

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

INSTITUTE OF STATISTICAL, SOCIAL & ECONOMIC RESEARCH

**UTILIZATION OF EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS FOR CHILDCARE
AND ITS USEFULNESS FOR WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD IN KASOA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Rebecca Kladeh Kwabo**, hereby declare that except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my research carried out at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), the University of Ghana under the supervision of Dr. Ernest Nimfah Appiah and Professor Adobea Owusu. This dissertation has neither in whole nor in part been presented for another degree.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God for making me who I am today and giving me wisdom, knowledge, understanding, strength, and endurance to complete this work. I also dedicate this work to my parents Mr. & Mrs. Daniel P.N. Kwabo for being my solid foundation and for their encouragement and unwavering support throughout my life. This work is also dedicated to the best boss ever Mr. George Kronnisanyon Werner for his immense support of my entire studies and Ms. Rose Kingston for affording me the time to complete this work.



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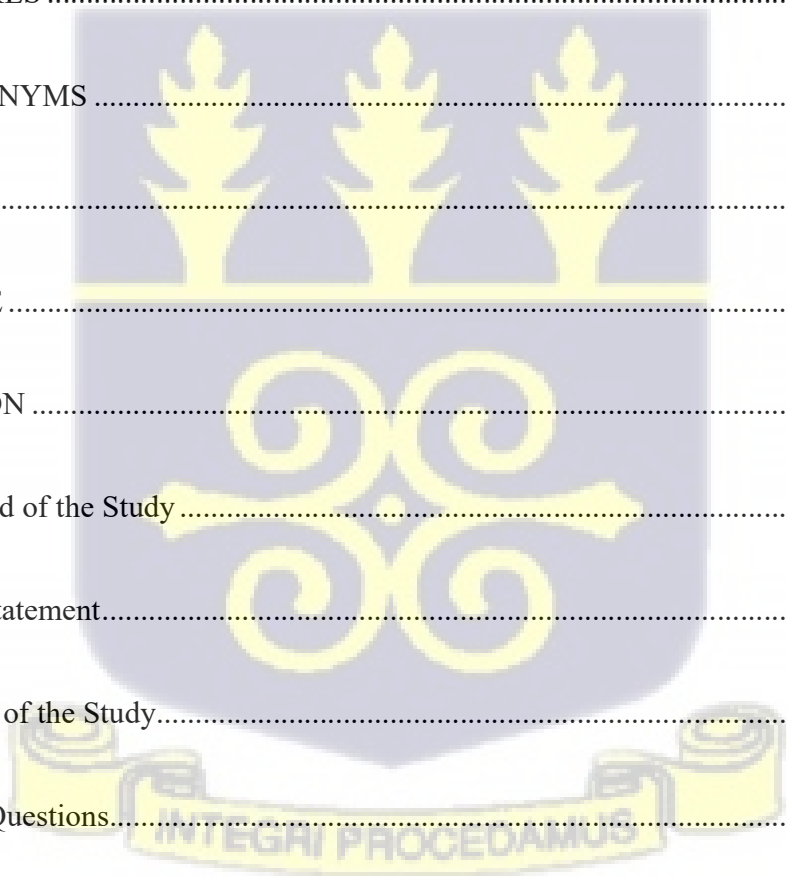
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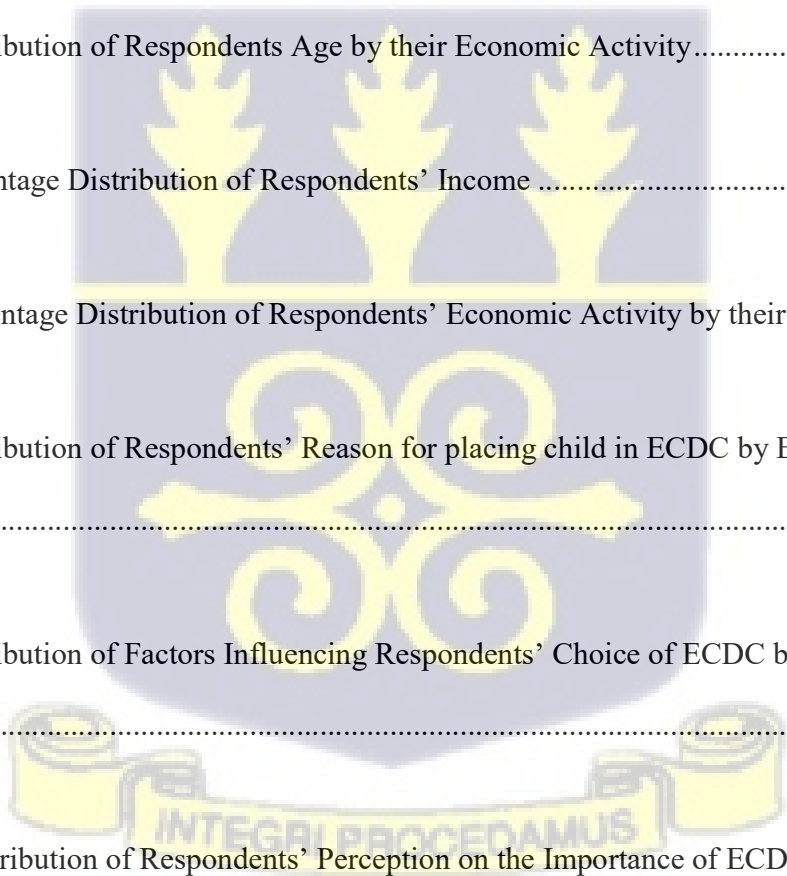


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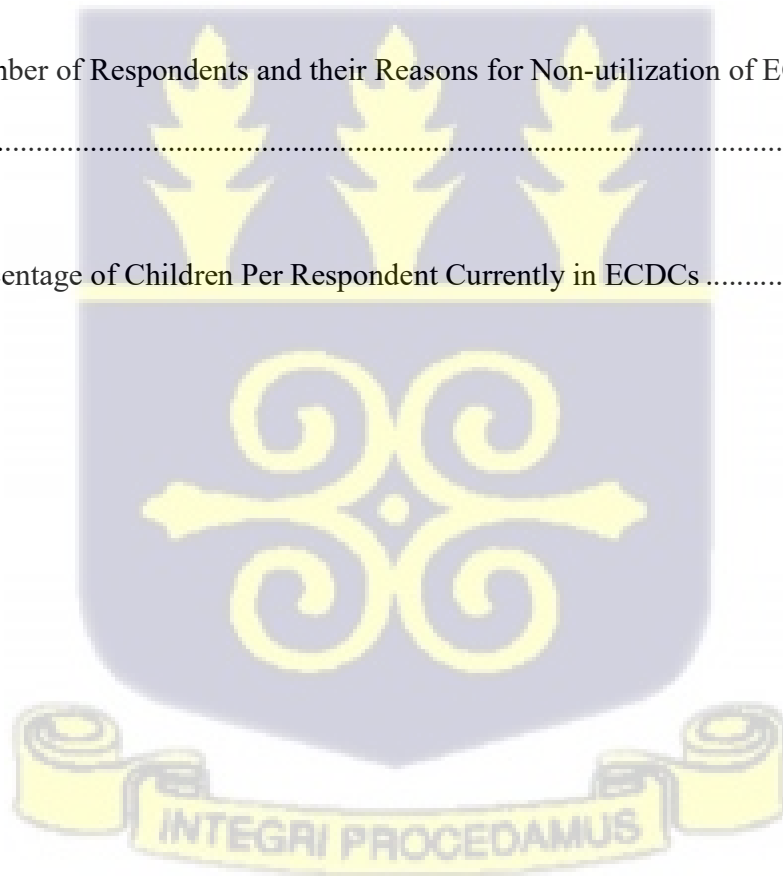
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEA	-	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ASEMA	-	Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly
DFID	-	Department for International Development
ECD	-	Early Childhood Development
ECDCs	-	Early Childhood Developments Centers
EFA	-	Education for All
GRASP	-	Ghana Rural Action Support Program
MENA	-	Middle East and North African
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNHCR	-	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
WGECD	-	Working Group on Early Childhood Development



ABSTRACT

Socially constructed traditional roles largely give women the responsibility to care for children, which places a bigger burden on them than on men. Evidence in developed countries shows that the availability of Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs) is intimately linked to parental labor market participation and income, especially for women. Little is known about the role of ECDCs in developing countries, including Ghana. This study examines how the utilization of ECDCs affects women's livelihood outcomes. The objectives of the study were to examine the factors that motivate women to leave their children at ECDCs; women's perception of and satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs; how the utilization of ECDCs impacts women's livelihood activities; and the challenges women face in utilizing ECDC as well as the coping mechanisms they adopt. A survey was conducted to administer a structured questionnaire to 120 mothers who send their children to four (4) ECDCs in Kasoa. To present the findings, descriptive statistics were used.

The findings show that in Kasoa, mothers use ECDCs to enable their children to have early education, give them time to go to work, and engage in other livelihood activities. Mothers considered ECDCs important to them and were satisfied with their services. They rated the quality of service in Kasoa as medium to high. The utilization of ECDCs enables other mothers to work normal hours without interruption and this has helped them to earn more money to support household expenses. Mothers faced challenges with the closing time, expensive fees, and frequency of children falling sick, among others. Mothers coped by asking for the support of relatives and friends, staying home to take care of the child, taking the child to work, or cutting down other expenses to meet expenditure on children. The study recommends the sensitization of mothers to the use of ECDCs, the need for the Education Directorate in Awutu Senya East

Municipal Assembly (ASEMA) to monitor ECDCs to ensure the required standards for operations are met, and for ECDCs to improve the services they render to children.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study examines the usefulness of Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs) for childcare in relation to women's livelihood outcomes. Women's contribution to economic growth and development is crucial for sustainable development, especially in a developing country. This is in the context that childcare plays a significant role in women's workforce or labor in developing countries. Studies have shown that there is a link between women's labor participation and affordable childcare centers for children. Affordable childcare and childcare subsidies by the government enable an increase in female labor supply and participation (Jaumotte 2004). Nicodemo and Waldmann (2009) for instance found out that childcare arrangement was an important instrument for women to enter paid employment. Connelly et al. (1996) also found out that in Brazil, the increase in women's labor force participation, coupled with a change in industrial structure, led to an increased demand for non-parental childcare.

As a result of the traditional role of childcare responsibilities that fall on women in the household, women often must make trade-offs between childcare and their economic activities. According to Bellamy and Rake (2005), women pay a penalty due to their caring responsibilities, a factor that they consider to be contributing to the economic disparities between men and women. They called this disparity "the motherhood gap". They further argue that women are not able to compete with men on equal terms in the labor market, including progressing their careers due to this challenge.

The issue of affordable childcare has gained attention globally. Governments have recognized that women's labor participation is very crucial to sustainable growth and development. Glynn et

al. (2013) highlighted the importance of preschool and childcare for working mothers in the United States of America while stressing the need for universal and quality preschool for children. Recently in Europe, many countries have created related multidimensional strategies such as the Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020, and Barcelona Summit. These strategies set various targets and objectives regarding childcare and women's labor force participation rates, and these, in turn, shape policy development (Janta, 2014).

In Ghana today, a development policy on Early Childhood Care has been formulated to enable children to have access to Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs), giving mothers the chance to pursue their livelihood, hence, promoting economic development in families and at the national level. Key components of the Childcare Development Policy in Ghana are the overall improvement in the quality of life and the enhancement of living standards for families. (Childcare Development Policy, 2004).

1.2 Problem Statement

Women's participation in development remains a major challenge in other parts of the world and in developing countries, especially in Africa. Many women are still not actively engaged in meaningful economic activities or gainfully employed, especially when they are consistently providing care for their children as well as performing other domestic duties. Research has shown that childcare constitutes a barrier to women's employment and training opportunities, as well as a constraint on women who are in the workforce (Redmond et al., 2006). This problem exists largely because female traditional roles place the woman in the home to care for the children. They therefore venture into activities that accommodate their roles in the home and in activities with limited vertical growth (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – [OECD]/European Union -[EU], 2017). This socially constructed role given to

women places a burden on them more than on men and this has a significant impact on their employment opportunities and choices (Redmond et al, 2006). Males dominate in meaningful employment and strategic positions, while a rather large population of women is restricted to limited employment and career growth (Rizavi and Sofer, 2010).

Unfortunately, this phenomenon has not changed much over the years in many countries around the world as many mothers who can work continue to struggle with juggling their jobs with domestic and reproductive affairs (Rasavi, 2007). According to Mehra et al. (1992), many working mothers in developing countries may be forced to either reduce their income-earning activities or make childcare arrangements that are unsatisfactory to them.

In some societies, Early Childhood Development Centers are gradually becoming visible. ECDCs have been established to provide quality primary care for children while women are gainfully engaged. A study conducted in Russia by Lokshin (2000) summarizes the benefits of ECDCs as a reduction in the rates of dropout and repetition of older children's school enrolment, improvement in school achievements, greater adult productivity, increased levels of social and emotional functioning, and very importantly, a positive effect on female labor force participation.

Over the past decades, women in Ghana have made significant strides in the labor market. Statistics from the 2010 population and housing census showed that of the total female population in Ghana, 76.6% are employed (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). The current statistics reported in the GLSS 6 report show that 94.3% of females are employed as compared to 95% of their male counterparts (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). While the proportion of males employed in the formal sector are more than the females, the proportion of females in the

informal sector is higher than the males. The 2010 census revealed that 9.7% of males as compared to 6.6% of women are employed in the public sector. In the private formal sector, 10.3% of males compared to 4.3% of females are employed. However, in the private informal sector, 88.6% of females compared to 79% of males are employed. This means that the private informal sector is dominated by females.

Despite the rapid pace at which Ghanaian women have entered the labor force in the past decades, concerns about access to proper childcare, especially for those living in low-income areas of the country, are concerning. The literature exploring the relationship between childcare and women's labor force outcomes in developed countries is vast and supports the hypothesis that the utilization of early childcare centers is intimately linked to parental labor market participation and income, especially for mothers (Garcia et al, 2008) (de Barros et al, 2011) (Berlinski and Galiani, 2005) (Pimkina and de la Flor, 2020). In the case of Ghana, there seems to be no study on the effect of access to early child-care development centers on women's livelihood, and livelihood outcomes.

