kids 6 years old. I was not trained nor had experience to work with children with special needs. I could not continue and I quitted the job. I work now in a private nursery as a secretary.
- Policymaker2: Childhood and motherhood department at the Ministry of Social Solidarity supervises childcare centres for disabled children as well as orphan care centres for kids who have no known parents and poor widowed mothers with children. Also we supervise alternative families who look after orphan children at their homes and we have 25 families at the moment.

3. Family Factors

Parent and family-related factors are among the strongest predictors of quality childcare for pre-school children. A number of family factors were found to be significant in the context of the study as discussed below.

Parents' education refers to the average of the combined level of education obtained by parents when they are both present in the household. Generally speaking, educated parents provided safe and caring home environments for their children as well as tending to choose quality non-parental care. This was a significant matter in particular communities that still have a number of illiterate people, as parents' education affects not only children's care and education, but also children's lifelong

health, productivity and wealth. The following extracts from the interview data illustrate the importance of parents' education:

Practitioner 1:	Educated parents and employed mothers use our service more.
Practitioner4:	Educated family with working mothers communicate more with us.
Policy Maker 1:	Parents' education plays an important role in ensuring children's daily attendance in nurseries and kindergartens and communication with the staff.... also in attending parents' meetings.
Policy Maker 2:	Centres and villages with high adult education ratio have a high enrollment ratio in nurseries as in Negila and Beir El-Abed. The villages close to Negila do not have the same enrollment ratio, as they have a high ratio of illiterate adults.
Policy Maker 4:	Uneducated mothers do not have enough awareness of the importance of early education and they might not walk up early and drop off their children in a nursery.

The number of children in a family was found to be a significant factor in the context of the study. There is a big gap between the ideal family size that the family can afford and the actual family size. As observed by Ryder and Westoff (1971), ideal family size correlate closely with parents' race, religion, education, and income. In Egypt as many other developing countries, the average number of children that a woman has in her lifetime is three or four. There are direct economic effects of the current high fertility rates on childcare in terms of availability, expenditure, and subsidies. The following extracts from the interviews with the subjects of the study show aspects of the effect number of children can have on the status of childcare:

Mother (Amira):	I found some nurseries which are very nice and I want to enroll my two younger kids in one of them, but I could not

because they are private with high fees, in addition to the bus fees.

Mother (Shadia): We do not have enough money to enroll our two sons in a private nursery and pay for transportation, uniform, books, packed lunch and snacks.

Practitioner 1: Many families have five children or more and they face difficulties in sending preschoolers to nurseries because of their economic status. Also mothers with more than two preschoolers find it hard to drop off and pick up their children in particular in winter.

Access to extended family was a factor that can influence childcare. If members of the extended family, such as grandparents, aunts, and cousins, live nearby or in the same household, they can play a supportive role in childcare provision. A typical example was where grandparents shared the household with a married couple and their children. The majority of the interviewed mothers were found to depend on their extended family as the main caregiver during their work or study:

Mother (Amina): I leave my two kids with my mother or sister if I have lectures in my college. However, it is difficult to leave them on daily basis as my mother is ill and looking after my children is an exhausting process.

Mother (Alla): My baby stays with my mother who lives in the same street as me, when I go to work.

Mother (Menallah): I do not live close to any members of my extended family.

Mother (Imam): I will feel comfortable to leave my children with my mother if she lives close to my house, as I will be sure that my children will stay in a safe place.

Mother (Amira): My family lives far from El-Arish, so I take my two children to a public nursery in my way to work. My younger child is in the baby class and the older is in pre-kindergarten class.

Mother (Entisar): If my mother is still alive, my life will be much easier as I will leave all my kids with her as my older sister did with her children before.

Income played an important role in determining the childcare arrangement for many families in the Egyptian context. Mothers in the current study expressed that they would change their children's care arrangement if another affordable option became available. However, with limited subsidies, low-income families were left with few options and had to cover childcare fees, transportation, and other services from their household monthly income.

Mother (Amira): The priority in choosing the nursery for my children is fees. I want a place with low fees and also I do not want to pay for transportation (the nursery bus). I found some nurseries which are very good in terms of quality of service but the fees are very high.

Mother (Mentallah): Our income became better after my employment. I can afford to buy toys and games for my children. My child is in a private nursery with high fees. My salary helps in covering the nursery fees.

Mother (Shadia): My husband was late to apply for one of our children in a public kindergarten because we did not know the deadline. I just heard one of my relatives said that she applied for her daughter. We do not have enough money to enroll him and his brother in a private kindergarten. In this case, we need to pay double fees and pay also for transportation, uniform, books, and food.

Practitioner 1: Our fees are only 12 pounds per month because the nursery is funded by a non-governmental organization. We provide a very basic service in comparison with private nurseries.

Practitioner 2: Some low or middle income families still could not use our service because of the fees; however in some cases we reduce the fees to half if we have enough fund.

Practitioner 6: Although our nursery fees are very marginal, some families do not enroll their children as they are not aware of the importance of sending their children early to a nursery before going to school.

The mother's work proved to be a crucial factor in determining childcare arrangements in the Egyptian context, in particular for mothers of children under the age of three. Childcare was the most time intensive role for parents, in particular mothers. The following extracts shed light on how the mothers' work affected their childcare arrangements in semi-remote areas:

Mother (Entisar): I used to look after my three kids by myself and I did not think to use a nursery until I started a new job.

Mother (Alla): It is hard to find unemployed mother sends her young children early to a childcare centre. The mothers who send their children early before kindergarten age are those who are employed and do not have any other options.

Mother (Fatma): I did not find a childcare place for my child that opens early. Public nurseries open late after 7 am and I must take the bus which takes all the workers to Sheikh Zwaid early in the morning before 7 am.

Practitioner 2: Employed mothers use our nursery service more.

Policy Maker 2: The majority of the unemployed mothers find it hard to walk up early in the morning to drop off their children in a nursery.

4. Contextual Factors

Contextual factors in the current study were the characteristics of the local environment that could affect childcare provision. A number of contextual factors were found to be significant including, culture, traditions and beliefs, geographical location, and neighbourhood.

Childcare traditions, long-established customs about children and their upbringing that have been passed from one generation to another, are of special

significance in the Egyptian cultural context (Johnson & McIntosh, 2005). Egyptian cultural values and beliefs favour family environment as the optimal setting for childcare (Samahy, 2013). Accordingly, most children are nurtured in accordance with these traditions irrespective of any evidence-informed practices of quality childcare.

According to Egyptian traditions and culture, women carry the burden of childrearing as they are the main caregivers (Hassanin, 1999). Men tend to be the breadwinners of their families and women's work is perceived as an additional source of income (Farah, 2009). Although exceptions might arise in the case where a woman is divorced, widowed or her husband is ill or disabled. The majority of the research participants preferred to be the main caregiver for their children under the age of four. They cared most about their children's health, hygiene and development. They were more likely to trust a member of the extended family to look after their children under the age of four rather than a nursery:

Mother (Alla):	I do not think I will send my youngest child to the nursery before the age of four, like all his brothers.
Mother (Sabah):	The source of our household income is my husband's salary from his job and also his work in the evening in his family business.
Mother (Mentallah):	My husband could not accept anyone else outside the family to look after our child.
Practitioner 2:	Employed mothers use our nursery service more.
Policy Maker 2:	Parents in El-Arish, Sheikh Zwaïd and Beir El-Abeid are aware of the importance to kindergartens to prepare their children for schooling.
Policy maker 1 :	Private kindergartens and nurseries which work with 4 and 5 years old children concentrate on academic subjects .They want to attract more children as a business, and therefore they focus on teaching academic subject matters as literacy, numeracy and Quran. They reinforce parents'

desire for educational achievement for their children. Recently one private nursery principal complained that around 20 children left her nursery because their parents were not happy to focus more on fun activities rather than learning activities that prepare their children for school.

Policy maker 4: Many young children do not want to go to nurseries and start to cry when their parents take them there, simply because of the class layout and the focus on academic subjects rather than on games and fun activities. Even some staff might punish the kids if they do not pay attention, memorize what they say, or follow instructions. This could include physical punishment.

Availability of childcare venues was closely related to geographical location, in particular in remote and semi-remote areas. Availability was measured by the total number of childcare venues which a family could reasonably access. This included not only convenient geographical location but also the availability of care service for the right age range and time of the day.

For example, Nikhil as one of the centres in North Sinai with 11 villages attached had only one public language kindergarten. It is called a language kindergarten as they teach children English as well as Arabic language. The fees were expensive compared to other public kindergartens. According to the policy makers interviewed, fees were 1000 Egyptian pounds in addition to books fees and uniform per year. This kindergarten had 38 children in 2013 and 53 children in 2014. A similar situation existed in another remote centre called El-Hasana which had only one public nursery with only 12 children enrolled. It was the only nursery in all the 21 villages attached to this centre. The following examples from the interview data show how the research participants expressed their views concerning this contextual factor:

Mother (Amira): The nursery must be close to my home or work place and must be cheap to be able to send my children.

Mother (Fadia): I am dreaming of a low cost nursery near my home that can accept my child [She has a child with Down syndrome].

- Mother (Fatma): I did not find a childcare centre for my child that opens early. Public nurseries open late after 7 am and I must take the bus which takes all the workers to Sheikh Zwaïd early in the morning before 7 am.
- Mother (Alla): There are some small nurseries for babies in my area and the fees are affordable, but the quality of service is poor and this is my main concern.
- Mother (Shadia): I heard from my relatives that there are some nurseries with low fees available. But the problem is the transportation and the fees of the bus every day as they are quite far from my house.
- Practitioner 2: Public nurseries are mostly located in busy residential areas and near governmental offices.
- Practitioner 4: Distance plays an important role. Most of the kids in the nursery here are from the same area or their parents work nearby.
- Policy Maker 1: In villages and very remote areas, there is a few number of kids who go to kindergartens. Also no teachers are available and live in these areas, so it is not easy to run a place in daily basis there. In Hassana, there are no kindergartens opened yet and some villages in sheikh Zwaïd as well. Nikhel has only one governmental language kindergarten.
- Policy Maker (1, 2&4): They almost say the same which is summarized below): Because there are no teachers living in remote areas, we cannot open a kindergarten there. It is a must that a childcare provider lives in the same region or close by to be able to come and be available every working day. Nearly all childcare staff are females and they cannot live their without their families.

As the physical environment affected ECCE availability, so it also affected quality in different ways, including resources, materials, venues, and standards of service. Moreover, the harsh physical environment hindered inspectors from monitoring quality and service standards as some parts of the governorate were virtually inaccessible due to their remoteness, bad roads, and recently terroristic

attacks. This meant that childcare venues in those areas were often left isolated especially when roads become impassable during winter and floods. The following extract shows this:

Policy maker 2: A private transportation needs to be arranged for the inspector first because no public transport is available in these areas. Also the inspection visit will take long hours from the inspector as he has to travel long distance between centers as only a few inspectors are available. Even in El-Arish, the capital city, due to the shortage of inspectors only few visits can be made every year.

In addition, geographical remoteness and bad roads prevented private investment in the childcare sector in these areas, Childcare venues tended to be profitable in highly populous areas, but not so much in remote and semi-remote areas with their limited population. According to the documents, only El-Arish (the capital city of governorate) had private nurseries and kindergartens.

The nature of the neighborhood, particularly those with fewer childcare venues, public parks and safe places for children to play, influenced childcare provision. Inequalities and disparities in childcare availability and quality across communities of varying income levels manifested themselves clearly in North Sinai. The parents in the study who were living in disadvantaged neighborhoods complained that it affected their children:

Mother (Fadia): Children spend their time after school and in holidays playing outside in the street. We do not have a garden and no public park in the community nor a library. There is a high risk but I cannot do anything. I cannot force them to stay all day at home.

Practitioner 4: You can notice inequality in resources and facilities between nurseries. Poor communities are less in everything. I worked before in a kindergarten in an area with big houses and rich families and I can see the difference.

Policy Maker 1: We are planning to support and improve kindergartens in poor communities according to the quality assurance project implemented by the Ministry of Education, but we are waiting for fund.

In a similar vein, poor neighborhoods were unlikely to attract private investment, with private sector investment in childcare focused only in the capital city. This was primarily the case for two interrelated factors. Firstly, the private sector did not see a demand in those areas existing because family income levels were low and therefore parents were on the whole unable to afford private childcare. Secondly, employment patterns meant women in these neighborhoods were less likely to be in work and therefore less likely to need private childcare.

The following figure (5.2) summarizes the thematic network of the salient socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE theme.

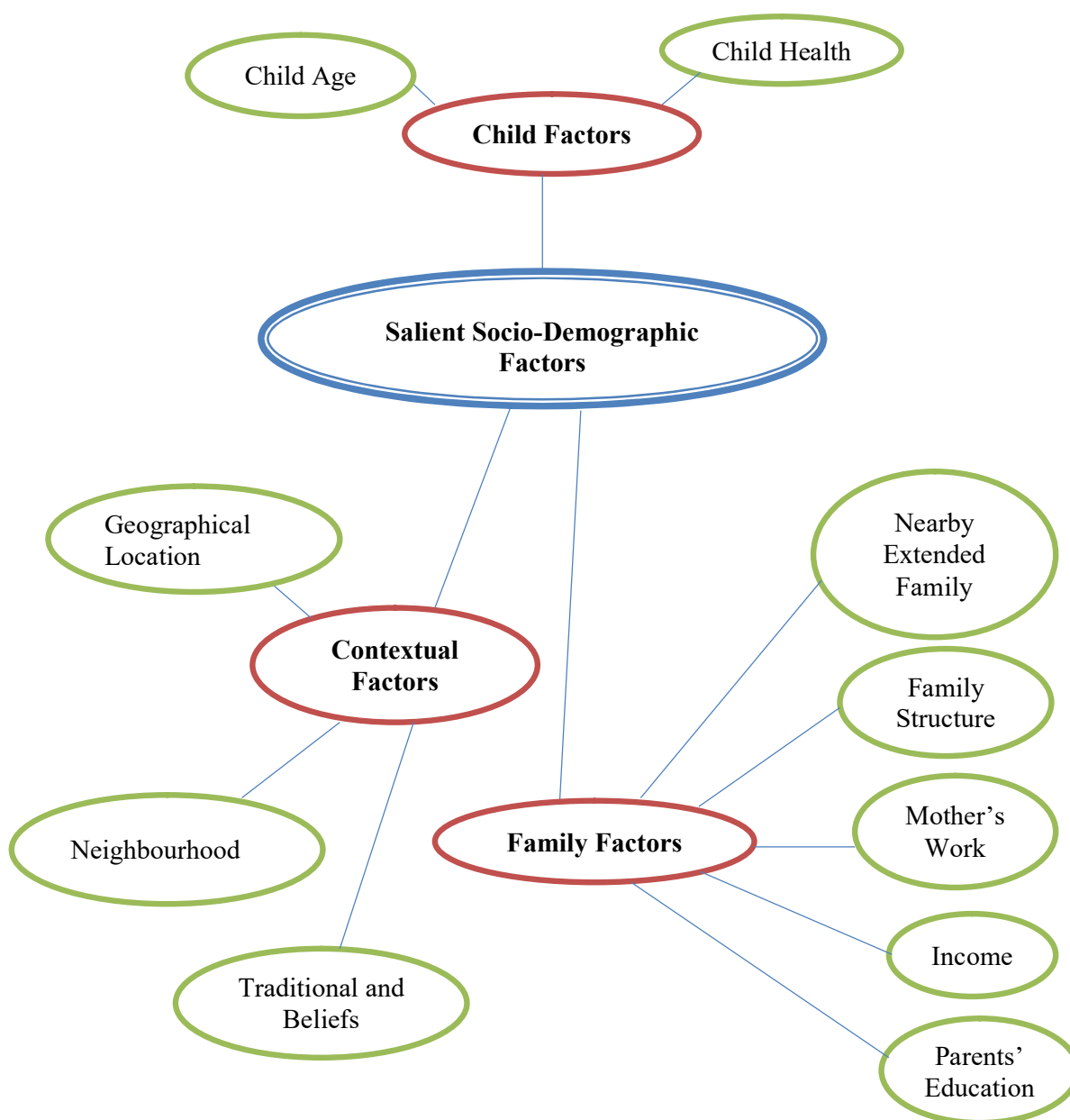


Figure 5.2 The thematic network of salient socio-demographic factors theme

5.5.2 ECCE Services

The global theme, ECCE services, refers to a range of care, educational and recreational services offered for young children on sessional, part-time, or full day bases. The thematic network of this global theme includes four organizing themes: care, education, recreation, and obstacles to those services.

- Care

Non-parental child care is the action of looking after a child through a childcare centre, babysitter, or other care providers. The act of caring and supervising young children is originally a parents' job. However, the last two decades have seen a surge in the number of women employed in different jobs in the Egyptian context (Nasr, 2010). Therefore, it becomes necessary for them to find a carer for their children while they are at work. Nurseries in the Egyptian context provide care tend to be organised in two classes; toddlers' class (from 3 months to 2 years) and young children's class (from 2 to 4 years).

According to Child Act No. 126 of 2008, a nursery is devoted to the care of children who are under the age of four years and is subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs in accordance with the articles of this law (Article 31). According to the care practitioners who participated in this study, nurseries have two main goals according to the child's age group. For toddlers under the age of two, the main aim is to provide care during mother's absence. However, toddlers' classes were very few and only available in the capital city of North Sinai (El- Arish) and the second biggest centre, Beir El-Abed. Whilst children from two to four years, the focus includes teaching academic content of literacy, numeracy and religion in addition to care. Aspects of health, hygiene, safety, social and cognitive development were not emphasized in the nursery program.

According to the sample of the study, there was a low demand for the classes of babies or young children under two years in North Sinai. The main reason was because parents favoured the family environment as the optimal setting for the provision of love, guidance, and nurturing for children at that age. Thus, they would

not trust anyone outside their family to look after their young children. There was a belief that home was a safe and clean place and any childcare centre would not offer that standard of quality and safety, as discussed in the first theme. It was also clear that all parent participants cared for their children more by tradition than by evidence-based practises. There are many childcare options, only those that were based on strong traditions of families caring of their children were believed to be sufficient. While the childcare practices that were evidence-based, were overlooked. More specifically, young or new parents depend on grandparents' advice concerning breastfeeding, nutrition and child rearing process, rather than seeking advice from professionals. An example was mentioned by one of the mothers that her mother told her not to lift and carry the child while he was crying and to leave him to calm down by himself as he will get used to carrying all the time. How sound is this advice? This was not checked with a professional as the mother added.

Some practitioners agreed with the parents that their nurseries offered poor services because of the limited resources, very low salary, high adult to child ratios and the routine which prevented them from offering more acceptable service standards. It was clear that most mothers had concerns about toddlers' care service and the mothers who did use it, was only because there were no other options. One previous practitioner in a public nursery confirmed that baby and young classes were dangerous and did not have any health or safety procedures. While policy makers saw that the service was acceptable and achieving the goal.

All the mothers interviewed with babies did not send them to a baby class. Four of the participants took their babies with them to their work places, while two mothers used to leave their babies with family members. The rest of the mothers preferred to stay at home and look after their children by themselves. The following examples from the interview data show how the research participants expressed their views concerning the care service provided in the nursery classes in North Sinai.

Practitioner 1:	The main aim of our nursery is holistic childhood development. We teach children good behaviours and life skills and also provide care for babies. We aim also to prepare 4 to 6 years old children for school.

- Practitioner 1: The baby class has 10 babies with one childcare provider.
- Practitioner 3: Mothers who do not have nearby family members to look after their children or able to take them to their work place are forced to place their children in a formal baby class.
- Practitioner 1: Sometimes we offer a meal but this depends on our financial budget. Government fund hardly covers teachers' wages. So, we accept donation from parents and local people who want to help us.
- Practitioner 1: The nursery is important in particular for poor kids, even with its current low quality.
- Policy maker 2: Baby classes are only for employed mothers.
- Practitioner 1: We work according to the Ministry of Social Solidarity guidelines.
- Mother (Entisar): I used to look after my 3 kids by myself and did not think to put them in a nursery until I started a new job. Two (daughters) are enrolled in a private nursery for only 2 days per week (my work days). I take my baby with me to work.
- Mother (Alaa): I do not think I am going to send my child before the age of four like all his brothers. Only I will send him to the kindergarten. It is hard to find a mother who sends her children before the age of four.
- Policy maker 2: We try to support children's physical, mental, emotional and social development. But we need parents' help and support. I think some parents need to attend some courses to raise their awareness of child development stages and children's illness etc. We have already organized some courses but, no one turned up.

Another major finding was that due to the limited number of public kindergartens and the increasing demand for preparing children from the age of 4 to 6 years for schooling, nurseries were used for mixed ages. Most of the nursery classes targeted 4 to 6 years old pre-schoolers, although they should accommodate

only children up to the age of four according to the law. Although a protocol of partnership between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Solidarity to encourage nursery attendance was commenced, but no one of policy makers had any information on how it will be implemented to increase nursery attendance:

Practitioner 1:	We have 4 classes; a class for babies, a class for 2-3 years children, a class for 3-4 years children, and the last one is for those from 4-6 years. We work according to the Ministry of Social Solidarity syllabus. It has 12 chapters, one each month.
Policy maker 1:	There is a new project run by the Ministry of Education to work in partnership with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to supervise nurseries which have children from 4 to 6 years old and to implement the Ministry of Education syllabus.
Policy maker 2:	Nurseries look after children from birth till the age of four under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Solidarity.
Policy maker 1:	Four years old in my opinion is the ideal age for children to join the kindergarten. This is because we tried to accept children at the age of three years and half and found that they were still not able to accommodate to the class atmosphere and also teachers face a lot of challenge to work with that age.

While a nursery provides a caring place for children (typically, two to three-years old), a kindergarten provides a school-like environment for children (usually between ages 4 and 6) before they begin their primary school. Accordingly, a kindergarten has a major teaching role, rather than that of caring which a nursery mostly focuses on.

- Education

Early childhood education (ECE) is the act of providing purposeful education for young children from infancy to the entry of primary school. In recent years, early childhood education has become an increasingly prevalent request for parents in spite of being not compulsory by law. Although a nursery might teach young

children knowledge, skills, and attitudes, it is the kindergarten which aims for school readiness through its educational curriculum (El-Kogali & Krafft, 2015).

Public kindergarten which run under the supervision of Ministry of Education, have affordable fees compared to the equivalent institutions in the private sector and accept children from age 4 and always have a long waiting list. Private kindergartens are more flexible about age of entrance. They accept children from age 3 years and 6 months but they are only located in El-Arish city. Governmental languages Kindergartens, despite their high fees, tend to always have a long waiting list. Some children celebrate their fifth birthday before gaining a place.

All kindergartens run under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Some primary schools give priority of enrolment to children who attend at least one year of kindergarten. Governmental primary language schools only accept children who attend 2 years in language kindergartens. The majority of the parents in the study believe that governmental language education is the best type of education available because of the low child to teacher ratio and still cheaper than private education. The following extracts support the views expressed above:

Mother (Alaa):	Language kindergartens are gaining good reputation as they provide quality education for children. I am going to enroll my younger child in a language kindergarten.
Policy maker 1:	Kindergartens only accept healthy and independent children who can depend on themselves. Public kindergartens do not admit disabled children or those younger than 4 years old. We tried before to accept children at the age of three and half but we discovered they did not settle well in the classroom.
Policy maker 4:	In Hasana, they did not have any kindergartens as well as in some villages in Sheikh Zwaid and Beir El-Abed.

The aim of kindergartens was to prepare children for primary school, and to take care of their physical and intellectual development. In accordance with the Child Act as well as Ministry of Education decrees, it is not compulsory for children under the

age of 6 to attend a kindergarten. Choosing a kindergarten depends on many factors including type, geographic location, availability and affordability. Kindergartens as mentioned in one of the quotes below work according to the Ministry of Education curriculum.

- Policy maker 1: Kindergartens aim at preparing 4 years old children for primary schooling, as well as developing their emotional, physical, intellectual, social and linguistic abilities.
- Policy maker 4: Kindergartens are the official education institutions for children aged four to six years. However, they are not compulsory.
- Practitioner 4: Children who start the primary school before being able to read and write will be delayed behind their counterparts who have learnt so in the kindergarten. It could be also a main reason for school drop off in the future.
- Practitioner 5: We implement the Ministry of Education curriculum.

Teachers in public kindergartens follow the Ministry of Education curriculum and rely heavily on the handbooks provided. Public nurseries work also according to a pre-specified curriculum from the Ministry of Social Solidarity. Private nurseries on the other hand can choose the content they teach, and nobody supervises their syllabi. The typical teaching materials included printed materials from commercial children books and Quran verses to recite. Teaching materials differed also among private nurseries according to fees paid. High fee nurseries can have a range of teaching and learning materials including audio/visual materials. Although expensive nurseries could be well equipped and resourced, they were very limited in number and only located centrally. The policy makers' views concerning the above aspects of ECCE in North Sinai are quoted below:

- Policy maker1: Only licensed kindergartens fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and implement its curriculum.

Policy maker 2: No governmental body approves private nurseries' curriculum, each nursery chooses the materials they want to use.

Policy maker 1: Nearly all governmental kindergartens now have some resources but still need more financial support to have enough resources.

The general characteristics of public kindergartens and nurseries in North Sinai were limited in space both indoor and outdoor, had fewer resources and commonly employed unqualified staff. Strong physical discipline, involving physical punishment ranging from slapping and beatings using sticks, was also practiced, as mentioned by two of the practitioners. Although they said they did not practise this themselves, but it was practised in their nurseries by other staff. A policy maker added that although the law prohibited any kind of physical punishment, they were still receiving some complaints from parents regarding a physical punishment practised against their children.

Some parents could not differentiate between the role of the kindergarten and the primary school. Therefore, they demanded more from the kindergarten as shown in the quotes below:

Policy maker 1: Parents' focus on the teaching role of kindergartens makes them to demand more from the kindergartens.

Policy maker 1: The main aim for parents is to teach their children reading and writing.

Policy maker 1: Private childcare centres (nurseries/Kindergarten) concentrate on academic progress more than learning through activities or play.

Merely to focus on the academic aspects would be to overlook the recreational role of the kindergarten as discussed below.

- Recreation

Recreation is difficult to separate from the general concept of play, which is usually the term for children's recreational activity. Through play children can develop different skills and abilities, in addition of being amused. Public nurseries and kindergartens suffered from limited funding which in turn affected the fun activities and recreational resources available for the children. There was a huge disparity in facilities among public and private childcare centres according to participants' views in this study.

Recreational activities were seen to be largely dependent on the amount of fees childcare centres charge. Poor neighbourhood childcare centres were unlikely to have even a garden available where children can play. In contrast, city centre neighbourhoods maintained higher level of facilities in the childcare centres including a garden, swimming pool as well as resource rooms with TV, computers, books, and crafts. However, childcare centres tended to follow parents' expectations and reduce fun and recreational activities to a minimum and focus more on teaching using textbooks. As the following quotes reveal:

Policy maker 4:	Recently around 20 children left a good kindergarten because parents' are not happy. They want more academic work.
Practitioner 5:	There is no clean garden suitable for kids to play and also the school playground is always busy as it is shared with primary school children.
Practitioner 3:	In my previous workplace, the garden was not safe and the toys were old and dangerous because most of them were broken.
Mother (Sabah):	We had only one scooter and all kids want to play with it. (Sabah was a previous worker in a non-governmental organization nursery). In addition, the playground was not safe and full of large pieces of rocks.
Policy maker 2:	Not sufficient parks, clubs, places for fun for young children in all North Sinai.

- Obstacles to Quality ECCE Services

Obstacles to quality ECCE services refer to aspects of ECCE which lack the quantity, in terms of number of resources, staff and classes, or quality, in terms of performance of administration, staff, and features of the environment, required. Children of low income families in deprived areas tend to attend nurseries which lag quantitatively and qualitatively behind those in the more advantaged ones (Waldfogel & Washbrook, 2010). Identifying the obstacles and areas of inadequacy in ECCE is of paramount importance to improve provision, in particular in semi-remote areas where inadequacy prevails broadly in the context of this study. More specifically, five obstacles to quality ECCE services were identified in the study as follows:

1. Unsatisfactory administration performance
2. Unsafe environment
3. Unqualified staff
4. Lack of resources
5. Insufficient and high density classes

1- Unsatisfactory Administration Performance

Unsatisfactory administration performance was one major obstacle. Analysis of the interview data with the selected parents revealed that the majority of the parents were unsatisfied with four main areas of administration performance:

- Availability of official source of ECCE information
- Admission and eligibility criteria
- Involving and communicating with parents
- Inspection and monitoring quality standards

The availability of official information about ECCE was a key issue for parents. Parents expressed their dissatisfaction as there were no bulletin boards, websites or office to seek information about ECCE in North Sinai. Most of the parents depended

on neighbours, relatives and some flyers about new private nurseries and schools opening in their area.

None of the participants mentioned any official bodies from which they could seek information except during children's vaccination campaigns, when they see TV advertisements, announcements in hospitals and schools. None of the mothers knew where to complain if things went wrong in a childcare centre or if they wanted to seek financial support. The following extracts from the data highlight these issues:

Mother (Entsar):	We depend on word of mouth from friends and family members about good nurseries. No formal source of information about available childcare places and their services and facilities.
Mother (Ala):	No source of information about the quality of childcare nurseries. We just listen to our relatives. Nowadays, we get information from Facebook as some contacts share photos and information of childcare places where their children are enrolled. So, I depend on these two sources only.
Practitioner 1:	In our nursery, we did not have printed guides but we provide verbal information for parents about our services and the facilities in the place.
Policy maker 1:	By law all nurseries must display license information. However, many private ones did not follow instructions because of the lack of inspection which is a result of the limited number of supervisors and logistic problems such as transportation.

Admission and eligibility criteria were another aspect of inadequacy of ECCE in North Sinai. All children were accepted in public kindergartens according to their age during the admission period from July to September, regardless of location. Private nurseries and kindergartens accepted children at any time if they have places. Children with identified special needs or medical grounds were not accepted in mainstream kindergartens, irrespective of age, because of the lack of facilities and staff. They were only accepted in special care centres if they were available. Some

private centres might accept those children depending on type of disability or medical condition.

- Mother (Fadai): The public kindergarten in my area refused to accept my disabled child. There is no specialized kindergarten for children with special needs close to my house.
- Policy maker 1: Kindergartens only accept healthy and independent children who can depend on themselves .They do not accept disabled children or those under 4 years old. We tried to accept children at the age of 3 years and half but they did not accommodate well with the class atmosphere.
- Policy maker 3: Public kindergartens are available in our local community, but most parents prefer to enroll their children in private kindergartens as they offer better service. However, children from a disadvantaged background have only to find a place in public kindergarten; otherwise they will play in the street till they are enrolled in the primary school.

Involving parents in the ECCE programs of their children in the context of the study was not significantly related to quality of ECCE at the centre and home levels. On the centre level, parents did not show any awareness of the importance of participating in parent-teacher meetings, and receiving and responding to written communications from ECCE staff. Parents did not have the time or awareness to coordinate with nursery events' schedule. For some parents, visiting the nursery was not perceived as an easy experience and could occur infrequently. This was made more challenging by the fact that the nurseries did not have a policy for involving parents or the community in children's care and education. Parents were not invited to volunteer on trips or as classroom assistants. Parental involvement at the home level was limited to homework that children took home at the end of every nursery day. This might include a number of activities that parents could do with their children at home. This kind of involvement also had its obstacles; including the amount of time involved in developing activities and the difficulty of coordinating parents' and teachers' schedules.

- Mother (Amina): The nursery only invites us for the end of year party.
- Mother (Mona): I did not hear about parents' meeting at my child's kindergarten before. The staff only contact me to ask for money for a trip, lunch snacks, or fees.
- Mother (Ala): As I send my son to a private nursery and not a public one, there is a follow-up notebook where the teacher writes notes for me to read. Those notes are mainly to do some assignments with my son.
- Mother (Abeer): I sometimes call my child's nursery teacher on her mobile phone if I want to tell her anything about my child's illness or her attainment.
- Policy maker 2: Parents usually avoid attending any parents meeting as most of them think they are for collecting donations.

Most of the parents participated in the study indicated that they informally discussed their children's performance and behaviour with the teachers when they dropped off or picked up their children. However, this was entirely dependent on each parent's initiative to approach the teacher and ask about his or her child. This way of communicating was considered by most parents and practitioners as the main channel of communication. An additional means of communication was through the phone. Only one practitioner said that her nursery organized an open day because it was a new nursery. No one mentioned anything concerning open days, sending newsletters, or drop-in sessions for parents.

Monitoring quality standards in ECCE was an absent routine in the Egyptian context in general and in semi-remote areas in particular due to many reasons, including lack of accountability and quality standards, low commitment of staff, logistic obstacles, centralized authority and inefficient work culture. In spite of the several calls for reform, ECCE is still run by bureaucracy and centralized authority. Setting standards for education in Egypt was a new initiative in the 2000s (Abdel-Moneim, 2015), however it neglected pre-school education. Although, Egypt has made significant progress towards achieving universal primary education to meet the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a net enrolment rate of 93.3% in the school year 2012/1013 in primary education (Ministry of Education, 2013). The pre-school education system is widely described as underdeveloped and increasingly an urban phenomenon (UNICEF, 2016). About 23.7% of children aged 4-5 are enrolled in pre-schools, which is far from the national goal of 60% enrolment.

Inspection is a mechanism used to check that services are carried out as they are supposed to be and to ensure that childcare centres are aware of their responsibilities to seek improvements (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler & Ouston, 2000). But lack of inspection has been adversely affecting quality in ECCE provision in the Egyptian context in general and in semi-remote areas in particular. Two inspection bodies carried out the inspection, Ministry of Education inspect the kindergartens that belong to them, whereas Ministry of Social Solitary inspect the nurseries under their supervision. The latter also inspect four other categories including: (1) foster homes for children with unknown parentage; (2) accommodations for far-from-home female students and employees, (3) orphanage homes, and (4) family-based care alternatives for orphans. This made it hard for them to monitor all these bodies and apply inspection standards. Nurseries were not inspected as planned because of the overlapping programmes which cover wide spectrum of bodies. Even if inspections schedules were prepared in advance, inspectors might be called to go for training or do something else. There was no fixed program to follow. The routine of writing reports after every inspection made these reports useless.

When asked about why this was so, policy makers gave a number of problems that affected their work and hence led to what was described as ‘limited’ or ‘inadequate’ inspection of pre-schools:

Policy maker (1):	Inspectors said that their job was hindered due to the lack of transportation. They also expressed concern that they were assigned too many roles which consume the time to carry out inspection tasks. For example, one inspector mentioned that on top of inspecting schools, they were expected to do administrative work, attend meetings as well as draw up next year plans.

Inadequate funding was also pointed out as one of the factors affecting inspection in the districts. The Inspectors said that no money was allocated for the purposes of inspecting ECCE centres. And because of this, they said that they hardly inspected nursery schools and that the only time that they got in contact with such centres was when they were seeking licences to allow them to operate.

Policy maker (1): Inspectors also face the problem of inaccessibility to some kindergartens which are located in unsafe areas in North Sinai.

Policy maker (4): Inspectors also face the problem of work overload as they inspect primary schools in addition to the kindergartens.

The quality of care and education remains a major challenge which adversely affects enrolment rates. Participants of the qualitative phase of the current study commented on this aspect as follows:

Practitioner 7: There is no monitoring of quality standards in our nursery from the Ministry of Social Solidarity. There are only inspectors for the management and financial issues.

Policy maker 2: It is one of the duties of the supervisor to visit nurseries, however due to the shortage of the number of supervisors; we did not visit them all every year.

Policy maker 1: Early childhood care and education is a new department in North Sinai and not all duties are performed. Still we need to build a cadre for that.

2- Unsafe Environment

The concept of a suitable safe play environment for child care was missing in semi-remote areas. Childcare providers, instead of spending the time with children in fun activities in free, less restricted and safe environments, spent most of their time redirecting children and limiting their movement. There was no space to accommodate all children, nor sufficient or appropriate toys to keep children interested in learning. From the researcher's local visits to nurseries and

kindergartens in North Sinai as a mother, school teacher, and lately as a researcher¹, she noticed that this environment is contributing to parents' less commitment to ECCE in formal settings. The mothers in the study gave different examples of the unsafe environment they experienced for their children as well as practitioners' comments on safety issues:

Mother (Ala):	The nursery gate always left opened although the nursery is in a main street.
Practitioner 3:	I cannot take kids outside the class because the garden is not safe and the ground is full of large concrete bricks and stones.
Practitioner 5:	We did not have a secure fence.
Mother (Mona):	The playground surface in the nursery is made of concrete, which means that if children fall down, they could severely hurt themselves.
Mother (Mentallah):	There is no safe place for babies in the whole region from my previous experience as I worked before in one of public nurseries and saw the baby class there. Babies left crying until they got tired and sleep. Only one childcare provider looks after 10 babies.
Mother (Ala):	I prefer not to send my child under the age of two to any nursery as there are no beds for children to sleep and also they easily get infections there.
Mother (Entisar):	There is no garden for children in the nursery to play and they always leave the main door open there and kids can go outside if unnoticed.
Mother (Iman):	There are no enough toys in public kindergartens or stationery items. My child only recites and repeats after the teacher to memorize the words they give him to learn.

¹ The researcher visited 2 public kindergartens, 3 public nurseries, and 2 private kindergartens when she was distributing the research survey.

Policy maker (1): Due to our limited budget, no much facilities, as computers or audio and video equipment, are available. We use the blackboard and printed books.

Practitioner (3): In our nursery, I try to show children how to handle toys and materials to be safe. But not everyone in the nursery does this.

Regarding health and safety regulations, the researcher could not find any documents about health and safety in childcare centres. There was just a yearly routine doctors' visit to governmental childcare nurseries and kindergartens, as well as visits from vaccination teams during the time of child vaccination. The location of kindergarten classes in primary schools as well as the nature of playgrounds and gardens were further areas of complaint:

Mother (Sabah): My child's class is located in the same building with other primary school classes. Kindergarten children share the same stairs and garden and other facilities in school with primary school pupils. Because of the number of children in school, I become afraid that my child could be easily pushed by other grown up children in school.

Practitioner 3: The playground is not suitable for the children as the ground is concrete, so we prefer not to take them outside the class.

Hygiene practices were also absent in most nurseries and kindergartens in north Sinai. Although boys and girls were provided with separate toilets, there was no soap for washing hands in all the public nurseries and kindergartens visited. In addition of being harmful of spreading microorganisms, it did not let children learn the correct hygiene practices of using the toilet independently and cleaning their hands with water and soap. Only private nurseries and kindergartens with fees had clean toilets with soap and a cleaner sitting outside the toilet to clean regularly.

Mother (Entisar): I moved my two daughters from a low fees private nursery to a more expensive one, as there was no proper cleaning for

the class and toilets as well as they do not provide soap or paper rollers for kids.

3- Unqualified Staff

Unqualified staff is widely noticeable in all public services in Egypt (Ibrahim, 2007). Many unqualified staff are being employed as teachers (Mina, 1981), where the majority of pre-school teachers are unqualified. More inadequately, unqualified staff could be hired to teach some of the area's most vulnerable children. On surveying around 100 childcare practitioners and asking about their qualifications, the researcher found that the ECCE staff in North Sinai ranged from no qualifications holders to postgraduate degree holders. The private sector were found to be more likely to recruit low qualified staff as jobs tended to be temporary with a low salary.

Policy maker 3: Working with young children is regarded as a low position job by the society and consequently low salary, therefore many graduates avoid applying for nursery jobs.

Practitioner 2: We receive low salary; only 150 pounds per month. So, administration does not look for qualifications or experience.

Policy maker 1: Governmental kindergartens recruit only university graduates irrespective of their major.

4- Lack of Resources

According to the sample of the study, a common feature of most of the nurseries and kindergartens in North Sinai was barren classrooms with no learning objects, toys, or learning materials. There were only chairs and tables squeezed together taking up almost all the classroom space. This lack of resources had possibly contributed to declining demand for pre-school enrolment in North Sinai. Some parents did not see a good reason why they should send their children to a nursery if one of them was not working. They believed that children would only sit in a boring atmosphere doing nothing. The main reason for the lack of learning resources in

preschools was being costly. Resources and materials were very expensive to buy. One practitioner said “we do not have extra fund to buy resources as they are very expensive. Whatever we can afford to buy or get from donations, nursery manager prefers to keep away from children in the storage room”.

Mother (Entisar): I visited a nursery close to my home but I was not happy with the classroom furniture, teaching and learning materials. There was neither a garden nor suitable toys for my kids’ age.

Practitioner 5: Work routine hinders us from buying materials for the nursery. We need to get three price quotes and send them to the education directorate to approve one quote and then allocate the necessary fund to buy the materials. This could take up to 6 months.

Practitioner 7: We have very limited budget, so we cannot buy new materials every year.

Practitioner 4: Nurseries in poor communities suffer from shortage in everything, when you compare them with those in more advantaged areas in the city.

Practitioner 1: Children feel bored as there are no enough toys and materials to draw and make shapes.

5- Insufficient and High Density Classes

Comparing the number of pre-school children in North Sinai and the number of classes show that there is an insufficient number of classes, in areas far from the urban centres. The teacher/child ratio was high due to a shortage in the number of classrooms and staff. In some villages, there were no pre-school classes at all as in the case of Hasana centre and its adjacent 21 villages, where some places have only limited number of classes. Most of the nurseries and kindergartens, visited by the researcher or described by the practitioners participated in study, were very crowded with an average of 35 children in each class.

Practitioner 4: I have more than 35 children in the class. I feel exhausted to work with all this number by myself.

Insufficient and high density classes as a quantitative aspect of ECCE impinged on the quality of service and teacher's performance; the greater the number of children in each classroom, the poorer the quality of care and education. Accordingly, there was a lack of one to one interaction inside the classroom and all activities were teacher centred.

Practitioner 3: I do not know the names of all children in the classroom as I have over 35 children in the class.

Policy maker1: We have to admit that all governmental kindergartens except, experimental language kindergartens, suffer from high teacher/child ratio as they are free or with low fees.

The following figure (5.3) summarizes the thematic network of the inadequacy in ECCE theme.

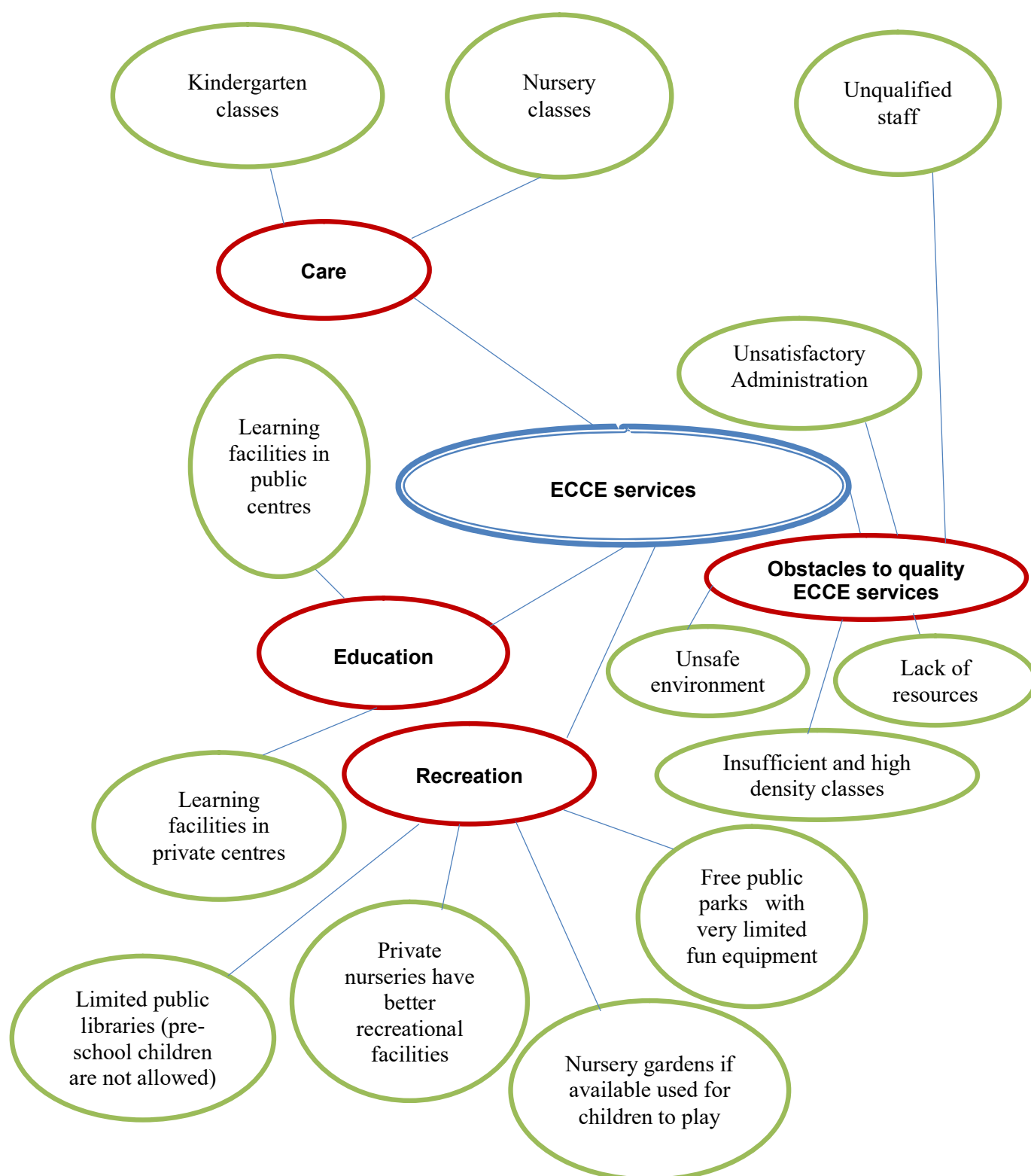


Figure 5.3 The thematic network of ECCE services theme

5.5.3 Parenting

Parenting is the process of caring for young children, supporting their development and meeting their needs (Purohit, 2005). Parenting is not limited to the biological parents, in spite of being the most common caretaker; it extends to involve grandparents, older siblings, or other members of the extended family (Brendtro & Larson, 2006). Some governmental agencies and NGOs may also play a role in parenting for orphaned children, such as Dar Al-Orman¹. In the current study, the focus of interest was on parenting activities parents undertake for their children in semi-remote areas. Parenting activities may vary from one parent to another, but parents usually do their best to care for their children. There is no perfection, but parents can be ‘good enough’ (Louis & Louis, 2015).

Good enough parenting refers to a number of prerequisites for childrearing that should be met. There is no doubt that most parents want to be good parents and in some cultures parents might exert themselves most energetically to be viewed as such by other members in their families and neighbourhood. Caring for one’s own children or using a formal childcare facility are not the same for many parents in the current study. Although they coexist in practice, they do not have the same moral significance in parents’ beliefs. The parenting theme in the current study can be discussed in terms of two organizing themes: (i) physical or domestic care, and (ii) social, intellectual, and emotional care. These forms of care were found to be the central components of being a ‘good enough’ parent in the study.

- Domestic/ Physical Care

Child-rearing practices and home environment can be argued to be important elements in shaping children’s lives. Women in Egypt, as in many other countries, carry the main burden of domestic and childrearing tasks (Al-Khudairi, 2000). All mothers in this study stated that they carried out a wide range of domestic duties and tasks to care for their children. Moreover, seven out of thirteen mothers indicated that they were also engaged in the labour market besides providing physical care for their children. The basic physical care routines for young children included feeding,

¹ An Egyptian charity registered in 1993 to provide care for orphans. www.dar-alorman.com

cleaning, dressing, and changing. The other routines were shopping and cooking. Providing physical care routines in the domestic sphere was the activity that consumed the bulk of the mothers' time and energy. The responsibilities of mothers as expressed by the research sample were:

Mother (Amina): The main and most important thing in my life is looking after my family. I also continue my education to find a good job.

Mother (Shadia): I am busy all day with my kids feeding, cleaning and changing clothes for them.

Some mothers also had to look after their parents, members of their extended family or parents in law:

Mother (Sabah): I look after my father as well by cleaning his house and cooking food for him.

Whether the mothers were housewives or employed, the research participants devoted vast amounts of their time in providing physical care in the domestic sphere. All participants stated that they carried out a long list of daily household tasks such as: preparing meals multiple times daily (breakfast –lunch –dinner), shopping, doing laundry, and cleaning the house and keeping it tidy:

Mother (Amina): I try to do all my responsibilities towards my family and make sure my study does not affect my commitment towards my husband and children. I prepare everything at home at night time such as preparing food and doing the general house work in order to be free next day for 3 to 4 hours to go and attend my lectures. I manage well to do so except when I could not find someone to look after my two kids.

Mother (Abeer): I spend all my day in the house work. In the morning, I prepare breakfast and lunch snacks for my children before they go to school. After that I look after my baby and during her nap, I go quickly to prepare lunch for the family and do general cleaning. My children go to school by themselves; even my preschool child goes and returns from his kindergarten by

himself as his kindergarten is in the same school with his siblings.

Mother (Amira): I walk up early morning and prepare breakfast for the whole family and walk up my children. My older children can wear school clothes by themselves. I help only my pre-school kids to brush their teeth and dress up. We leave all home by 7 am. I drop kids in the nursery and continue to my work and afternoon doing same thing and old kids go home by themselves. Quickly I prepare lunch and clean after lunch. After a short break, I start helping my kids in their homework till dinner time. After kids go to bed, I prepare for the next day, cleaning and tidy up. Also I start to prepare lunch for next day to save time in the morning.

Mother (Samira): I prepare lunch for all the family besides I look after my youngest kid and sometimes leaves him with his granny and go for shopping. In the evening I help in school homework as much as I can and prepare dinner for children first to go to bed early.

It was the women who opt to spend a greater proportion of their time at home than men. They do so through reduced or flexible working hours and the take-up of parental leave. This was because in spite of the increased participation of women in paid work, men typically do not take on an equal share of the burden of housework and childcare in the Egyptian context. If the woman works or studies, then the responsibilities were doubled, described as a dual burden of domestic and paid work (Al-Khudairi, 2000). In some other contexts, childcare pressure is reduced on women by welfare policies and supply of affordable ECCE services (Craig & Mullan, 2011). This is not the case in North Sinai, where most ECCE services are in the private sector where effective capping of fees is difficult to impose, besides being limited and of low quality.

The role of fathers did not change if the women were employed or not. Indeed, it was found that none of the participants mentioned anything about their husbands' participation in any of domestic or child rearing activities. Only one mother (Amina)

said that sometimes if her husband was available at home he would supervise their two kids. For example:

Mother (Sabah): My child likes to play with his friend (child name). He was not used to stay with his dad while I am away.

Mother (Abeer): One of my preschool boys is in a private kindergarten near my home; just in walking distance less than 10 minutes. I am the only adult who watches children; even my husband never stays at home alone with the children. If I want to go to any place I must take all of them or leave them with one of my family members.

- Social, Intellectual, and Emotional Care

Although domestic duties and physical care of their young children take most of the mother's time commitment, social, intellectual, and emotional care occurred concurrently. Most of the families believed that care was the duty of the family. As more than one generation usually live in family units in Egypt (Sherif-Trask, 2006), social care is the responsibility of the whole family. Social care aims at providing personal care, protection and comfort for the child.

According to the mothers who participated in this study, parents of high SES were able to provide a wider range of experiences, parental actions, social interactions, and resources that many low SES families were not be able to offer exacerbated by limited government subsidies. They stated that there were no public clubs or libraries in their local areas. Many of the children tended to play in front of their houses, which was felt to be unsafe, except children whose families had a farm or a house with a garden.

Mother (Abeer): During the summer holiday and each Friday, we visit my husband's family and spend all day in their farm. My children like to play there with other children in the family in the farm. At home, they play inside home and sometimes outside in the street in front of the building.

- Mother (Samira): We have a big house and a garden and my children play most of the time in the garden.
- Mother (Abeer): We did not know any clubs or libraries for kids in the area. We have a computer and toys at home.
- Mother (Amina): My husband buys toys and games for our children to play at home. No clubs are available to teach children swimming, sports nor a library in the whole region.
- Mother (Fadia): I feel sorry and sad when children need important things (such as clothes, toys, etc.) and no enough money to buy them. Children spent their time after school and in holidays playing outside in the street.

Intellectual care was seen to be about helping the children to develop their thinking and how they make sense of their world. Through providing basic toys and real objects, the mothers in the study indicated that they helped their children to experience the objects in the environment and use their senses. As children acquired more language, they tended to use interrogatives to ask for specific information, such as "What's that?", "Who's that?", "Where?", and "Why?" Although this happened with almost all children, parents' education and work nature in the context of the study played a role in limiting the interaction between parents and their children. The fathers were not involved in their children's care and education as they were the main breadwinner and busy at work most of the time. While mothers did their best to assist their young children in their kindergarten's home activities whenever they got time and to the best of their knowledge. Parents can positively nurture their children's intellect by answering their questions, providing them with resources and encouraging them to think and speak by asking open questions for them to answer.

- Mother (Alla): My children are happy and doing well at school .I want to see them happy always. Six days a week, I spend 2-3 hours with young kids help them in homework and watch the older kids to concentrate on their work and stop playing.

Mother (Mona): It is important to be at home full-time to be able to monitor kids' homework. I hope to be able to continue my education because I do not have enough education and I want better opportunities for my Children. I spend several hours each day helping my children with their school work.

Mother (Shadia): I am worried about my children because I did not have enough time to help them in their lessons and also I did not continue my education so a lot of subjects and new languages were hard for me and my income did not help me to give them private tutoring lessons.

Physical, social, and intellectual care takes place in an atmosphere of comfort and love from the side of parents. Emotional care is hard to separate from the other types of care. Children need to be surrounded with love, as it is one of the most important needs for a happy childhood. Paying full attention with active listening to children is another aspect of emotional care. These emotional aspects of care lead children into a happy state of mind and consequently happy life.

Some of the mothers in my research had to take their children with them wherever they go because they do not have anyone else to care for them. This becomes a challenge physically, mentally, and emotionally, in particular without a car or by using bad public transportation.

Mother (Fadia): I leave my disabled son with my mother and my sister to go for shopping once a week for couple of hours. I cannot not leave him longer because no one is able to communicate with him and my mum is old. So I do shopping quickly and sometimes forget some things and forced to leave my child at home alone and go to bring the missed stuff later. I know this is dangerous and hurts me and hurts my child too but I cannot take him with me because he is disabled and heavy to carry him and his buggy needs a taxi .I could not afford a taxi every time.

Some parents also pointed out that their children ask them to buy for them some stuff, clothes, shoes and kinds of food as their classmates in the kindergarten. It was heart breaking when they could not afford to get the stuff they like and children emotionally got affected and felt inferior than their classmates. Therefore, parents

must give due importance to their children's emotional needs. They are as important as the essential needs for food, shelter, clothing and medical care. Young children benefit greatly when they feel that their needs are being met in a consistent, respectful, and responsive manner (Essa, 2011).

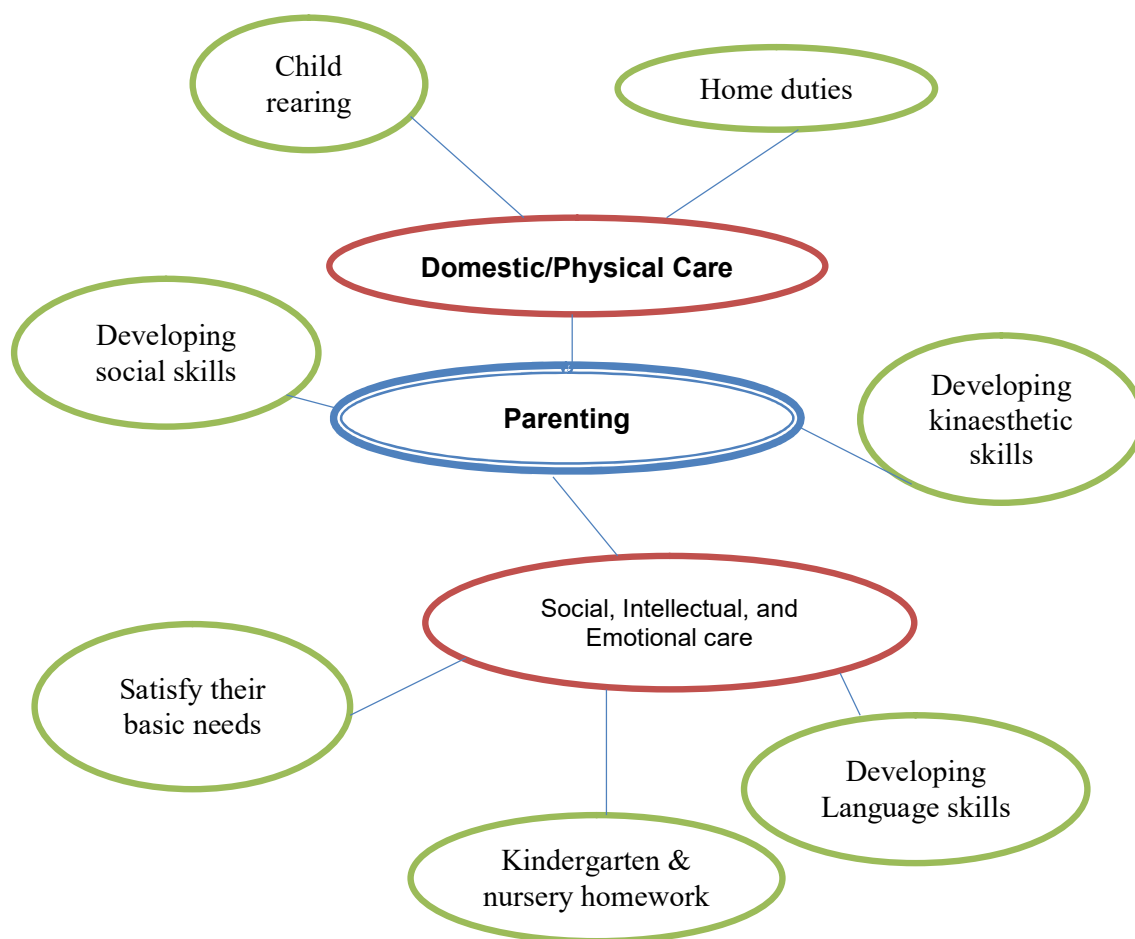


Figure 5.4 The thematic network of parenting theme

5.5.4 Policy Response

Determining the appropriate policy response to childcare demographics is a challenging task that is further complicated at the implementation stage in the Egyptian context, where policy actions may be inefficacious or procrastinated as indicated by most of the research sample. Furthermore, “Policy responses to economic, social, and demographic change vary with the political and cultural traditions of the country and whether or not trends are perceived as problems” (Baker, 1995, p.41). ECCE policy responses often take one or more of the following forms; suggested strategies, programs, interventions, regulatory frameworks, legislations, financial commitment and subsidies. In the current study, the broad theme policy response is exemplified in three organizing sub-themes: budget and subsidies, program, and legislations.

- Budget and Subsidies

In the interviews with policy makers a substantial part of ECCE budget in Egypt was indicated to be allocated for staff salaries, whereas the rest was for subsidies. Subsidies normally cover part of the monthly fees, purchase of books, materials, and snacks for children of public nurseries and kindergarten. The analysis of the qualitative data collected from the interviews and policy documents revealed some features of ECCE budget and subsidies in the context of semi-remote areas in Egypt. These include: (i) inadequate funding for ECCE, (ii) limited financial support for families, and (iii) affordable public ECCE.

The government expenditure on education in general and ECCE in particular, as expressed as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), can be described as limited and inadequate (OECD, 2002). Due to the lack of data and statistics concerning the funding of ECCE in North Sinai, the researcher used the statistics of the general education budget of the country to portray the status of this budget when it comes to the governorate level. The expenditure on education in the 2014/2015 budget for all stages was about 94.4 billion Egyptian pounds (12% of GDP). Wages and salaries took up about 85% of the total sector expenditures, while the rest was

spent on education services for about 19 million (18 million of them were in pre-university education) (Ministry of Finance, 2016). Although the government has shown an increasing interest in the last few years in expanding formal education to include pre-school education, there was still no clear allocated fund for ECCE provision to improve its quality, availability, and accessibility. Any surplus from the budget for primary education was to be reallocated to ECCE as expressed by one policy maker in the current study. Inadequate funding affected the way ECCE departments, nurseries, and kindergartens carried out their roles in ECCE provision. The following extracts support this argument:

Policy maker 1:	ECCE receives limited support from the government. And because we are financially constrained, it is difficult to improve the quality of ECCE or increase enrolment. All of the aggregate expenditure goes to staff salaries.
Practitioner 1:	We receive 12000 pounds per year from the Ministry of Social Solidarity, hardly covering the staff salary. In addition, we receive donations from parents and people in the community (money, food, furniture, clothes... etc.). We need more resources and fund to be able to offer good service and fun environment for our kids.
Policy maker 1:	The government's top priority now is to provide free universal basic education for school age children, as a result of the economic status and low public fund. So, ECCE responsibility was passed mainly onto the private sector which aims at profit making.
Policy maker 4:	The governor of North Sinai informed us that the priority is for primary schools concerning distributing the fund and what is left over will be reallocated for ECCE provision.

Inadequate state funding challenges some families' capacity to meet the financial requirements of sending their children to nurseries. A family's socio-economic status beyond preferences for non-subsidized centre care predicted utilization only to a limited extent. This finding is highlighted in the following interview quotes:

- Mother (Amira): The priority in choosing the nursery for my children is fees. I want a place with low fees and also I do not want to pay for transportation (the nursery bus). I found some good nurseries but the fees are very high.
- Mother (Shadia): Our budget is limited and we cannot afford to enroll my 4 years old son and his younger brother in a private centre. So, only my older child will go to a public kindergarten next year as we could not enroll him this year as it was too late.