This researcher observed in Kasoa, the study's catchment area, that some women undertake economic activities while having young children at their back. Others were however seen dropping their children at ECDCs. The question worth asking is that for those who dropped their children at ECDCs, what is their motivation for doing so, and how does the utilization of ECDCs contribute to their livelihood outcomes? Unfortunately, there are scarce studies on the factors that motivate women to send their children to ECDCs in sub-Saharan Africa in general and Ghana in particular. Given the important roles played by women in Ghana's socio-economic development, there is a need to discuss issues that influence their economic empowerment and livelihood outcomes. The aim of this study, therefore, is to contribute to enhancing the public

knowledge of the effect of utilizing the services of ECDCs and the impact on women's livelihood in low-income communities such as Kasoa.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to find out how the utilization of ECDCs affects women's livelihood activities in Kasoa.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the factors that motivate women to leave their children at ECDCs.
- ii. To assess women's perception of and satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs.
- iii. To ascertain the challenges women encounter in utilizing ECDC as well as the coping mechanisms they adopt.

1.4 Research Questions

As a result of the above-mentioned research objectives, data were gathered to answer the following specific research questions:

- i. What factors drive women to utilize ECDCs?
- ii. What contributions have been made to women's livelihood activities by the usage of ECDCs?
- iii. What are women's views on the adequacy of ECDCs to meet women's need for childcare?
- iv. What are the challenges confronting women who use ECDC for childcare?
- v. What strategies do women adopt in dealing with the challenges of using ECDCs?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will produce meaningful outcomes including the following:

Serve to enlighten the Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly (ASEMA) in ensuring improvements and quality of ECDCs.

Serve as a backup document and reference tool for discussion about ECDCs and women's labor participation.

Serve as a tool of reference to civil society groups such as women's organizations and sponsors on the importance of children being placed at ECDCs and the need for investing in such programs.

The findings from this study are expected to serve as a point of reference for future studies in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana due to limited studies done on ECDCs in the region.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

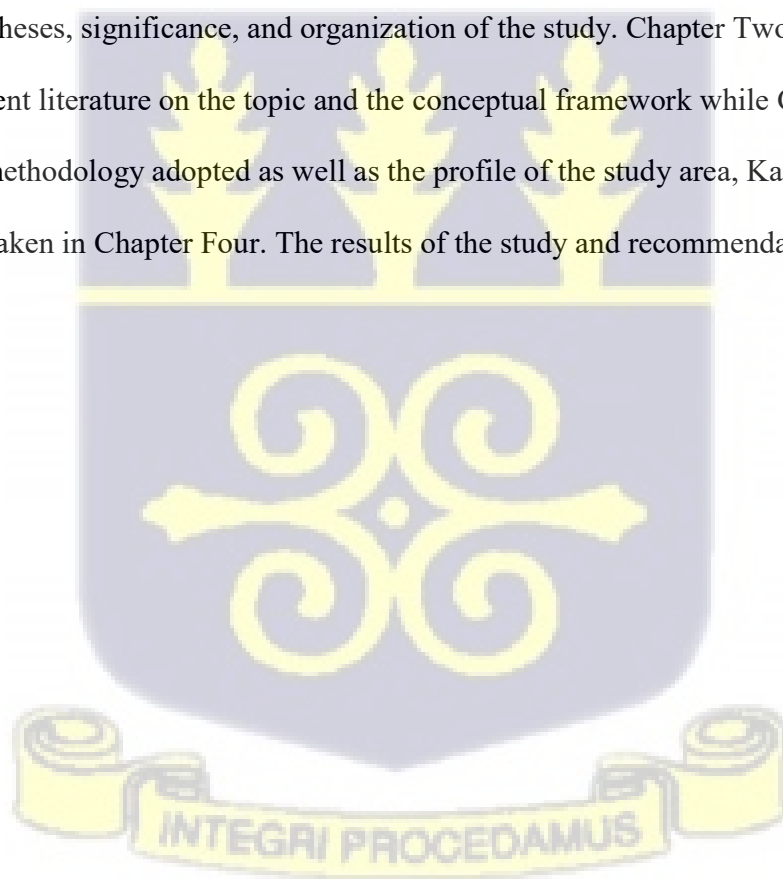
This study faced limitations such as the availability of time coupled with the language barrier. As a result of inadequate time and the fact that the researcher can neither speak nor understand the local languages (Akan, Ga, Ewe), the researcher solicited the assistance of trained individuals, who are well versed in the local languages (Akan, Ga, Ewe), to administer the questionnaires, under the supervision of the researcher. The researcher was therefore unable to ascertain the accuracy of translations of questions in vernacular by the research assistants. However, the researcher is convinced that this did not significantly affect the quality of the data collected. This is because in almost all cases, responses provided to the questionnaire were meaningful and logical.

Another limitation was that there is limited literature linking ECDCs to women's livelihood in developing countries such as Ghana. As a result, part of the review of relevant literature is scanty.

Furthermore, this study focused only on women who utilized ECDCs for their children. The better approach would have been to compare women who utilized the services of ECDCs to those who did not. This would have led to stronger conclusions on the effect of utilization of ECDCs on women's livelihood activities.

1.7 Organization of Study Report

This research is structured into five chapters. Chapter One includes a general introduction to the study, the background of the study, a statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, hypotheses, significance, and organization of the study. Chapter Two accounts for a review of pertinent literature on the topic and the conceptual framework while Chapter Three focuses on the methodology adopted as well as the profile of the study area, Kasoa. The analysis of data is undertaken in Chapter Four. The results of the study and recommendations are detailed in Chapter Five.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of relevant literature on early childhood development and the concept of Early Childhood Development. It also contains the evolution of the policy of early childhood development in Africa in general and Ghana as well as those factors that prompted Ghana to develop a policy on ECDC. It also covers the review of relevant literature on the relationship between childcare and women's livelihood. It also contains some relevant literature on the factors that influence women's decision to either enroll their child/children in ECD programs. Based on the literature review, a conceptual framework showing the linkages between the factors of interest to the study is also presented in this chapter.

2.1 Concept of Early Childhood Development

Early childhood education is a starting point in a child's development and in every modern society, it is believed that education is the key to national development. The latter stages in education are predicated upon the foundation of early education. If an individual misses out on the first stage, it is most often difficult for the person to get the basics of education (Obiweluzor 2015). Ghana's Early Childhood Care and Development Policy is defined as the provision of a variety of services that encourages the development, protection, growth, and survival of a child, zero to eight (0–8) years old, in a timely manner (Boakye et al., 2008). Obiweluzor (2015) examines the implementation of the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy, pointing out the purposes of early childhood education, and achievements made within the Nigerian system, and concludes that early education for children has a positive effect on a child's educational base later in life; hence, the objectives and goals from the national policy report should be successfully executed (Obiweluzor, 2015).

In the past, many countries questioned the value of early childhood education and the role it plays in subsequent academic achievement and socialization in the primary grades (Jacinta and Rotich, 2015). Robinson (1968) holds the view that young children are not mature enough to learn complex tasks or skills that are required of them in preschool programs. He also argues that the love and warmth of a mother are more important than any educational program. On the other hand, some research evidence shows that early childhood education has a positive influence on a child's affective, conceptual, and social development in later years (Baker 1973; Gormley et al 2005; Rolnick and Grunewald 2003). Many parents have been indecisive about sending their children for early childhood education (Gregory, 2004). This concern was the basis for the initiative of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, drafted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in 1989 (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 1998). Most countries have now turned to universal pre-primary education to give children a better start in life (Myers, 1995; OECD, 2002; UNESCO, 2004). There is now some general agreement among experts around the world from developing as well as developed nations that, early childhood care and education programs are crucial and desirable especially for children (Sylva & Pugh, 2005).

Gregory (2004) argues that the most significant years in the life of a child to teach them how to love, care, and learn is when they are between the age range of two to six (2 – 6) years old. He went on further to state that children also learn how to communicate with people, how to express what they feel, and how to develop their educational capacities. Hence, the academic and emotional development of a child is heavily reliant on success in preschool (Gregory, 2004). Blau and Currie (2005) and Heckman (2006) argue that attending pre-primary school increases average grades, class participation, behavioral skills, socialization, and self-control in primary schools.

Early childhood education programs are therefore designed to foster the general well-being and enhance school readiness so that these children might gain the full benefit of their school experiences and be more successful in life generally (Barnett, 2011). For example, in the United States, it was found that children are provided care and educational experiences from adults other than parents during the preschool years critical to brain development and learning (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

The foundation for developing a person from childhood to adulthood is Early Childhood Development (ECD) (Aidoo, 2008). Due to its significance to national development, there has been an increase in the number of ECDCs all over the globe. For instance, evidence from Thailand shows that the types of early childcare providers have been increasing and so has the number of community-based nurseries and childcare centers, even in rural areas (Bautista, 2004). These centers have become a vital lifeline for working parents with infants and very young children. Globally, kindergartens or pre-school classes are seen as important preparatory programs for children's entry into primary school and are thus more closely associated with Early Childhood Care and Education, but some consider even informal childcare programs as provisions for ECDC (Bautista, 2004).

The lines are becoming increasingly blurred as more and more childcare centers and early childhood programs catering to two and three-year-olds are appearing alongside kindergarten (Bautista, 2004). Bautista (2004) further states that while the original goals of the kindergarten are primarily linked to preparing for school readiness, and therefore, the teaching of skills deemed necessary for entering and adjusting to primary education, teachers and staff perform an essential childcare role. This is in response to the needs of families who require programs that provide all-day childcare support.

In Ghana, accessible childcare relates to increased women's employment (Quisumbing et al, 2003) even though there is a high rate of women working in the informal sector. Accessible childcare would also mean affordable childcare. According to the 2010 Ghana Population Census, the private informal sector constitutes 90.9 percent of women's employment in Ghana. This means that women are more economically engaged in the informal sector than in the formal sector. Can the participation of women in the formal sector increase due to the availability of affordable childcare in Ghana?

A study focusing on a peri-urban community, Ashaiman near Accra, shows that 93 percent of children aged between three and six years old attended ECDCs, with 90 percent of these children in private schools as compared to public schools (Bidwell and Watine, 2014). Can the public schools be adequately empowered to handle ECDCs? Though a lot has been done globally about ECD, especially in the West or the developed world, this study illustrates the need for childcare support systems for mothers in Ghana. The concept of ECDCs seems to outweigh the lack thereof from so many angles. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), our economies and development have not been so fast-growing and stable. The concept of ECDC seems to be one of those concepts that can be expanded upon, and its implementation improved over the years to come. Hence, the researcher hoped to explore the utilization of ECDCs in Ghana and whether such utilization can have an economic impact on a key stakeholder, mothers.

2.2 Evolution of ECD Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa

There are forty-eight (48) countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) with about 130 million children that range between birth and six (6) years old (Garcia et al 2008). Early beginnings of the ECD concept in Sub-Saharan Africa began in the 1970s in Kenya when the Bernard van Leer Foundation supported ECD through the Kenya Institute of Education and established the National Centre for

Early Childhood Education (NACECE) (The Republic of Kenya, 2006). However, in 1990, ECD gained momentum with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC; United Nations 1989) by the United Nations General Assembly. The then President of Mali, Dioncounda Traoré co-hosted the Summit, however, President Abdou Diouf of Senegal played a significant role in endorsing the CRC summit (Pence et al, 2004). During the CRC summit, most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa signed the policy document.

During later years in the 1990s, there were a series of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries, groups, and international partners or organizations that furthered the concept of ECD in SSA. Key among them was the Donors to African Education which later became the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). In 1993, ADEA developed a technical Working Group on ECD (WGECD). Garcia et al. summarized a series of events that occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s:

“In 1999 the World Bank took the lead, with support from United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other international organizations, to organize a continent-wide African International Conference on Early Childhood Development. The conferences were hosted in Kampala, Uganda, Asmara, Eritrea (2002), and Accra, Ghana (2005). The Asmara Declaration on ECD in 2002 was developed at the 2002 Asmara Conference which was embraced by all who attended the Conference, whereas 39 government representatives from African Countries endorsed the Accra Communique 2005 in support of Early Childhood Development. The March 2006 eighth ADEA biennial meeting held in Liberville, Gabon was another indication that ECD was growing in momentum and strength (ADEA 2006).”

(Garcia, Pence, Evans, 2008, pg. 31,32)

Other notable interventions included the development of several key policy documents and publications geared towards supporting the ECD concept in SSA. These include *The Condition of Young Children in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Colletta et al, 1996) published by the World Bank; Technical Paper No. 326, the *Review of Early Childhood Policy and Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Corletta and Reinhold, 1997) published by the World Bank; Technical Paper No. 367, *Does the Village Still Raise the Child? A collaborative Study on Changing Child-rearing and Early Education in Kenya* (Swadener et al, 2000) published by State University of New York Press; *Africa Fit for Children* published by UNICEF; *The Young Face of NEPAD: Children and Young People in the New Partnership for Africa's Development* published by UNICEF; *Early Childhood Development as an important Strategy to Improve Learning Outcomes* (Hyde and Jabiru, 2006) published by ADEA Working Group on ECD and *Africa's Challenge: Early Childhood and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Garcia et al, 2008) published by the World Bank. In 2005, ADEA, UNICEF, and UNESCO sponsored the development of an ECD policy guideline, *Planning Policies for Early Childhood Development: Guidelines for Action* (Baron 2005). These policy guidelines are geared toward assisting SSA countries to develop their own specific national ECD policy.

Today, most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have developed and implemented some form of ECD activities in support of both young children and their families (Garcia et al, 2008). There has been a realization that there is a connection between ECD and national development processes (Baron, 2005). A small number of countries in SSA have either developed or are in the process of developing specific national ECD policies that will assimilate its ECD activities. Examples of such countries include Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Liberia, and Tanzania. However, several other countries are still testing

different strategies that will encompass the costs attached to national ECD programs to ensure their sustainability (Aidoo, 2008).