Most of the policymakers and ECCE practitioners in the current study argued that a family's socio-economic status played an important role in ECCE enrolment. The low and average family's socio-economic status along with the limited state fund affected ECCE in a number of ways. Some parents chose not to send their children to pre-school programs because it required them to pay fees. Some parents chose not to send their children to nurseries as they were located far away from their accommodation and it required daily transportation. Some children started their primary schooling older than their counterparts (older than 6 years), as they had to wait until a place in a public kindergarten or non-profit private centre was available. Priority of admission to primary school classes was given to children who attended kindergarten classes in the same school and this created admission problem for some parents. Many children received only one year in preschool programs. On contrary, high income families had more choices for their children, either in private nurseries or governmental language nurseries. Their children could start KG1 earlier at the age of three and half and therefore, they could start primary school at the age of five and half.

One of the main aspects of child support is the accessibility of affordable public childcare. Lack of affordable childcare leads to one of the parents, in particular mothers, foregoing work or placing their children with relatives or in unsafe care arrangements. The majority of the research participants indicated that public childcare was affordable, however it was of low quality and limited in number, especially in remote areas. This was contrary to their indication of the high fees of

private childcare centres which were generally better in quality. The following remarks are from the research participants:

- Policy maker 1: The fees of public kindergarten are very low; 90-100 pounds per year. We provide also books, snacks (milk and biscuits) free.
- Practitioner 4: Fees here are affordable for all parents in the community.
- Policy maker 2: Nurseries, which run under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Solidarity, are funded by the government. So, their fees are very low; they are only 12 pounds a month. Also some non-governmental organizations receive financial support from the Ministry of Social Solidarity to offer childcare services with affordable fees.
- Mother (Fatma): I could not find a public childcare place for my child that opens early. Public nurseries open after 7 am and I must take the bus which takes all the workers to Sheikh Zwaïd early in the morning before 7 am. Private nurseries are really expensive and I cannot afford to enroll my child in one of them.
- Mother (Entisar): I take my baby with me to work as there is no public nursery for babies near me and private ones are costly.
- Mother (Amira): The two top priorities for me when choosing a nursery for my kids are location and fees. I want a low fees nursery and also I do not want to pay for transport. I found some good nurseries around my area but they are costly and I cannot afford their fees.

Affordable public childcare was only available on a limited scale in North Sinai in general and Nikhil and Hasana in particular. Nikhil with its 11 villages had only one public language kindergarten, but its fees (1400 Egyptian pounds per year, Ministry of Education, Decree 285, 2014) were expensive compared to other types of public kindergarten. A similar situation existed in El-Hasana centre, which had only one public nursery. It was the only nursery in all the 21 villages attached to this centre. A surprising result was the number of children in this nursery: only 12 child. The reason, as one policy maker said, was poverty:

Policy maker 1: The majority of the parents in this place do not have enough awareness of the importance of education in general, in addition to the poverty ratio is high. So they did not pay even the very low fees.

Although the government subsidized public childcare through charging very low fees, parents who could not use it for any reason, they were not subsidized if they used private childcare. However, these subsidies did not reach poor children from disadvantage backgrounds. Although government subsidised enrolment to the extent that it was free to attend public kindergartens and nurseries, some poor families still felt that they need further cash subsidies to pay for uniform, snacks, books, pens, and transportation. Thus income continued to place a limit factor on the likelihood of children's attendance at ECCE.

Policy makers and some practitioners who participated in the study confirmed that parents of the children from disadvantage backgrounds could apply for financial support. However, none of the mothers who participated in the interviews knew anything about this kind of support and therefore had not previously applied for it. In general, it was felt that there was no information about family support available for parents in nurseries or kindergartens. Further, bureaucracy and 'red tape' could prevent parents from negotiating the application process and claiming any subsidies.

Policy maker 2: Financial support is only for widows and lone mothers and in fact it is very low.

Practitioner 1: Poor kids take books free. We only ask them to do a social status enquiry.

Policy maker 2: Mothers in need can receive financial support (Loan) from the Ministry of Social Solidarity.

Practitioner 5: Fees are low, and sometimes poor kids do not pay. So, all families from different economic status can enroll their kids. But some kids did not attend daily for many reasons.

Mother (Fadia): One of my relatives told me that because I am a widow, my children have the right for subsidies and told me to go to the social solidarity office. When I went there too many documents needed from my late husband's work and from me to confirm the income. Each document also needs to be signed from several government bodies. I have started the paper work and did not continue as it took almost 6 months and up till now it is not finished yet.

The childcare centres in North Sinai which accepted toddlers were mostly nurseries run by non-government organizations with low service standards as described by some mothers in the study. However, private nurseries which accepted children younger than 2 years old were very few and tended to have high fees.

Policy maker 2: We have public nurseries which accept children from birth to help working mothers.

Policy maker 1: Nurseries which accept babies are located in El- Arish, Rafah, Beir -Elabeid. No baby classes are in Sheikh Zwaïd, Hasana and Nekhel. Parents in those places depend on their families or themselves. Also most of mothers in those area work from home in hand-made products.

Policy maker 3: Most of the private nurseries accept kids who can depend on themselves to go to toilet and eat their food by themselves. So, they have to be over 2 years old.

Practitioner 1: The baby class is only for working mothers by law.

Mother (Entisar): I visited a nursery close to my house but I was not happy with the standard of service. The good ones are far away from my home.

- ECCE Program

The ECCE program in Egypt can be described in terms of admission criteria, goals, standards and curriculum. According to the admission rules of the academic year 2014/2015, children were eligible for a kindergarten place if they were aged over 4 years and if there were extra places available, admission age could be lowered to children aged 3 years 6 months on the 1st of October of the year that they would be starting. Applications were only accepted from June to July each year. However, age in private childcare centers was more flexible. Children could be allocated a place at any time during the year. According to the documents the researcher got on admission for public kindergartens in North Sinai for the year 2014/2015, the oldest child accepted in KG1 was 5 years and 8 months and 22 days, while the youngest child accepted at the same class was 4 years and 11 months and 3 days (Education Directorate-North Sinai, 2014).

According to the National Centre for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), the national goal of ECCE at the time of this study was to increase the enrollment rate. However, about 23.7% of children aged 4-5 were enrolled in pre-schools, which was far from the national goal of 60% enrollment (NCERD, 2015).

Policy maker 1: The Ministry of Education strategy aims at increasing enrollment rate, so pre-primary education can become part of compulsory basic education. However, this will take some time due to unavailability of enough fund, classes, training courses, specialist staff and supervisors.

The reasons for the low enrollment rates was expressed by policy makers and practitioners participated in the interviews as :(1) lack of funding to open new KG classes and appoint qualified teachers, (2) lack of awareness of the importance of pre-school education among parents in rural and remote areas, (3) the exaggeration of fees at some private nurseries and schools.

ECCE enrollment rate is not strongly related with the goal of enrollment. The main aim of kindergartens is the comprehensive development of the children and to extend the basic learning experiences provided at home and to prepare children for

schooling. Therefore, enrollment rate in kindergartens was higher than that in the nurseries.

Policy maker 3: Parents require kindergartens to focus on developing their children's literacy and numeracy skills. Therefore, the enrollment rate is higher in kindergartens in comparison with nurseries which are mainly for children to play and practice expressive arts.

Child Act (Art. 57): Kindergartens aim at helping pre-school children to achieve comprehensive intellectual, physical, motor, emotional, social and moral development (Child Act, 2008).

The nursery aims, according to the Child Act Art.32, are to engage children in playing, art and recreational activities appropriate to their age, as well as to develop their social skills and general abilities. In spite of the fact that both kindergartens and nurseries have mutual aims, they are intended to be segregated with care being the primary focus of the nursery and education being that of the kindergarten. However, policy makers and practitioners in the interviews referred to the pressure they felt from parents who did not differentiate between the two institutions and wanted their children to learn the academic subject matter as early and as intensively as possible regardless of the type of institution attended.

Egypt has launched a national strategic plan for reforming pre-university education since 2007. This plan aims to use performance and content standards through reforming curricula (Ministry of Education, 2011). However, this plan does not set standards for pre-school education nor develop a national curriculum for this stage. Only Ministry of Education kindergartens have a national syllabus which has to be followed by all school kindergartens. NGO' affiliated nurseries follow a general guideline from the Ministry of Social Solidarity:

Practitioner 1: We work according to the Ministry of Social Solidarity's plan. We have a book called guidelines which has 12 chapters which sets the themes, topics and steps of teaching.

Meanwhile, private nurseries follow their own syllabus and use commercial printed materials. The syllabus in the kindergartens or the nurseries was described to be academically oriented and subject centred (covering subjects like Arabic, English, numeracy, religion). Children were being taught things beyond their age.

Practitioner 1: Children were mainly taught to read and write and recite Quran.

Practitioner 3: Parents bring their children to kindergartens for the purpose of school readings, so they expect them to do academic stuff. Many children are taught an academic content which is far beyond their age.

The implementation of the nursery program depends on the staff and the inadequacy of staff qualification was discussed earlier in this chapter. Staff training is therefore considered an important factor for the successful implementation of the ECCE program. Practitioners and service providers expressed their need to be trained in many areas of child care and development.

Policy maker 1: Training public kindergarten staff is to be done through the Professional Academy for teacher in Cairo which is responsible for training Ministry of Education teachers because we do not have enough fund to organize training in the department for early childhood education.

Policy maker 1: About 50% of the female teachers in the kindergartens were trained.

Policy Maker 3: Staff need more training as most of them are not specialized in early childhood education.

Practitioner 5: I attended a training course last year. I have been trained on using discipline techniques suitable for young learners, such as Time out Chair/ Naughty Chair (a chair with a sad face sticker). Also, I have been introduced with some activities to be used inside the classroom. But there are no regular training courses.

Practitioner 3: I worked for a month and half as a class teacher (kids from age 2 and half till 4 years, plus two special needs kids aged 6 and 7. I did not have any experience or trained to work with mixed age children or to deal with children with special needs. I could not continue and I left the job. Now I work in a private nursery as a secretary.

There were three national training centres run by the Ministry of Education for its staff. One was in Mubarak Educational City at Giza, another one was in Nasr City in Cairo, and a third one was in Port Said.

Practitioner 4: Training has to be in the Ministry of Education centres. This makes training difficult and not appealing for many staff, as they need to travel long distance to attend training for few hours.

Nurseries, public or private, do not usually have criteria for their job positions and might accept applicants irrespective of qualifications. Public nurseries and low fee private nurseries accepted low qualified staff and as a result the salary tended to be low.

Policymaker 2: Because all the available jobs are temporary and not permanent in addition to the low salary, nursery posts are not attractive for university graduates.

Practitioner 1: We receive a low salary, only 150 pounds a month.

Policy Maker 4: Unqualified staff employed in ECCE centres are not interested in training courses and they did not apply any of the new techniques they learn.

Policy maker 4: The only regular meetings held at the Education Directorate in El-Arish are those discussing administrative issues for pre-school education.

- Legislations

The Egyptian constitution of 2014 underlined the principles of family and child's rights and protection (ARE, 2014). A number of articles focus directly on the family, women's rights, and child rights, as well as the role of national councils caring for the family and the child. For instance:

Article 10: *Family as the basis of society*

Family is the basis of society and is based on religion, morality, and patriotism. The state protects its cohesion and stability, and the consolidation of its values.

Article 11: *The place of women, motherhood and childhood*

The state commits to ensure women empowerment to reconcile the duties of a woman toward her family and her work requirements. The state ensures care and protection and care for motherhood and childhood, and for breadwinning, and elderly women, and women most in need.

Article 80: *Rights of the child*

- Rights of children guaranteed

A child is considered to be anyone who has not reached 18 years of age. Children have the right to be named and possess identification papers, have access to free compulsory vaccinations, health and family care or an alternative, basic nutrition, safe shelter, religious education, and emotional and cognitive development.

- State's support for children

The state guarantees the rights of children who have disabilities, and ensures their rehabilitation and incorporation into society.

- Limits in the employment of children

The state shall care for children and protect them from all forms of violence, abuse, mistreatment and commercial and sexual exploitation.

Every child is entitled to early education in a childhood centre until the age of six. It is prohibited to employ children before they reach the age of having completed their primary education, and it is prohibited to employ them in jobs that expose them to risk.

Article 214: *National Councils*

The law specifies independent national councils including the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and the National Council for Persons with Disability. The law sets out their structures, mandates, and guarantees for the independence and neutrality of their members. They have the right to report to the public authorities any violations pertaining to their fields of work. These councils have legal personalities and enjoy technical, financial, and administrative independence. They are to be consulted with regards to draft laws and regulations pertaining to their affairs and fields of work.

Moreover, the Egyptian government has shown commitment and ratified international charters in the field of childcare, education and protection, such as the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Detrick, 1999) and Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 2006). There are various government bodies in charge of childcare, education and protection as mentioned in Article 214 of the constitution. The main stakeholders are National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), Ministry of Social Solidarity, and Ministry of Education. Some other stakeholders include Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, and non-governmental organizations.

The NCCM is claimed to be the top government authority entrusted with planning childhood and motherhood programs, proposing policies, and cooperating with other organizations at the national and international levels. However, its role, as seen by a policy maker in this study, is limited to compiling information and statistics:

Policy maker 2: Although NCCM is intended to propose policies to respond to ECCE problems, its role is limited, as I see, to following up aid agreements offered by international donors such as the UNICEF and USAID and preparing reports of ratifying protocols and charters. We only receive copies of these reports from the NCCM.

The Ministry of Education is the main responsible for pre-school education of children aged 4 to 6 years. Although it is not yet part of compulsory education, the Ministry of Education is working towards including this stage as part of basic education. According to Child Act No. 12 for the year 1996 and its moderated version No. 126 for the year 2008,

Article (55): Kindergarten education is an educational system to achieve the comprehensive development of pre-school children and prepare them for schooling.

Kindergartens are under the administrative and technical supervision of the Ministry of Education which sets their programs, admission and building requirements. The ministerial decree No. 335 of 2008 specifies the requirements for non-governmental organizations to open kindergarten classes for children aged 4 to 6 years. While the ministerial decree No. 138 of 2007 determines the admission procedures to private kindergartens and the possibility of accepting children from the age of three years and half if they have places available.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity is also responsible for enforcing Child Law No. 126/2008. According to this law:

Article (31): A nursery is a suitable place devoted to the care of children under the age of 4 years old. Nurseries are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Social Solidarity/Affairs according to the articles of this law.

In addition, the Ministry runs also care institutions for orphans, abandoned children and those at risk. Although the law limits the role of nurseries to accommodate children from birth up to 4 years old, many of them accept children up to school age.

This is mainly due to the shortage of kindergartens in some areas, however there was no policy response to regulate this action.

Policy maker 2: We try to accommodate all children irrespective of age if there are no other options available for parents.

The Ministry of Manpower has also a role in childcare through enforcing the Labour Law No. 12 of 2003. According to this law, a woman who has worked for at least 10 months in a job is entitled for a maternity leave of 90 days (Article. 91). However, she may only take a maternity leave twice during her employment service. The law also enforces the right of the mother to take two periods of rest daily, at least 30 minutes each, for breastfeeding her child until he/she becomes 24 months old (Article 93). The mother may choose to combine both rest periods in one break. In addition to maternity leave, a woman who works in a facility that employs more than 50 people has the right to take a job leave without pay for up to 2 years to care for her child (Article 94). She may take such leave no more than twice during her employment service. How this law affected the mothers in the study can be discerned from the following extracts:

Mother (Alla): I finished all my maternity leaves because I have 5 children. So I chose to work in a school outside the city to work only 2-3 days a week to find time to look after my children. It is a full time job but I only go 2 or 3 times a week.

Mother (Mentallah): I work in a private place for a year on a temporary contract and did not have any maternity leave, otherwise I will lose my job. I took my baby with me to my work place. I put him beside me on the chair in his carrycot. In my work, they understand the situation and don not mind me bring my child.

If the woman works temporarily, or for less than 10 months, or in many private places, this legislation is not applicable. Therefore, this law is more for those who are working in governmental jobs. Concerning paternity leave, no relevant law or articles were found. According to the same law, Art. 96, in a facility that employs at

least 100 women in the same location, the employer must establish a nursery or utilize an outside nursery to care for the employees' children.

In regard to child health, the Ministry of Health focuses on child vaccinations for epidemic diseases. During vaccination campaigns, they visit public kindergartens and schools, while it is the responsibility of parents to take their children in private care centers to the nearest vaccination or health center. Although all education institutions in Egypt can request a visiting doctor from the Ministry of Health, none of the mothers heard about a doctor visited their children's nursery or kindergarten. Furthermore, it was a matter of annual routine for some practitioners:

Practitioner 6: There is an annual visit from a Ministry of Health doctor to our nursery. He did not do any medical check for the children. He was just speaking with staff about the importance of healthy food and hygiene practices.

There are many registered non-governmental organizations in Egypt working in the field of childhood. However, due to the nature of remote areas and lack of fund, NGOs have a limited effect on childcare. As other civil society associations, they have been typically controlled by bureaucratic regulations restricting their services and access to fund. Notwithstanding, Law No. 84 of 2002 exempt civil society organisations from contract registration and tax, fund raising was found by many as inhibitive:

Practitioner (6): We have a very limited budget and we cannot accept any grants or donations unless approved by the Ministry of Social Solidarity which might take up to 6 months due to bureaucracy.

Notwithstanding the legislations mentioned above, children in Egypt are generally considered "recipients of benefits rather than rights holders. Advocacy for a rights based approach remains necessary to change the opinions and behaviours of family members and neighbours that strongly influence decision-making in the family"(Save the Children Sweden, 2011, p.17). The following figure (5.5) summarizes the global theme 'policy response' and three organizing themes derived from it.

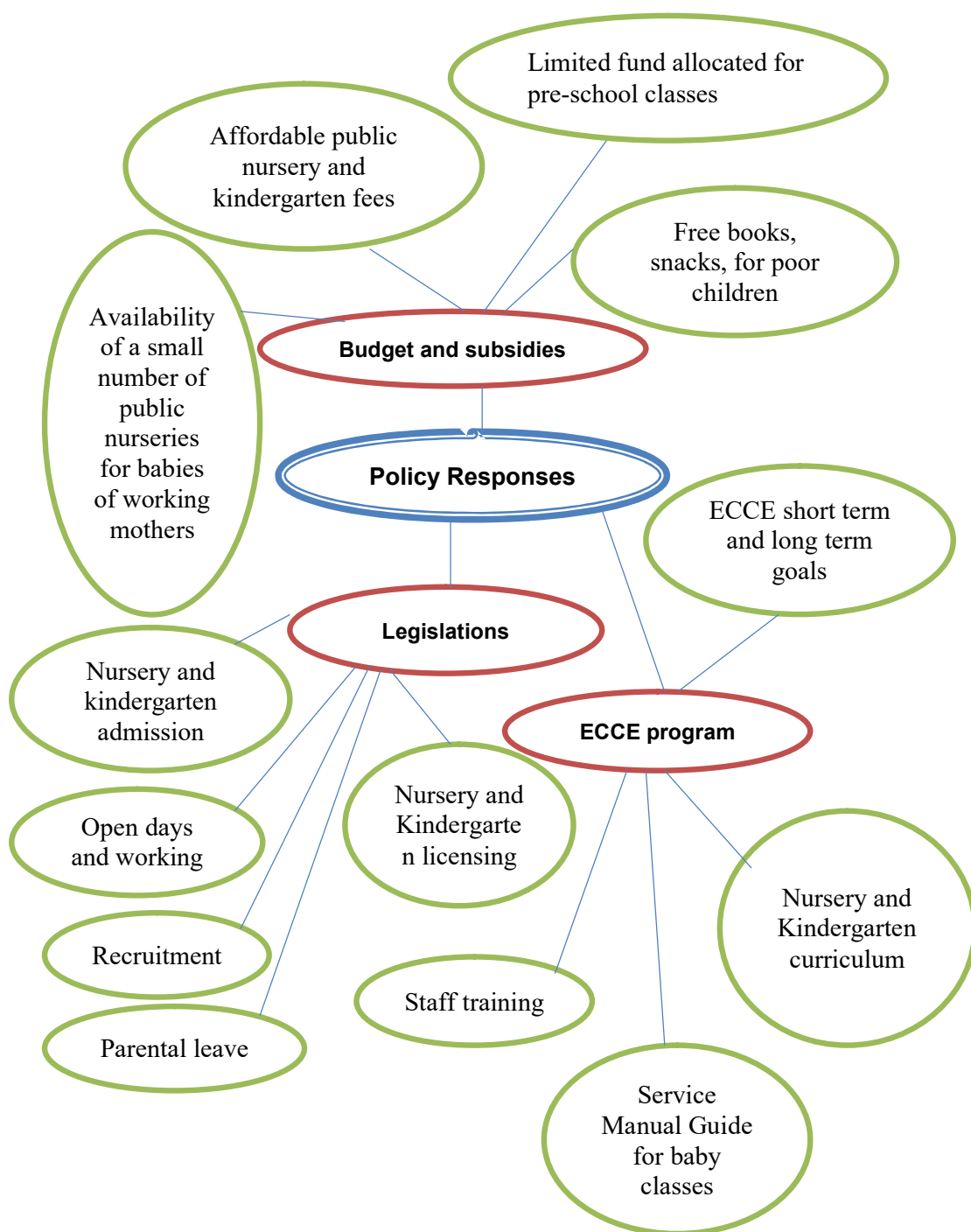


Figure 5.5 The thematic network of policy responses theme

5.6 Summary

This chapter had two main aims to: (1) describe the qualitative data collection process, and (2) apply the thematic analysis method and construct thematic networks for the qualitative data. Applying a three stages model of thematic analysis produced five interrelated and interconnected global themes. These included salient socio-demographic factors, ECCE services, parenting, and policy response themes. The thematic analysis was an explicit and effective method to unify what was collected from the documents analysis and communicated through the interview data. Ultimately, the thematic analysis was able to compose a cohesive story of ECCE provision in North Sinai as a semi-remote governorate in Egypt. More specifically, the qualitative findings of this phase highlighted the importance role of grandparents as key child care providers. This role is reinforced with parents' education, employment and income factors, as well as upbringing, culture and traditions. The available ECCE services in North Sinai limited parents' ECCE choices, in particular with the existing family welfare policies. The next chapter will focus on combining the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative phases to provide complete answers to the research questions.

Chapter Six

Discussion of the Results

Chapter Six

Discussion of the Results

Three ways of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches (i.e., integrating methodologies; confirming, refuting, enriching and explaining findings of one approach with those of the other; and merging the findings of both into one set of policy recommendations) (Carvalho & White, 1997, p.16).

6.1 Introduction

This study included two phases of data collection, each of which complemented and cooperated with each other sequentially, addressed interrelated questions, and produced different data. The first phase was quantitative in nature and the data was collected via a survey method. Based on the survey results, a number of interviews were conducted and analysed qualitatively along with policy document analysis. This sequential explanatory mixed methods design allowed the findings from the second qualitative phase to further explain and interpret the statistical results from the first quantitative phase. The purpose of this chapter is to merge the findings of both phases and discuss in details.

This chapter reviews first the research questions and how they were evolved from the initial question during the course of the research. Then, guided by each question, the findings that emerged from the quantitative and qualitative phases are integrated, presented and compared with those of previous research. A discussion of the findings was next provided from a systems perspective ((Bronfenbrenner, 1979) featuring the results within an ecological model. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the main points discussed.

6.2 Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Results

Integrating qualitative and quantitative results is the core of mixed methods research (Creswell, 2009). The synthesis method used to integrate the qualitative and quantitative results in this study was an interpretive qualitative method which

identifies prevalent themes in the quantitative and qualitative data (Hannes & Lockwood, 2011). Guided by the research questions and supported by citing related literature, the integrated results are interpreted and discussed.

The process of integrating the results starts with the evolution of the research questions. As discussed in Chapter One, the initial research questions were driven by the researcher's experience as a mother and primary school teacher in North Sinai as a semi-remote area. The researcher was interested in the impact of socio-demographic factors on childcare provision. The initial research question was "how do socio-demographic factors affect ECCE provision in North Sinai as a semi-remote area in Egypt?" After a year of study in the PhD program, the researcher chose to focus on three variables; socio-demographic factors, childcare activities mothers undertake and existing childcare policy.

The scope of the study was kept broad rather than selecting a single socio-demographic factor for examining. This scope loosely translated into two main points of focus; the first was the holistic influence of socio-demographic factors on ECCE provision in terms of the different activities and arrangements parents chose for their children in semi-remote areas as a result of those factors, and secondly the perspectives of the stakeholders (policy makers, parents, and practitioners) in relation to the existing ECCE policies how far they were effective in responding to the socio-demographic factors. Therefore, I expanded my original research question into two exploratory questions:

1. What were the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in North Sinai as a semi-remote area in Egypt?
2. What were the perspectives of the stakeholders (policy makers, parents, and practitioners) in relation to the existing ECCE policy and its response to the socio-demographic factors?

6.3 Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting ECCE Provision in Semi-Remote Areas

Socio-demographic factors that affect children in general and their care in particular are not new; they are recurrent exogenous and endogenous factors (Barman & Talukdar, 2014). More specifically, they are child, family, and context related factors. Not all the factors are equally important in every context. Some are indeed very influential but others might not make much of a difference in childcare provision. The socio-demographic factors identified in the current study have been tested for correlation with ECCE arrangements and activities.

- Socio-Demographics Factors Pertinent to the Child

In analysing the socio-demographics of semi-remote areas in North Sinai at the child level, parents' ECCE decisions were constrained by child's age and health. In terms of child's age, 48% of the parents surveyed thought that the ideal age to send their children to formal childcare was 3 years and 43% indicated 4 years. While only 6.8 % said they would send their children to a childcare centre at the age of 1 or 2 years. These results corresponded well with those obtained from the practitioners. More than 70% of nurseries and kindergartens accept children from the age of three, while few nurseries accept children from two years and very few from under 2 years. Most of the practitioners participated in the study worked with 4 to 6 years old children to prepare them for schooling. This coincided with parents' perspective concerning the purpose of early care and education setting. They expressed that they sent their children to a childcare setting mainly for the purpose of school readiness. In this respect, High's (2008) perspective might consolidate this view that "all of a child's early experiences, whether at home, in child care, or in other preschool settings, are educational.... Children who enter school ready to learn are expected to achieve more academically" (p.e1008).

The interview analysis provided additional insight into the importance of child age in using formal childcare. All parent participants had the belief that home is the best place for the child before the age of three. Traditions in semi remote areas played a vital role in forming such belief and consequently childcare decisions. As

expressed by most participants, children were nurtured more by traditions than by evidence-informed practices. Whilst women carry the burden of childrearing as they are the main caregivers, non-maternal childcare increases as children grow up until school age, a trend that coincides with cultural beliefs and traditions in the Egyptian context.

Similarly, children's age has been shown to be one of the most predictive factors in childcare use in the literature (Sylva, Stein, Leach, Barnes & Malmberg, 2007). Pungello and Kurtz-Costes (1999) confirmed that younger children were more likely to experience family day care while older children were more likely to experience centre care. Child age was found to be significant in studies of poor families as well. A study of childcare selection among mothers participating in California's early welfare-to-work program showed that just 23% of mothers with very young children, aged 0-2 years, selected centre care, compared to 47% of mothers with children aged 3-5 (Meyers & Heintze, 1999). Meyers, Heintze and Wolf (2002) indicated in another study that the use of care varies with the age of the child and mothers' activities.

The current study agrees also with Early and Burchinal's (2001) study which found that the age of a child can dictate the type of care selected. Most families prefer their young children to be placed in informal, home-based childcare settings or with a relative or a friend. Thus, the belief in " 'the home as haven' may mediate the relationship between the child's age and mother's care preferences" (Pungello and Kurtz-Costes, 1999, p. 77). As discussed above, mothers of infants were more likely to prefer family care over centre care, while mothers of preschool children were more likely to prefer centre care over family care. These findings were consistent also with those of Miller, Votruba-Drzal, and Coley (2013) that child age predicted centre-care enrolment with the increase of age. More specifically, an increase in age of one month increased the probability of being in centre-based preschool over parent care or home care by 5%. So therefore the semi-remote Egyptian context, while having some unique geographic and cultural characteristics, fitted well with the worldwide previously ECCE trends observed.

A child's health, in particular disability, was a strong predictor of family care. The practitioners in this study indicated nurseries did not offer any specific activities for disabled children and in many cases did not accept them at all. Over 63% of the parents in the study indicated that a child's health condition did not impact on the type of care they chose for them, as they did not have the luxury of choice. They expressed their frustration by saying "no one thinks there are disabled children, starting from streets/ roads you did not find any access to wheelchairs". "Those children cannot be accepted in public kindergartens which are only for healthy kids by law", one policy maker said.

Both public nurseries and private nurseries, as parents and practitioners indicated, did not have facilities for disabled or children with special needs. Also staff did not receive any training for specialist intervention programs. Policy makers maintained that disabled children had their own centres, but there was only one in the whole governorate of North Sinai. It is important here to refer to the fact that because of marriage traditions in north Sinai, marriage between close biological kin (Holy, 1989), and in addition to low awareness of the importance of pre-marriage medical checks, there are many children born with disabilities and health problems. Unfortunately, there is no official information on consanguineous marriage and its outcomes in the Egyptian context (Hagrass, 2005), as in many other populous countries as argued by Bittles (2001). As a result of this phenomenon and other factors of malnutrition of pregnant women and high fertility rates (Hagrass, 2005), the number of disabled children and those with health problems in rural and remote areas was higher than urban cities in Egypt. El Banna (1989) claimed that consanguineous marriage could account for as high as 67% of the impairments among children. The director of the only non-governmental organisation centre in North Sinai said that they had a long waiting list although their services were not free and they charged high fees. Also they worked in this centre in the evening as a specialist place to support children with special needs as speech delay, autism etc.

Relatively fewer studies, and none in the Egyptian context, were found to be devoted to examining the influence of disability on ECCE provision. The study of Parish, Cloud, Huh, and Henning (2005), based on the National Survey of America's

Families (NSAF), found that children's disability status was not a predictor of childcare with family structure being a stronger predictor. Important differences were found in the use and quality of childcare which were not in favour of disabled children and resulted in deleterious developmental outcomes for those children. Childcare provision for disabled children is complicated by limited options, as many childcare centres do not accept children with disabilities, even in western countries. In one study, just 34% of childcare centres from a representative sample in a State in US enrolled one or more children with disabilities (Buysse et al., 1999). In another study, nearly one-third of children in another State in the US denied access to childcare centres was due to their disability (Cutler & Gilkerson, 2002). These findings suggest the need for more childcare subsidies directed at families with disabled children, in particular those with low-income, so they can afford to enrol their children in childcare centres without any child being left behind.

The results relevant to child age and health factors and the choice of childcare arrangement refer to the process of decision making in the family. According to Weber (2011), families do not make decisions independent from their environment. They are part of a dynamic context shaped by a wide variety of factors. This can be supported by Casper and Smith's (2004) model of preferences-and-constraints which explains childcare choices. Parents make childcare choices subject to their constraints (family income, employment, and culture) and preferences (choosing a type of child care with certain characteristics to suit their children's age and health and suitable in terms of time and location).

The findings of this study showed that the choice of self-care or family care over other alternatives was linked to a number of factors, including the availability of one of the parents, the child's age and level maturity, family structure, income, unavailability of quality or affordable centre care, and neighbourhood context. The results also suggested that the parents who participated in this study used different decision-making processes and choices depending on their children's age as shown in the figure below (Figure 6.1).

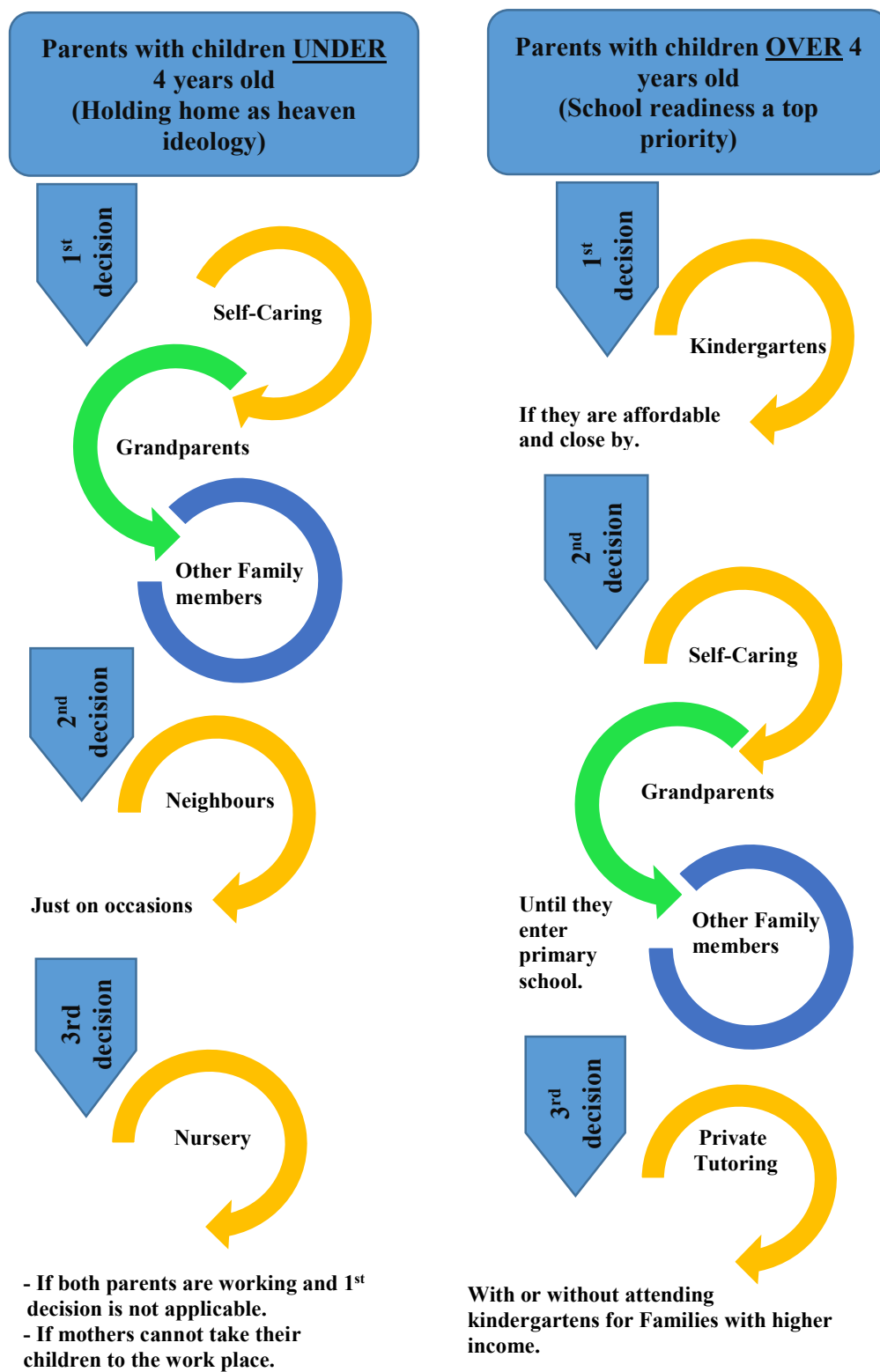


Figure 6.1 ECCE decision making process and choices

The figure above shows two processes with multiple choices for children under 4 years old and those over 4 years old. These processes of decision making were also constrained by factors of poverty, high proportion of parents working far away from home, lack of public transport, and shortage of childcare centres. The survey analysis showed that Egyptian society still has a relatively big family size in terms of the number of children as 45% of the sample had three children or more. In addition, 66.4% of the families had two adults at home, typically the mother and father. However, 12% had three adults and a slightly similar 11.2% had four adults. Big family size (number of children and number of adults) encourages the family to rely more on informal childcare. The younger the child the more likely the child is to be in the care of the parents or a family member.

- Socio-Demographics Factors Pertinent to the Family

Living with or nearby extended family decreased the likelihood of mothers using childcare centres. Most of the mothers in the study depended on their family members (grandparents, or relatives) as a primary care provider for a young child even if the child used to go to a childcare centre. It was confirmed that this has traditionally been an expectation of grandparents or relatives to be main care providers. Many of the participant mothers indicated that they had used multiple childcare arrangements to accommodate certain constraints such as employment schedules and socio-economic status issues of low income and high childcare fees. Multiple childcare arrangements were used also as formal care tended to not be available on a full time basis or every day. All public formal child care centres in North Sinai run part time from 8 am till 2 pm, only 5 days a week and are closed during the three months of the summer holiday (end of May until mid-September).

In addition, the poor quality of service, especially in centres for babies, made many parents reluctant to send their young children to baby classes. None of the mothers who were living with extended family mentioned that they used any formal childcare for children before kindergarten age. Also, families who had more than one pre-school child were unlikely to send them to nurseries before the age of four. The policymakers, practitioners and mothers stated that the financial burdens parents could face concerning fees, uniform, food, snacks, and books, as well as the

difficulties in drop off and pick up which takes time and might need transportation all increased when there was more young children in the same family.

The findings discussed above coincide with those of other studies such as, Nyland, Zeng, Nyland and Tran (2009). Nyland et al. indicated that many grandparents play the role of carers of pre-school children and this role increasingly becomes an economic and social phenomenon, in particular in societies as in china. Similar to the Egyptian culture, in the Chinese culture grandparents are necessary and widely used in providing childcare. Grandparents' care of young children in the Chinese context is a necessity and tradition. In China, there was a significant increase in involvement of grandparents in caregiving as the child reached preschool age. Zachrisson, Jansson, and Nærde (2013) found also that children in two parent families started formal care later compared to children in one-parent families. Also, Huston, Chang, and Gennetian (2002) pointed out that the family structure variable in which an adult at home predicted home care by one of the family members. Parish, Cloud, Huh, and Henning (2005) indicated that family structure is a more important predictor of childcare than children's disability.

According to the study of Lowe and Weisner (2004), 80% of the New Hope Ethnographic Study (NHES) households were headed by a single-mother, and most did not have another adult to share their childcare responsibilities. Those who did not work cared for their children themselves or relied on both kith and kin and formal support resources to sustain themselves. Those employed were likely to use centre care if a second parent or relative did not live in the home. This corresponds to the results of the study of Markowitz, Ryan, Johnson (2014) showed also that household structure could shape the association between subsidy use and care arrangement. For example, living with extended family members decreased the likelihood of mothers using subsidies for informal care versus centre-based care.

Socio-Economic status (SES) is determined by factors such as 'education', 'employment', and 'income'. They were collectively seen to affect ECCE provision in this study. Chi-square tests confirmed that the type of childcare arrangement, including private nursery, public nursery, babysitter, grandparents or relatives providing care, staying with older siblings, neighbour's care, parental care, was

significantly associated with mother and father's education level, mother and father's work, and household income. This was then developed in the qualitative findings that also indicated that family's SES was linked with inequalities in the use of quality care. While high SES played the most important role for children in receiving good quality ECCE and sending them early to childcare centres, families with low SES opted to overlook the importance of sending children early to child care centres, save money for their children's later schooling, and keep children at home or rely on family care if possible.

This discussion will start with parents' education as it is usually comes prior to employment and income in life's chronology. Families with poor education level (high school or less) were found to be less likely to send their children to formal childcare than those who had intermediate or higher education degree (43.1% vs. 63.5%). Also 60% of the care practitioners viewed that parents' education level affected to a great extent or very great extent child enrolment in formal childcare. 27% considered it affected parents' decision to some extent. However, 10% and 3% respectively viewed education level as having a minimal effect on child enrolment in formal childcare.

Employment was another SES factor which reflected the use of certain childcare arrangements. The majority of the participant mothers in the study 66.4% were unemployed. Therefore, self-care was the primary choice. Unemployed mothers returned this to the belief that it was not worth getting up early and walking their children to spend couple of hours at an ECCE facility. Some mothers found it easier and better to keep young children at home in particular those under the kindergarten age. Some other mothers were working from home, so they preferred to keep their children with them. In the study's sample, all families had at least one parent working as there was no single case where both parents were not in employment. Care practitioners considered the impact of employment status of parents on formal childcare enrollment as influential to a great extent by 33% of the sample and very great extent by 36% of the sample. Also, a sizable portion of the sample 42% and 21% viewed work nature as having a great effect and very great effect respectively

on childcare enrollment in favour of professions based on professional degrees such doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and architects.

Household income was viewed by more than half of the sample as a pivotal factor in childcare enrolment, in particular when there are only small or no subsidies. Children in low-income households, in particular those under 4 years old, were unlikely to be enrolled in formal childcare and they usually did less well than their better-off peers, simply because they were poorer. According to the statistics in the current study, 61.6% of parents mentioned that the cost of centre care was the main reason behind their choice. Results also showed that expensive fees, as seen by 48.8% of parents, were one of the main childcare obstacles. While parents' education level, employment, and other parental factors have a direct impact on children's ECCE, high income improves wider aspects of a child's well-being and increasingly makes families to base their childcare decisions on preferences of quality and child enrichment.

The qualitative results provided additional insight into the family related factors affecting ECCE in semi-remote areas. Policy makers confirmed that because of the lack of governmental commitment and provision of childcare, ECCE in many parts of Egypt remained a family matter which was greatly influenced by familial factors. Egyptian society still has low levels of social security (Kashef, 2016). Parents, with the highest level of education who could thereby secure an assured future free of poverty for their children, were able to take up good quality ECCE provision for their children irrespective of location, geographical and demographic factors. According to the qualitative findings, parents with lower levels of education had unstable employment status with longer working hours and lower wages, and thus their children were unable to have access to good quality ECCE services and in many cases to any ECCE services irrespective of quality. Cost and availability were the two most prominent obstacles for parents making decisions about whether and when to send their children to centre care. As a family matter as pushed by the government actions, each family had to arrange their childcare according to their SES and family structure.

As a result, private childcare centres which mainly aim for profit making controlled the scene of ECCE provision. This was in addition to the distinguished ECCE services which were provided by the state institutions but were not free and very limited in number. However, there was still a great demand for the state institutions which provide distinguished service as their fees were still cheaper than the private ones. This demand can be noticed clearly from the results of admission for the state distinguished kindergartens which were published as an advertisement on the web site of one of the main newspapers in Egypt: 'YOUM 7'. Parents can log on a portal service for the Ministry of Education in Giza using their national insurance number to check if their children were accepted in this governorate or to find alternative places. The same high demand was in North Sinai, however as a semi-remote governorate there was no such service as publishing the admission results on the Ministry of Education website.

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www.Youm7.com

Figure 6.2 Youm 7 Newspaper advertisement for the admission results to the state distinguished kindergartens in Giza (published 25 July 2016, www.youm7.com)

The above quantitative and qualitative findings were consistent with research on access to ECCE and its constraints. One of the main findings of the research is that children were not accessing ECCE programs because of their families' demographic or social factors. This finding corresponds with the findings of Yunus and Dahlan (2013), which found that child-rearing practices and home environment were significant factors in shaping children's lives. More specifically, the socioeconomic status (SES) of the family plays an important role in influencing parenting practices and children's development. Parents of high SES were able to provide a wider range of experiences, material resources, parental actions, and social interactions that many low SES children might not have access to. Also these findings coincided with one of few studies in the Egyptian context, which indicated that family background, in terms of wealth and parents' education, was skewed more toward ECCE in favour of the highest wealth level families. Youth coming from wealthy economic backgrounds were more than four times more likely to have attended ECCE programs than those from poorer economic backgrounds (Krafft, 2011). Moreover, Iram and Butt (2004) pointed out that a mother's education level was a significant determinant of child-care quality. Also Aly & Grabowski, (1990) found that mother's degree of education, in particular in rural areas, is a significant factor in reducing child mortality.

- Socio-Demographics Factors Pertinent to the Context

Along with the child and family related factors, contextual factors were found to significantly contribute to ECCE provision in the current study. They included cultural beliefs and traditions, neighbourhood, and geographical location. Cultural and attitude differences in child rearing beliefs and parenting behaviours can explain to some extent the diversity in the ECCE experiences of children from one area to another in North Sinai. A fundamental goal of sending young children to child care centres was school readiness as believed by 72% of the parents. The optimal age to place one's child in a formal childcare setting as expressed by most of the parents surveyed was from 3 years and 4 years. The results obtained from practitioners' survey analysis triangulated that finding as 45% of the practitioners worked with children from 4 to 6 years old. While 27% of the sample were working in nurseries

with mixed classes from 2 years up to 6 years. 18% were employed in private nurseries which accept children from 3 months up to school age. Finally, 10% of the sample were working in infant nurseries from 3 months up to 2 years.

Interviews provided additional insight into parents' beliefs. Beliefs about the optimal age to start formal childcare were strongly associated with parents' beliefs about security and desirability of care. Only one mother accepted that she would place her child in a toddlers' class if it was available and affordable in her local area. The rest of 12 mothers preferred to take their babies to their work place rather than to leave them in a public nursery.

Another cultural belief was that mothers prioritized family over work. This coincided with the 'home as haven ideology' as argued by Rapp and Lioyd (1989). The interviews analysis indicated that the mothers saw their main role as inside the house as their community historically viewed them outside the workforce. They carried the burden of childrearing and were the main caregivers. Men were mostly the breadwinners of their families and women's work was just an additional source of income and could not be relied on. The only exception to this was the case of single parents. Therefore, with the dominance of the male breadwinner model in Egypt, married women's work was limited. This meant the mothers, the research participants, were the main caregivers for their children under the age of four. They believed that their young children should be in their own care or other family members, similarly as the findings from Pungello and Kurtz-Costes (1999), Bernstein (2012), and Kim and Fram (2009). Similar findings can be seen in the study by Huston, Chang, and Gennetian (2002) which revealed that family structure, human capital and resources, personal beliefs and social circumstances, predicted the amount and type of child care used.

Public funding as indicated by policymakers was very limited and affected the availability of enough centres and the quality of service. This in turn nourished the tradition of child rearing belief as being mainly a home based one. They added that the society beliefs made parents did not see any benefits of sending their children to any ECCE program too early. The importance of attitudes and beliefs in determining type of care use was investigated in the study of Huston, Chang, and Gennetian

(2002). The study found that mothers' attitudes and beliefs concerning women's work and family were related to both the likelihood of using care and the type of care used. Mothers whose beliefs and attitudes tended to prioritize family over work used less childcare in general and less centre-based care in particular.

Neighbourhoods are social communities with certain characteristics. One of the influential characteristics of neighbourhood in North Sinai is poverty. The survey results found neighbourhood poverty significantly contributed to low enrollment and use of ECCE programs. According to the quantitative results, 27%, 31% and 24% of the practitioners pointed out that there was an effect of poverty on childcare enrolment which varies from some extent to a very great extent respectively. Children in poor communities had less chance in childcare enrolment.

The qualitative analysis also showed how neighbourhood poverty affected children in their early years and caused inequalities in the use of quality childcare settings. Children from poor communities were less likely to use formal child care, although their fees were relatively low. The policy makers and practitioners attributed this to the tradition of children helping their family in their private businesses from an early age as well as a low awareness of the importance of formal early care and education. Childcare hidden fees such as, books, uniform, and snacks, also contributed to less use of ECCE in disadvantaged communities. Poor resources of nurseries and kindergartens in disadvantaged areas exacerbated this by not attracting children, who would then prefer playing in the street or staying at home rather than joining these programs.

These findings were consistent with those of Habibov's (2015) study, which found a relationship between family SES, neighbourhood factors and accessibility and quality of ECCE services. The study of Harden, Monahan and Yoches (2012) referred to the positive relationship between neighbourhood social disadvantage and lower childcare quality. The quality of childcare is related to the availability of resources and facilities which are generally few in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Wilson, 1987, 1997). Disadvantaged neighbourhoods are usually associated with four risk factors which affect childcare, as argued by Carta, Greenwood, Baggett, Buzhardt, and walker (2012). They include (1) single parent depending on public

assistance, (2) teenager problems, (3) high unemployment rates, and (4) having lower education qualifications.

Geographical location was another aspect of context which affected the cost, supply, availability and quality of ECCE in semi-remote areas. In the quantitative analysis, “location” was found to significantly influence access to ECCE. The quantitative results revealed that the central region had the biggest percentage of pre-school centres (74 classes in Capital centre EL-Arish, 28 classes in Beir Elabeid, 15 classes in Sheikh Zwaïd, 12 classes in Rafah, 2 classes in Nekhel, and no classes in Hasana). The further from the urban centres, the less ECCE centres there were. Also the survey found that private childcare centres were only available in the capital city EL-Arish. The practitioners survey findings pointed out that the geographical location of childcare setting affected availability and children’s access to childcare services, this affect varied from some extent 34%, a great extent 16%, to a very great extent 24%. According to the mothers’ survey, 49.2% perceived childcare places for their children in their catchment which were not far away but still needed a means of transportation. However, 28% of the parents viewed the nearest childcare places as very far and needed a long journey by a means of transportation.

The physical environment also affected ECCE quality in terms of carrying out inspections and having enough staff. Remoteness was seen to hinder inspectors from carrying out their work due to their distance to travel or bad roads. This meant that some kindergartens in those areas, in particular those attached to primary schools, were often left isolated. Policy makers attributed this to limited funding and low infrastructure in boarder’s governorates which created highly dispersed and unevenly distributed pre-school classes. Convenient geographical location cannot be compromised with quality, affordable and secure ECCE service as it might be considered unavailable if it is physically present but it is too expensive or too low in quality or unsecure. Policy makers added in the interviews that due to the geographical location, there was a shortage of staff as almost the pre-school staff were females who refused to travel to work in remote areas where they could not settle. They explained that in primary schools and other education stages, the Ministry of Education sent only male teachers to these places on two weeks rota of

work and two weeks off to go back home. This could not be applied to the pre-school stage as explained earlier.

Some literature found that accessibility in ECCE provision has been mainly due to the location ECCE provision. For example, Kisitu's (2008) qualitative study found that the physical environment affected ECCE quality in terms of hindering inspectors from carrying out their monitoring and inspection work. Similarly, the study of Hewett, Sweller, Taylor, Harrison, Bowes, (2014) drew on Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model to explore the interconnections among child and parental characteristics, key contextual variables, and the use of multiple childcare arrangements. A key finding of the study was that parents made their childcare choices on grounds of convenience and ease of access which might imply some constraints on their choices.

The quantitative and qualitative findings discussed above highlighted the childcare demographics in North Sinai governorate and can be interpreted in terms of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. According to this model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), children's microsystems in North Sinai as a semi-remote area included the mothers who were the main caregivers along with the grandparents if they lived in the same house or close by. Some other members of the family might have also a role in childcare if they lived nearby. Fathers were the main breadwinners of the family and they did not spend much time in caring for their pre-school children. It also includes kindergartens' staff who work with 4 to 6 years old children to prepare them for schooling. The mesosystems of the children in North Sinai were confined to the interactions between parents and grandparents, parents and neighbours, parents and care practitioners. These kinds of interactions created a family-childcare mesosystem. There was not much involvement from official bodies nor formal ECCE service providers. Neighbourhood variables of poverty, deteriorated infrastructure and lack of resources and services formed the Exosystems. The indigenous culture (rural and Bedouin culture) of North Sinai favouring boys' education when a family has limited resources as well as the limited ECCE policies and laws constituted the macrosystems of ECCE.

It is therefore imperative for ECCE policy to recognize and respond to the influential socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in North Sinai in order to minimize their impact and enhance ECCE services.

6.4 Stakeholders' Perspectives on the ECCE Policy

ECCE policy should arguably be intended to provide well-targeted actions in ECCE provision from the perspective of the government to overcome the immediate obstacles and make matters better. After identifying the major socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE in North Sinai as a semi-remote area and how they have created diverging incentives for action, it was important to review stakeholders' perspectives on the existing ECCE policy and its response to those factors. In literature, there are four perspectives on ECCE matters: (i) the top-down perspective of the professionals in ECCE, (ii) bottom-up perspective of the children including level of comfort and engagement, (iii) the outside-in perspective of the parents, (iv) and the inside-out perspective of care practitioners (Katz, 1993). This study focused on the perspectives of the professionals (policy makers and regularity bodies), parents and practitioners, while the perspective of the children as representing the bottom-up level was not included due to the time scale of the research and children's young age. Stakeholders' perspective on childcare policies is crucial to ensure responsiveness to children's needs (Kearns, 2010). Each category of the stakeholders in the study found to have certain concerns as shown in the table below:

Table 6.1 key Stakeholders and their main concerns

Key Stakeholders	Main Concerns
Parents	Child's development, affordability, quality, and accessibility of ECCE, and access to information.
Practitioners	Wages, work schedule, classroom discipline, and teaching skills.
Policy makers	Regulations and monitoring
Regularity Bodies	Continuity of the service and control

In the table, the stakeholders in the study focused on specific aspects relevant to their roles in ECCE provision.

Generally, policies in ECCE can be divided into two categories: short and long-term policies. Short-term policies are immediate remedies for an urgent situation, whereas long-term policies are socially constructed after a period of consultation and extensive studies, and aim at making long term changes. Reviewing ECCE policy documents in Egypt revealed that there were no place-based policies. They were no particular ECCE policies which target rural, remote, semi-remote, and disadvantaged regions. According to the stakeholders' perspective on ECCE policies, they were generic rather than specific. For example, in consulting the practitioners and policy makers' opinion on one of the ministerial decrees, decree No. 65/2000 concerning the kindergarten classroom and its contents in this particular instance, they indicated that most of the policies if not all are very generic and are not always tailored to suit the context and available resources. More specifically, the government actions to improve the status of ECCE provision did not follow a geographically tailored policy. With the peculiarities of North Sinai as a semi-remote area, ECCE policies did not recognize the geographical dimension in terms of quantity, accessibility, affordability and indigenusness.

In terms of quantity, according to the research sample, the number of nurseries and kindergartens was not adequate, even they were not distributed evenly where the majority existed in urban areas and less and sometimes none in areas far away from the major centres. For example, there was only one governmental language kindergarten in Nekhel and its 10 villages, and no kindergarten classes at all in Hasana and its 20 villages. This made staff ratio very high as 34% of the practitioners indicated that the child to practitioner ratio in their childcare centres was 1 to 20 children, for 42% of the sample was 1 to 30 children, and for 8% of them was 1 to more than 30 children. Only 16% of them had classes of 10 children or less. The qualitative findings indicated that even in baby classes that accept children from 3 months to 2 years, there was only one carer who had to look after 10 infants by herself without an assistant.

Reviewing ECCE policies in the study could not lead to the existence of any nationwide policy for opening pre-school classes depending on the number of population or any other demographic or geographic criteria. The perspective of the research participants, the practitioners and policy makers, was that there was no clear policy on how to accommodate the high demand for nursery and kindergarten classes in North Sinai, whether by opening more public pre-school classes depending on demographic data or by encouraging the private sector to open pre-school classes and subsidize low-income families to enrol their children. 47% of the practitioners considered the lack of sufficient number of childcare centres as a real obstacle to childcare provision in semi-remote areas.

Accessibility in terms of the availability of transport for the children and staff was another aspect overlooked by the ECCE policies in semi-remote areas. Practitioners and policy makers in the study referred to the difficulties of travelling from their home to their work places, in particular female staff. 78% of the practitioners were of the opinion that the surrounding environment, including poor roads and lack of public transport, was affecting their commitment to work. In addition, there was no specific subsidy policy for semi-remote areas which could encourage parents for using private childcare centres whenever public childcare centres were not available. 61.6% of the parents responded that the cost of private nurseries hindered them from enrolling their children where public nurseries were not available. The qualitative data confirmed also that availability for parents did not only refer to the physical availability of nurseries but also to the availability of quality nurseries. Some nurseries could be available physically but since the quality of the service did not meet the expectations of the parents, they were considered unavailable. This can be exemplified in one of the mother's remarks concerning enrolling her three daughters, twin 3 years old and a baby 1 year old, in a public nursery:

I was not working and when I got a job post as a teacher, I was looking for a nursery for my three daughters. I found a private nursery near my house; however it was small, crowded with too many children, and only one care assistant for the baby class with around 10 children. I could not enroll them there and I had to find a more expensive one for my twin

daughters with a bus service as it was not near. I take my youngest daughter with me to work.

There was also no policy directed to indigenusness beliefs which could prevent parents from enrolling their young children in childcare centres, in particular girls. This contributes to the high rates of illiteracy in Egypt and the urban-rural breakdown of literacy. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016), the male literacy rate is 75.06% and female literacy rate is 67.18% in Egypt. The admission policy to pre-school education in North Sinai and to a greater or lesser degree in all areas in Egypt was age based. Although nurseries should only accept children up to 4 years old according to Child Act No. 126/2008, the stakeholders in the study indicated that this policy was not followed in many cases as nurseries could accept children right up until school age due to the shortage of available places in kindergartens. However, admission to school kindergartens, in particular distinguished kindergartens run by the Ministry of Education, was carried out by the Early Childhood Education Department in each governorate. According to the ministerial decree No. 138/2007, the minimum age for kindergartens admission is 4 years and kindergartens can lower that age to 3 years and half if they have places available. Stakeholders' perspective on age-related admission policy was that although children could meet the age criteria, the physical limitation of available space could result in overcrowded classes or children being refused admission. The qualitative findings provided further insight into the perspective of stakeholders regarding the admission policy that it did not allow equal opportunities between children. One of the practitioners said:

If a child from a high socio-economic status could not find a place in a governmental language kindergarten, it would be easy to find a place in a private kindergarten. However, a child from a disadvantage background would stay at home and play in the street till next year. As a result the child could start school at least one year behind his/her counterparts.

According to the survey results, 50% of the practitioners responded that they were suffering from working in overcrowded classes and effective monitoring and teaching were not possible. Similarly, 49.6% of the parents complained of the poor discipline and unhygienic condition of the classrooms as they were very crowded.

The qualitative results clarified mothers' perspective concerning crowdedness, as they assumed that young children could catch epidemic diseases easily with the large number of children in the class. Therefore, the majority of them preferred to keep their young children at home if their circumstances permit.

Presently, the pre-school stage is not an official stage in the Egyptian education system and therefore there are no program or curriculum standards. However, the ministerial decree No. 65/2000 set the ECCE quality policy for the kindergarten classroom to ideally include: puppetry theatre, library, table for arts and crafts, table for science, music corner, carpet covered area for storytelling, and decorative boards. The perspective of the research sample concerning the ECCE quality policy was that the decree was too ambiguous to be implemented mainly due limited fund and resources as well as the lack of monitoring, accountability and assessment measures. According the budget of the Ministry of Education and the number of children and classroom sizes as indicated by the research participants, this decree was impossible to apply across all centres. Kindergartens might have one or more of these components in the classroom, but not all. Data regarding physical facilities and resources showed that %50 of the practitioners considered it a major problem for providing quality care in their in childcare centres. Similarly, 49.6% of the parents indicated that poor resources were among the main reasons of not sending their young children to formal childcare centres. One of the policy makers in the study commented on the quality aspect of nurseries and kindergartens in North Sinai saying:

Clearly you can find a big difference between public and private centres due to the limited fund for public ones. Public centres have only seats and boards, while private centres have many facilities ranging from computers up to swimming pools. But parents have to pay thousands of pounds in the private ones.

The following pictures were taken from childcare classes in North Sinai. More specifically, they were captured at two different places; one private nursery for mixed age children, and one public kindergarten. They show the condition of the classes and the gap between the above decree and reality, as well as the gap between

public and private classes. Due to ethical considerations, the researcher could not take more photos as children's faces could appear.



Figure 6.3 Private kindergarten class (North Sinai)



Figure 6.4 Public kindergarten class (North Sinai)

Quality in ECCE is related in a way or another with ECCE subsidy policy. The perspectives of the different stakeholders in the study concerning the ECCE subsidy policy were very similar as they all viewed it to be unable to reduce the burden of parents paying fees for their children's care and education. Although most public nurseries and kindergartens were with very marginal fees, parents still had to pay for

meals, transportation, uniforms, and stationery items for their children. According to the survey results, 48.8% of the parents viewed expensive fees as a major reason of not sending their children to formal childcare. At the same time, 84.8% of the parents in the study did not receive any financial support.

The government subsidised main food items, fuel, energy, and partially housing for low income families. The qualitative results provided additional insight into the subsidy policy from the stakeholders' perspective that many families did not benefit from the social support system, as it did not provide child allowance, low income families allowance, large family allowance, temporary allowance for children in emergency, paid paternity leave, or childcare allowance. There were only two types of benefits which parents were entitled to in semi-remote areas: paid maternity leave, universal benefit, and remote areas' allowance. Paid maternity leave is for 90 days for the all mothers who worked for 10 months for their employers (Labour Law No. 12 of 2003, Article. 91). Women could only take this maternity leave twice during their service to the employer. This law was not applicable to a large scale on the private sector as expressed by many mothers in the study. Remote areas allowance was only for government employees. It was a small allowance added to monthly wages to encourage employees to apply for jobs in remote areas.

As the whole education system, including ECCE, is centralised, all policies and regulations follow a top-down model (Cochran, 2013). Policy makers in the study indicated that unless the whole education system was planned and run by local councils, it would be difficult to have separate policies for ECCE for semi-remote areas. Moreover, local administrators were not given the power to appropriately adapt ECCE policies as required in semi-remote areas. Care practitioners criticized also the objectives of the pre-school stage as they were set to be too general and ambitious to be met in the current local circumstances in North Sinai. Nursery and school principals had little to say about the policy, curriculum, and general discipline.

Clearly enough from the perspectives of the stakeholders discussed above that the ECCE policies in Egypt did not respond to the socio-demographic factors prevailing in semi-remote areas in terms of either level of provision or policy design.