In Ghana, the ECD policy took about eleven (11) years to be developed, approved, and launched due to various reasons ranging from the change in government, to building consensus among key stakeholders (Garcia et al, 2008). This is one example of how most countries in SSA struggled to get an ECD policy fully approved and launched for implementation. The broad goal of Ghana's policy on ECD is to promote the survival, growth, development, and protection of all children, zero to eight (0 – 8) years old in Ghana, with many specific objectives relating to the holistic development of all young children (Boakye et al., 2008). Boakye et al (2008) conducted studies in various communities in Africa (Ghana, Mauritius, and Namibia) while Garcia et al (2008) conducted studies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). They pinpointed some factors believed to have prompted policy development on ECD in Ghana.

The first was to carry out awareness about the deprived condition of young children and the vital need to address it. For example, about 90 percent of children aged zero to six (0–6), especially those from rural and/or poor areas in Ghana, did not have access to early childhood services (Boakye et al, 2008).

Another factor was “the internal obligation to ensure the survival, growth, development, and protection of children”, as envisioned in the 1992 Ghana constitution (Ghana, 1992), the 1998 Children Act (Ghana, 1998), and the bylaws of metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies (Garcia et al, 2008).

“The third factor was the responsibility to conform to principles that have been agreed upon in international conventions and treaties endorsed by Ghana, including CRC” (Garcia et al, 2008). In addition, Ghana recognized the need for a national ECD strategy that would help reduce poverty.(Garcia et al, 2008). These factors underlined the government’s commitment, through its Ministry of Education, to the development, growth, and sustainability of ECD programs in Ghana. The ECDCs under the Ministry of Education are regulated and monitored to provide children with all the needed care and lessons they need at the early stages of development.

2.3 Childcare and Women’s Livelihood

The care of children and household chores that are not paid work has not been shared evenly among partners. Women have, to a greater extent, taken on the role even when they are employed. According to Nicodemo and Waldmann (2009), women are primarily responsible for unpaid work at home. The situation is far worse for developing countries than for developed countries. For instance, women in SSA do most of the household work at the same time as they rely on self-employment or wage work for survival; there are limited options to being further productive (Jiggins 1989). Hence, women are more heavily engaged in the informal sector than the formal sector. According to the UN Women 2015 report, 89% of women in SSA obtain their livelihood from the informal sector.

A study conducted in Kenya, Liberia, and Senegal shed more light on the choices that women are making about the care of their children and their livelihood (Bhatkal, 2014). They were asked whether there were faced with challenges because of childcare and a vast number of them answered positively; 91% from Liberia, 82% from Kenya, and 72% from Senegal. A significant proportion of these mothers reported they often faced a “trade-off between childcare and their livelihood ambitions” (Bhatkal, 2014). In Africa, we see that childcare has for the most part been

the responsibility of women. We see women being responsible to take the child to the hospital, to school and taking care of the child's daily needs among others. What impact has this role played by women have on their economic advancements?

Women's continuing low economic participation has been attributed to several interrelated socioeconomic, cultural, individual, structural, and institutional factors (Mcloughlin, 2013). Some of the key barriers, among others, to women's economic participation identified by other studies by ILO (2008), Abdelali-Martini (2011), and Mcloughlin (2013) are the demands of the care economy. The heavy burden of household duties, responsibility for the care of children and the elderly, coupled with the often-limited availability of childcare. Women are clothed with the responsibility of taking care of the children and the elderly even if they are working women. With the lack of effective and unaffordable Care Centers, women tend to abandon their jobs. Such sacrifice makes women a burden on society because they have no or limited economic contribution.

There has been some disincentives to women working in the private sector after marriage. Women withdraw from work in the private sector after marriage, because it is considered incompatible with their household responsibilities. Most employers in the private sector are skeptical about employing women who are newly married or pregnant because they do not want to be bothered with having to get replacements for them if they happen to go on maternity leave. They see it as being costly on their part because they would have to pay both the replacement and the woman for the period of absence. Also, there have been many laws formulated globally protecting the rights of women in the workplace. However, there are very few of these laws that are adhered to.

The effects of childcare costs on married women's labor supply have been extensively researched, especially in developed countries. The first study to look explicitly at this, Heckman (1974) found that the estimated cost of childcare had a significant negative effect on women's labor supply; this effect diminished substantially as the age of the child increased. Subsequent research tried to specifically study the effect of childcare on married or single mothers. Those that were conducted to examine the effect of childcare on married women found that married women's labor supply tends to significantly decrease when the need for childcare arises (Blau, 1992; Connelly, 1992; Barrow, 1996; Kimmel, 1998). Some of these studies such as Blau (1992) and Connelly (1992) even found that a significant proportion of married women must change their work or even quit totally to take care of the child at home.

A similar conclusion was drawn from studies that were conducted to examine the effect of childcare on single mothers. The findings from those studies showed that higher childcare costs decrease single mothers' employment (Connelly, 1992; Berger and Black, 1992; Kimmel, 1995). Han and Waldfogel (2001) conducted a comparative study to examine the childcare costs among single and married mothers in terms of employment in the United States. The results from the study confirm that childcare costs have a strong negative effect on the probability that a mother works and that, these effects are larger for single mothers than for married mothers. Earlier studies by Michalopoulos, Robins, and Garfinkel (1992) and Anderson and Levine (2000) also found that childcare greatly costs single mothers more than married mothers.

In the US, research has focused on estimating the impact of child-care on the labor supply of women, viewing access to childcare as one of the determinants of female labor supply. Most studies that measure the elasticity of female labor force participation concerning the cost of childcare show that there is a negative relationship. In other words, when the price of childcare

falls, maternal labor force participation increases (Anderson and Levine, 2000; Blau and Currie, 2005). Results from other developed countries corroborate the evidence of a negative link between childcare and female labor force participation (Gustafsson and Stafford 1992; Lokshin 2000; Fong and Lokshin 2000; Baker et al. 2008).

2.4 Benefits of ECDCS to Women's Labor Outcomes

Despite the increasing equality in maternal roles, reproductive responsibilities of child upbringing continues to be gendered and it is mothers who take on most of the responsibility for childcare (Acker, 1990; Santos and Cardoso, 2008; Kodagoda and Duncan, 2010). The available evidence in many developing countries shows that not only are mothers caretakers of their wards, but young daughters also act as providers of free childcare, releasing mothers for market work (Tiefenthaler, 1997; Deutsch, 1998).

Studies on Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs) have found that ECDCs have enormous benefits to both the children who attend the educational units and the mothers who send their children there. DFID (2010) has found that mothers who send their children to the ECDCs centers enjoy greater gender equality, greater participation in higher education or training to prepare for workforce participation, and improvement in maternal depression rates. Browning (2006) has also found that mothers who can send their children to ECDC centers can enter the labor force, and are able to participate in higher education and training to prepare for life in the labor force (Browning, 2006).

Evaluation of ECDC programs in Dublin, Ireland, by UNESCO (2007) shows significant beneficial effects for both mothers and children in terms of self-esteem, interaction, women's economic empowerment, and even support for the child's learning experiences. Garcia et al (2008)

wrote on ECDCs considering Africa's future and challenges and found that when mothers patronize the services of ECDCs, it enables mothers to participate in the paid workforce and increase the family's income. The authors however cautioned that for families to benefit from the services of ECDCs, it is essential that ECDC services are affordable as well as accessible to women. Unlike some two to three decades ago, urbanization, with its attendant changes in household structures, has reduced the role of extended family members as caregivers. The demand for alternative childcare for younger children can be attributed to the increase in the number of mothers who are working (Garcia, Pence & Evans, 2008).

de Barros et al. (2011) carried out a randomized trial study in low-income neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to extend free early childhood care to women as they assess the impact of childcare on women's labor market outcomes. The result of their study shows that access to free childcare significantly impacted maternal labor outcomes. Furthermore, employment and labor force participation rates of women are substantially boosted, while unemployment rates are reduced. Interestingly, the results show that for mothers who were not working before being offered free childcare, there was an almost 100 percent increase in employment rates.

Evidence from developing and middle-income countries also shows a strong positive link between access to ECDCs and maternal labor force participation. In Latin America, there is a small but growing body of evidence on the impact of specific childcare and preschool programs. Evaluations of policies and programs in Argentina (Berlinski and Galiani, 2005), Colombia (Attanasio and Vera-Hernandez, 2004; Peña-Parga and Glassman, 2004; Collins and Ribero, 2004), and Guatemala (Quisumbing, 2005) all show a strong positive relationship between access to childcare centers and female labor force participation. For instance, in an evaluation study by Berlinski and Galiani (2007) and Berlinski, Galiani, and Gertler (2008) of pre-primary school facilities (targeted

at children 3 to 5 years of age) in Argentina, it was found that there is a significant positive impact of pre-primary school facilities on maternal employment. Utilization of the services of ECDCs was therefore found to safeguard mothers' employment. Similarly, Attanasio and Vera-Hernandez (2004) found large positive effects on female labor supply in their evaluation of a community nursery program in Colombia.

2.5 Factors that Motivate Women's Decision to use ECDC

Many factors have been found in studies, which influence mothers' decision to enroll their child/children in ECDCs. Even though many of the studies were conducted in advanced countries such as the UK and US, many of the same factors have been found in the few studies that have been conducted in developing countries (Samman et al, 2016). According to Kodagoda (2014), trust is a key reason affecting mothers' decision to enroll their child in an ECDC. Hand (2005) did a study in Australia on the factors that affect women's decision on the use of ECDCs and found that mothers mostly prefer a person who can substitute for a mother's love since they have fears about the possibility of their child learning undesirable habits (Hand, 2005; Duncan, 2005; Armstrong and Walby, 2009). These studies were done in countries out of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Hence, the researcher will want to know whether there are similar reasons that affect women's decision to use ECDCs in a SSA country like Ghana. According to Duncan (2005), and Armstrong and Walby (2009), in countries like the UK and Sri Lanka, many mothers and their husbands usually prefer the child's grandparents as suitable child caregivers for their children until they reach school-going age. Hence, mothers are more attentive in the selection of childcare centers (Byrne, 2006).

(Kodagoda, 2014) wrote on the practical aspects of childcare, such as location, distance to mother's (or father's) workplace, and the opening hours of the childcare centers, and found out that these

practical aspects are key influencing factors on the decision mothers make on sending their kids to ECDCs. Research has also found that unaffordable fees shaped mothers' decisions on child-caring differently (Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004). Pre-existing motherhood experiences of childcare also play a significant role; for example, some mothers make their decision following their own mothers' experiences or based on stories from their workplace and friends (Kodagoda, 2014). Demographic characteristics such as mother's level of education and employment also lead to different decisions on the use of ECDCs (Crompton and Harris, 1999; Debacker, 2008). A study in the UK found that middle-class mothers often choose formal caring provisions for a child's development (Vincent and Ball, 2001) as compared to lower class mothers. Further, Vincent and Ball (2007) revealed that a child's development is highly classed because middle to higher-class mothers mostly desire to send their children to extra enrichment activities, such as creative and sports classes, which the lower-class mothers cannot afford.

All the factors discussed above have been found to vary from country to country. In some developed countries, where the state considers itself as an active agent in children development, the state makes policies to provide many state ECDCs to help care for the children. For example, most mothers in Scandinavian countries believe that state childcare by well-trained professionals is better than their informal caring systems as it can be unhealthy for children to be at home with caregivers in the form of other relatives and the parents after they have reached 18 months old (Duncan and Strell, 2004). In Sweden in particular, provision of socialization and care of children are regarded as responsibilities to be shared between parents and the welfare state, supported by employers (Björnberg, 2002). The aim of the Swedish government, spearheaded by their Ministry of Education, is to combat social disparities through the provision of high-quality education, emotional, and social support.

In Sweden, fathers are even entitled to take two “daddy months” after the childbirth as a replacement for maternity leave. As a result of these policies, there is a gradual increase in the use of parental leave by men to support women and the state to care for their babies (Björnberg, 2002). In contrast, liberal welfare states such as the USA, Australia, and the UK promote traditional work norms, and the availability of public provisions for mothers is therefore limited. In these countries, the responsibility for childcare is a parental one, thus, the state is reluctant to provide care for their families. Hence, childcare is a main barrier for working mothers (Mandel, 2009).

2.6 Satisfaction with the Services Provided by ECDCs

There have been some studies done on parental satisfaction of services provided by ECDCs in developed countries mostly. Parental satisfaction with ECDCs has been shown to have a link with parents’ income level (Lucile Packard Foundation, 2007). The study done in the Bay Area, USA, indicated that high income earning parents were more satisfied with the quality of education provided to their children compared to parents who are low-income earners. In contrast, a study conducted by Falbo (2003) however found that low-income parents in Texas, USA were greatly satisfied with the quality of education in their children’s ECDCs compared to higher-income parents.

Another study stated that the adequacy and the availability of appropriate teaching and learning materials that develops the minds of children has been found to influence parental satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs (Silva, 2006).

In addition, the parents’ level of education has also been shown to affect their satisfaction with the quality of education provided to their children. Dasgupta (2009) did a study measuring the quality of healthcare services and education in Indonesia. In the study, perception data was used showing

that parents with higher education levels were less likely to be satisfied with the services rendered by ECDCs compared to parents who had a lower level of education.

According to Horwood et al (2019), a study done in South Africa, mothers who work in the formal economy and entrust care for their children to formal ECDCs are more satisfied with the services (Horwood et al, 2019). However, in contrast, mothers living in poor areas or with low income or non-standard work schedules are more likely to use the support of family members for childcare. Hence, they are not fully satisfied with the services of this informal childcare.

The Literature has proven that there is a relationship linking mothers' satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs Horwoord et al, (2009), Dasqpta, (2009), Silva, (2006), Lucile Packard Foundation, 2007).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

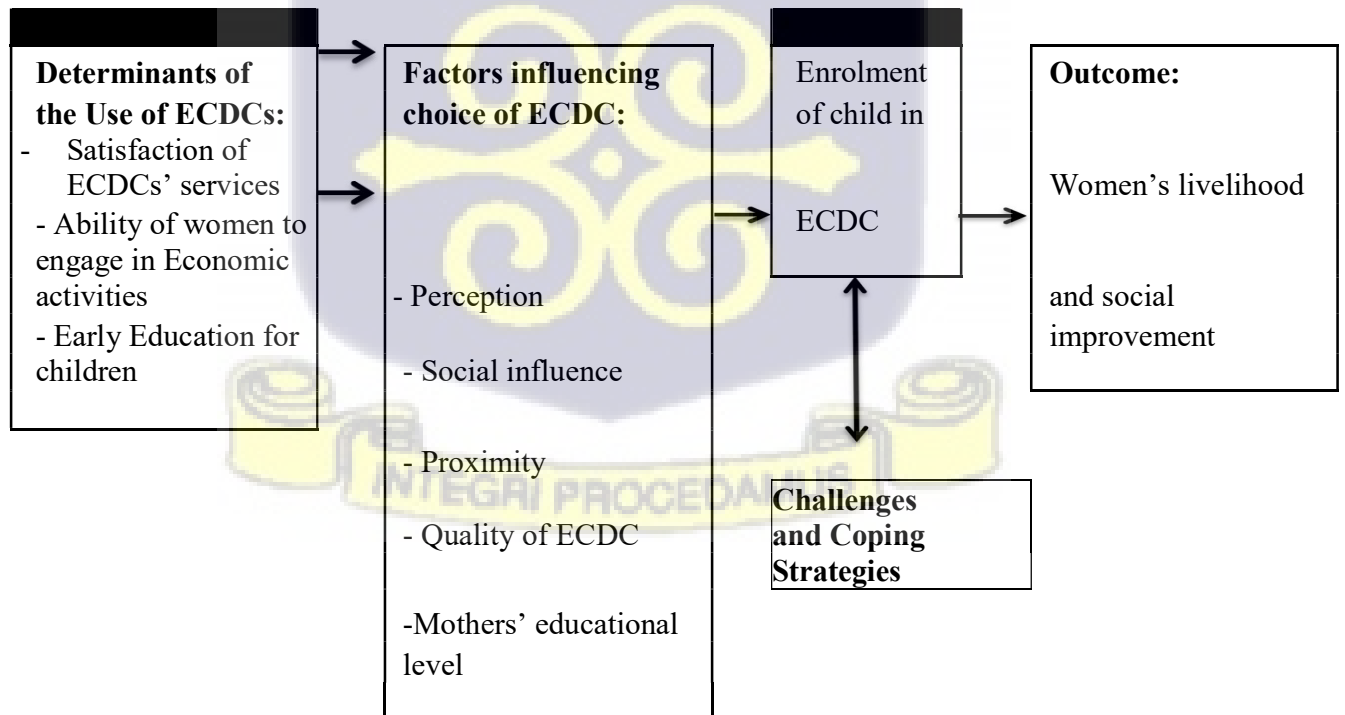
Based on the findings from the literature reviewed, the researcher conceptualizes three major determinants for the use of ECDCs, which are the ability of mothers to engage in economic activities, early education for children, and the satisfaction of services provided by ECDCs. The three determinants are broken into factor categories that are more likely to influence or motivate women to leave their children at ECDCs. These factors are perceptions they hold about the quality of the ECDCs to child development, the social influence from other mothers in the community, the proximity of an ECDC to the residence or place of work of a mother, government subsidies and the educational level of mothers.

As perceived by the researcher, the factors listed above are subject to some challenges that may affect women's livelihood outcomes and the core of this thesis is to put forth remedial coping

mechanisms. Despite the challenges that are perceived, women still consider the services of ECDCs. This means that they adopt some coping mechanisms to manage whatever challenge that confronts them while using ECDCs. This research anticipates the unraveling of some of these challenges women encounter while using ECDCs and how they cope with them.

These challenges and coping mechanisms perceived in addition to the factors discussed above are believed to influence women’s decision to enroll a child in an ECDC. However, the result despite all the challenges women encounter and the coping measures they adopt, women’s livelihood and social status is expected to improve when they utilize the services of ECDCs. The expected outcome is therefore an increase in women labor force participation, earning them income to enable them to achieve a better livelihood as compared to those who totally stay at home to care for their children as presented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework: Factors Influencing Mothers’ Decision to use Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDC)



Source: Author’s Construct (2015)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study sought to examine how the utilization of ECDCs affects the livelihood of women in Kasoa. A quantitative methodology was adopted where 120 women were selected and interviewed by convenient sampling at 4 ECDCs in the Kasoa Township. A descriptive statistical approach using frequencies, charts, and graphs was used in the presentation of the data. This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, conclusion, and recommendations for policy purposes.

3.1 Summary of Findings

The study sought to achieve four main objectives namely: to examine the factors that motivate women to leave their children at ECDCs; to assess women's perception and satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs; to find out how the utilization of ECDCs impacts women's livelihood activities; and to ascertain the challenges women face in utilizing ECDC as well as the coping mechanisms they adopt.

A socio-demographic analysis of the respondents shows that majority of them were traders and had basic to secondary level education. Their monthly income ranged from less than GH¢ 100 to above GH¢500. It also shows that 81.7% (98 out of 120) of the women interviewed were married and almost half of them were Akans. Kasoa is in the Central Region which is predominantly an Akan region. The dominance of Akan among the respondents was therefore an expected reflection of ethnicity patterns in the Central Region.

Kasoa, it is further reported that “trading and its related activities are the leading economic ventures, and employ about 60% of the working population in the Municipality” (ASEMA Composite Budget, (2014).

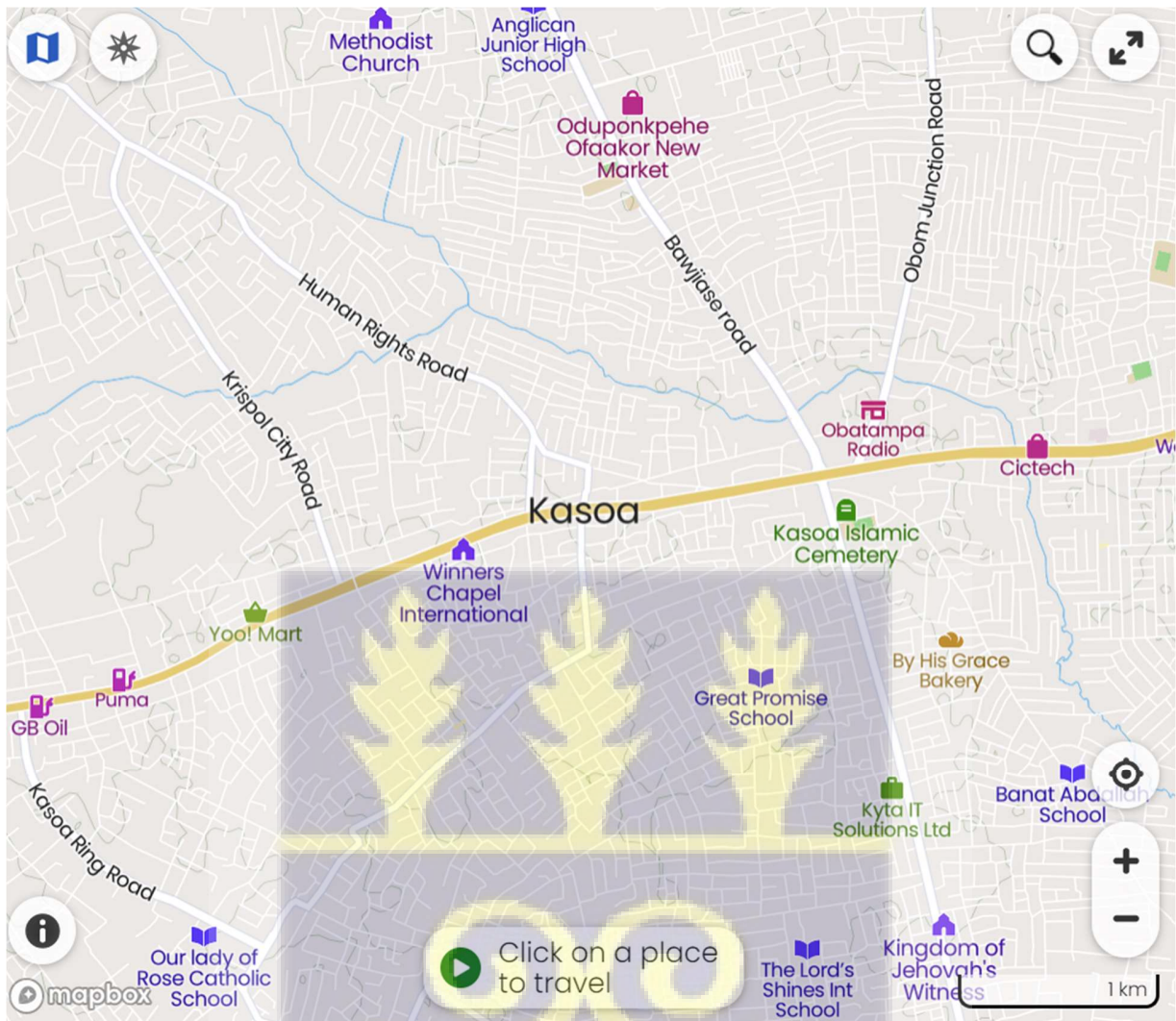
Some non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have seen the need to empower women for them to contribute meaningfully to economic development in Kasoa. To boost female economic activity in Kasoa, the Ghana Rural Action Support Program (GRASP) has initiated micro-finance loans to empower women in Kasoa (Adjei-Bosompem, 2013). Women can further expand or begin petty businesses, or engage in agricultural activities with the aid from these loans.

Unlike other districts or assemblies, the highest level of health delivery system in Kasoa is provided by a private institution. The ASEMA Composite Budget 2014 reports that in the entire ASEMA, “there are only 15 health facilities located within the municipal, with a doctor-population ratio of 1/111,303”. This means that Kasoa is most likely to have access to only one doctor.

The Educational Directorate in ASEMA was newly established in 2015 and less than a year old when the researcher gathered data for the research. The researcher was informed by the Director that, the Directorate was then in the process of creating an effective and efficient database of the entire education sector within the assembly. However, the Director of the Early Childhood Development Unit informed the researcher that there were 30 public ECDCs in Kasoa and about 800 private ECDCs with only 293 ECDCs formally registered. However, according to the Coordinator for Private Schools in Kasoa, some of the private schools have closed down. He gave the number of current active schools at 270.



Figure 3. 1: Map of Kasoa



Mapbox, 2022

3.2 Research Design

Research design describes how, when, and where data are to be collected and analyzed (Parahoo, 1997). There are two major research approaches: qualitative and quantitative. This study adopted the quantitative research design, where a survey was conducted to administer a structured questionnaire to mothers who brought their children to ECDCs. Survey Research can be defined as “the method used to collect data about people, their preferences, thoughts, and behaviors in a systematic way through the usage of uniformed questionnaires or interviews” (Bhattacharjee,

2012). Bhattacharjee (2012) iterated surveys can be used for descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory research involving individuals as the unit of analysis. The use of a scientific survey in this study was to allow the researcher to generalize her findings to reflect on the targeted population. The nature of the design is a cross-sectional descriptive survey. A cross-sectional descriptive survey is “where data collection for both independent and dependent variables occur at a single point in time” (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The reason for using a quantitative design is that, many of the previous studies that have been conducted across the world used a survey approach to administer the questionnaire to mothers (Anderson and Levine, 2000; Han and Waldfogel, 2001; Boakye et al., 2008; Abdelali-Martini, 2011; Mcloughlin, 2013). The use of the quantitative approach, therefore, does not deviate from the standard approach used by other studies. Another reason for using the quantitative approach in this study is because statistics can be used to generalize findings and it is more reliable and objective (ACAPS 2012).

3.3 Sources of Data

For this study, the researcher utilized both secondary and primary data. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from the field. It formed the main basis for the analysis and conclusion of the study. Secondary data on the list of all ECDCs in Kasoa were collected from the Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly (ASEMA) Education Directorate. Secondary data were also obtained from relevant records such as books, journals, articles, the internet, and published and unpublished materials. The findings from these sources were used to establish a basis for the background for the study and were also used to support the findings of the study.

3.4 Study Population

The study population refers to an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications (Polit and Hungler, 1999). The target population was women in Kasoa. However, it is not all women who were included in the study; only women who had their children attending ECDCs were specifically targeted for this study.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The targeted population for the study was women who placed their kids at ECDCs, and then went about their livelihood and activities. Mothers in this study refer to biological mothers and guardians. The most convenient way to get these mothers was when they dropped their kids off in the morning at an ECDC. Therefore, the researcher sought the help of the ECDCs to get to women who patronize their facility. As a screening process, women contacted were asked whether they were the biological mother or guardian of the child or children they dropped off. Based on their response, the interview was either conducted if they were the biological mother or guardian, or was discontinued if they were not.

With the help of the education officer in charge of Early Childhood Development, the researcher was able to get the list of all ECDCs legally operating in Kasoa and registered with the Educational Directorate. The total number of registered schools in Kasoa with ECDCs was 300. To get a representative sample of schools in Kasoa, schools with active ECDCs were stratified into two, namely, public and private. The number of private schools with ECDCs in Kasoa, registered with the Educational Directorate was 270, while the public ones were 30. Irrespective of the number of ECDCs in each category, a simple random sampling method was employed to select four schools from each stratum. Therefore, a total number of eight schools were used for the collection of data: four private ECDCs and four public ECDCs. Using the sole existing traffic light in 2015 as a central point, Kasoa was divided into four (4) zones. For each zone to be represented in the

research, two (2) schools (private and Public) were selected from each zone. The intention was to have reasonable coverage of Kasoa. It must be noted that adequate coverage of a population reduces sampling errors and bias (ILO, 2004).

To select the four private schools, the researcher divided Kasoa into four zones for adequate coverage using the sole existing traffic light at the center of Kasoa as the reference point. Using the simple random sampling method, one ECDC was selected from each zone.

To select the four public schools, the researcher used the Education Directorate's division or grouping of schools; wherein, public ECDCs were grouped into three zones/circuits. Using the simple random sampling method, one school was selected from each zone. The researcher performed another simple random sampling on the three zones to select a zone to pick the fourth public ECDC.