ECCE policies were generic rather than specific. Accordingly, they were regarded ineffective from the perspective of the research sample. Many parents in the study could not rely on public ECCE provision. It became their sole responsibility to look after and care for their pre-school children and not to share this responsibility outside the family. Quantitatively, only 16.8% of the parents would choose public childcare centres as a main childcare arrangement for their children.

Most of the practitioners and policy makers agreed that parents in North Sinai were motivated by their culture to keep their children at home as the best place for young children. Egyptian cultural values and beliefs favoured the family environment as the optimal setting for childcare as argued by Samahy (2013). The tendency of not sending young children to pre-school institutions in North Sinai was reinforced by the poor and insufficient ECCE services in semi-remote areas. This was featured in a number of aspects as determined by the research participants, including unsafe environment for babies, small class environments, crowded classes, unqualified carers, and lack of resources. These aspects had two consequences on parents. First, it confined their expectations from ECCE programmes to school readiness, while care and recreational activities were left for home. Second, it persuaded parents that home was the best place for young children. Even if mothers were working, nothing changed in their child rearing role; it was just added to their other responsibilities.

In short, it was important to explore the stakeholders' perspectives, representing the various people interested in child care and education including parents, policy makers, childcare staff and administrators, on ECCE policy as their knowledge of the factors affecting ECCE is always growing (Ceglowski, 2004). Consequently, and from a systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the findings of the study will be framed below within an integrated model to highlight the micro and macro social factors which could constrain and potentiate the meso-level opportunities of interactions for young children in their eco-cultural context.

6.5 Ecological Model of ECCE Provision in Semi-Remote Areas

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979; 1993) was used in the study to provide a framework to characterize levels of factors of environmental influence that impact childcare provision in semi-remote areas. These levels of factors as used by Stacks (2005) represent multiple layers of context and are of dynamic, interactive nature. The rationale behind adapting Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is the premise that the ecology of the child is constantly changing and interacting with a changing matrix of ecological systems (Hetherington & Parke, 1993). Bronfenbrenner's model is also found valuable in "conceptualising the roles and relationships between stakeholders at a personal, interpersonal and institutional level" (Layland & Smith, 2015, p. 271).

The following account combines the findings of the study, pertinent to the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision and stakeholders' perspectives on ECCE policy in semi-remote areas, into an ecological model. It is a child-centered model based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development. Within this child-centered perspective, early childhood care and education can be promoted through recognizing and responding to ecosystemic factors in the given context, as well as through constructive interactions and coordination among the several stakeholders: parents, family, childcare practitioners, care providers, and policy makers.

The eco-systemic factors of the model according to the levels used by Bronfenbrenner are presented below:

- *Microsystemic Factors*

The first level of the ecological model applied in the current study is the microsystem. According to Bronfenbrenner (1993), the microsystem is the "pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person....with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 15). More

specifically, in this study it involved the interaction of the child with the immediate socio-demographic factors pertinent to the parents (education, income, and health), family (family structure), neighbours (poverty and infrastructure), and nursery (location and facilities). These factors found to impact ECCE in semi-remote areas in a number of ways, including: desirability of a certain type of care, availability and accessibility of childcare centres, and quality of care.

- *Mesosystemic Factors*

The mesosystem, the second level, is the interactions between the various microsystems. This level entailed the interpersonal relationships that occur between two or more of the agents of the settings around the child, including: parents, extended family members, neighbours, friends, and nursery/ kindergarten staff. The interpersonal interactions in the study occurred between the parents and the other members of the extended family who were used for caring for their children, including grandparents, sisters and sisters in law, parents and neighbours, parents and friends and colleagues at work, and parents and nursery/kindergarten staff. The strength of these interactions impacts ECCE in different ways. In the current study, the relationship between parents and nursery staff lacked co-operation and partnership. Also, parents and neighbours relationships made some of the parents to choose to leave their children with a neighbour rather than enrolling them in a nursery. This is in addition to the strong family ties which made some parents to depend on their extended family members, in particular grandparents, in caring for their children, in particular if they live nearby. The final type of interaction found in the study was between parents and friends and colleagues at work. Those two categories, friends and colleagues at work, were found to be the main source of information for parents regarding available childcare centres, their quality and affordability.

- *Exosystemic Factors*

The third level, the exosystem, focused more on the distal factors of the community in North Sinai which did not involve the child directly but affected his/her care and education. For example, parents' work place and nursery staff after-

work-second-jobs entailed exosystemic influences on childcare provision. Parents' work place made some parents in the study to take their children with them to the work place as they had to leave home early before 7 am and their managers did not mind them bringing their young babies. Stacks (2005) gave a more example of the impact of parents' place on young children stating that stress at parents' place of employment may affect their parenting behaviour and in turn might affect children in several ways.

- *Macrosystemic Factors*

The fourth level, the macrosystem, involved the impact of the broader social and cultural context and its large institutions such as the government and the media on ECCE provision. The impact of this level was apparent on childcare policy which was designed according to a top-down approach. Understanding Bedouin culture and the nature of their traditions was absent in dealing with ECCE provision in North Sinai. Therefore, developing an understanding of the aspects of the local people's culture, their aims for their children and how to bring to their consciousness the importance of formal care could impact ECCE provision in semi-remote areas significantly.

Finally, although there are significant challenges in rural, semi-remote and disadvantaged areas, particularly with regard to the limited fund and resources, the degree of socio-demographic factors awareness, constructive interactions, and goal consensus among the different systems around the child can determine the degree of success of ECCE provision. The following figure (6.5) summaries the study's perspective for the ECCE provision in semi-remote areas according to the ecological model:

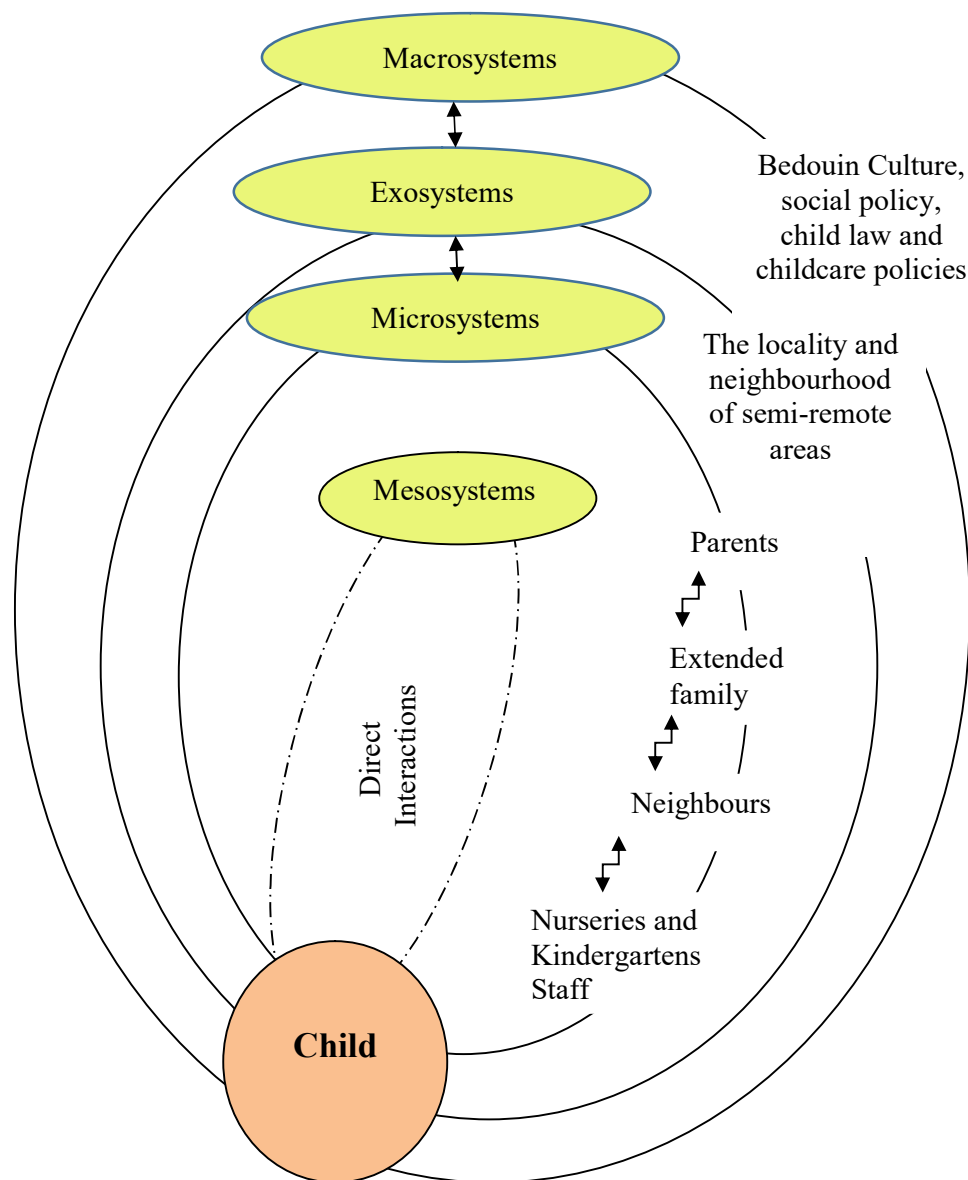


Figure 6.5 Ecological model of ECCE provision in semi-remote areas

The above model shows how the microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems interact and affect the stakeholders' perspectives of ECCE provision. This kind of interaction will lead to policy responses which are based on full awareness and recognition of the context including the different systems affecting children's life as well as stakeholders' perspectives, and more likely to result in successful ECCE provision.

Significant to this model is its focus on the interactions among the different systems of influence. Although Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has been criticized for its broadness (Hook, 2009), the suggested model limits the scope of ecological detail to intervene at any given level.

6.6 Summary

This chapter presented a discussion for the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. The discussion considered the most important of these findings, along with a critical interpretation within the context of previous research. The findings of my study showed that the socio-demographic characteristics of parents and their children, in addition to the contextual factors of semi remote areas in North Sinai, affected the availability, accessibility and quality of ECCE provision. More specifically, children's age and health alongside parental characteristics, such as the socio-economic status of the family (education, income, and employment), family structure (living close to extended family, number of children and adults at home), significantly impacted childcare arrangement. Contextual factors such as cultural beliefs, neighbourhood poverty and geographical location also affected childcare arrangement as well as ECCE provision in general in the area.

The findings on stakeholders' perspectives indicated that the country's welfare policies, including ECCE policies, overlooked broadly the characteristics of rural and remote areas and the sharp contrast between them. ECCE policy followed a top-down model in which official bodies in North Sinai did not have the power to adopt it as required in semi remote areas. Moreover, with the lack of a strong government commitment to ECCE, it remained a family matter which was greatly influenced by familial factors. Cultural beliefs and traditions, neighbourhood, and geographical

location in North Sinai contributed also to the spread of self-care of young children by their parents. Clearly enough, understanding Bedouin culture and the nature of their traditions was absent in dealing with ECCE provision in North Sinai. Collectively, the findings indicated that ECCE policies in semi-remote areas could not overcome the impact of the socio-demographic realities, which in turn made them ineffective.

Based on these findings, the study proposed a framework of ECCE provision in semi-remote areas which is child-centred, promoting parental involvement, suitable for the neighbourhood and local environment, based on standards, allowing information sharing and networks, recruiting qualified staff with continuous professional development, subject to assessment, and fully supported by the government. Next chapter will introduce the implications the study may have for ECCE policy and provision in semi-remote areas of Egypt, along with the conclusions one can draw.

Chapter Seven

Implications and Conclusion

Chapter Seven

Implications and Conclusion

Although ECCE is available to some children in Egypt, there is enormous inequality in children's chances of attending ECCE.....More needs to be done to ensure that children thrive in their early years and have equal chances to grow and develop, with special focus on the least advantaged (El-Kogali & Krafft, 2015, p. 120).

7.1 Introduction

Research evidence collected by this study leads to some implications for ECCE policy and provision in the Egyptian context. This chapter will first introduce the implications this study led to. Then, research recommendations and suggestions for further research will follow. The chapter will end with a general conclusion of the whole thesis.

7.2 Implications

From the findings discussed in the previous chapter, the study has drawn several significant implications for ECCE policy and provision, particularly in the context of remote and semi-remote areas. Although many studies have examined the different socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision, none found to focus on these variables in remote and semi remote areas with their peculiarities and their inhabitants; the Bedouins. The Bedouins, as the major residents of those areas, have a strong sense of identity. They maintain their original traditions, life style, and sense of community.

For the Bedouins, child rearing is literally a family and community concern. Although the mother is the main carer for her children, other members of the family share this responsibility and give mutual assistance and support. Moreover, there is a tradition of preadolescent children in the family to care for their younger siblings as a way of sharing the burden of care. Accordingly, the design of appropriate and

effective ECCE services for remote and semi-remote communities requires close attention to the prevailing sociocultural conditions. Besides, it is feasible to adopt rigorous ethnographic methods when studying those sociocultural conditions in their real context.

Another important implication of the research is that the meta-cognitive processes parents in semi-remote areas implicitly use when making decisions concerning their children's ECCE are not questioned nor followed by think loud protocols at the family level or above. The first step in recognizing and responding to the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE in semi-remote areas is to understand those meta-cognitive processes which could affect children's future life. Accordingly, child-related policies can be tailored to be more respondent towards the prevalent socio -demographic factors affecting ECCE.

At the child level, the findings implied that, irrespective of the context, children who have attended some sort of ECCE could do better in school and later in their life by developing functioning skills, better academic achievement and be socially active. In the long term, this could mean better Human Development Index (HDI) for the country by means of a high composite of health, education, and income indicators which are used to rank countries. This suggests that more efforts are needed to promote access to nurseries and kindergartens in disadvantaged areas to have equal ECCE chances for all children.

At the state level, the findings indicated that ECCE policies, including child welfare and subsidy policies, can play an important role in promoting ECCE by providing more access and encouraging non-profit organizations to participate in running ECCE classes and raise fund for children in the disadvantaged areas. A final important implication which can be drawn from the government's role in ECCE is to improve the quality of ECCE. This does not mean to improve only centre care, but also to improve the quality of home (by a childminder or baby sitter), self and relative care for those who cannot use centre care. Awareness raising, training, sources and subsidies should be provided for those families who use these types of care for their children.

In short, providing ECCE to all children, and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds as the study implied, could be an important step toward a better life for those children.

7.3 Recommendations

This study has contributed new knowledge due to its target on semi-remote areas of Egypt, whereas most of the previous studies of ECCE have been urban focused in Western cultures, overlooking the fact that rural and remote areas are often faced with unique challenges. Based on the discussion of the results provided earlier in this chapter, this section draws a number of ECCE provision and policy implications and recommendations, which are viewed to be interrelated and interdependent.

The first recommendation here is about parents who are the first and continuous carer of the child and therefore their involvement in ECCE is essential for a successful provision. Due to cultural beliefs and values in semi-remote areas of Egypt as well as the SES of some parents, mothers carry the burden of child rearing. Fathers need to support mothers more in this task and spare some extra time for caring for their children at the family level. Mothers in the study, in particular those with three pre-school children or more, were exhausted from being the sole childcare provider and expressed their wish for more support from their husbands. Moreover, both parents have to be involved more in their children ECCE at the formal childcare level. There was a lack of involvement from the side of the parents as most participants limited their role to dropping and picking up their children from childcare centres. Parents need to work in partnership with childcares centres and to enquire about all the aspects of the service and do regular visits.

Working in partnerships between parents and child care centres require well trained staff. Childcare centres should appoint only specialized staff at the appropriate staff to child ratio. This will help staff to carry out all the essential activities on daily bases such as child observation, record keeping, participating in tasks with children, and engaging with parents. As the findings of the study indicated, the majority of staff in North Sinai in the pre-school stage were unqualified. Therefore, a government's action plan is needed to replace the existing

unqualified staff with childcare graduates staff. The inauguration of the Faculty of Kindergarten Education in North Sinai recently will help in this matter by providing qualified graduates and training for the existing staff.

Furthermore, education is an indispensable duty for the government and it should be considered as the core of national welfare policy. Therefore, it is recommended that the government has to embark on including pre-school education as a formal stage of the education system in Egypt and to set standards for it. Standards need to be relevant to the context, based on a clear set of values and principles, and feasible to be achieved. Also setting standards for ECCE will minimize the gap of inequality between advantaged and disadvantaged areas. For example, in North Sinai, you can find nurseries with swimming pools and other nurseries without desks or chairs for the children to sit in.

It is also impossible for the government not to be involved in private childcare centres' curriculum. What it is needed right now is how to avoid over-controlling and balance between going too far and not far enough. A real guideline for the program of ECCE is required and not to be limited only to the syllabus or the list of contents. This cannot be done without effective ECCE policies and strong government commitment. This commitment can be put into practice with adequate funding and clear and coordinated strategies. However, thorough assessment of the ECCE services and programs has to precede and to be carried out by independent bodies away from the bureaucratic and unclear practices of the government offices.

Parents also need to be informed of any changes in their children's ECCE services. Therefore, a database of ECCE information and networks in North Sinai is urgently required. ECCE services as many other services in North Sinai were not supported by information database. This database will facilitate information sharing concerning available services, providers and neighbourhood issues affecting children. Information about the neighbourhood as the immediate physical space where the child is present is of paramount importance to ensure the safety, hygiene, and comfort of young users of the neighbourhood areas.

A further recommendation to overcome the problem of the shortage of kindergarten and nursery classes in semi-remote areas is through the application of

double shift childcare classes in which one group of children attend early in the day and the second group attend later in the day. The final recommendation here is the need in semi-remote areas for an ECCE visitor. This is similar to a health visitor who visits people in their homes to assist and provide advice. Due to the nature of the environment in semi remote areas of Egypt, lack of services and transportation, culture of the place, as well as the work of some mothers at home in handmade products, an ECCE visitor, who can regularly visit those families to advise them concerning their children's care and education, will be very helpful. The government might not be able to provide ECCE services in those areas in the short term as well as the difficulty of finding staff, in particular female ECCE graduates who can work and stay in those areas. Therefore, a visiting ECCE adviser could improve the upbringing of the children. The government was applying a similar idea in vaccination campaigns against polio by visiting homes in rural and remote areas to vaccinate children.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Research is always a powerful tool in developing services and practices. It is a key for professionalism in ECCE (Roberts-Holmes, 2014). Being one of few research studies on ECCE provision and policy in semi remote areas, this study leaves some important unanswered questions awaiting investigation. They are important research points which emerged during the course of the research or as a result of its findings. This study ends with a clear identification of the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE in semi-remote areas of Egypt as well as stakeholders' perspectives of the existing ECCE policy which was to a great extent not effective in overcoming the impact of the socio-demographic factors on ECCE provision.

The research was holistic in nature which did not focus on a certain socio-demographic factor and studied it in details. Therefore, additional research is needed to understand: (1) the interactions between the indigenous culture of the Bedouin in semi-remote areas and modern childcare practices; (2) ECCE policy formulation in the Egyptian context; (3) realities of low income families in semi-remote areas; (4) types of subsidies that can be provided in semi-remote areas to support ECCE

provision; (5) parents' reasoning processes in choosing childcare arrangements; (6) the longitudinal impact of ECCE on semi-remote areas' children; and (7) the political and social agenda of the government in semi-remote areas, in particular in North Sinai which is under emergency state for the last four years due to terrorism, and the long term impact on access, equity, and quality of ECCE programs.

7.5 Conclusion

This study was taken with the main objective of identifying the socio-demographic factors affecting ECCE provision in semi-remote areas and stakeholders' perspectives towards ECCE policy and its response to the impact of these factors. The findings of the study indicated that the socio-demographic characteristics of children and parents, in addition to the economically and politically disadvantaged condition of semi-remote areas affected the availability, accessibility and quality of ECCE. Whilst a number of ECCE policies were in place, they could not overcome the impact of the socio-demographic realities, which in turn made them in many instances ineffective and likely to remain so until alternative and more effective policy responses are implemented.

ECCE in Egypt, in the sense of linear progression, thus began with sending the elite living in urban centres their young children to private kindergartens which gradually permeated unequally across the country with the changing role of women in the society. The country's welfare policies, including those pertinent to ECCE, overlooked broadly the indigenous economic and social structures and their development over time. This created a particular set of problems in ECCE, in particular in rural and remote areas. Women's role in rural and remote areas, while carrying the most burden of their children's care due to indigenous economic and social structures, exhibits also orientalist heritage promoting an idealist epistemology in which women scarify their lives for their family and preferring to keep young children in their custody until school age.

Taking into account these findings, the study suggested a model of ECCE provision in semi-remote areas which is child-centred, promoting parental involvement, and recognizing the neighbourhood, local culture and environment. It is based on standards, allowing information sharing and networks, urging for

recruiting qualified staff with continuous professional development, subject to assessment and monitoring, and fully supported by the government and NGOs.

Eventually, this study encourages further research in areas related to ECCE in semi-remote and rural areas, including indigenous Bedouin culture, policy formulation, realities of low income families in disadvantaged areas, location-based ECCE subsidies, parents' reasoning processes, and the political and social agenda of governments.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent Forms

A-1: Informed Consent Form for the Survey Questionnaire (English Version)



Wafaa Salama
Collingwood College,
South Road, Durham, DH1 3LT

Informed Consent Form (Survey Questionnaire)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project that tries to identify the socio-demographic factors affecting early childhood care and education provision in North Sinai. Besides, it aims at examining how childcare policies and programs respond to those factors. The research project is also interested in understanding the activities and tasks that parents do in caring for their children, and how they make decisions about their child care arrangements. The findings of this research will form part of the researcher's PhD thesis in education, University of Durham, United Kingdom. It is hoped also that the research findings will help improve early childhood care and education provision in semi-remote areas in Egypt.

I can confirm that any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and no personal information will be retained. The questionnaire is brief and should take less than 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is highly appreciated. If you have any questions before agreeing to participate or anytime during answering the questions, please contact Wafaa Salama, the principal investigator, or her assistant Safi, on this telephone number (002) 01010612474.

I agree/ disagree to complete this survey (Please delete as appropriate)

Please add your telephone number here _____ if you are interested in participating in a short follow up interview and receiving three children's books.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,

Wafaa Salama (PhD Student)

w.m.salama@durham.ac.uk

Thesis Supervisors:

Prof Carl Bagley, c.a.bagley@durham.ac.uk

Dr Kate Wall, kate.wall@durham.ac.uk

A-2: Informed Consent Form for the Individual Interviews (English Version)



Wafaa Salama
Collingwood College,
South Road, Durham, DH1 3LT

Informed Consent Form (Individual Interview)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project that tries to identify the socio-demographic factors affecting early childhood care and education provision in North Sinai. Besides, it aims at examining how childcare policies and programs respond to those factors. The research project is also interested in understanding the activities and tasks that parents do in caring for their children, and how they make decisions about their child care arrangements. The findings of this research will form part of the researcher's PhD thesis in education, University of Durham, United Kingdom. It is hoped also that the research findings will help improve early childhood care and education provision in semi-remote areas in Egypt.

Your participation will be in a short face to face interview. It will last approximately from 45 minutes to 60 minutes and will be conducted at the time and place most convenient for you. You can choose also to have your interview audio recorded or not. You are free not to answer any questions during the interview or withdraw at any time. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research as it is educational in nature. I can confirm also that any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and no personal information will be retained. To protect confidentiality, you will be assigned fictitious name for use in description and reporting the results. All data, including the audio recordings, will be held in a computer hard drive with a password, and will be erased after the end of the study. Your name will not appear in any of the data, audio recordings, or transcripts. If you have any questions before agreeing to participate in the interview or after the interview, please contact Wafaa Salama, the principal investigator, or her assistant Safi, on this telephone number (002) 01010612474.

Please tick this box to indicate that you have read this page ☐

Your participation is highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Wafaa Salama (PhD Student)

w.m.salama@durham.ac.uk

Thesis Supervisors:

Prof Carl Bagley, c.a.bagley@durham.ac.uk

Dr Kate Wall, kate.wall@durham.ac.uk

A-3: Informed Consent Form for the Survey Questionnaire (Arabic Version)



Wafaa Salama
Collingwood College,
South Road, Durham, DH1 3LT
Email: w.m.salama@durham.ac.uk

استطلاع رأي

العوامل الاجتماعية والسكانية التي تؤثر على توفير الرعاية والتعليم
في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة ما قبل المدرسة في شمال سيناء

التاريخ / /

عزيزي المشارك / المشاركة،

ندعوا سيادتكم للمشاركة في استطلاع رأي عن العوامل الاجتماعية والسكانية التي تؤثر على توفير الرعاية والتعليم للأطفال في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة في شمال سيناء، وذلك بهدف التعرف على تلك العوامل وكيفية استجابة السياسات وبرامج الرعاية والتعليم لها. وايضا يهتم البحث بالتعرف على الأنشطة التي يقوم بها الآباء لرعاية أطفالهم وكيف يتخذوا قراراتهم حول نوع الرعاية والتعليم لهم. وسوف تمثل نتائج هذا البحث جزءاً من رسالة الباحثة لدرجة الدكتوراة في التربية بجامعة درم بالمملكة المتحدة. ومن المأمول أيضاً أن تساعد نتائج البحث في تحسين رعاية الطفولة المبكرة وتوفير التعليم في المناطق النائية وشبه النائية في مصر.

وأؤكد أن هذه الاستمارة مخصصة لأغراض البحث العلمي ولن يطلع عليها أحد سوى الباحثة، ولن يتم تسجيل أي بيانات شخصية للمستجيبين. تتسم استمارة استطلاع الرأي بالإيجاز وسوف تأخذ أقل من 15 دقيقة لإكمالها. مشاركتكم في استطلاع الرأي محل تقدير كبير ولها أهمية قصوى للبحث. إذا كان لديكم أي استفسار بخصوص الاستطلاع، فالرجاء الاتصال بالباحثة أو مساعدتها صافي علي هذا الرقم 01010612474.

شكراً لوقتكم وتعاونكم وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ...

برجاء الاختيار بالموافقة/أو عدم الموافقة علي المشاركة. ومن فضلك أكتب رقم الهاتف _____ إذا رغبت في المشاركة في مقابلة قصيرة لشرح أراءك.

الباحثة

وفاء محمد سليمان سلامة

المشرفون:

Prof Carl Bagley, c.a.bagley@durham.ac.uk
Dr Kate Wall, kate.wall@durham.ac.uk

A-4: Informed Consent Form for the Individual Interviews (Arabic Version)



Wafaa Salama
Collingwood College,
South Road, Durham, DH1 3LT
Email: w.m.salama@durham.ac.uk

شخصية مقابلة

العوامل الاجتماعية والسكانية التي تؤثر على توفير الرعاية والتعليم
في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة ما قبل المدرسة في شمال سيناء

التاريخ / /

عزيزي المشارك / المشاركة،

ندعوا سيادتكم للمشاركة في مقابلة شخصية لمناقشة العوامل الاجتماعية والسكانية التي تؤثر على توفير الرعاية والتعليم للأطفال في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة في شمال سيناء، وذلك بهدف التعرف على تلك العوامل وكيفية استجابة السياسات وبرامج الرعاية والتعليم لها. وايضا يهتم البحث بالتعرف على الأنشطة التي يقوم بها الآباء لرعاية أطفالهم وكيف يتخذوا قراراتهم حول نوع الرعاية والتعليم لهم. وسوف تمثل نتائج هذا البحث جزءاً من رسالة الباحثة لدرجة الدكتوراة في التربية بجامعة درم بالمملكة المتحدة. ومن المأمول أيضاً أن تساعد نتائج البحث في تحسين رعاية الطفولة المبكرة وتوفير التعليم في المناطق النائية وشبه النائية في مصر.

وأؤكد أن هذه المقابلة سوف تستغرق من 45 الى 60 دقيقة وهي مخصصة لأغراض البحث العلمي ولن يطلع علي الحوار أحد سوى الباحثة، و اذا اردت يمكن تسجيل المقابلة صوتياً أو لا، ولكن لن يتم تسجيل أي بيانات شخصية. مشاركتكم في المقابلة محل تقدير كبير ولها أهمية قصوي للبحث. إذا كان لديكم أي استفسار بخصوص المقابلة، فالرجاء الاتصال بالباحثة أو مساعدتها صافي علي هذا الرقم 01010612474.

شكراً لوقتكم وتعاونكم وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام ...

الباحثة

وفاء محمد سليمان سلامة

المشرفون:

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Appendix B: Participants' Questionnaires

B-1: Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early Childhood Care and Education Provision in North Sinai (Parents' Questionnaire)

FOR RESEARCHER USE ONLY

How was the questionnaire completed? 1-Self administered by the participant
2-Face-to-face interview
3-Both self-administered and interview
4-Not completed

Category Code:____ **Participant Code:**____

Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early Childhood Care and Education Provision in North Sinai (Parents' Questionnaire)

Please complete the following questionnaire by placing a CROSS ☐ in the appropriate box or circle and by writing a short answer where applicable.

Part I: Basic Information	Notes
1. In what age group are you? ☐ 20 and under ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51+	
2. What is your marital status? ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed	
3. Do you have any disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
4. Does your spouse have any disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No	<i>If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.</i>
5. How would you describe your health? ☐ Healthy ☐ Having some health problems.	
6. How would you describe your spouse's health? ☐ Healthy ☐ Having some health problems.	<i>If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.</i>

7. What is your education level?	
8. What is your spouse's education level?	<i>If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.</i>
Part II: Employment and Income	
9. What is your occupation/job?	<i>If you did not work please write not working</i>
10. If you are employed, is it a ☐ Full-Time Work ☐ Casual, Seasonal Work, or Part-Time ☐ Not applicable	<i>If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.</i>
11. Is your Job requiring travel away from home? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable	
12. What is your spouse's occupation/job?	<i>If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.</i>

13.If he or she is employed, is it a ☐ Full-time employment ☐ Casual, Seasonal Work, or Part-Time ☐ Not applicable	
14. Is your Job requiring travel away from home ? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable	
15. What is your total combined family income per month from all sources, wages, public assistance/benefits, help from relatives, alimony, and so on? If you do not know your exact income, please estimate. - Less than £1000 ☐ - From £1000 to £2000 ☐ - From £2000 to £3000 ☐ - More than £3000 ☐	
Part III: Housing	
16. How many adults are currently living in your household, including yourself?	<i>Please write down your answer.</i>
17.Please describe the home where you live, ☐ Owned Housing ☐ Private Rented Housing ☐ Public/Social Rented Housing Your Family or Spouse Family's Housing	
18.Do you live next to a person within the third degree of relationship to you or your spouse ? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify.....	
Part IV: Your Children	
19. How many children do you have?	<i>Please write down your answer.</i>

20. How many of those children are pre-school age?	<i>Please write down your answer.</i>
21. How many male and female children do you have? Male Female	<i>Please put the number in the box provided next to male and female.</i> <i>Leave the box empty if none.</i>
22. Do any of your pre-school children have special needs (e.g. autism, physical handicap, serious illness)? ☐ Yes ☐ No If so, please explain.....	
23. Does the health condition of your pre-school children affect the type of care you chose for them? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
24. What activities do you undertake in caring for your children? ☐ Religious and moral education in religious institutions. ☐ School readiness in nurseries and kindergartens. ☐ Domestic caring at home. ☐ Academic and physical activities in libraries and clubs. ☐ Rehabilitation activities in an educational setting for children with special needs. ☐ Other.	