After a school is selected, the Headmaster/Headmistress of the school was contacted, and his/her permission is sought. The four private schools which were randomly selected were Glorious Generation Academy (Off Obom road), Kings of Talent School (94 Zongo), Loma Linda SDA School (Kae Me Bre) and Messiah International School (Walantu). The public schools which were randomly selected were Sheik Dr. Nuhu Sharubutu Islamic Basic, Kasoa Methodist School, Akweley St. Mary's Anglican Primary A/B/E (Akweley), and Ofaakor D/A A&C KG Primary (Ofaakor).

Due to time and financial constraints, the convenience sampling technique was used to interview 15 women at each school. This, therefore, made the total sample 120. The selection of 120 respondents represent a good sample size for the pupose of an MA dissertation and allows for

statistical inferences (Baker and Edwards, 2012). The selection of parents was based on their willingness to participate in the study. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), convenience sampling involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study.

3.6 Data Collection

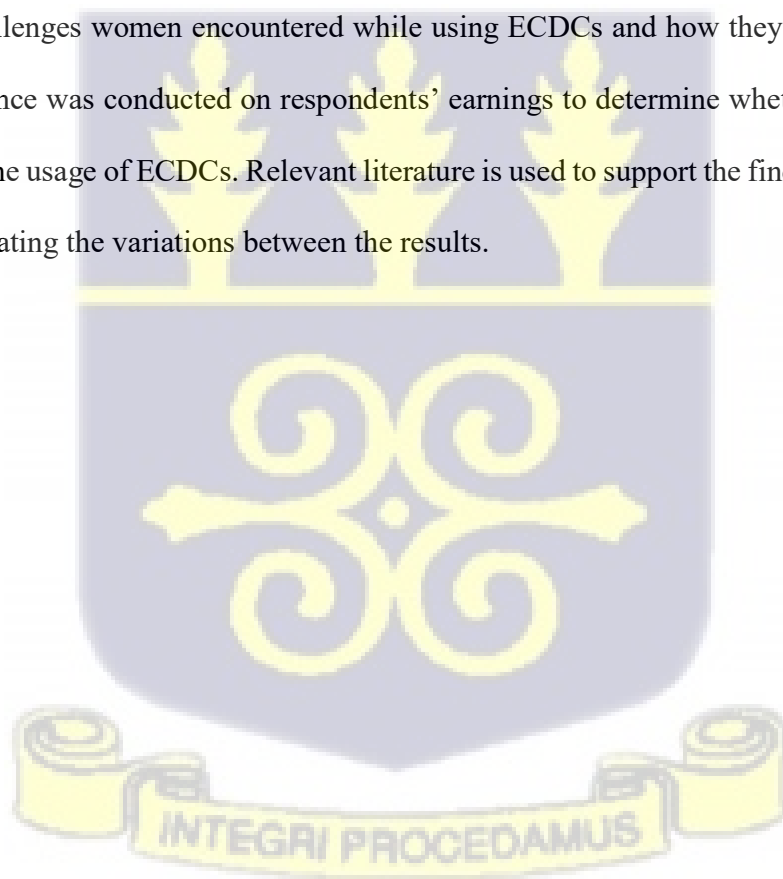
After a mother was selected, the objectives of the study were explained to her. Her consent and voluntary participation were ensured. After she had agreed to participate in the study, two options were provided to her; either she fills the questionnaire herself (thus, for literate women) or she was interviewed. Those who could fill it themselves did so and those who could not were interviewed. All the research assistants who helped in data collection could speak at least two or more of the following languages fluently: English, Akan, Ga, and Ewe. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Kasoa is predominantly occupied by people who speak the above languages. Hence, the interviewers needed to speak these local languages. If an interviewee did not understand any of these languages, she was replaced. The data collection was done very early in the morning, between 6:00 am and 8:30 am, as this was when women brought their children to school.

3.7 Data Analysis

In the presentation of the findings, the researcher adopted a descriptive statistics analytical approach. Descriptive statistical analysis is mostly used in the presentation of quantitative research findings. For this reason, descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, crosstabs, and charts were used.

The study used various frequencies including respondents' age, marital status, number of children, ethnicity, educational level, economic activity, and occupation to gather the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The study also used a series of crosstabs including respondents'

economic activity by their income, to determine whether the type of economic activity engaged in informed their monthly income. Another crosstab was for the factors responsible for respondents enrolling their children in ECDC by their economic activity, to establish whether the factors responsible for the usage of ECDCs were impacted by their economic activities. Another was the respondents' economic activities by the effects the usage of ECDCs had on their livelihood, to determine the variations in impact. An analysis was conducted between the challenges the respondents faced while using ECDCs and the coping mechanisms they adopted to mitigate these challenges. It was assumed by the researcher in the conceptual framework, that, the usage of ECDCs had challenges and women adopted coping mechanisms. This analysis was done to unravel some of the challenges women encountered while using ECDCs and how they coped with them. A test of difference was conducted on respondents' earnings to determine whether their earnings improved with the usage of ECDCs. Relevant literature is used to support the findings. This helped in better appreciating the variations between the results.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data of the survey conducted in Kasoa, which sought to examine how the women's utilization of Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs) affect their livelihoods.

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.1 Age of Respondents

The analysis of the age of the respondents indicated that more than half of the respondents (61) representing 75.8% were between the ages of 20 – 39 years as presented in Table 4.1. However, a quarter of them (30) representing 25% were between the ages of 20 - 29 years. Twenty-eight representing 23.3% were between the ages of 40 – 49 years and only one (1) was above 50 years. The data show that almost all the respondents were below 50 years and given the fact that about 75.8% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 - 39 years, we can describe the mothers who participated in this study as falling within youthful and reproductive ages.

The age distribution was expected because the women interviewed were those with young children in ECDCs and therefore, would fall within the active reproductive ages.

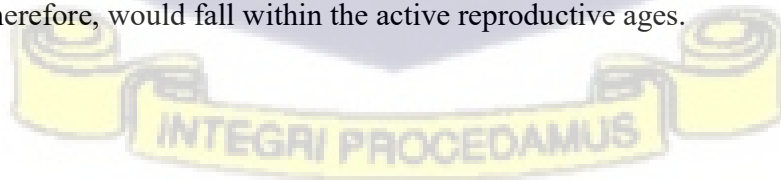


Table 4. 1: Percentage Distribution of Age of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-24	8	6.7	6.7
25-29	22	18.3	25.0
30-34	33	27.5	52.5
35-39	28	23.3	75.8
40-44	21	17.5	93.3
45-49	7	5.8	99.2
50 and above	1	0.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

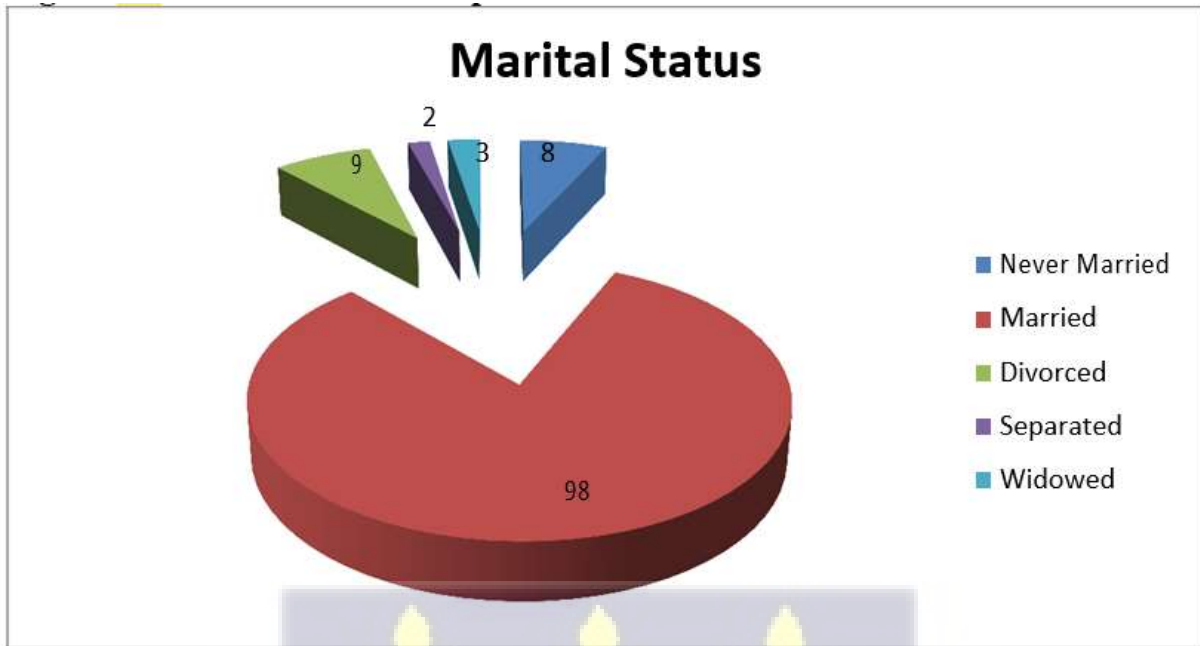
Source: Field data, 2015

4.1.2 Marital Status of Respondents

The results in Figure 4.1 shows that as high as 98 of the 120 mothers representing 81.7%, that were interviewed were married. Nine (9) of them representing 7.5% were divorced and eight (8) representing 6.7% had never married. Also, three (3) representing 2.5% were widows and two (2) representing 1.7% were separated women.

Women interviewed were those with young children, and most reproduction occurs within marriages. Therefore, it was expected that majority of the women would be married since they had young children.

Figure 4. 1: Distribution of Respondents' Marital Status in Figures



Source: Field data, 2015

4.1.3 Number of Children

During the interviews for this study, the respondents included two (2) non-biological mothers who took full responsibility for the upkeep and upbringing of relatives' children.

The mothers were asked to state the number of children they had. The data presented in Table 4.2 shows that on average, the mothers had two (2) children each. One third (41) of the respondents, representing 34.2% had two (2) children and 30% of them had one (1) child. Twenty-two of the women, representing 18.3% also had three (3) children and 19 representing 15.8% also had more than three (3) children. The results show that overall, 82.5% had between one (1) and three (3) children. Only two (2) of the respondents had no child. Through probing during the interviews, the two mothers with no children explained that the children they dropped off at the ECDCs were not their biological children but adopted children from other relatives in the family. They therefore

took full responsibility for their education and upbringing. This shows that 118 respondents were biological mothers.

Table 4. 2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Number of Children

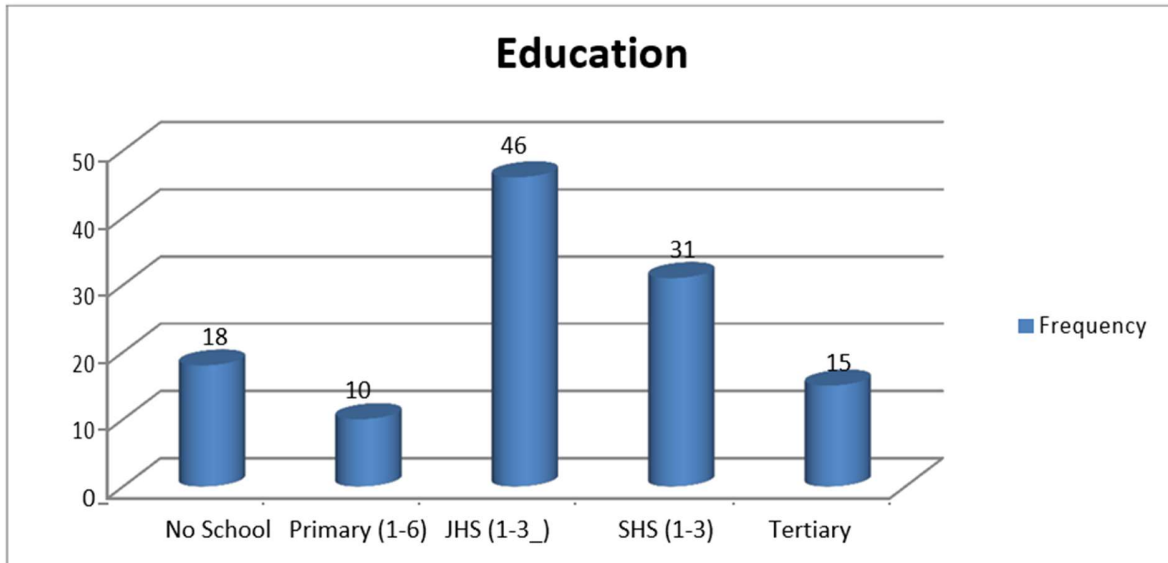
Number	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No Child	2	1.7	1.7
1 Child	36	30.0	30.0
2 Children	41	34.2	34.2
3 Children	22	18.3	18.3
More than 3 Children	19	15.8	15.8
Total	120	100.0	100.0
Mean Number of Children		2	

Source: Field data, 2015

4.1.4 Level of Educational Attainment

Data on respondents' levels of education show that the highest proportion of the respondents (46), had only up to Junior High education. This is followed by 31 who had senior secondary education and 15 with tertiary education. This means that those with at least Junior High education, which we can classify as educated, added up to a total of 93 representing 76.7% of the total respondents. Eighteen of the respondents indicated that they had no education, and ten (10) had primary education. This shows that majority of the women had some level of education, especially ranging between Junior High School and tertiary.

Figure 4. 2: Distribution of Respondents' Educational Level



Source: Field data, 2015

4.1.5 Economic Activity of Respondents

In this study, unemployed referred to “all persons (15 years and older) available for work and actively seeking a job during a referenced period”. Employed refers to “all persons of working age (15 years and above) who during seven (7) days before a referenced period did any work for at least one hour of pay, profit, or family gain or worked without pay on a farm or family holding” (GSS, 2016). Respondents’ economic activity is grouped into three (3): unemployed, salaried workers in the formal economy, and wage/self-employed in the informal economy.

The analysis of the economic activity of the respondents reveals 85 respondents were employed in the informal sector. This is an expected reflection of the large informal sector activity carried out in Kasoa as Kasoa is a commercial city.

Table 4. 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Unemployed	14	11.7	11.7
Employed in the formal sector	21	17.5	17.5
Employed in the informal sector	85	70.8	70.8
Total	120	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data, 2015

The women's economic activities were examined across their educational backgrounds. The researcher wanted to know whether the educational level of a respondent had an impact on the kind of work the respondent did. The objective was to see if education predisposed them to economic activities. The analysis of the relationship between the economic activities women were engaged in and their level of education, indicated that for those who were unemployed, two (2) had no education, three (3) had primary education, four (4) had JHS education, three (3) had SHS education, and two (2) had tertiary education. Of the employed in the formal sector, only one (1) had no education; all the rest had at least JHS education with the majority having SHS and tertiary education. Of the 85 respondents who were employed in the informal sector, 15 had no education, seven (7) had primary education, as high as 40 had JHS education, 19 had SHS education and only (four) 4 had tertiary education.

Table 4.4 reveals that a large proportion of those with higher education (tertiary) are most likely to be employed in the formal sector, while those with lower education are more likely to engage in informal sector activities such as trading, being a seamstress, hairdressing, among others. It is

further evidenced by the fact that the p-value is 0.000 which means that the null hypothesis or basic assumption is true and the association between the two variables are statistically significant.

Table 4. 4: Education Distribution of Respondents by their Economic Activities

Economic Activity	None	Primary	JHS	SHS	Tertiary	Total
Unemployed	2	3	4	3	2	14
Employed in the formal sector	1	0	2	9	9	21
Employed in the informal sector	15	7	40	19	4	85
Total	18	10	46	31	15	120
Chi-square	$\chi = 58.203$		Pr = 0.000			

Source: Field data, 2015

The women's economic status categories were looked at across their age categories. This was to ascertain the age categories of women versus their employment status. The data show that for those who were unemployed, half (7 out of 14) were between the ages of 30 – 39 years. Of the 21 employed workers in the formal sector, more than half (12) were between the ages of 30 – 39 years, while one-third (seven (7)) were between the ages of 20 – 29 years. For the employed workers in the informal sector that constituted a majority of the respondents, they were mostly within the broad age bracket of 20 – 49 years, though the majority of them were within the bracket of 30 – 39 years. This shows that women are engaged economically in Kasoa. A large proportion of the working women were between the ages of 30 – 39 years. This is an indication that women

within the reproductive age were also within the working ages, and therefore, viable users of ECDCs. Again, as Kasoa is a commercial town, it is not odd that the bulk of the respondents were engaged within the informal sector.

Table 4. 5: Distribution of Respondents Age by their Economic Activity

Age Category	Unemployed	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	Total
20-29	2	7	21	30
30-39	7	12	42	61
40-49	5	2	21	28
Above 50	0	0	1	1
Total	14	21	85	120

Source: Field data, 2015

4.1.6 Income Earnings of Respondents

Out of the 120 respondents, 111 responded to the question on income. The data on the income respondents earned showed that more than half of them earned either GH¢ 300 or less each month. Less than a quarter of the respondents earned above GH¢ 400. This shows that the women had relatively low earnings. For instance, 18% earned below GH¢ 100 and a high proportion of the respondents, 31% earned between GH¢ 100 – GH¢ 200. Also, 11% earned between GH¢ 201 - GH¢ 300 and 14% earned between GH¢ 301 - GH¢ 400. Only 9% earned between GH¢ 401-500 and only 14% earned above GH¢ 500. This is a relatively low income, and women may not be making enough to contribute enough to their households.

Table 4. 6 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Income

Income	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 100	20	18	18
100 - 200	34	31	49
201 - 300	12	11	60
301 - 400	15	14	74
401 - 500	10	8	83
Above 500	20	18	100
Total	111	100	

Source: Field data, 2015

An analysis of the economic activities of the women by their monthly earnings was done to determine whether the type of economic activity informed their monthly income. Of the 14 who were not employed, half (50%) indicated that they earned nothing in the month. However, 35.7% noted that the occasional income they received was less than GH¢ 100 a month. Seven-point one percent (7.1%) of those who were unemployed also indicated that they got GH¢ 100 - 200 or GH¢ 301 – 400 in a month. Of the 21 salaried workers, the highest proportion of them, (28.6%) earned above GH¢ 500, and 23.8% also earned GH¢ 301 – 400. About 14% (14.3%) of salaried workers earned GH¢ 401 – 500, and only as low as 9.5% earned GH¢ 100 – 200.

On the part of the 61 traders, a high proportion of them (44.3%) earned between GH¢ 100 – 200 monthly. With this income range, it can be deduced that majority of the women were doing petty trading. Even 14.8% of the traders earned below GH¢ 100 and 11.5% earned

between GH¢ 201– 300. Only 13.1% earned monthly income above GH¢ 500 a month. For the seamstresses, a high proportion of them (38.5%) earned below GH¢100 and 23.1% earned between GH¢ 301 – 400. Fifteen-point four percent (15.4%) each earned either GH¢ 100 - 200 or GH¢ 401 - 500 monthly while only 7.7% earned above GH¢500 in a month. For those who are hairdressers, half of them (50%) earned between GH¢ 301-500 but as high as 37.5% earned GH¢200 or below in a month. Only 12.5% earned above GH¢ 500. Finally, for the 2 shop attendants, their earnings were between GH¢ 100 – 300.

It is obvious that the type of economic activities women engaged in did inform their income. A greater proportion of the workers in the formal economy earned GH¢ 500 or above with none earning below GH¢ 100. However, for the traders, seamstresses and hairdressers, a good number of them earned around or below GH¢ 100 to slightly above GH¢ 200.

Table 4. 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondents’ Economic Activity by their Income

Economic Activity	N/A	Below	100 -	201 -	301 -	401 -	Above	Total	Total
		100	200	300	400	500	500	(%)	(n)
Unemployed	50.0	35.7	7.1	0	7.1	0	0	100.0	12
Employed workers in the formal sector	0	0	9.5	19.0	23.8	14.3	33.4	100.0	18
Employed workers in the informal sector	22.5	13.16	24.4	12.3	10.9	9.06	7.5	100.0	70

Source: Field data, 2015

4.2 Women's Utilization of ECDCs

This section presents an analysis of the proportion of mothers who had used ECDCs previously and those who had not. It further presents an analysis of the factors that prevented mothers from using ECDCs in the past. The people who motivated mothers to use ECDCs and their reason for currently using the services of ECDCs.

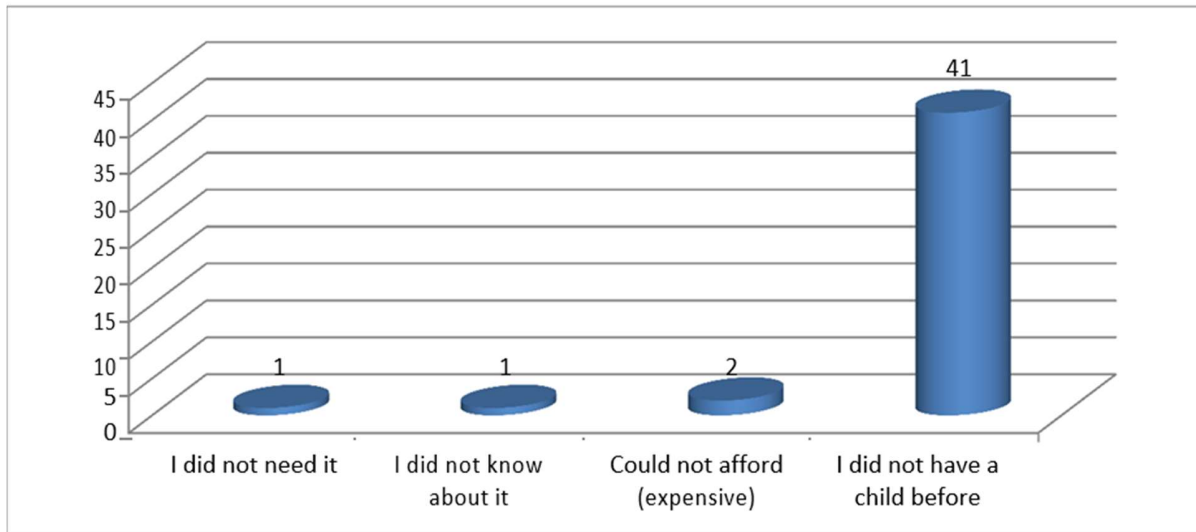
4.2.1 Previous and Current Use of ECDC

The women were asked to indicate the number of their children who previously attended ECDC. The essence was to have a sense of women's ECDC utilization behaviors. As shown in Figure 4.3, 45 mothers indicated that they did not send any child to ECDC previously. They were therefore asked to give the main reason why they did not utilize the services of ECDC in the past.

The reasons presented below show that a little more than 90% (41 of the 45 women) indicated that they did not have children in the past and that was why they did not utilize the services of ECDC. Aside this major reason, 2 of the mothers indicated that it was expensive and as such they were unable to afford it at that time.

Based on further probing during the interview, one of the respondents indicated that she did not need it at that time because she was not working and since it was her first delivery, she had her other relatives coming to live with her to take care of the child. One (1) noted that she did not know about ECDCs. This means that the reason why majority of the respondents did not utilize ECDC previously was because there was no need to do so as they had no child at the time.

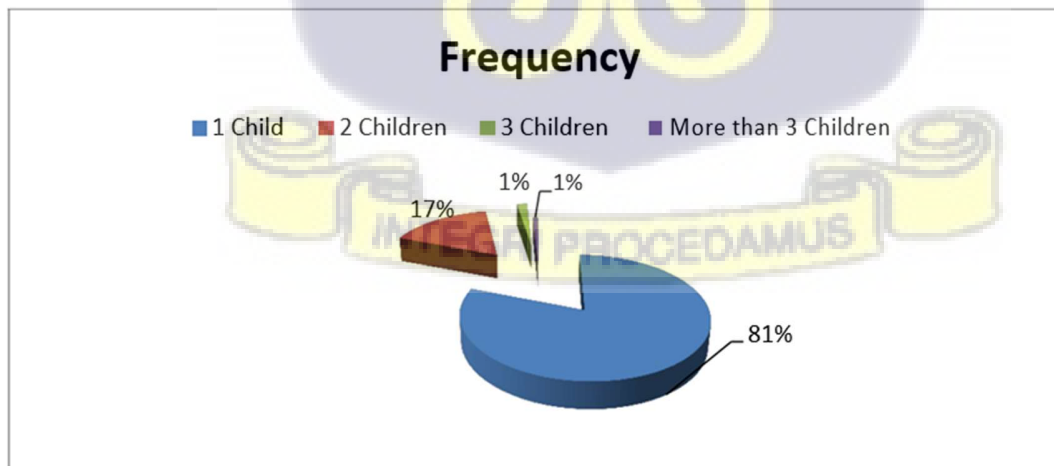
Figure 4. 3: Number of Respondents and their Reasons for Non-utilization of ECDC in the Past



Source: Field Data, 2015

The mothers were asked to indicate the number of their children who were currently in an ECDC. As high as 97 of the 120 women indicated that they had one child in an ECDC currently while 20 noted that they had 2 children in an ECDC. Two (2) mothers had 3 children in an ECDC; only one respondent had more than 3 children in an ECDC as shown in Figure 4.4. This figure shows that a lot of first-time mothers were utilizing ECDCs for childcare.

Figure 4. 4: Percentage of Children Per Respondent Currently in ECDCs



Source: Field data, 2015

4.2.2 Factors Influencing the Use and Choice of ECDC

There are various reasons why women decide to utilize Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDCs) for childcare for their children. The cross-tabulation of the reasons why women placed their child/children in ECDCs by their economic activity was done to determine whether the kind of activities the women engaged in informed their decision to use ECDCs and whether these determinants were the same as predicted in the conceptual framework. There are varied reasons why women chose to utilize ECDCs. The data presented in Table 4.8 indicates that overall, there were two major reasons why women enrolled their children in ECDCs; namely, to create the time to be able to work, and for the child to have early education. These two determining factors were predicted in the author's conceptual framework. As high as 64 of the responses indicated that they enrolled their children in ECDCs to give them time to work, and 77 of them also noted that they enrolled their children in ECDCs to give them early education. Other minor reasons given were to have more time at home to do domestic work and to get time to engage in other livelihood activities.

The occupational assessment of these factors shows that for those who were unemployed, a large proportion of them sent their children to ECDCs to have time for household work and give their children early education (4). For those employed in the formal sector and informal sector, a large proportion wanted to give their children early education and they wanted time to be able to be economically engaged. This illustrates that women overall are willing to use ECDCs as a means of childcare. As a large proportion of respondents (85) were heavily engaged in the informal sector whether as traders, hairdressers, seamstresses, or shop attendants, their place of work was mostly hazardous to young children. Therefore, women had significant reasons for utilizing ECDCs; hence, their decision to use ECDCs was informed by the economic activities they were engaged in.

Table 4. 8: Distribution of Respondents' Reason for placing child in ECDC by Economic Activity

Reason for enrolling child in ECDC	Economic Activity			Total
	Unemployed	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	
To go to work, market, shop, school	0	14	50	72
To have more time at home to do household work	12	1	7	11
Wanted child to have early education	4	18	55	77
I realized I needed more time to engage in my livelihood activities	0	1	3	4
Total	14	21	85	120

Source: Field study, 2015

Even though a control group was not used in this study, the findings of this study show that the usage of ECDCs has some effect on women's livelihood as has been shown by other studies conducted in other countries all over the world. For instance, Connelly et al (1996) and Nicodemo and Waldmann (2009) have both found in their studies that there is a positive relationship between the utilization of ECDCs and women's livelihood outcome. Nicodemo and Waldmann (2009) for instance found out that the utilization of childcare services is an important instrument for enabling women to enter paid employment. Glynn et al. (2013) also highlighted the importance of preschool and childcare for working mothers in the United States of America. They found that working mothers can have uninterrupted productive working hours when they send their children to a

childcare center. This evidence, therefore, supports the findings of this study that the utilization of ECDCs enables mothers to work longer hours without any interruption.