25. What are the reasons for choosing your current child care arrangement? ☐ No other childcare choices available ☐ Cost ☐ Distance ☐ Suitability to work circumstances ☐ Preference of a particular type of care to meet child needs ☐ Other	Please check all that apply
26. What do you think the ideal age to send your children to nursery?	Please write down your answer.
27. What do you expect your child will gain from attending a nursery? ☐ Care during parents' absence ☐ School readiness ☐ Playing ☐ All the above	Please choose ONLY one answer
28-. How does your child nursery involve you in your children's care and education? ☐ No involvement at all. ☐ Regular meetings with parents. ☐ Reports are sent to parents. ☐ Inviting parents to visit their children in the nursery setting. ☐ Other.	Please check all that apply If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.
29. What are your children's needs which can be achieved in the nursery/ kindergarten? ☐ Social and psychological care. ☐ Physical growth through proper nutrition in a clean and healthy environment. ☐ Mental and cognitive development. ☐ Other	Please choose ONLY one answer If the question is not applicable, please go to the next question.

30. How far is the nearest nursery from your home? ☐ Within a short distance , no need for a means of transportation. ☐ Not very far, but it needs a means of transportation. ☐ Very far and definitely needs a means of transportation	
31. Do you receive any financial support for your pre-school child care? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
32. In your opinion, what are the obstacles of having a good childcare and education for your pre-school children in your area? ☐ Expensive Nursery Fees. ☐ Poor Nursery Services (including, small classes, large number of children, unqualified carers, and lack of resources. ☐ Insufficient nurseries and kindergartens in the local area. ☐ Non-parent involvement in the planning and assessment of nursery services. ☐ Other.	Please check all that apply
33. What arrangements do you use or will use to provide early childhood care for your children when you at work or when you plan to get a job? ☐ Private Nursery ☐ Public Nursery ☐ Baby-sitter ☐ Grandparents/relatives providing childcare ☐ Staying with older siblings ☐ Staying with a close neighbour ☐ Parental care ☐ go with me to my work	Please choose ONLY one answer

34 What are the reasons for choosing this type of arrangement? ☐ No other childcare choices available ☐ Meet the special needs of my child ☐ Cost ☐ Distance ☐ The quality of childcare provided ☐ School readiness ☐ Other	<i>Please check all that apply</i>
35. If your child is in any formal childcare, how do you learn about child care arrangement? ☐ Friends ☐ Neighbours ☐ Relatives ☐ Colleges at work ☐ Newspapers or Public Bulletins ☐ Govern-mental Body ☐ Not applicable	<i>Please choose ONLY one answer</i>
36.If you could make one change about your current work environment or when you work to help you in your pre-school children care and education, what would it be? ☐ Increasing salary ☐ More Flexibility in work schedule ☐ Working reduced hours while caring for young children ☐ Reducing work travel time by working near home ☐ Providing a crèche in the work place ☐ Other	<i>Please choose ONLY one answer</i>
Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.	

**Appendix B-2 Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early
Childhood Care and Education Provision in North Sinai
(Parents' Questionnaire Arabic Version)**

كود المشترك كود الفئه	تملاً فقط بواسطة الباحثة: كيف تم تعبئة استطلاع الرأي؟ قام المشترك ذاتياً بملء استطلاع الرأي عن طريق مقابله مع المشترك وجها لوجه ☐ ملء ذاتي ومقابله مع المشترك ☐ لم يتم استكمال استطلاع الرأي ☐

العوامل الاجتماعية والسكانية التي تؤثر على توفير الرعاية والتعليم في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في شمال سيناء يرجى ملء استطلاع الرأي التالي عن طريق كتابة إجابة قصيرة أو بوضع إشارة (x) في المربع المناسب وفقاً لما يتطلبه السؤال مع مراعاة الإجابة عن جميع الأسئلة التي تنطبق عليك:	
الجزء الأول: معلومات أساسية	الملاحظات
1- إلي أي فئة عمرية تنتمي؟	
☐ 20 عام أو أقل ☐ من 20 إلي 30 عام ☐ من 31 إلي 40 عام ☐ من 41 إلي 50 عام	
2- ما هي الحالة الاجتماعية؟	
☐ متزوجة/متزوج ☐ مطلقة/مطلق ☐ أرملة/أرمل	
3- هل تعاني من أي إعاقة؟	☐ نعم ☐ لا
4- هل يعاني الزوج/الزوجة من أي إعاقة؟	☐ نعم ☐ لا
5- كيف تصف صحتك؟	من فضلك اكتب إجابتك في مثل هذا النوع من الأسئلة.
6- كيف تصف صحة الزوج/الزوجة؟	
7- ما هو مستواك التعليمي؟	علي سبيل المثال: بدون مؤهل - شهادة محو أمية أو تعليم أساسي - شهادة تعليم ثانوي - مؤهل متوسط - مؤهل جامعي
8- ما هو المستوى التعليمي للزوج/ الزوجة؟	علي سبيل المثال: بدون مؤهل - شهادة محو أمية أو تعليم أساسي - شهادة تعليم ثانوي - مؤهل متوسط - مؤهل جامعي
الجزء الثاني: الوظيفة والدخل	الملاحظات
9- ما هي مهنتك/وظيفتك؟	في حالة عدم العمل يكتب لا أعمل

إذا كان هذا السؤال لا ينطبق، يرجى الانتقال إلى السؤال التالي (رقم 11). فضلاً أجب عن جميع عبارات هذا السؤال بوضع علامة أمام "نعم" أو "لا"، مع كتابة إجابة عن الفقرة الأخيرة.	10- إذا كنت تعمل، هل هو عمل - دوام كامل يومي ☐ نعم ☐ لا - دوام جزئي للعمل (بعض الايام أوبعض الساعات يومياً) ☐ نعم ☐ لا - عمل مؤقت موسمي ☐ نعم ☐ لا 11- يتطلب منك السفر والإقامة بعيداً عن البيت ☐ نعم ☐ لا إذا كانت إجابتك عن السؤال الأخير بنعم، من فضلك حدد مدة الإقامة بعيداً عن المنزل للعمل (مثال اسبوع- شهر.... الخ)
	12 - ما هو عمل الزوج/الزوجة؟
	13 إذا كان الزوج/الزوجة تعمل، هل هو عمل - دوام كامل يومي ☐ نعم ☐ لا - دوام جزئي للعمل (بعض الايام أوبعض الساعات يومياً) ☐ نعم ☐ لا - عمل مؤقت موسمي ☐ نعم ☐ لا 14- يتطلب السفر والإقامة بعيداً عن البيت ☐ نعم ☐ لا إذا كانت إجابتك عن السؤال الأخير بنعم، من فضلك حدد مدة الإقامة بعيداً عن المنزل للعمل (مثال اسبوع- شهر.... الخ)
	15- ما هو دخل الأسرة المجمع (الزوج والزوجة) شهرياً من جميع المصادر (مثل المرتبات، وأجر العمل الإضافي، والمساعدات الحكومية، ومساعدات الأسرة والأقارب، والنفقة، وغير ذلك)؟ إذا كنت لا تعرف بالضبط دخلك، يرجى تقدير: ☐ أقل من 1000 جنية ☐ من 1000 إلى 2000 جنية ☐ من 2000 إلى 3000 جنية ☐ أكثر من 3000 جنية

الملاحظات	الجزء الثالث: المسكن
	16- كم عدد الراشدين الذين يعيشون حالياً في منزلك، بما في ذلك نفسك؟ 
	17- المسكن الذي تعيش به، ☐ تمليك ☐ إيجار ☐ حكومي ☐ بيت اسرتك أو أسرة الزوج/الزوجة
	18- هل تعيش بجوار قريب لك أو للزوج/الزوجة حتى الدرجة الثالثة؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم رجاؤا تحديد صلة القرابة: 
الملاحظات	الجزء الرابع: أطفالك
	19- كم عدد أولادك؟
	20- كم عدد أولادك الذين يقل عمرهم عن 6 سنوات؟ 
فضلاً ضع عدد الاطفال الذكور والإناث بالمربع المقابل لكل جنس	21- كم عدد أولادك الإناث والذكور الذين يقل عمرهم عن 6 سنوات؟  ☐ ذكر ☐ أنثى
	22- هل أي من أطفالك الذين يقل عمرهم عن 6 سنوات من ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة (مثال أن يكون لديهم توحّد، إعاقة أو مرض خطير لا قدر الله)؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم يرجى ذكر نوع الإعاقة أو المرض: 
	23- هل تؤثر الحالة الصحية لطفلك على قرارك بشأن نوع الرعاية التي تختارها له؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم يرجى ذكر نوع الرعاية : 

	24- ما هي الأنشطة التي تقوم بها بشكل منتظم لرعاية وتعليم أطفالك ما قبل المدرسة؟ ☐ ☐ تعليم ديني في المؤسسات الدينية ☐ رعاية الطفل في المنزل ☐ أنشطة تعليمية وترفيهية في الأندية والمكتبات العامة ☐ أنشطة تأهيلية لذوي الإحتياجات الخاصة.
فضلاً أختار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	25- ما أسباب اختيارك لهذه الأنشطة؟ ☐ لا توجد أنشطة بديلة بالمنطقة لرعاية أطفال ☐ تناسب ظروف المادية ☐ لقربها من مسكني ☐ تناسب ظروف عملي ☐ لأنها تساعد على نمو طفلي جسمانياً وعقلياً وانفعالياً واجتماعياً ☐ غير ذلك
	26- ما هو السن المثالي لإرسال أطفالك إلى الحضانة من وجهة نظرك؟ ☐
فضلاً أختار إجابة واحدة فقط	27- ماذا تتوقع أن يستفيد طفلك من الذهاب للحضانة /رياض الأطفال؟ ☐ ☐ رعاية طفلي في فترة غيابه عنه ☐ إعداده للمدرسة ☐ غير ذلك
إذا كان هذا السؤال لا ينطبق، يرجى الانتقال إلى السؤال التالي (رقم 29) فضلاً أختار كل ما ينطبق	28- ماذا تقوم به الحضانة أو دار رياض الأطفال الملحق بها طفلك من أجل إشراكك في نشاطات رعاية وتعليم طفلك؟ ☐ لا تقوم بأشراكى فى أى أنشطة ☐ اجتماعات دورية مع الآباء ☐ تقارير ترسل للآباء عن أطفالهم ☐ توجيه الدعوة للآباء لزيارة أطفالهم فى الحضانة من

إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	الحين للآخر للتعرف على ما يقومون به من أنشطة ☐ غير ذلك
فضلاً أختار إجابة واحدة فقط إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	29- ما هي أهم حقوق طفلك الخاصة بالرعاية والتعليم التي تعمل علي تحقيقها الحضانه أو رياض الاطفال الملحق بها طفلك ؟ ☐ الرعاية الاجتماعية والنفسية ☐ النمو الجسمي السليم من خلال التغذية السليمة والنمو في بيئة نظيفة وصحية ☐ النمو العقلي والمعرفي من خلال توفير فرص اللعب والتعليم ☐ غير ذلك
	30- كم تبعد أقرب حضانه أو رياض اطفال عن منزلك؟ ☐ قريبة ولا تحتاج وسيلة مواصلات. ☐ ليست بعيدة جداً ولكن تحتاج وسيلة مواصلات. ☐ بعيدة جداً وتتطلب وسيلة مواصلات
مثل مساعدة للام المعيلة	31- هل تأخذ أى مساعدات مالية لتعليم ورعاية أطفالك من أي جهة ؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا
فضلاً أختار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	32- في رأيك، ما هي العقبات التي تعوق رعاية وتعليم طفل ما قبل المدرسة في منطقتك؟ ☐ ارتفاع مصاريف رياض الأطفال أو الحضانات ☐ المستوى المتدنى للخدمة برياض الأطفال أو الحضانات (صغر حجم الفصل - تكديس عدد كبير من الأطفال -- المعلمين غير مؤهلين - فقر الموارد والوسائل التعليمية والترفيهية) ☐ عدم وجود عدد كاف من الحضانات ورياض الاطفال بالمنطقة ☐ عدم اشراك أولياء الامور في تقييم مستوى الرعاية المقدم لأطفالهم وتقديم مقترحاتهم لتحسين الخدمة المقدمة لأطفالهم ☐ غير ذلك

33- ما هي الترتيبات التي تقوم بها لرعاية أطفالك أثناء العمل أو لو كنت سوف تعمل؟ ☐ حضانة خاصة ☐ حضانة حكومية ☐ مربية/جليسة اطفال ☐ الأجداد أو أحد الأقارب ☐ البقاء في المنزل مع الأشقاء الأكبر سناً ☐ البقاء مع جارة قريبة ☐ البقاء في المنزل مع احد الوالدين غير ذلك..... إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	34- ما هي أسباب اختيار هذا النوع من الرعاية ؟ ☐ لا توجد دور رياض اطفال أخرى متاحة في المنطقة ☐ لتقديمها خدمات للأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة ☐ التكلفة ☐ قصر المسافة ☐ جوده الرعاية المقدمة ☐ تحضير الطفل وأعداده للدخول للمدرسة ☐ غير ذلك إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح
35- إذا كان طفلك في أي دور رعاية حكومية أو خاصة بأجر، كيف سمعت عن تلك الدار ؟ ☐ من الاصدقاء ☐ من الجيران ☐ الأقارب ☐ زملاء العمل ☐ صحيفة ☐ اعلان في الشارع /صحيفة ☐ هيئة حكومية ☐ غير ذلك إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	36- إذا كان لديك فرصة لعمل تغيير واحد في بيئة عملك لمساعدتك علي رعاية وتعليم طفلك في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة بطريقة أفضل، ماذا سيكون؟ ☐ زيادة راتبك ☐ زيادة المرونة في مواعيد بدء وانتهاء العمل ☐ تقليل عدد ساعات العمل ☐ تقليل السفرات التي يتطلبها العمل ☐ وجود دار حضانة ورياض اطفال في مكان العمل ☐ غير ذلك إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح
هذا هو نهاية الاستبيان شكراً لوقتكم وتعاونكم	

**Appendix B-3 Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early
Childhood Care and Education Provision in North Sinai
(Practitioners' Questionnaire)**

FOR RESEARCHER USE ONLY

How was the questionnaire completed? 1-Self administered by the participant
 2-Face-to-face interview
 3-Both self-administered and interview
 4-Not completed

Category Code:_____ Participant Code:_____

Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early Childhood Care and Education Provision in North Sinai (Practitioners' Questionnaire)

Please complete the following questionnaire by writing a short answer or by placing a CROSS ☒ in the appropriate box or circle where applicable.

Questions	Notes
1. What qualification(s) do you hold?	
2. Do you have a certificate in early childhood care and education? ☐ Yes ☐ No	
3. How many years of experience do you have in working with children?	
4. What is the age group of children attending your nursery?	For example, 0 to 3 years
5. What is the class size in the nursery where you work?	
6. What is the staff-child ratio in your nursery?	
7. What is the main purpose of your nursery?	For example caring of children during parents' absence or School readiness.
8. In addition to classrooms, what are the facilities in your nursery? ☐ Garden ☐ Playroom ☐ Audio-visual Media equipment ☐ Catering facilities for preparing meals ☐ Other	Please check all that apply Please specify if you choose other
9. How your nursery get parents involved in their children's care and education? ☐ Regular meetings with parents ☐ Reports are sent to parents ☐ Inviting parents to visit their children in	Please check all that apply

the nursery setting ☐ Send activities with children to practise under the supervision of parents. ☐ No involvement at all ☐ Something else (please mention it down) -----	
10. Do you have any specific activities in your nursery for disabled children? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, what are they?..... 	
11. What are the reasons that encourage parents to choose your childcare centre? ☐ No other centres available in the area ☐ Offering care for special needs children ☐ Cost ☐ Distance ☐ The quality of care provided ☐ School readiness ☐ Other.....	<i>Please check all that apply</i> <i>Please specify if you choose other</i>
12. How do parents get information about Childcare centres in the area? ☐ Friends ☐ Neighbours ☐ Relatives ☐ Colleges at work ☐ Newspapers or Public Bulletins ☐ Governmental Body ☐ Other.....	<i>Please check all that apply</i> <i>Please specify if you choose other</i>
13. To what extent do you think poverty is affecting childcare provision in your nursery and in the region? ☐ To a very little extent ☐ To little extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To a very great extent	<i>Please choose one answer</i>

14. How does low income effect children in your nursery? ☐ Children suffer from malnutrition ☐ Lack of attention to personal hygiene ☐ Child's behaviour and his relationship with his/her peers ☐ Low achievement ☐ Other..... 	<i>Please check all that apply</i> <i>Please specify if you choose other</i>
15. Do you think there is a gender discrimination practised by parents in terms of enrolling their children in the nursery in favour of a certain gender? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, in favour of which gender? Why? 	<i>For instance enrolling boys rather than girls or vice-versa.</i>
16. To what extent does the distance from nursery to home affect child enrolment in your nursery? ☐ To a very little extent ☐ To little extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To a very great extent	
17. To what extent does the work of the father or the mother affect the enrolment in your nursery? ☐ To a very little extent ☐ To little extent ☐ To some extent ☐ To a great extent ☐ To a very great extent	
18. To what extent does the nature of the work of parents affect the enrolment in your nursery? ☐ To a very little extent ☐ To little extent	<i>For example professional/self-employed/manual work.</i>

[illegible]

22. In your opinion how can care and education authorities help you and the nursery more in providing better childcare? ☐ Raising the efficiency of care providers ☐ Regular inspection to improve care services ☐ More financial support ☐ Increasing salary ☐ Providing enough resources ☐ Other	Please check all that apply Please specify if you choose other
Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.	

**Appendix B-4 Socio-Demographic Factors Affecting Early
Childhood Care and Education Provision in North Sinai
(Practitioners' Questionnaire Arabic Version)**

كود المشترك كود الفئة	تملاً فقط بواسطة الباحثة: كيف تم تعبئة استطلاع الرأي؟ قام المشترك ذاتياً بملء استطلاع الرأي ☐ طريق مقابله مع المشترك وجها لوجه ☐ ذاتي ومقابلة مع المشترك ☐ تم استكمال استطلاع الرأي ☐

العوامل الاجتماعية والسكانية التي تؤثر على توفير الرعاية والتعليم في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في شمال سيناء يرجى ملء استطلاع الرأي التالي عن طريق كتابة إجابة قصيرة أو بوضع إشارة (x) في المربع المناسب وفقاً لما يتطلبه السؤال مع مراعاة الإجابة عن جميع الأسئلة. ويمكن استخدام ورق اضافي إذا تطلبت الإجابات ذلك:	
الجزء الأول: معلومات أساسية	
	11- ما هي المؤهلات الدراسية الحاصلة عليها؟
	12- هل لديك أي شهادات في مجال رياض الأطفال والطفولة المبكرة؟
	13- كم عدد سنوات الخبرة لديك في العمل مع الأطفال؟
مثال: الأطفال من سن 1 إلى 3 سنوات	14- ما هي الفئة العمرية للأطفال بدار رعايتكم؟
	15- كم عدد الأطفال في الفصل الواحد؟
على سبيل المثال كل مقدمة رعاية مسئولة عن 15 طفل بمفردها	16- ما هي نسبة مقدمي الرعاية لنسبة الأطفال بالفصل الواحد في الحضانة التي تعمل بها؟
فضلاً اختار إجابة واحدة فقط	17- ما هو الغرض الرئيسي للحضانة التي تعمل بها؟ ☐ رعاية الطفلي فترة عمل الأم ☐ الأعداد للمدرسة ☐ المساعدة في نمو الطفل جسمانيا وعقليا وانفعاليا واجتماعيا

إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	☐ غير ذلك
يرجى اختيار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	18- ما هي الإمكانيات المتوفرة داخل الحضانة التي تعمل بها؟ ☐ حديقة/غرف للعب ☐ وسائل سمعية وبصرية ووسائل تعليمية ☐ تقديم وجبات غذائية ☐ غير ذلك
	19- كيف تقوم حضانتكم بإشراك الآباء في نشاطات رعاية وتعليم أطفالهم؟ من خلال ☐ اجتماعات دورية مع الآباء ☐ تقارير ترسل للآباء عن أطفالهم ☐ توجيه الدعوة للآباء لزيارة أطفالهم في الحضانة ☐ إرسال أنشطة منزلية ليمارسها الأطفال تحت إشراف الآباء ☐ غير ذلك
مثال كتب بطريقة برايل للمكفوفين	20- هل توفر حضانتكم أي أنشطة تحديداً للأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ ☐ نعم ☐ لا  إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم يرجى التوضيح:

يرجى اختيار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	21- ما هي أسباب اختيار اولياء الأمور حضانتكم لأطفالهم؟ ☐ لا توجد خيارات فلا يوجد دور رعاية أخرى بديلة بالمنطقة ☐ انها تقدم خدمات للأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة . ☐ لتفضيل اولياء الأمور لنوع محدد من الرعاية ☐ التكلفة ☐ المسافة ☐ جودة الرعاية المقدمة ☐ تحضير الطفل وأعداده لدخول المدرسة ☐ غير ذلك
يرجى اختيار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	22- كيف يعرف الآباء عن خدمات رعاية وتعليم الأطفال في المنطقة بما في ذلك كيفية المعرفة عن حضانتكم؟ ☐ من الاصدقاء ☐ من الجيران ☐ الاقارب ☐ زملاء العمل ☐ صحيفة ☐ اعلان في الشارع او نشرات في مراكز الصحة ☐ هيئة حكومية ☐ غير ذلك
	23- إلى أي مدى تعتقد الفقر يؤثر على الحاق الاطفال بدور الرعاية (الحضانات - رياض الاطفال) في المنطقة؟ ☐ إلى حد كبير ☐ إلى حد ما ☐ إلى حد ضئيل ☐ إلى حد ضئيل جدا

يرجى اختيار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	24- كيف يؤثر مستوي الدخل المتدني على الأطفال في حضانتكم؟ ☐ يعاني الأطفال من سوء التغذية ☐ عدم الاهتمام بنظافته الشخصية ☐ سلوك الطفل وعلى علاقته مع اقاربه ☐ قلة فرص نجاحه الاكاديمي ☐ غير ذلك
على سبيل المثال البعض يهتم بتوفير فرص تعليم أفضل للولد من البنت بالحاقه بدار رعاية مرتفعة المصاريف وادخال البنت دار رعاية اقل تكلفة	25- هل تعتقد أن هناك تمييز بين الجنسين في تسجيل اولياء الامور لأطفالهم بالحضانة لصالح جنس معين؟ ☐ لا ☐ نعم إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، لصالح أي جنس؟ ولماذا؟
	26- - إلى أي مدى تؤثر المسافة من الحضانة إلى المنزل علي التحاق الأطفال بدار الرعاية الخاصة بكم؟ ☐ إلى حد كبير ☐ إلى حد ما ☐ إلى حد ضئيل ☐ إلى حد ضئيل جدا
	27- إلي أي مدى يؤثر عمل الاب والأمفي في نسبة الالتحاق بدور الرعاية و التعليم لأطفال ما قبل المدرسة بالمنطقة؟ ☐ إلى حد كبير ☐ إلى حد ما ☐ إلى حد ضئيل ☐ إلى حد ضئيل جدا

	28- إلي أي مدى تؤثر طبيعة عمل الاب والام(حرفي - اداري- مهني) في نسبة الالتحاق بدور الرعاية و التعليم لأطفال ما قبل المدرسة بالمنطقة؟ ☐ إلى حد كبير ☐ إلى حد ما ☐ إلى حد ضئيل ☐ إلى حد ضئيل جدا
	29- إلي أي مدى يؤثر دخل الأسرة في نسبة الالتحاق بدور الرعاية و التعليم لأطفال ما قبل المدرسة بالمنطقة؟ ☐ إلى حد كبير ☐ إلى حد ما ☐ إلى حد ضئيل ☐ إلى حد ضئيل جدا
	30- إلي أي مدى يؤثر مستوى تعليم الاب أو الأم في نسبة الالتحاق بدور الرعاية و التعليم لأطفال ما قبل المدرسة بالمنطقة؟ ☐ إلى حد كبير ☐ إلى حد ما ☐ إلى حد ضئيل ☐ إلى حد ضئيل جدا
يرجى اختيار كل ما ينطبق	31- ماهي معوقات توفير رعاية و تعليم جيد للأطفال في مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة بالمنطقة؟ ☐ عدم وجود عدد كاف من الحضانات ورياض الأطفال بالمنطقة ☐ عدم اهتمام الاجهزة المعنية برفع كفاءة مقدمي الرعاية من خلال دورات تدريبية ☐ عدم اهتمام الجهات الرقابية بعمل تفتيش دورى على دور الرعاية لتحسين خدماتها ☐ عدم اشراك اولياء الأمور فى تقييم مستوى الرعاية المقدم لأطفالهم وتقديم مقترحاتهم لتحسين الخدمات التى تقدم لأطفالهم ☐ البيئة المحيطة غير مؤهلة بسبب وعوره الطرق ، بعيدة عن

إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	العمران ، قلة المواصلات العامة. ☐ غير ذلك
يرجى اختيار كل ما ينطبق إذا اخترت غير ذلك يرجى التوضيح	32-فيراك، كيف يمكن ان تساعدكم السلطات المسؤولة عن الرعاية والتعليم سواء بالمديرية او الوزارة في توفير خدمة افضل للأطفال لديكم ؟ ☐ رفع كفاءة مقدمى الرعاية من خلال دورات تدريبية ☐ عمل تفتيش دورى على دار الرعاية لتحسين خدماتها وتطويرها ☐ تقديم الدعم المالى ☐ زيادة الرواتب ☐ الامداد بالادوات ووسائل الرعاية والتعليم ☐ غير ذلك
نهاية الاستبيان شكراً لوقتكم وتعاونكم	

Appendix C: Interview Schedules

Appendix C-1: Mothers' Interview Questions

Appendix C-2: Practitioners' Interview Questions

Appendix C-3: Policy Makers' Interview Questions

**Appendix C-4: The Arabic Translation of the Interview
Schedules**

Interview Schedules

Interview Opening

- **Introduction**

Giving a brief introduction about myself and the purpose of the interview. It is important also to mention at this stage that the data collected in this interview will be used for this research study only and kept in strict confidence.

- **Purpose of the Research**

My research tries to identify the socio-demographic factors affecting early childhood care and education provision in North Sinai. Besides, it aims at examining how childcare policies and programs respond to the socio-demographic factors affecting early childhood care and education. The research is also interested in understanding the activities that parents undertake in caring for their children, and how they make decisions about their childcare arrangements. The findings obtained from the interviews as well as those drawn from the other search instruments will form part of my PhD thesis in education, University of Durham, United Kingdom.

- **Motivation**

It is hoped that the research findings will help improve early childhood care and education provision in Egypt, in particular in semi-remote areas.

- **Duration**

The interview will be short and should take 45 minutes to one hour.

- **Reconfirming Confidentiality**

I can confirm that any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and no personal information will be retained.

- **Informed Consent**

You have the right to refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any time. If you are happy with that, then we can proceed (record consent).

- **Expressing Thanks and Appreciation**

I am very grateful for your time and efforts to participate in this study.

C-1 Mothers' Interview Questions

Category	Questions	Prompt Questions & Examples
1. General demographic information (Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about you and your children)	1.1 Could you please talk me through some of the basic information about you and your family? 1.2 Are you originally from North Sinai?	1.1 E.g. age, education, employment, number of children, family structure, housing. 1.2 If not, how long have you been living in North Sinai
2. Childcare arrangement and socio-demographic factors (Transition: Let's move to ask about your childcare arrangements)	2.1 Is your child being cared for by someone other than the mother (or father)? Why? 2.2 If yes, what type(s) of arrangement(s) do you frequently use? Why? 2.3 What are the three most important factors influencing your decision concerning your childcare arrangement? Why? 2.4 What is the main purpose of sending your child to a formal childcare setting?	2.2 How many hours a week your child is in care? 2.3 E.g. family structure, income, education, employment, health status, marital status.
3. Activities mothers undertake for caring for your children (Transition: Let's ask now about childcare activities you use).	3.1 What kind of activities do you undertake for your children care and education? 3.2 What are the factors that assist or constraint your childcare activities?	3.1 How much time does each of these activities take? 3.2a How do you manage to get everything done? 3.2b Is there anyone who helps you?
4. ECCE policies (Transition: Let's move to ask about ECCE policies).	4.1 What are the childcare policies that you are eligible for?	4.1 E.g. Parental leave, fee subsidies policies.
5. Obstacles and Future Plan (Transition: Let's conclude our interview with questions about childcare obstacles and future plan).	5.1 What are the obstacles of providing a good childcare and education? 5.2 What is your plan to overcome the current obstacles? 5.3 Finally, do you have any questions for me?	5.1 What care and education regulations do you consider burdensome? 5.2 How can you improve your children care and education in the future?

C-2 Practitioners' Interview Questions

Category	Questions	Prompt Questions & Examples
1. Qualification, experience, accommodation and general satisfaction questions (Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about you and your work)	1.1 Could you please talk me through some of the basic information about you and your work? 1.2 How far do you live from your work? 1.3 Are you satisfied with your job? Why? 1.4 Do you have another job? 1.5 Do you expect to be working in the early childhood care and education field after three years from now?	1.1 E.g. qualifications, experience, job description
2. Work environment (Transition: Let's move to talk about your work environment)	2.1 What is the main purpose of your nursery? 2.2 What is the age group of children attending your nursery? 2.3 Can you please tell me more about nursery facilities? How about class size? Staff- child ratio?	2.1 Do you think childcare aim is confined to school readiness in the Egyptian context? Why?
3. Communications with parents (Transition: Now I am going to ask about your communication with parents)	3.1 How do you work with parents? 3.2 Are they involved in their children's care and education at your nursery?	3.1 E.g. regular meetings, news letters
4. Socio-demographic factors and ECCE (Transition: Let me ask you now some questions about socio-demographic factors and ECCE)	4.1 What type of arrangements do parents frequently use in the region? Why? 4.2 What are the most important factors influencing parents' choice of childcare arrangement? Why?	
5. ECCE policies (Transition: Let's move to ask about ECCE policies).	5.1 What are the childcare policies in operation in your work? 5.2 How do childcare policies respond to care and education requirements in the region?	

6. Obstacles and Future Plan (Transition: Let's conclude our interview with questions about childcare obstacles and future plan).	6.1 What are the obstacles of providing a good childcare and education in the region? 6.2 How can authorities help you and the nursery more to provide better childcare? 6.3 Finally, do you have any questions for me?	6.1 What care and education regulations do you consider burdensome?