The findings of this study also support the position of some international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that ECDCs give children a better start in life in terms of cognitive development, and education (OECD, 2002; UNESCO, 2004). There is now some general agreement among experts around the world from developing as well as developed nations that early childhood care and education programs are not only desirable but important for numerous children (Sylva & Pugh, 2005). This is because early childhood education years are the most important for teaching a child how to love learning, how to communicate with others, how to express their feelings, and how to develop their creative educational abilities (Gregory, 2004).

Empirical findings from the works of Blau and Currie (2005) and Heckman (2006) both show that attending pre-primary school increases average grades, class participation, behavioral skills, socialization, and self-control in primary schools. Early childhood education programs are therefore designed to foster the general well-being and enhance school readiness so that these children might gain the full benefit of their school experiences and be more successful in life generally (Barnett, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that the mothers in this study sent their children to ECDCs because they wanted them to have early education.

A cross-tabulation between the distribution of factors influencing respondents' choice of ECDC by their economic activity was to establish whether the factors responsible for the usage of ECDCs were influenced by the respondent's economic activities. People's decision to accept and use a

system new to them is based on many varying factors. There are many ECDCs at Kasoa as stated in chapter three of this work. The mothers were therefore asked to state the reasons that informed their choice of an ECDC. The data from the study revealed that the reasons why mothers placed their children in a specific ECDC were based on proximity, favorable operating hours, and quality of care and cost of ECDCs. This means that women's usage of ECDCs has proven useful to them because they have an alternative for childcare, especially quality childcare while they go about their livelihood. Most women are not averse to sending their kids to ECDCs, in fact, they embrace its usage as evidenced by the factors stated that influence their decision to use ECDCs.



Table 4. 9: Distribution of Factors Influencing Respondents' Choice of ECDC by the Economic Activity

	Factors	Unemployed	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	Total
Proximity	Easy access because it is close to home; therefore, anyone can help me pick up my child	6	10	33	48
	The hours of care available is suitable for me	4	3	17	24
Favorable working hours	Early opening hours allow me to get to work on time	0	4	7	11
	Late closing enables me to leave work and pick up my child/children	1	1	0	2
Quality of Care	ECDCs provide good care	2	14	36	52
	ECDC is neat and clean	4	5	13	22
	Staff at the ECDC are polite	1	6	17	26
Cost	ECDC is much cheaper	1	0	18	19
	Other	1	1	5	7
	Total	14	21	85	120

Source: Field data, 2015

The analysis shows that for the unemployed respondents, 42.8% of them sent their children to a particular ECDC because it was closer to them, 28.5% of them said that the hours of care were suitable and another 28.5% said the place was neat and clean. For those who are employed in the formal sector, a large percentage, 66.6% chose ECDCs because of the good care the ECDC provided the children while other respondents chose it because of its proximity to their place of residence. For those who are employed in the informal sector, 40.2% cited the good care the ECDC gave the children, while about 36% cited the

proximity of the ECDC to the place of residence or work, and the affordability of ECDCs. The remaining respondents stated that the hours of care were suitable, the ECDC facility was clean, and the staff was polite.

Evidence from previous studies supports the findings of this study that the quality of the ECDC is a determining factor for place a child in an ECDC (Duncan and Strell, 2004) (Kodagoda, 2014). This was also predicted as per the conceptual framework in chapter two (2). The quality of ECDCs was foreseen as one of the factors influencing the choice to use ECDCs and it turned out to be the major factor. Of all the factors that influence women to either enroll their children in an ECDC, the prime among them was the trust in the ECDC and its quality. Trustworthiness according to Kodagoda (2014) is a key reason affecting mothers' decision to enroll the child in an ECDC. In Australia, studies have shown that the majority of mothers prefer home-based care to ECDCs (Hand, 2005). The results of these studies show that mothers mostly prefer a person who can substitute for a mother's love since they have fears about the possibility of their child learning undesirable habits (Hand, 2005). In countries like the UK and Sri Lanka, many mothers and their husbands usually prefer the child's grandparents as suitable child caregivers for their children until they reach school-going age (Duncan, 2005; Armstrong and Walby, 2009). Therefore, mothers are more attentive in the selection of childcare centers (Byrne, 2006). Once they can establish trust in an ECDC that it transmits good morals into children and their founding principles are in conformity to their beliefs, customs and ideologies, the decision to enroll a child in such ECDC is high.

Other practical aspects of childcare, such as location, distance to the mother's (or father's) workplace and the opening hours of the childcare centers also influence mothers' decisions (Kodagoda, 2014). Thus, where the ECDC is located either close to the mothers' place of residence or place of work, the probability of enrolling the child is higher as compared to those in faraway places.

As Kasoa is a major commercial city and more than fifty percent (50%) of the respondents are employed in the informal sector, it is evident that the economic activities of women is also one of the impacting factors that influenced women's choice of an ECDC. This is evidenced by the findings that a good number of respondents stated they were able to go to work when they drop their kids to school and the care hours was suitable for them. Hence, the findings are consistent with similar findings from other parts of the world.

4.3 Perception and Satisfaction with ECDCS

The perception people hold about a given product or initiative may positively or negatively affect the extent to which they will utilize that service. Positive perceptions induce a positive influence on adaptability and usage, and the reverse is true. This section examines the perception mothers hold on the importance of ECDCs, the quality and their overall satisfaction with the ECDCs.

4.3.1 Perceived Importance and Quality of ECDC

An analysis of the respondents' perception of the importance of ECDCs and their economic activities was carried out. This was to find out the varied level of importance women in different economic groups attached to the use of ECDCs. The respondents were given three scales to rate the importance of ECDCs to them. Out of the 120 respondents, 72 of them representing 60% considered ECDCs as very important and 47, representing 39% considered them as important. Only one of the respondents rated ECDCs as not important.

This study shows that the usage of ECDCs is important to women and that women have recognized the importance of utilizing ECDCs. The occupational analysis of the respondents shows that almost all respondents, those unemployed, and those employed in the formal or informal economy all considered

ECDCs as very important. All the reasons given above clearly indicate that women from different occupations valued ECDCs presumably as they can get time for their work and other household chores. It is therefore expected for them to consider ECDCs as important to their livelihood.

Table 4. 10: Distribution of Respondents’ Perception on the Importance of ECDCs by their Economic Activity

Economic Activity	Importance of ECDC			Total
	Very Important	Important	Not Important	
Unemployed	6	8	0	14
Employed in the formal sector	14	6	1	21
Employed in the informal sector	52	33	0	85
Total	72	47	1	120

Source: Field data, 2015

A cross-tabulation of the respondents’ perception on the quality of the ECDC by their economic activity was to determine the level of satisfaction women from different occupational backgrounds.

Everyone needs value for the money spent to consume a product. In the same way, mothers will want satisfaction from the money they spend on their children’s education. The level of satisfaction mothers will obtain from sending their children to ECDC will mainly stem from the quality of care that a particular ECDC will give to their children as evidenced by the findings. The respondents were therefore asked to rate the quality of the ECDCs their children attend.

As high as 85 of the 120 respondents rated the quality of ECDCs as high, 32 rated it as Medium, and 2 rated it as low. Against women’s economic activity, the data show that of the 14 unemployed women, seven (7) considered the level of ECDCs as high. Those employed whether in the informal or formal sector, considered the ECDC quality as high. Overall, the women considered the quality of ECDCs as high. This shows that even though women utilize ECDCs, they also consider the quality of the ECDCs as they would not want their kids to be kept in any childcare environment.

Table 4. 11: Distribution of Respondents’ Perception on the Quality of ECDC by their Economic Activity

Economic Activity	Level of Quality of ECDC			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Unemployed	1	6	7	14
Employed in the formal sector	0	7	14	21
Employed in the informal sector	1	19	65	85
Total	2	32	86	120

Source: Field data, 2015

4.3.2 Satisfaction with ECDCs

An assessment of the mother’s overall satisfaction with ECDCs is presented in Table 4.15. The majority of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the activities of the ECDCs. For instance, 70.8% of respondents noted that they were satisfied while 20% indicated that they were very satisfied. As low as 5% were not satisfied with the activities of ECDCs in the community.

Assessing the level of satisfaction with economic activities, the data show that for those who were unemployed, about 86% indicated that they were satisfied with being unemployed. However, it must be

noted that they carried out household chores. There is also a similar trend for those who were employed whether in the formal or informal economy. In the formal economy, about 62% of the respondents were satisfied while in the informal economy, about 71% of the respondents were satisfied with the ECDCs they used for childcare.

This could result from the fact that the utilization of ECDCs allowed them to engage more actively in their livelihood activities by them being able to go to work. Ideally, a neutral classification was needed as per the Likert Scale, but it became an afterthought. However, the entire table cannot be dismissed entirely because it has some useful data.

Table 4. 12: Distribution of Respondents' Occupation by their Level of Satisfaction with ECDC

Economic Activity	Overall Level of Satisfaction			Total
	Not satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory	
Unemployed	1	12	1	14
Employed in the formal sector	1	13	7	21
Employed in the informal sector	4	60	21	85
Total	6	85	29	120

Source: Field data, 2015

4.4 Usefulness of ECDCs for Women's Livelihoods

Literature shows that utilization of ECDCs has a positive effect on users, their households and even the businesses they are engaged in (DFID 2010; Browning 2006; de Barros et al., 2011). This study also explored the idea that a woman's utilization of ECDCs is expected to positively affect their livelihood outcomes.

4.4.1 Major effects of ECDCs on Economic Activity and Earnings of Women

A cross-tabulation of the major effects the usage of ECDCs had on the respondent's livelihood by their economic activities was to determine the variations in impact. For instance, will the impact of ECDC on the livelihood of a trader (informal sector) be more likely to be different from that of the salaried worker (formal sector) or even the unemployed?

The respondents were asked to indicate at least two impacts of ECDCs on their livelihoods. The results presented in Table 4.13 show that overall, the greatest effect of ECDCs on women was that it enabled them to work normal hours without any interruption. As high as 76 of the 120 respondents indicated that when they started using ECDCs, caring for their children did not become an obstacle to their work. Other important effects of ECDCs usage were that mothers were able to trade more efficiently, some were able to earn more income, while others got engaged in more economic activities without worrying about taking care of their children. However, when responses from respondents who stated that the usage of ECDCs enabled them to earn more income and those who responded that they could engage in more economic activities without worrying about childcare were combined, it revealed that 51 respondents had more time to engage in other activities that are beneficial to their economic outputs due to the usage of ECDCs. This was an expected outcome as per the conceptual framework. Other minor impacts were that mothers cited that using ECDCs gave more time to take care of their home, a few others stated that using ECDCs gave them extra time to focus on expanding their businesses, and another few said they had time to go back to school.

The data show that for those unemployed, five (5) respondents indicated that using ECDCs gave them time to take care of the home while four (4) cited that using ECDCs enabled them to work normal hours without (probably at home) any interruptions. For those employed in the formal and informal sectors,

100% and 94% of the responses, respectively, indicated that using ECDCs made them work normal hours without any interruption and they were able to engage more in economic activities without worrying about childcare. For about 95% of the informal economy, they indicated that they were able to trade or do business efficiently compared to if they were not using ECDCs.

Table 4. 13: Distribution of Major Effects of ECDCs on Respondents' Livelihood by their Economic Activity

Impact	Unemployed	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	Total
I earn more income	0	5	19	23
I can now work normal hours without interruption	5	14	57	76
I can now trade or do business more efficiently.	4	2	27	33
I now have time to focus on expanding my business, farm, etc.	0	0	9	9
I can now engage in more economic activities without worrying about taking care of a child.	5	10	13	28
I can now go back to school.	0	2	1	3
I have more time to take care of my home.	5	1	9	15
Other	0	0	1	1
Total	14	21	85	120

Source: Field data, 2015

This study revealed that there is not that much variation of effect among the various economic activities. For instance, the primary effect among most of the economic groups (unemployed, formal sector workers and informal sector workers) was that the usage of ECDCs enabled them

To work normal hours without any interruption whether at home or their place of work. However, the two major effects for those in the informal economy were that they were able to earn more income and they were able to engage more efficiently and productively in their economic activities without worries about childcare.

It is an indisputable fact that women are primarily responsible for the unpaid work at home (Nicodemo & Waldmann, 2009), especially childcare. Studies have shown that the labor market in most Middle East and North African countries is highly segmented, with women's work and enterprise activity clustering in a narrow number of sectors considered to be culturally 'appropriate' (World Bank, 2012; OECD, 2012). One of the key barriers, among others, to women's economic participation identified by other studies such as ILO (2008), Abdelali-Martini (2011) and McLoughlin (2013) is the heavy burden of house chores such as child and elderly care.

Empirical studies by scholars such as Heckman (1974) and Anderson and Levine (2000) have found that the estimated cost of childcare has a significantly negative effect on women's labor supply; although the effect diminishes substantially as the age of the child increases (Blau, 1992; Connelly, 1992; Barrow, 1996; Kimmel, 1998). A significant proportion of married women must change their work or even quit totally to stay at home to take care of their children (Blau, 1992; Connelly, 1992). The utilization of ECDCs is therefore expected to relieve women of most of these burdens associated with childcare and increase their level of participation in economic activities as presented in this study.

In the previous findings on the impact of ECDCs, 76 respondents stated that they were able to work more hours without any interruption, and this shows that when women sent their children to ECDCs, they were able to earn more income, hence, they were able to contribute to household expenses. This further suggests that when women used ECDCs, they were able to significantly boost their total earnings. An

analysis was carried out to determine the extent to which the usage of ECDCs impacted the women's earnings and whether the impact was significant or not. They were therefore asked to indicate on average their earnings now, as compared to times when they were not using ECDCs.

The data show, based on the test of difference, that using ECDC increases women's earnings, holding all other factors constant. For instance, for those who were salaried workers, the average previous earning was GH¢ 300.48, but currently the average monthly income was GH¢ 664.29, showing a positive variance of GH¢ 363.81. Since salaried workers most times have fixed salaries, their salary increase may be attributed to inflation or overtime work. However, for traders, their average monthly income at the time they did not use ECDC was GH¢ 158.44, but currently they earned GH¢ 281.15, showing a positive variance of GH¢ 122.70. The increased income because of using ECDC was seen across all the other economic activities women are engaged in.