C-3 Policy Makers' Interview Questions

Category	Questions	Prompt Questions & Examples
1. General information about ECCE in North Sinai (Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about early childhood care and education in North Sinai)	1.1 Can you talk me through the main goals of pre-school care and education in North Sinai? 1.2 What are the current childcare and education project(s) which target preschool children in remote and semi-remote areas? 1.3 What are the strategies for childcare provision in the area? 1.4 Are there any programs for the rehabilitation of the environment in order to improve childcare provision?	1.1 Is it mainly for school readiness? 1.4 If yes, what are they?
2. ECCE Policies (Transition: Let me move to ask about early childhood care and education).	2.1 What is the legislation on social protection/social security for families and their children in vulnerable situations and in need? 2.2 Do you think there is a gender discrimination practiced by parents in terms of enrolling their children in the nursery in favour of a certain gender? 2.3 Do you think early marriage is one of the obstacles of providing a good childcare and education for pre-school children in the region? Why? 2.4 How do parents know about childcare and education services in the region? 2.5 How can parents be aware of their children's rights regarding care and education? 2.6 What are the forms of support for early childhood care and education in the poor- disadvantage areas?	2.1 If there is any legislation and if no, why?
3. ECCE Quality	3.1 What are the facilities in public	

Standards (Transition: Let me ask now about early childhood care and education quality standards)	nurseries? 3.2 Do childcare nurseries provide any specific services for disabled children? 3.3 Can you comment on the qualification level of caregivers in the nurseries in the area? 3.4 How about class size and staff-ratio?	
4. Factors affecting ECCE provision (Transition: Let me ask now about the factors affecting ECCE provision)	4.1 How do family socio-demographic factors affect ECCE provision in the area? 4.2 To what extent do you think poverty is affecting childcare provision in the region? 4.3 How do neighbourhood characteristics affect childcare provision?	4.1 Parents' education level, work ,income, family structure, number of children
5.ECCE Obstacles (Transition: Let me conclude our interview with your opinion on the ECCE obstacles and future action plan).	5. 1What are the obstacles of providing a good childcare and education for pre-school children in the region? 5.2 What is the action plan to overcome the current obstacles in the future? 5.3 3Finally, do you have any questions for me or do you want to discuss anything else?	

Appendix C-4: The Arabic Translation of the Interview Schedules

اسئلة المقابلات الموجهة للأمهات

الفئة	الاسئلة	أمثلة
1- معلومات ديموغرافية عامة عن المشاركات : أسمحي لي أن نبدأ بسؤالك عن بعض المعلومات التي تتعلق بكى وبطفلك.	-هل من الممكن أن تخبريني ببعض المعلومات عنك وعن طفلك ؟ اطفالك؟ - هل أنت من محافظة شمال سيناء أم من الوادى؟	على سبيل المثال : عمرک و سن أطفالك – تعليمك – هل بتعملی أم ربه منزل – عدد أولادك – مسكنك لو انت او زوجك لستم من شمال سيناء & منذ متى وانتم تعيشوا هنا؟
2- اسئلة تدور حول العوامل الديموغرافية المؤثرة على انشطة الرعاية والتعليم للأطفال فى سن الطفولة المبكرة التى تقومى بها انت وزوجك.	هل يقوم أحد غيرك برعاية طفلك؟ ما نوع الرعاية التى تستخدمها بشكل منتظم يوميا؟ ولماذا؟ ما هى أكثر العوامل التى تؤثر على قرارك الخاص باختيار نوع الرعاية لطفلك؟ ولماذا؟ ما هو الغرض الاساسى من دور الحضانات ورياض الاطفال فى اعتقادك؟	كم عدد الساعات التى يقضيها طفلك اسبوعيا مع أحد غيرك انت أو والده خارج البيت أو بالبيت ولكن مع شخص غريب عنكم ؟ عوامل مثل دخل الاسره - عدد افراد الاسره – صحتك – عمك – الحالة الاجتماعية
3- الأنشطة التى تقوم بها الأم لرعاية وتعليم أطفالها: دعينا ننقل للحديث الان على ما تقومى به من أنشطة لرعاية اطفالك الصغار الذين لم يلتحقوا بالمدرسة حتى الان.	ما هو نوع الانشطة التى تقومى بها مع أطفالك من أجل رعايتهم وتعليمهم فى سنوات عمرهم الاولى وقبل التحاقهم بالمدرسة ؟ ما هى العوامل التى تساعدك أو تعيقك اثناء قيامك بمثل هذه الأنشطة ؟	كم تستغرق هذه الانشطة؟ كيف تحاولى القيام بهذه الانشطة وتتمكنى من انجازها؟ هل يوجد أحد يساعدك ؟
4- سياسات رعاية وتعليم الطفل	ما هى سياسات رعاية الطفل التى أنت مؤهلة لها؟	على سبيل المثال اجازات رعاية الاسره – الحضانات ورياض الأطفال الحكومية .
5- المعوقات وخطتك المستقبلية : دعينا ننهي حوارنا بالحديث عن المشاكل والعقبات وترتيباتك المستقبلية.	ما هى العقبات التى تواجهينها لتقديم رعاية وتعليم على مستوى عالى لطفلك؟ ما هو خطتك للتغلب على هذه العقبات؟ أخيرا هل ترغبى فى توجيهه اى سؤال لى وشكرا لمشاركتك ؟	ماهى القوانين واللوائح التى ترى أنها معيقة لتقديم رعاية وتعليم لطفلك. كيف يمكن تطوير رعاية طفلك فى المستقبل؟

اسئلة المقابلات مع مقدمي الخدمة

الفئة	الاسئلة	أمثلة
1- معلومات عامة حول التعليم ورعاية الاطفال منذ الميلاد وحتى سن المدرسة: اسئلة عن رعاية وتعليم الطفل بمحافظة شمال سيناء.	- هل من الممكن أن تحدثيني عن نفسك وعن عملك ؟	مثال : المؤهلات وخبراتك وطبيعة العمل الذى تقومى به .
2- مكان عملك:	- ما هو الغرض الرئيسى للحضانة أو الروضة التي تعملين بها؟ - ما هو سن الاطفال الذى تستقبلوهم بالدار لديكم ؟ - ما هي الامكانيات المتاحة لديكم وحجم القاعات وعدد المشرفين والاطفال ؟	هل تعتقدى أن الهدف الاساسى من رياض الاطفال والحضانات هو الإعداد للمدرسة و لماذا؟
3- اشراك أولياء الأمور:	- كيف تعملوا مع اولياء الأمور ؟ - هل تقوموا باشراك أولياء الأمور فى تعليم ورعاية أطفالهم؟	كعقد اجتماعات مع الاباء وأرسال نشرات دورية
4- ننقل الان للعوامل الديموغرافية المؤثرة على أنشطة الرعاية والتعليم للأطفال فى سن الطفولة المبكرة	- ما هو نوع الرعاية التي يستخدمه اولياء الامور بمنطقتكم ولماذا؟ - ما هي أهم العوامل المؤثرة على اختيارات الاباء لنوع الرعاية لأطفالهم ولماذا؟	
5- سياسات رعاية الطفل	- ما هي السياسات المستخدمة لديكم؟ - كيف تستجيب السياسات الحالية لمتطلبات الرعاية والتعليم بالمنطقة؟	
6- العقبات والخطط المستقبلية	- ما هي العقبات التي تواجه تقديم الرعاية والتعليم لأطفال ما قبل المدرسة بالمنطقة؟ - كيف يمكن لمؤسسات الدولة ان تساعدكم لتقديم رعاية وتعليم افضل ؟ - أخيرا هل يوجد أى سؤال تودى أن توجهيه لى وشكرا ؟	على سبيل المثال ما هي القوانين والتشريعات التى تعيق رعاية وتعليم الاطفال بالمحافظة ؟

اسئلة المقابلات مع واضعى السياسات

الفئة	الاسئلة	الامثلة
1- معلومات عامه عن التعليم والرعاية المتوافرين بشمال سيناء	- هل من الممكن أن نتحدث عن الأهداف الرئيسية لتعليم ورعاية الطفل قبل التحاقه بالمدرسة فى هذا السن بشمال سيناء تحديداً؟ - ما هى المشاريع الحالية التى تستهدف الاطفال فى هذا السن فى المنطقة؟ - ما هى الخطط المستقبلية لرعاية وتعليم الطفل بشمال سيناء ؟ - هل توجد اى برامج لاعاده تأهيل المناطق الوعره والبيئات الصعب الوصول لها ؟	
2- سياسات تعليم ورعاية الطفل بشمال سيناء	- ما هى التشريعات الحالية لحماية الأطفال بالمناطق المحرومة ؟ - ما هى السياسات التى تحقق العدالة والمساواه بين الاطفال فى هذا السن المبكر وتحميهم من التمييز والانعزال بسبب ظروف اسرهم ؟ - كيف يعرف أولياء الأمور عن الخدمات المتاحة بالمحافظة لرعاية أطفالهم؟	ما هى أشكال الدعم المتوافره للطفل فى المحافظة ؟
3- جوده الرعاية المقدمة ومستواها	- ما هى الامكانيات المتاحة فى الحضانات ورياض الاطفال الحكومية؟ - هل يوجد أى اشكال دعم وانشطة للأطفال ذوى الاحتياجات الخاصة؟ - ما هو المستوى العلمى لمقدمي الرعاية بشمال سيناء ؟ - هل حجم وكثافة الفصول مناسبة؟	دورات تدريبية قبل وبعد الخدمة.
4- العوامل المؤثره على تقديم الرعاية والتعليم للطفل بشمال سيناء	- كيف تؤثر العوامل الديموغرافية للأسرة والبيئة المحيطة بالطفل على فرص الحصول على رعاية وتعليم جيد؟	مثال : الى اى مدى يؤثر الفقر و البيئة المحيطة على فرص حصول الطفل على رعاية وتعليم قبل التحاقه بالمدرسة.
5- اخيرا سنختتم المقابلة بالسؤال حول العقبات التى تواجه الرعاية بشمال سيناء وخططكم المستقبلية للتغلب عليها	- ما هى العقبات التى تواجه تقديم رعاية وتعليم على مستوى جيد للطفل بالمنطقة؟ - كيف يمكن لمؤسسات الدولة أن تساعدكم فى تخطب هذه العقبات ؟ أخيرا أود أن أشكركم على وقتكم معى ؟	

Appendix D: Qualitative Data

Appendix D-1: The characteristics of the participants of the first group (Mothers)

Code	Participant Description
Alla	She is originally from North Sinai and her husband as well. Alla was 35 years old and had 5 children. The youngest was 1 month and the oldest was 13 years old. Her husband was working abroad and only visited them for one month each year during his annual holiday. All her children were in private schools. She had a full time job but only goes 2 or 3 days a week. She was living in the same street with both her family and her husband family.
Amina	She was 20 years old and not originally from North Sinai but lived there from 10 years. Her husband was from North Sinai. She had 2 pre-school boys. Amina did not work but she was studying.
Menatallah	She was 25 years and a mother of a three years old boy and a four months old baby. She was working as a secretary in a private school. She and her husband were from North Sinai. Her family and her husband family were living in another city in North Sinai.
Shadia	She was 37 years old and a mother of six children. Children are of different age ranging from 4 months old to 12 years old. She and her husband were from North Sinai. She did not work and her husband was the main source of income.
Abeer	She was 35 years old .She was married and had five children between the ages of three months and Eleven years. Three children were at a public school, a 4 year old child went to a private nursery and a baby cared at home by the mother. Both the mother and the father were from North Sinai. Their families also were living near. They were living in their owned house. Her husband was a self-employed with good income.
Samira	She had 32 years and a married mother of five children between the ages of 3 and 14 years. Samira was not from Sinai and just moved to after marriage as her husband was from North Sinai. Samira lived with her husband's family in the same house and her mother in law lived with her. Her husband was a businessman and always busy.
Fatma	Fatma was a single mother and had a 7 months baby girl .She was working as a teacher in a temporary position in a school which was far away from her residency. She was divorced before the birth of her child. She was living with her mother who was ill and cannot take care of her child while she was at work. So, she took her child with her to work four times a week. She was facing a lot of problems, but she could not leave the job as it was her main source of income.

Fadia	She was a widow and had 3 children. Two old children were at school. The youngest child was four and half years old and he had a disability. She wanted to find a job because her husband's pension was not enough to cover the monthly living expenses. Her mother, sister and two brothers were living in the region and were an important source of support to her.
Iman	She was married and had a 5 months old baby. She came to North Sinai after marriage and did not have any relatives in Sinai. She was working as a pharmacist in a public hospital .Her husband was working as a lecturer at the university. She could not find a suitable nursery for her baby at that age. So, she had to take the baby with her to work and this caused her a lot of problems.
Amira	She was a mother of four children; two preschool children and two were at school. She and her husband were from North Sinai. Her family was living far away from her, so she took her two children to one of public nurseries in the way to her work. One of the children was in a baby class and the other one was in a pre-kindergarten class. She had to get a letter from her work as well as supporting documents to be entitled a baby place in the public nursery, in particular in Saturdays which is not a working day for many work sectors.
Sabah	She was married and had a 2 months baby boy. She did not work but she would like to find a job. If she found a job she will leave her child with her mother in law. She lived in the same building with her husband's family.
Mona	She was a mother of three children .They were two boys and a girl between the age of 4 and 13 years old. Mona's husband always travelling on business. She had only part-time temporary work. Her two sons attended school and her youngest daughter attended a public kindergarten close to her home at the same school of his younger son. They were living in their owned three bedroom flat. The flat was quite central.
Entsar	She was a mother to 3 girls. Two girls were twins and they were 2 years old. The youngest girl was 3 months old. She just started work last month as a teacher in a temporary contract. She accepted this job although it was in another village far from where she was living. The reason was that this job could become a permanent after three years and it was a governmental work which many people found more secure and permanent. She used to take her youngest baby with her to work as she could find baby sister that she can afford. The other two girls went to a private nursery near her home.

**Appendix D-2: The characteristics of the participants of the second group
(Practitioners)**

Code	Qualification	Experience	Position and Work Place
Practitioner 1	Secondary school qualification	10 years	Teacher at a nursery affiliated t a non-governmental organization
Practitioner 2	Post-graduate education	1 year	Director of a private center for children with disabilities
Practitioner 3	Secondary school qualification	2 years	Secretary at a private nursery
Practitioner 4	2 years intermediate education degree	22 years	Teacher at public kindergarten
Practitioner 5	4 years university degree in early childhood education	1 year	Teacher at a public kindergarten
Practitioner 6	4 years university degree in early childhood education	20 years	Teacher at a nursery affiliated t a non-governmental organization
Practitioner 7	4 years degree in education	2 years	Teacher at a private nursery

**Appendix D-3: The characteristics of the participants of the third group
(Policy Makers)**

Code	Work Place
Policy maker 1	Centre of Motherhood and Childhood, Ministry of Social Solidarity, North Sinai.
Policy maker 2	Pre-School Education Supervisory Department- Ministry of Education, North Sinai
Policy maker 3	Education Directorate in North Sinai, Ministry of Education.
Policy maker 4	Manager of a private nursery school.

Appendix D-4: An example of a coded text segment

Data Extract	Codes	Issues discussed	Themes identified
I have 2 boys. The younger is two and half years old and older is four years old. I am a house wife, recently registered in an open education program to continue my education, improve my education level and to find a good job. I have 2 years intermediate Higher Education degree .My husband is the solely source of income. I try to do all my responsibilities towards my family and my study does not affect my husband and children. I have lectures two days a week. I usually leave my children with my mum, but she is not available at all times. She is also an old woman and children sometimes make her feel tired. Sometimes my husband has to stay with them or leave them with a friend. But this again just temporarily and not every week. If I can find someone to look after my kids, I will prepare everything at night ,cooking, laundry, cleaning all house work to be free next day . Children just play at home with the toys they have. No clubs available to teach children swimming, sports	Coded for : children Wife Education Domestic Granny Domestic Play activity Concerns	Basic Demographic Information Domestic Caring Type of childcare arrangements	Participant Characteristics Childcare arrangement

and no library available as well for this age. Private or governmental centres provide poor childcare service in North Sinai .		Childcare activities	Domestic Activities Constraints

Appendix D-5: *Coding the interview texts* / List of Codes

Twenty eight codes from the mothers' interview transcripts were identified. These include:

- 1- Age
- 2- Children
- 3- Wife
- 4- Single
- 5- widow
- 6- Study
- 7- Work
- 8- Needs
- 9- Tasks
- 10- Bread winner – main source of income
- 11- Family
- 12- Support
- 13- Religious centres
- 14- Nursery
- 15- Kindergarten
- 16- Play at home
- 17- Fees
- 18- Support
- 19- Play
- 20- Friend
- 21- Neighbour
- 22- Granny
- 23- Staff
- 24- Availability
- 25- Activity
- 26- Domestic
- 27- Maternity leave
- 28- Quality

The following seventeen codes were extracted from the practitioners' transcripts:

1. Degree
2. Experience
3. Class
4. Babies
5. Mothers
6. School age
7. Guide/syllabus
8. Fees
9. Meal
10. Service
11. Budget
12. Salary
13. Work
14. Policy
15. Class density
16. Ministry of Education
17. Ministry of Social Affairs

The codes of the interview transcripts of the policy makers were:

1. School readiness
2. Psychological
3. Cognitive
4. Social
5. Physical
6. Linguistic
7. Learning
8. Basic reading and writing skills
9. Challenge
10. Staff
11. Class size
12. Children with disabilities
13. Resources

14. Professional academy
15. Training
16. Monitoring and supervision
17. Parents
18. Social
19. Economic
20. Financial
21. Widows
22. Non-governmental organization
23. Village
24. Standards
25. Private
26. Curriculum
27. Professional academy

Appendix D-6: Basic themes extracted from the qualitative data

• Mothers related basic themes

- 1- Living close to one's family
- 2- Husband working abroad
- 3- Husband is the main source of income
- 4- 2 to 6 children
- 5- Visiting relatives in the weekend
- 6- Daily routine of going to school, private tutoring and religious places (mosque)
- 7- Indoor activities, watching TV and playing on the computer
- 8- No leisure places available in the area such as clubs or parks.
- 9- Working few days in a full time job.
- 10- Mother's full responsibility of children's education and monitoring school assignments
- 11- Children's friends are invited to play with at home.
- 12- Parental leave for 6 years
- 13- Like my job and do not want to leave it
- 14- Young children stay with grandmother
- 15- Do not prefer to take children to nursery before the age of 4 years old
- 16- Nursery fees are affordable
- 17- Availability of small nurseries for babies
- 18- Quality care service is poor
- 19- Nursery for infants always suffer from inflections
- 20- Infants become sick in nurseries.
- 21- Taking babies to work place.
- 22- Work accepts babies to accompany their mothers at work
- 23- Bad experience with a previous public nursery for babies
- 24- Staff ratio for babies 1 to 10.
- 25- Babies fell of beds
- 26- Babies left crying
- 27- Outdoor activity going to owned farm
- 28- No place for children to play in the neighbourhood

- 29- Learning bad habits and words from neighbours' children
- 30- Mother's income supports the family
- 31- Buying toys and kids' stuff
- 32- Covering nursery fees
- 33- Children become more sociable and independent
- 34- Children shy and dependent before
- 35- Nurseries finish early by 12pm
- 36- Not suitable for working mothers and student parents.
- 37- Mother with basic education
- 38- No job opportunities for mothers with basic education
- 39- Husband does not help in house work
- 40- Husband does not in caring of children at home
- 41- Living in the same house with mother in law.
- 42- Preference of private kindergartens
- 43- Temporary work
- 44- Single mother
- 45- Divorced and live with my family
- 46- Ill grandmother
- 47- Nurseries open late
- 48- During inspection mothers have to hide their children who accompany them to their work place.
- 49- Neighbours childcare
- 50- Disabled child
- 51- Nursery for disabled children
- 52- Starting a self-employed job
- 53- Low income family
- 54- Living far from one's family
- 55- Regulations of accepting infants in baby classes
- 56- Playing in the neighbourhood area
- 57- Risk and car accidents when playing in public streets
- 58- Unemployed mother
- 59- No official information available concerning children care and education

60- Only child vaccination information is sometimes broadcasted on TV and printed on the back of the birth certificate.

61- Secondary school education.

62- Using a babysitter

63- No work privileges for mothers in temporary work

- **Practitioners related basic themes**

1- High school certificate

2- 10 years' experience

3- Class for babies

4- Class for 2 to 3 years old

5- Class for 3 to 4 years old

6- Class for 4 to 5 years old

7- Babies cared by a practitioner with basic education or illiterate certificate

8- Baby class is only for working mothers in a governmental job

9- 12 years' experience

10- Children accepted from 3 months to school age

11- A monthly visit by a doctor to the nursery place by law

12- There is a guide for the caring and education of the children in the nursery

13- Nursery monthly fees from 12 to 30 Egyptian pounds per month

14- A meal would be provided free if there is a budget for it once finished no meals.

15- Nursery books are free for poor children.

16- Educated parents use the nursery service more

17- Employed mothers use the nursery service more.

18- Parents' income affects child health and childcare.

19- Nurseries work 6 days a week and Friday is off

20- Nurseries open from 7:30am to 2pm

21- Limited budget and limited resources

22- Low salary for staff members

23- 150 Egyptian pounds are the monthly salary for staff working in temporary contract.

- 24- Small numbers of parents attend meetings with nursery staff
- 25- Lack of the awareness of parents of the importance of the meetings with the nursery staff.
- 26- The staff at the ministry of education kindergartens should hold bachelor degree in early childhood education.
- 27- Kindergartens are the official education institutions for children aged three and half to six years.
- 28- Ministry of Education staff receive training in lesson planning and teaching methodology
- 29- New policy of children admission in primary school. Children with the age of 5 and half can go to primary one if they have attended 2 years in the kindergarten
- 30- No playgrounds available in most of the nurseries
- 31- Some playgrounds are not suitable for children as they have water from leaked sewage pipes.
- 32- Physical punishment is not allowed by law but still practiced in some nurseries.
- 33- Thirty five children is the class density in some nurseries.

- **Policy makers related basic themes**

- 1- The primary aim of kindergartens is preparing children for school (school readiness)
- 2- Kindergartens aim to develop eight aspects psychological, physical, cognitive, religious, linguistic, athletic, academic and social.
- 3- Nurseries are for children less than 4 years and the main aim is child caring.
- 4- Parents focus more on their children academic achievement (learning the alphabet to read and write).
- 5- Enrolment ratio at the pre-school stage is %60
- 6- Enrolment ratio will increase when –pre-school education is included in basic education.
- 7- Number of children and the availability of enough classes are the main challenge for ECCE in Egypt.

- 8- Class size should be 25 children; however on reality class size is more than that because of the limited number of staff and specialized personnel.
- 9- Department of early education in North Sinai is quite new and job posts structure is not complete yet.
- 10- Little attention given by school principals to kindergarten classes
- 11- Public kindergartens do not accept children with disabilities.
- 12- Library and summer clubs open for children from age six.
- 13- Kindergarten children under the age of 4 (3 and half) are not mature enough to communicate with the teacher.
- 14- No nursery classes available in remote areas and small villages.
- 15- The majority of nursery nurses are female.
- 16- If there are no female nurses living in the same city and cannot be available every day, it is difficult to have nursery classes in schools.
- 17- Male teachers only work in remote schools, as they can travel for long hours between their work place and their homes.
- 18- Economic status influences enrolment in nurseries.
- 19- Some working mothers do not prefer to walk up early to drop their children in the nursery.
- 20- Parents should understand that nurseries are primarily places for fun for the children and not as schools.
- 21- Majority of parents do not attend meeting held in nurseries or kindergartens.

Appendix D-7: Organizing and global themes identified

- **Organizing themes:**

- 1- Aims and purposes
- 2- Care givers
- 3- Childcare practices
- 4- Nurseries and Kindergartens
- 5- Work place
- 6- Childcare domestic activities
- 7- Fees and subsidies
- 8- Women's work
- 9- Information sources
- 10- Childcare regulations
- 11- Problems and challenges
- 12- Economic, social and demographic factors

- **Global themes :**

- 1- Salient Socio- Demographic Factors
- 2- ECCE Services
- 3- Parenting
- 4- Policy Response

Appendix E: Laws and Decrees

Appendix E-2: Decree No. 138/ 2007 for kindergarten admission

FROM : ٢٠١٦ / ٥ / ٢٨

إدارة التعليم - الرياض
مكتب المدير العام

2014 10:34:01 P2

محافظة القليوبية
مديرية التربية والتعليم
إدارة وتوجيه رياض الأطفال

ناتكس لجميع الإدارات التعليمية

قواعد القبول برياض الأطفال الرسمية للعام الدراسي ٢٠١٤م / ٢٠١٥م

بناء على القرار الوزاري رقم (٢١٠) في ١٣/٥/١٩٩٨، والقرار الوزاري رقم (٦٥) بتاريخ ١٩/١/٢٠٠٢ والمعدل للقرار رقم (٦٥) لسنة ٢٠٠٠ والقرار الوزاري رقم (١٣٨) بتاريخ ٢١/٥/٢٠٠٧، نقرر أن تكون شروط القبول برياض الأطفال بالمدارس الرسمية للعام الدراسي ٢٠١٤م / ٢٠١٥م على النحو التالي:-

أولاً:- أن يكون حساب السن في القبول برياض الأطفال بالمدارس الرسمية حتى أول أكتوبر ٢٠١٤م

ثانياً:- * أن يكون الحد الأدنى لسن القبول برياض الأطفال لنظام السنتين بالمدارس الرسمية والخاصة أربع سنوات ويجوز في حالة وجود أماكن القبول بالنسبة إلى ثلاث سنوات ونصف

* يكون الحد الأدنى لسن القبول برياض الأطفال لنظام السنة الواحدة بالمدارس الرسمية والخاصة خمس سنوات

* وفي جميع الأحوال يتم القبول تنازلياً من أعلى سن المتقدمين مع عدم الإخلال بالكثافات المقررة (لا تزيد الكثافة بالمدارس عن ٢٦ متلاً)

ثالثاً:- لا يجوز قبول أطفال في رياض الأطفال وهم في سن الإلزام

رابعاً:- يكون القبول في الروضة وفقاً للتوزيع السكني بالمرحلة كما تحدد كل إدارة وتقديم ما يثبت ذلك

خامساً:- تقبل طلبات الالتحاق للأطفال الذين لهم أخوة بالمدرسة وكذلك أبناء العاملين بالمدرسة دون التنازل بالمربع السكني ويتم تسقيطهم بنفس الشروط

سادساً:- يرفق بطلب الالتحاق شهادة الميلاد أو مستخرج رسمي منها وعند (٨) صور

سابعاً:- تشكل لكل مدرسة لجنة لتنسيق القبول للروضة برئاسة مدير المدرسة والمعلمة الأولى لرياض الأطفال ومسؤول شؤون الطلبة

ثامناً:- لا تقبل طلبات بعد انتهاء موعد القبول من الأحد ٢٠١٤/٦/٨ وحتى الخميس ٢٠١٤/٧/٢٤م

تاسعاً:- بعد إنهاء موعد التقديم تقوم المدرسة بتحرير كشوف لجميع الأطفال المقبولين والمنتظرين مرتين تنازلياً حسب السن من الأكبر للأصغر وتعتمد من اللجنة وترسل من الإدارة إلى المديرية لإعداد التنسيق

تعلق هذه الشروط بديوان الإدارات والروضات في أماكن واضحة

مدير الإدارة العامة
الموافق له
الموافق له
الموافق له
الموافق له

٢٠١٦ / ٥ / ٢٨

**Appendix E-3: Decree No. 335/2008 regarding allowing NGOs
and private bodies to open nursery classes**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

التاريخ ٢٠٠٨ / ١٠ / ٢٥

قرار وزاري
رقم (٣٣٥) بتاريخ ٢٠٠٨ / ١٠ / ٢٥


 جمهورية فلسطين
 وزارة التربية والتعليم
 مكتب الوزير

بشأن التصريح للجمعيات الأهلية والمنشآت الخاصة بفتح قاعات رياض الأطفال

وزير التربية والتعليم :

بعد الاطلاع على قانون التعليم الصادر بالقانون رقم ١٣٩ لسنة ١٩٨١ وتعديلاته ،
وعلى قانون الطفل الصادر بالقانون رقم ١٢ لسنة ١٩٩٦ ، ولائحته التنفيذية الصادرة بقرار
رئيس مجلس الوزراء رقم ٣٤٥٢ لسنة ١٩٩٧ ،
وعلى مذكرة التفاهم بين وزارتي "تربية والتعليم والتضامن الاجتماعي" بتاريخ ٢٠٠٧/٣/٢٥ ،
وتحقيقاً للصالح العام .

قرر :

المادة الأولى :

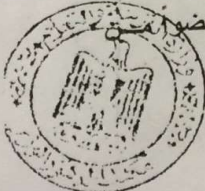
يرخص للجمعيات الأهلية والمنشآت الخاصة المرخص لها من وزارة التضامن الاجتماعي
بفتح قاعات جديدة لرياض الأطفال في الشريحة العمرية من (٤ - ٦ سنوات) ، ويصدر الترخيص من
مديرية التربية والتعليم الواقعة في النطاق الجغرافي للجمعية أو المنشأة الخاصة وذلك وفقاً للإجراءات
المنصوص عليها في هذا القرار .

المادة الثانية :

على الجمعيات والمنشآت التي ترغب في فتح قاعات لرياض الأطفال ان تتقدم بطلب على النموذج
رقم (١) المرفق بهذا القرار إلى مديرية التضامن الاجتماعي التابعة لها الجمعية أو المنشأة ، وإذا وافقت
عليه ، يقدم طلب فتح قاعات لرياض الأطفال للشريحة العمرية (٤-٦) سنوات إلى مديرية التربية
والتعليم الواقعة في النطاق الجغرافي للجمعية أو المنشأة وذلك طبقاً للنموذج رقم ٢ المرفق بهذا القرار
مرفقاً به النموذج رقم (١) و يقيد الطلب في سجل قيد طلبات الترخيص وفق تاريخ وروده .

المادة الثالثة :

تشكل مديرية التربية والتعليم المختصة لجنة فنية يعهد إليها بمعاينة القاعات المطلوب الترخيص
بفتحها وتضم : عضواً من إدارة الجمعيات الأهلية ، و عضواً من إدارة رياض الأطفال ، و عضواً من
فرع هيئة الأبنية التعليمية .





Appendix E-4: Application form for requesting opening nursery classes

وزارة التضامن الاجتماعي
مديرية التضامن الاجتماعي بمحافظة
الإدارة الاجتماعية

نموذج طلب ترخيص دار حضانية
(أشخاص طبيعيين / أشخاص اعتباريون)

أولا : بيانات عامة :

١. الأشخاص الطبيعيون .

اسم طالب الترخيص المهنة
الجنسية المؤهل الدراسي
ممثل طالب الترخيص إن وجد رقم التليفون
عنوان السكن
الرقم القومي تاريخ صدورها : / / جهة إصدارها
يراعى استيفاء البيانات السابقة في حالة تعدد الأفراد المؤسسين .

٢. الأشخاص الاعتباريون (جمعيات أهلية / شركات ومؤسسات وهيئات) .

اسم الهيئة طالبة الترخيص رقم وتاريخ الإصدار
عنوان الهيئة أو الجمعية رقم التليفون
ثانيا : موقع ومواصفات المبنى المخصص لدار الحضانية :
عنوان الدار المنطقة التي تخدمها الدار
مواصفات المبنى والمرافق الملحقة

بيانات خاصة بنظام العمل بالدار .

اسم الدار سعة الدار فترة الرعاية (نهائية / ابوائية)
نوع الرعاية : رضع (من المهد إلى سنتين) - عابدة (من سنتين إلى أربع سنوات)
نوعية الأطفال (أسوياء / معاقين)
قيمة الاشتراك (شهري / ربع سنوي / نصف سنوي / سنوي) رسم القيد
بيانات تملأ بمعرفة مديرية التضامن الاجتماعي المختصة .
تاريخ تقديم الطلب : / / رقم القيد بسجل الطلبات
رأى المديرية

رقم وتاريخ إخطار مقدم الطلب بالرأى
توقيع الموظف المختص توقيع رئيس القسم توقيع المدير العام
تحريرا في : / /

وزارة التضامن الاجتماعي
مديرية التضامن الاجتماعي بمحافظة
الإدارة الاجتماعية

يصل

استلمت أنا / الطلب المقدم من السيد /
بشأن طلب ترخيص دار حضانية (أشخاص طبيعيين/ أشخاص اعتباريون) مستوفيا كافة مستندات الحصول على الخدمة وقيد الطلب
برقم تاريخ : / /

توقيع الموظف المختص
التاريخ المحدد لإنجاز الخدمة : / /
(.....)

**Appendix E-5: Decree No. 154/1989 for admission in state
experimental language kindergartens and schools**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

٢٠٠ / / التاريخ

- ٢ -

الفصل الثاني
شروط القبول


جمهورية مصر العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

مادة (٥) :

يتم القبول في المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات وفقاً للقواعد المنصوص عليها في القرار الوزاري رقم ١٥٤ لسنة ١٩٨٩ المشار إليه مع ضرورة عقد مقابلة للطفل.

مادة (٦) :

يجوز لتلاميذ المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات التحويل إلى الصفوف المناظرة بمدارس المناهج العربية المناظرة إذا استوفوا الشروط المقررة للقبول بها.

الفصل الثالث
الخطط والمناهج والكتب

مادة (٧) :

الدراسة في مرحلة الحضنة:

تكون الدراسة في سنتي الحضنة بالمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات لمدة ٣٦ ساعة أسبوعياً بواقع ٦ ساعات يومياً، ويراعى تقسيم اليوم الدراسي إلى فترات كل فترة من نصف ساعة إلى ساعة، وتوزع الساعات الأسبوعية على عناصر المنهج على النحو الآتي:

أ - الجانب الروحي :

* من خلال جميع الأنشطة ساعتان أسبوعياً

ب - الجانب الجسمي والرعاية الصحية :

(١) الرعاية الصحية اليومية والتغذية ٦ ساعات أسبوعياً

(٢) النشاط الجسمي ٦ ساعات أسبوعياً

ج - الجانب الاجتماعي والنفسي :

* من خلال التوجيه طوال اليوم ومن خلال الأنشطة المختلفة .

اسم المدرس /

المرجع / /



- ٣ -

د - الجانب العقلي :

* من خلال اللعب المنظم داخل القاعات ٣ ساعات أسبوعياً

هـ - الجانب اللغوي :

* يدخل ضمن العديد من أوجه النشاط ٦ ساعات أسبوعياً

و - الجانب العملي :

* من خلال الأنشطة المحددة في المنهج ٦ ساعات أسبوعياً

ز - الجانب الابتكاري :

* من خلال إتاحة الفرص للتعبير الحر أثناء قيام الطفل ٤ ساعات أسبوعياً
بالأنشطة المختلفة وبصفة خاصة الأنشطة الفنية.

ح - التذوق الجمالي :

* الموسيقى والاستمتاع بالطبيعة ٣ ساعات أسبوعياً

ويؤخذ في الاعتبار عند وضع الخطة اليومية للأنشطة ما يأتي :

- احتياجات واهتمامات الطفل المختلفة وقدراته المتنوعة.
 - المشكلات والمواقف التي يمكن أن تتحدى تفكير الطفل في البيئة.
 - استغلال البيئة المحيطة بكافة إمكانياتها المتاحة.
 - خطة تعاون بين المعلمة والطفل من أجل تحقيق وإبراز الهدف المطلوب.
 - توفير الخامات، التجهيزات، الفراغات اللازمة بما يتيح حرية الحركة للطفل عند تنفيذ الأنشطة.
 - تيسير الزمن لكل من الأنشطة المختلفة التي يشتمل عليها البرنامج.
- ويراعى أن يكون التعليم عن طريق اللعب ما أمكن مع استعمال اللعب التعليمية التي تناسب عمر الطفل.

مادة (٨) :

تطبق مناهج المدارس العربية المناظرة على الدراسة بمرحلة التعليم الأساسي والتعليم الثانوي بالمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات، ويتم تدريس الرياضيات والعلوم بلغة أجنبية



باسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



- ٤ -

وتدرس في الحلقة الابتدائية من مرحلة التعليم الأساسي بهذه المدارس لغة أجنبية واحدة، وتدرس في الحلقة الإعدادية من مرحلة التعليم الأساسي ومرحلة التعليم الثانوي بها لغتان أجنبيتان .

مادة (٩) :

تطبق خطط مدارس المناهج العربية على المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات مع زيادة حصص اللغات الأجنبية.

مادة (١٠) :

يجب أن تعتمد خطط ومناهج وكتب اللغات الأجنبية أو الكتب المترجمة التي تدرس بالمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات من وزير التربية والتعليم أو من يفوضه ، وذلك بعد بحثها بمعرفة الجهات المختصة بالوزارة .

الفصل الرابع

الامتحانات

مادة (١١) :

يكون نظام الامتحانات في المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات مطابقاً للنظام المعمول به في مدارس المناهج العربية المناظرة .
ويؤدى تلاميذ هذه المدارس الامتحانات في المواد التي درسوها بذات اللغة التي درسوا بها تلك المواد وذلك بعد ترجمة أسئلتها .

مادة (١٢) :

يشترط للاستمرار في الدراسة بالمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات أن يحقق التلميذ نجاحاً في امتحان اللغة الأجنبية ذات المستوى الرفيع بنسبة ٥٠% واللغة الأجنبية الثانية بنسبة ٤٠% ، ولا ينقل التلميذ من صف إلى الصف الذي يليه بهذه المدارس إلا إذا كان ناجحاً في هاتين المادتين وبالنسب السابقة ، وذلك بالإضافة إلى باقي شروط النجاح المعمول بها في مدارس المناهج العربية المناظرة .



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

القرار رقم ١ / ١ / ٢٠٠٠



- ٥ -

مادة (١٣)

لا يعد بنتيجة امتحانات اللغات الأجنبية ذات المستوى الرفيع التي لا تدرس بمدارس مناهج اللغة العربية عند تقرير حق الطالب في التقدم لامتحان الدور الثاني .

مادة (١٤) :

تعقد المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغة امتحانات دور ثان في اللغات الأجنبية ذات المستوى الرفيع التي لا تدرس في مدارس المناهج العربية للطلاب الراشدين في جميع الصفوف حتى يتسنى لهؤلاء الطلاب الاستمرار في الدراسة في هذه المدارس.

مادة (١٥) :

يجوز نقل الطالب بالمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغة الذي يرسل في اللغات الأجنبية ذات المستوى الرفيع وكان مستوفياً لجميع شروط النجاح المقررة في باقي المواد إلى الصف التالي بمدارس المناهج العربية إذا رغب في ذلك وإلا بقي لإعادة الدراسة بفرقة، وذلك مع مراعاة عدد مرات الرسوب المسموح بها في مدارس المناهج العربية المتأخرة .

الفصل الخامس

مقابل الخدمات الإضافية

مادة (١٦) :

تحصل الرسوم والاشتراكات ومقابل الخدمات الإضافية من تلاميذ المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغة وفقاً للنظام المعمول به بمدارس المناهج العربية المتأخرة، وطبقاً للقرار الوزاري الذي يصدر سنوياً في هذا الشأن.

ويحصل بالإضافة إلى ما هو مقرر، طبقاً للفقرة السابقة، مقابل نظير الخدمات الإضافية الأخرى التي تؤدي لتلاميذ هذه المدارس على النحو الآتي :

مرحلة التعليم	مرحلة التعليم الأساسي		رياض الأطفال	الخدمات الإضافية
	المرحلة الابتدائية	المرحلة الإعدادية		
المرحلة الثانوية				
خدمات تجريب	٨٠ جنيهاً	١١٠ جنيهاً	٨٠ جنيهاً	٨٠ جنيهاً
تشاط عام	٤٠ جنيهاً	٤٠ جنيهاً	٤٠ جنيهاً	٤٠ جنيهاً
تطوير تكنولوجيا	٢٠ جنيهاً	٢٠ جنيهاً	٢٠ جنيهاً	٢٠ جنيهاً



اسم الزمّن الرسيم



جمهورية فلسطين العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

- ٦ -

وتزاد رسوم خدمات التجريب بنسبة ١٠% سنوياً اعتباراً من العام الدراسي ٢٠٠٦/٢٠٠٧. ويتم إبقاء رسم التطوير التكنولوجي الموضح بالجدول السابق بالمدرسة للصرف منه على كل ما يخدم أغراض التطوير التكنولوجي من شراء أجهزة الحاسب الآلي والمعمل المتطورة وإصلاح وصيانة هذه الأجهزة واشتراك خطط الشبكة الدولية للمعلومات.

مادة (١٧) :

يؤدي تلاميذ المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات ثمن الكتب الأجنبية فقط طبقاً للأسعار المقررة مضافاً إليها ١٠% مقابل مصاريف النقل والتلف وغير ذلك.

مادة (١٨) :

يجوز للمدرسة التجريبية الرسمية للغات تدبير سيارات لنقل التلاميذ إلى المدرسة ذهباً وإياباً مقابل اشتراك سنوي يحدد في ضوء التكلفة الفعلية بالإضافة إلى نسبة لا تتجاوز ١٠% كاحتياطي.

ويكون تحصيل مقابل الخدمات الإضافية وثمان الكتب الأجنبية واشتراك السيارة الاختيارية بهذه المدارس بموجب القسيمة ١٢٣ تربية وتعليم، ولا يجوز تحصيل أي مبالغ أخرى تحت أي مسمى دون الحصول على ترخيص بذلك من المديرية المختصة وتفصح المدرسة حساباً خاصاً بأحد البنوك يودع فيه المتحصل أولاً بأول.

مادة (١٩) :

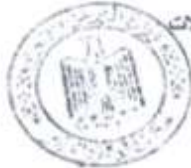
يجوز للمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات تحصيل مقابل النشاط العام وخدمات التجريب واشتراك السيارة والتطوير التكنولوجي على قسطين أما ثمان الكتب الأجنبية فتحصل دفعة واحدة مع القسط الأول.

الفصل السادس

ضوابط الإنفاق

مادة (٢٠) :

تلتزم المديرية أو الإدارة التعليمية المختصة بالإنفاق على المدرسة التجريبية الرسمية للغات شأنها في ذلك شأن مدارس المناهج العربية المناظرة، وذلك طبقاً للمعدلات وأغراض الصرف المقررة.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٢٠٠٠ / /



- ٧ -

مادة (٢١):

يتم الصرف من حصة الرسوم والاشتراكات ومقابل الخدمات في المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات حسيما هو مقرر بمدارس المناهج العربية المناظرة، ووفقاً للقرارات التي تصدر سنوياً في شأن قواعد الصرف من حصة كل مقابل.

مادة (٢٢):

تلتزم المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات بالصرف من حصة كل مقابل على الأغراض التي حصل من أجلها، ويحظر صرف مكافآت أو غيرها لغير العاملين بالمدرسة أو في أغراض لا تخصها، وذلك مع مراعاة أحكام المواد التالية .

مادة (٢٣):

تكون أوجه الصرف من حصة مقابل النشاط العام بالمدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات على النحو الآتي :

- (أ) تقديم خدمات إضافية في مجالات الأنشطة (رياضية - اجتماعية - ثقافية - فنية) لشراء الأجهزة والأدوات اللازمة لكل نشاط .
 - (ب) شراء المستلزمات التعليمية الإضافية اللازمة لتدريس المواد الدراسية .
 - (ج) عمل التجهيزات الإضافية اللازمة لتدريس المواد الدراسية .
- ويجوز استخدام فائض النشاط العام إن وجد في نهاية العام الدراسي في الصيانة والترميمات والإنشاءات والأعمال الصغيرة لمباني المدرسة ومرافقها ، كما يجوز استخدامه في التعاقد مع عمال أو مدرسي رياض أطفال لمساعدة العجز الذي يصعب تدبيره على مستوى الإدارة أو المديرية بمعرفة إدارة المدرسة.

مادة (٢٤):

تكون أوجه الصرف من حصة مقابل خدمات التجريب على النحو الآتي :

- (أ) عمل التجهيزات الإضافية اللازمة لتدريس المواد الدراسية.
- (ب) شراء المستلزمات التعليمية اللازمة لتدريس المواد الدراسية.



**Appendix E-6: Decree No. 65/2000 regarding regulating the
work in kindergartens including class layout and facilities**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الجمهورية العربية السورية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

قرار وزاري
رقم (٦٥) بتاريخ ٢٢ / ٢ / ٢٠٠٠

وزير التربية والتعليم :

بعد الاطلاع على قانون التعليم رقم ١٣٩ لسنة ١٩٨١ وتعديلاته ،
وعلى القانون رقم ١٢ لسنة ١٩٩٦ بإصدار قانون الطفولة ،
وعلى قرار رئيس مجلس الوزراء رقم ٣٤٥٢ لسنة ١٩٩٧ بإصدار اللائحة التنفيذية
لقانون الطفل رقم ١٢ لسنة ١٩٩٦ ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ١٥٤ لسنة ١٩٨٩ بشأن قواعد الالتحاق بمدارس
التعليم وتعديلاته ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ٣٣٠ بتاريخ ١١/٢٣/١٩٩٤ بشأن رياض الأطفال التابعة
أو المنسقة بالمدارس الرسمية والخاصة ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ٣٩٨ بتاريخ ١٦/٧/١٩٩٨ بشأن القبول برياض الأطفال ،

قرر :

المادة الأولى :

رياض الأطفال هي مرحلة تعليم غير ملهجي ولا ترتبط بفترة دراسية معينة ، وهي
مرحلة تمهيدية للالتحاق بالتعليم الأساسي .

المادة الثانية :

تنظيما للعمل برياض الأطفال واتباعا للمبادئ العلمية في تعليمهم ، يراعى :
بتنفيذ الآتي :

١- تقسيم قاعة رياض الأطفال إلى أركان للنشاط بدني ، تحتوي على " مسرح عرائس -
مكتبة - منضدة للفن - منضدة للعلوم - ركن للموسيقى - لوحة وبرية - مجموعة
متنوعة من المكنتبات بأحجام وألوان مختلفة . منطقة مغطاه بالموكيت ومجهزة
ببلايس للكبار لألعاب التمثيل والخيال .

٢- ترتيب المناضد في شكل مجموعات .

١ - ٢٠٠٠

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



جمهورية مصر العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

التاريخ / / ٢٠٠٠

- ٢ -

- ٣- تجهيز مجموعة من الدمى القماش يساعد في عملها الأطفال .
- ٤- تجهيز الفناء الخارجى بألعاب التسلق والتزحلق والأطواق .
- ٥- التزام المعلمات بتطبيق ما جاء في كتاب " رياض الأطفال مدخل لنمو الشخصية - وزارة التربية والتعليم " .
- ٦- تنظيم لقاءات مع أولياء الأمور مرة كل شهر .

المادة الثالثة :

يحظر حظرا باتا :-

- ١- تنظيم قاعة رياض الأطفال إلى صفوف .
- ٢- استخدام الألعاب الميكانيكية .
- ٣- إجبار الأطفال على الكتابة وذلك اكتفاء " ببطاقات اعداد الطفل للكتابة - وزارة التربية والتعليم " .
- ٤- عقد امتحانات واعطاء درجات للأطفال .
- ٥- اعطاء واجبات منزلية .

المادة الرابعة :

- ١- يكون حساب السن في القبول برياض الأطفال بالمدارس الرسمية والخاصة حتى أول أكتوبر .
- ٢- يكون الحد الأدنى لسن القبول برياض الأطفال بالمدارس الرسمية والخاصة نظام السنتين أربع سنوات على الأقل ، وفي المدارس نظام السلة الواحدة خمس سنوات على الأقل ، ويتم القبول تنازليا من أعلى سن للمتقدمين .
- ٣- يجوز تحويل الأطفال الملتحقين بالتمهيدى (ما قبل رياض الأطفال) بالمدارس الرسمية والخاصة والذين يبلغ سنهم أربع سنوات أثناء العام الدراسى وفى موعد اقصاه أول فبراير - إلى الصف الأول رياض الأطفال بهذه المدارس .



Appendix E-7: Decree 252/ 2005 aims and system of state experimental language schools and kindergartens



وزير التربية والتعليم :

بعد الإطلاع على قانون نظام العاملين المدنيين بالدولة الصادر بالقانون رقم ٤٧ لسنة ١٩٧٨ ،
وعلى قانون التعليم الصادر بالقانون رقم ١٣٩ لسنة ١٩٨١ ،
وعلى قرار رئيس الجمهورية رقم ٢٧١ لسنة ١٩٩٧م بتنظيم وزارة التربية والتعليم،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ١٥٤ لسنة ١٩٨٩م بشأن قواعد الالتحاق بمدارس وزارة
التربية والتعليم ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ٣٠٦ لسنة ١٩٩٣م في شأن التعليم الخاص ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ٩٤ لسنة ١٩٨٥م في شأن المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات .
وعلى موافقة المجلس الأعلى للتعليم قبل الجامعي بجلسته ٢٠٠٥/٩/٤ ،
ومراعاة للصالح العام .

مقرر

الفصل الأول

أهداف المدرسة ونظام الدراسة

مادة (١) :

تهدف المدارس التجريبية الرسمية للغات بالإضافة إلى تحقيق أهداف التعليم قبل
الجامعي إلى التوسع في دراسة لغات أجنبية بجانب المناهج الرسمية المقررة.

مادة (٢) :

تبدأ الدراسة بهذه المدارس بالحضانة لمدة سنتين، تليها مرحلة التعليم الأساسي ثم
مرحلة التعليم الثانوي العام.

مادة (٣) :

لا يجوز أن يزيد عدد تلاميذ الفصل في الحضانة ومختلف المراحل على ستة وثلاثين تلميذاً.

مادة (٤) :

تسير الدراسة في هذه المدارس على نظام اليوم الكامل .



Appendix E-8: Decree 208/1989 regarding funding kindergarten classes attached to public schools

٥

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

جمهورية مصر العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

القاهرة في / / ١٩٨٩

قرار وزاري
رقم (٢٠٨) بتاريخ ١٩٨٩/٩/٥

بشأن رياض الاطفال التابعة أو الملحقة بالمدارس الرسمية

وزير التعليم :

بعد الاطلاع على قانون التعليم رقم ١٣٩ لسنة ١٩٨١ ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ١٥٠ لسنة ١٩٨٩ بشأن تنظيم رياض الاطفال التابعة أو الملحقة
بالمدارس الرسمية ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ١٥٤ لسنة ١٩٨٩ بشأن قواعد الالتحاق بمدارس وزارة التربية والتعليم ،
وعلى القرار الوزاري رقم ١٦٢ لسنة ١٩٨٩ بشأن الرسوم والغرامات والاشتراكات ومقابل الخدمات
الاغانية والتأهيلات التي تحصل من طلبة وطالبات المدارس بمختلف مراحل التعليم للعام الدراسي
١٩٨٩/٨٩ ،
ومراعاة للمصالح العام ،
قرر :

المادة الاولى :-
تعمل الاشتراكات ومقابل الخدمات الاغانية والتأهيلات المقررة على تلاميذ
الصف الاول بالحلقة الابتدائية من مرحلة التعليم الاساسي من اطفال رياض الاطفال التابعة
أو الملحقة بالمدارس الرسمية .

المادة الثانية :-
يجوز تحميل بالاضافة الى ما هو منصوص عليه بالمادة السابقة تحميل مقابل الخدمات الاغانية
الاخرى التي تودى لاطفال هذه الرياض التالية :-
١ - نشاطات
٢ - تنظيم التعليم
٣ - خدمات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وزير التعليم

مكتب الوزير

القاهرة في / / ١٩

- ٢ -

المادة التاسعة :-

- توجه حصة مقابل تنظيم التعليم بالرياض للصرف في الوجة التالية :-
- أ - المكافآت التشجيعية للعاملين بالدراسة (يصدر بتحديد ها قرار من مدير مديرية التربية والتعليم المختصة بحيث لا تزيد عن ٥٠ % من جملة حصة المقابل) .
 - ب - المستلزمات التعليمية الاضافية اللازمة للروضة .
 - ج - التجهيزات الاضافية اللازمة للروضة .
 - د - المطبوعات الاضافية اللازمة للعمل .

المادة العاشرة :-

تلتزم المديرية أو الادارة التعليمية المختصة في عدم أحكام نظام العاملين المدنيين بالدولة تعيين جميع العاملين اللازمين لهذه الرياض بما يتفق مع مستوى الكفاية المطلوبة على درجات بالموازنة أو بمكافآت شاملة شهرية .

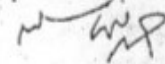
المادة الحادية عشر :-

تصرف المديرية أو الادارة التعليمية أجور ومكافآت وخوافز جميع العاملين بهذه الرياض خصمًا على الهدود المخصصة بموازنتها ووفقا للقرارات الصادرة في شأن كل منها بمقتضى الحلقة الابتدائية من مرحلة التعليم الاساس .

المادة الثانية عشر :-

على جميع الجهات تنفيذ هذا القرار كل ما يخصه ويلغى كل نص يخالفه لاحكامه .

وزير التعليم



(دكتور احمد فتحي سرور)

**Appendix F: An Arabic Summary of the Research
Findings Sent to the Research Participants**

Appendix F: An Arabic Summary of the Research Findings Sent to the Research Participants

ملخص لنتائج البحث

عنوان الدراسة

العوامل الاجتماعية والديموغرافية التي تؤثر على توافر الرعاية والتعليم
في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة في المناطق شبه النائية بمصر:
دراسة لسياسات توافر الخدمة

هدفت الدراسة إلي التعرف على العوامل الاجتماعية والديموغرافية التي تؤثر على توافر الرعاية والتعليم لأطفال مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة في شمال سيناء كمناطق شبه نائية بمصر، وكذلك كيفية استجابة السياسات وبرامج الرعاية والتعليم لهذه العوامل. كما أهتم البحث بالتعرف على الأنشطة التي يقوم بها الآباء لرعاية أطفالهم وكيف يقررون نوع الرعاية والتعليم لهم. وناقشت الدراسة أيضا وجهات نظر الآباء ومقدمي الرعاية وواضعي سياسات وبرامج الرعاية والتعليم لإطفال مرحلة ما قبل المدرسة حول مدى توافر وسهولة الوصول وجودة الخدمات المقدمة للإطفال في شمال سيناء منذ الولادة وحتى التحاقهم بالتعليم الإلزامي.

أعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الكمي والكيفي (المنهج المختلط) لتحديد ودراسة العلاقة بين متغيرات الدراسة. وأشارت النتائج إلى اجماع المشاركين بها على اختلاف مواقعهم- أمهات ومدرسين ومشرفين ومسؤولين من قسم الامومة والطفولة بوزارة التضامن الاجتماعي وموجهي رياض الاطفال بالمحافظة – علي أن نسبة الالتحاق بخدمات رعاية الإطفال ضعيفة بالإضافة الى المستوى المتدني للخدمات المقدمة للإطفال قبل الالتحاق بالمدرسة بالمحافظة. ويرجع ذلك للعوامل التالية :

أولاً:- عوامل تتعلق بالطفل (سن الطفل وصحته). أبرزت النتائج أن الإقبال على دور الحضانه يكون بعد تجاوز الطفل عامه الثالث. وصحة الطفل تلعب دورا أيضا في نسبة الالتحاق .فالطفل الذي يعاني من إعاقه أو مرض لا يجد في الغالب دار رعاية تقبله حيث أن رياض الاطفال طبقا للقانون تستقبل الأطفال الأصحاء فقط .

ثانياً:-عوامل تتعلق بالأسرة (حجم الاسرة، عدد الاطفال وعدد البالغين بالبيت- دخل الأسرة – مستوى تعليم الاب والام –عمل الام). ولقد ساهم وجود أحد الجددين أو أحد الأقرباء في نفس البيت او أنهم يعيشون بالقرب منهم في الاعتماد عليهم في رعاية أطفالهم.عدد الاطفال في العائله يحدد نوع الرعاية التي يستقبلهاالطفل حيث اوضحت نتائج المقابلات أن وجود اكثر من طفل قبل سن المدرسة لا يشجع الأسرة في الاعتماد على الحضانات والاعتماد على الام بالبيت او تركهم مع الجده أو احد من عائلتهم. العوامل الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لعبت الدور الأهم حيث يلعب الدخل كما أظهرت نتائج الدراسة الدور الرئيس في التحاق الطفل من عدمه بالحضانه او رياض الاطفال . أيضا مستوى تعليم الاب والام المرتفع ونسبة الوعي بأهمية رياض الاطفال وانها لا تقتصر فقط على الجانب الاكاديمي لإعداد الطفل للمدرسة يساهم في ارتفاع نسبة الإلتحاق.

ثالثاً:- عوامل تتعلق بالمجتمع كالعادات والتقاليد والموقع الجغرافي والفقر فهي أيضاً تلعب دوراً بارزاً في إلحاق الأطفال بالحضانات ودور رياض الأطفال. كما وضح عدد من المسؤولين في الدراسة أن الأسر الفقيرة الموجودة في القرى بتجد صعوبة في إلحاق أطفالهم بالحضانات ودور رياض الأطفال حتى ذات المصاريف الرمزية. أيضاً أكد بعض المشاركين في الدراسة أن بعض الأطفال لا يحضرون بانتظام لأنهم يساعدوا آبائهم في عملهم . بالإضافة الى عامل آخر وهو العادات والتقاليد السائدة بأن البيت هو أفضل مكان لرعاية الطفل الصغير. فالمجتمع السيناوي يرى أن ترك الطفل مع الغرباء لا يلقى استحسان خاصة في سن مبكرة من حياته قبل أن يتم عامه الثاني. لذلك عدد الحضانات التي تستقبل الأطفال من سن الميلاد قليلة و معظم الحضانات بشمال سيناء تستقبل الاطفال من سن ثلاث واربع سنوات وتقوم بدور رياض الاطفال.

أخيراً أوضحت النتائج وجهات نظر الآباء ومقدمي الرعاية وواضعى سياسات وبرامج الرعاية والتعليم حول السياسات والبرامج الحالية كالتالى :

- 1- عدم كفاية الخدمات المتوافره من حيث عدد دور الحضانات ورياض الأطفال وكذلك تدني مستوي جودتها حيث تعاني من اوجهه تقصير عديدة منها (نقص التمويل – ضعف السياسات التي ما زالت تحمل الاسره العبء الكامل لتربية وتعليم الاطفال بدون النظر الى الأسر الفقيرة ومحاولة تقديم المساعدة للأطفال المهمشين حتى تقضى على دائره الفقر - الكثافه العاليه للقاءات – نقص عدد المدرسين والمشرفين المؤهلين - عدم وجود بيئة أمنة خاصة للأطفال أقل من ثلاث سنوات- قلة الالعب التعليمية والترفيه وكذلك غياب الاشراف والمتابعة. أوضحت الدراسة ايضا أن الأهتمام فى مرحلة الطفولة المبكره ينصب بشكل كبير على الجانب الاكاديمى لإعداد الاطفال للإلتحاق بالمدرسة والاعتماد على الوسائل التقليدية فى تعليم الأطفال عن طريق التلقين والحفظ .
- 2- مستوى الجودة المتدنى وقلة الخدمات المقدمة لرعاية الأطفال لا يشجع الآباء على تبني طرق حديثة لرعاية اطفالهم ولا يعطى فرصة للأمهات للبحث عن عمل أو استكمال دراستهم. وتقتصر الرعاية علي الطرق التقليدية التي تلجأ لها الامهات سواء بالمكوث بالطفل فى البيت او بتركه عند الجده أو أحد أفراد عائلتهم أو الجيران أو الاصدقاء واحيانا يلجأوا الى طرق فيها خطوره على الطفل كما ذكرت بعض الامهات فى الدراسة من اصطحاب الرضع الى مكان العمل ومكوثه ساعات طويله بجوارها على مقعد، بالإضافة الى الظروف الأمنية الغير مستقرة التي تعرض الطفل للخطر لوجوده مع والدته فى كمائن علي الطرق العامة .
- 3- غياب واضح للقطاع الخاص في تقديم خدمات الرعاية للأطفال ، فالقطاع الخاص ينافس فقط فى عاصمة المحافظه (مدينه العريش) في تقديم خدمات الرعاية.

أهم توصيات الدراسة :

أوصت الدراسة إلي ضرورة تبني طرق جديده عند وضع سياسات التعليم والرعاية بما يتناسب مع طبيعة المجتمع السيناوى . حيث اشارت البيانات فى البحث إلى أن النهج الذى يتبع عند وضع سياسات التعليم والرعاية يتسم بأنه يسير في شكل هرم مقلوب (أي من أعلى إلى أسفل) وبالتالي تأتي السياسات غير لائقة وغير فعالة في التعامل مع الحقائق الاجتماعية والديموغرافية المرتبطة بتوفير الرعاية والتعليم

للأطفال قبل سن المدرسة في شمال سيناء. وأيضاً أوصت الدراسة بأهمية إشراك الأسرة في التخطيط للخدمات. بالإضافة إلى الاهتمام برفع كفاءة العاملين في قطاع رعاية وتعليم الطفل وقبول حاملي الشهادات العليا وخاصة خريجي رياض أطفال. وأشارت الدراسة إلى أهمية العمل على ضم مرحلة رياض الأطفال ضمن التعليم الإلزامي لضمان التحاق جميع الأطفال من مختلف البيئات وخاصة المحرومة برياض الأطفال بما في ذلك من نتائج ايجابية تعود على الطفل والمجتمع معاً. نظراً للظروف الاقتصادية التي تمر بها الدولة وعدم استطاعة الحكومة التوسع في إنشاء قاعات رياض أطفال جديدة ولزيادة نسبة الاستيعاب المعلن عنها سابقاً والتي أخفقت الحكومة عن تحقيقها، لابد من العمل في مرحلة رياض الأطفال بنظام الفترتين حتي يتسني لكل طفل على الأقل حضور 10 ساعات بالاسبوع (بمعدل ساعتين يومياً).