The test of the difference in monthly earnings between the period they were using ECDCs and when they did not use ECDCs show that on the average, women earned GH¢ 175.09 monthly when they did not use ECDCs, but after enrolling children in ECDCs, the monthly earnings increased to GH¢ 343.48, showing a variance of GH¢ 168.39. The mean analysis shows that the difference is statistically significant at 1% since the p-value (thus, the significance level of the test) was 0.000. It can therefore be concluded that holding all factors constant, women's utilization of ECDC significantly improves their monthly earnings.

The findings show that the utilization of ECDCs influences the increase in earnings because when mothers sent their children to ECDCs, they were able to work more hours without any interruption and this led to the increase of their monthly earnings. Some mothers were even able to expand their businesses. These factors are precedents to improvement in earnings.

Table 4. 14: Respondents’ Monthly Average Earnings before and after use of ECDC

Economic Activity	Previous Earnings	Current Earnings	Variance
Unemployed	63.57	135.71	72.14
Employed in the formal economy	300.48	664.29	363.81
Employed in the informal sector	115.21	240.7	105.68

Paired Samples Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation
Earnings Before	175.09	168.895
Earnings Now	343.48	421.100

t = -6.032 df = 111 Sig. (2-tailed) = .000

Source: Field data, 2015

4.4.2 Effect of ECDC on Women Personally

An analysis was carried out to ascertain how women themselves were affected by the usage of ECDCs. This excluded respondents who were not employed. This is because the researcher thought that they had no relevance to the discussion. However, they do have relevance as they are engaged in household chores. Unfortunately, this aspect is not a part of the analysis below.

The women were asked to indicate the impact of ECDC on them personally. The data show that most mothers stated that using ECDCs enabled them to contribute to household expenses, some said they were able to work longer hours and get additional compensation through remuneration for the increased hours

of work, while others cited that sending their children to ECDCs enabled them to engage more in other household duties, get time to attend religious services to intercede for the family's prosperity, and get enough time to rest. About 72.2% of respondents from the informal sector said that they were able to work longer hours, hence, they could contribute to household expenses and expand their businesses.

It was revealed that a significant number of women were enabled to contribute to their household expenses; others were remunerated more for their increased hours of work at their place of work, and some were able to enlarge their businesses.

Despite the increasing equality in parental roles, reproductive responsibilities of child upbringing continue to be gendered and it is mothers who take on most of the responsibility for childcare (Acker, 1990; Santos and Cardoso, 2008; Kodagoda and Duncan, 2010). The findings of this study support other findings that when mothers patronize the services of ECDCs, it enables them to participate more in the paid workforce and increase the family's income (Garcia, Pence & Evans, 2008). Browning (2006) has also found that mothers who can send their children to ECDC centers can enter the labor force, and can participate in higher education and training to prepare for life in the labor force.

An evaluation of the ECDC programs in Dublin, Ireland, by UNESCO (2007), shows significant beneficial effects for both mothers and children in terms of self-esteem, interaction, women's economic empowerment and even support for the child. Other studies have also found that access to ECDCs significantly impact maternal labor outcomes (de Barros et al., 2011). The scholars further found that employment and labor force participation rates of women are substantially boosted, while unemployment rates are reduced when mothers utilize the services of ECDCs.

Evidence from developing and middle-income countries also shows a strong positive link between access to ECDCs and maternal labor force participation as found in this study. In Latin America for instance, there is a small but growing body of evidence on the impact of specific childcare and pre-school programs. Evaluations of policies and programs in Argentina (Berlinski and Galiani, 2005), Colombia (Attanasio and Vera-Hernandez, 2004; Peña-Parga and Glassman, 2004; Collins and Ribero, 2004), and Guatemala (Quisumbing, 2005) all show a strong positive relationship between access to childcare centers and female labor force participation.

Table 4. 15: Distribution of the Effect of ECDC on Respondents by their Economic Activity

Impact to you	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	Total
I can contribute to household expenses.	14	42	55
I can expand my business	6	29	35
I can work longer hours and be remunerated.	10	39	54
Other	2	4	16

Source: Field data, 2015

4.4.3 Effect of ECDC on Women’s Household Activities

An analysis of respondents’ economic activities by the impact on their household activities was to ascertain whether improvements in women’s livelihood outcomes had any effect on their households’ activities.

The data as presented in Table 4.16 show that overall when women sent their children to ECDCs, they were able to engage more in household duties as reported by 90 of them. Forty-four (44) of them also indicated that sending their child to an ECDC gave them time to rest, which is good for their health.

Twelve (12) indicated that using ECDCs gave them time to attend to the needs of other children, and five (5) indicated that they had quality time to attend to their husbands. The analysis of the data on the impact of the various economic activities indicate that for the majority of the women, using ECDC enabled them to engage more in household duties. This shows that the utilization of ECDCs does not only contribute to the sustenance and growth of women’s businesses or improvement in their livelihood outcomes, but it also contributes to their welfare as well as their household welfare. This also shows that some members of the household such as other children and spouses stand to benefit from sending a child to an ECDC.

Table 4. 16: Distribution of Respondents’ Economic Activity by the Effect of ECDC on Household Activities

Impact to you	Unemployed	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	Total
I can now engage in more household duties.	8	17	66	90
I now have more time to rest.	6	7	39	52
I can pay attention to my older children	1	3	8	12
I can attend to my husband better	1	0	4	5
Other	0	0	4	4
Total	14	21	85	120

Source: Field data, 2015

4.5 Challenges and Coping Strategies in the Use of ECDCs

Despite the benefits of ECDCs to women’s employment, their household and their welfare, the use of ECDCs are not without challenges. Literature has shown that factors such as distance and cost can be great challenges to the effective utilization of ECDCs. There was therefore the need to solicit views from the respondents to ascertain if they faced any challenges using ECDCs for

the care of their children, as well as the coping strategies they adopted to mitigate the effect of the challenges.

4.5.1 Major Challenges faced using ECDC

An analysis was conducted to examine the challenges facing women as they utilized ECDCs for their children. This was also to determine if there was any difference in terms of the challenges the women faced. This was expected, as depicted in the conceptual framework, that women would encounter some challenges while utilizing the services of ECDCs.

The data presented in Table 4.17 shows that the closing time of ECDCs was not suitable for many of the women, and this was the major challenge confronting 75 of the women. The data also show that ECDCs opened between 7 am and 8 am and closed between 3 pm and 4 pm (see Table A2.1 and A2.2 in Appendix 2 for details).

The second challenge experienced by 35 of the respondents was that it was expensive to enrol their children in ECDCs. Furthermore, the fees women paid in a term for enrolling one's child at an ECDC show variations. There were 15% of the women who did not pay any fee. This was because the ECDC was public. Of those who paid, about 28% paid less than GH¢ 100 as school fees in a term, 40.8% paid between GH¢ 100 and GH¢ 300 as termly fees, and 13.2% paid above GH¢ 300 as school fees per term (see Appendix 2 for details).

About a quarter (29) of the women complained that their children often became sick while the distance and transportation to the ECDCs of their choice was another challenge confronting 18 of them. Only 3 respondents cited that the operating hours at the ECDC was not sufficient for them. The analysis of these challenges by marital status indicates that for the majority of those who had never married, their major

challenge was the closing time and the expensive nature of the fees they paid. For married women, their major challenges were the closing time, expensive fees, a child falling sick, and distance. For those who were divorced, closing time, a child falling sick, and high fees were their challenges. For separated mothers, closing time was their major challenge and for widows, closing time, fees, and distance were their challenges. This shows that the main challenge faced by the women was that the time utilizing ECDCs varied according to their marital status.

Table 4. 17: Distribution of Respondents' Marital Status by the Major Challenges they faced when using ECDC

Challenges	Never					Total
	Married	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed	
It is expensive	4	27	3	0	1	35
Hours of work at ECDC is not sufficient	2	1	0	0	0	3
Closing time not suitable as I would still be working	5	62	4	2	2	75
Distance and transportation to and from the ECDC daily	0	15	2	0	1	18
My child/children often fall(s) sick	1	23	4	1	0	29
Others	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total	8	98	9	2	3	120

Source: Field data, 2015

An analysis was done on challenges women faced when using ECDCs by their economic activities. This was to ascertain whether a challenge was selective of economic activity and vice-versa. The data on this

is presented in Table 4.18. 62.5% of the respondents noted that the closing time of ECDCs was not suitable for them since they were still working at the time ECDCs close between 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Normal closing hours from work is about 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm. It is expected that the closing time would be a challenge. The cost of sending a child to ECDC was also one of the main challenges women encountered. As evidenced by this work and as other researchers previously emphasized, the affordability of ECDCs is crucial to their usefulness (Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004) (Garcia et al, 2008). Others said their children getting sick constantly was a challenge. This is further supported previously when the majority of the women stated that the quality of the ECDCs was a major factor that influenced their decision to use ECDCs.

Table 4. 18: Distribution of Respondents’ Challenges and their use of ECDCs by their Economic Activities

Challenges	Unemployed	Employed in the formal sector	Employed in the informal sector	Total
It is expensive	5	8	22	35
Operational hours of ECDCs are not enough.	0	0	3	3
Closing time not suitable as I would still be working	9	17	49	75
Distance & transportation are not suitable to and from ECDCs.	3	1	14	18
My children often fall sick	5	3	21	29
Other	1	0	2	3
Total	14	21	85	120

Source: Field data, 2015

The majority of the women worked in the informal sector where business is normally high between 3 pm and 6 pm. As noted above, most ECDCs close between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm,

coinciding with when marketing activities are at their peak. Therefore, it became difficult for mothers to leave their place of work and pick their children from school at the closing time. Even salaried workers (those within the formal sector) close at about 5:00 pm, an hour or two after ECDCs had closed. This made it difficult for working mothers to pick children from ECDCs. It is therefore not surprising that closing time is a challenge to working mothers across all occupations in both the formal and informal sectors.

Other studies have found similar challenges identified by this study. For instance, research has found that unaffordable fees shape mothers' decisions on child-caring differently (Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004). Thus, where mothers can afford the fees the ECDCs charge, the level of utilization is high but when they are unable to afford it, the level of utilization is relatively low.

Kodagoda (2014) has found distance as a barrier to the utilization of ECDCs. Pre-existing motherhood experiences of childcare also play a significant role; for example, some mothers make their decision following their own mothers' experiences or based on stories from their workplace and from friends (Kodagoda, 2014).

4.5.2 Coping Measures

There are varying mechanisms people use to cope with the various challenges they face in life. The respondents were asked to indicate the various measures they used to cope with the challenges they were facing in their utilization of ECDCs.

An analysis was done to unravel some of the challenges women faced while using ECDCs and how they coped with them as predicted in the conceptual framework. For the 35 women who considered ECDC as expensive, there were two major strategies they used to cope. About 74% cut down other expenses to

enable them to meet the cost of school fees while about 46% utilized the assistance of friends and relatives to drop off or pick up their child from school, thereby reducing the cost of transportation and enabling them to work more hours. The 3 who considered the hours of work at the ECDC as not sufficient coped with this challenge by asking relatives or friends to pick up their children since they would be unable to pick them up (100%).

Similarly, about 95% of the 75 respondents who noted that the closing time was not suitable for their work coped by asking relatives or friends to pick up their child from school since the closing time was not convenient. They might not have closed from their various workplaces. About 94% of the 18 women complaining about distance also mentioned that they asked relatives or friends assistance to pick or drop their child at school to cope with the challenge. Finally, about 52% of the 29 mothers who complained that their children often got sick noted that at the time of sickness, they stayed home to take care of the child or asked relatives or friends to help take care of the child in their absence.

In the conceptual framework, it was postulated that women will face challenges in their use of ECDCs. However, it is expected that they would adopt some coping strategies to deal with those challenges. This study unraveled these challenges and the coping mechanisms that the women adopted. Challenges such as the expensive nature of fees, closing hours of ECDCs, distance and transportation, and the frequent illness of children were major. They had to adopt coping measures which at times could be inconveniencing and unreliable. The coping measures they adopted included cutting down on other expenses to be able to meet expensive fees, seeking assistance from friends and relatives, taking the child to work, or staying home to take care of the child. These mitigated the challenges they faced.

It is common to find other relatives or even close neighbors taking care of children in the absence of the mother. It is also common for mothers to leave their ailing child to go to work (especially traders on

market days) when the sickness is not too severe. This is evidenced as the researcher has lived all her life in Africa and has seen this going on around her, in her community and home. It is therefore not surprising that mothers utilize the services of their relatives to cope with child upbringing to enable them to work. However, it must be noted that these are merely coping strategies and by themselves would not sufficiently replace the functional importance of ECDCs.

Table 4. 19: Major challenges faced using ECDC by Respondents' Coping Measures

Challenges	Coping Mechanisms (%)					Total
	A relative/ friend help me dropped off or pick up child/ children	Ask a relative/ friend to help take care of ailing child/ children	I cut down on other expenses to take care of costs	Stay home to take care of ailing child/ children	Other	
It is expensive	45.7	0	74.3	2.9	5.7	35
Hours of work at ECDC is not sufficient	100	0	0	0	33.3	3
Closing time not suitable as I would still be working	94.7	4	12	1.3	1.3	75
Distance and transportation to and from the ECDC daily	94.4	11.1	16.7	11.1	11.1	18
My child/children often fall(s) sick	44.8	13.8	17.2	51.7	0	29
Others	100	0	0	0	33.3	3

Source: Field data, 2015

Even though ECDCs have emerged as an alternative to childcare, women were asked to give other alternatives they would use supposed they were not using the ECDC. Overall, the two major measures cited by the women were that if they were not using ECDCs, they would stay home and take care of their child themselves or take the child with them to work. Other measures were that they would ask other relatives and neighbors to assist them. The alternative measures clearly showed the importance of ECDCs to the respondents' livelihood. It demonstrates that without the usage of ECDCs, these women would have had to stay home, abandon work or source of livelihood and become completely dependent on their partners for their needs as well as that of their children. Some of the coping mechanisms such as leaving children in the care of older siblings and neighbors put the child at risk of improper care, which is more likely to affect the cognitive development of the child. Even mothers who took their kids to work as an alternative measure would have been less productive. ECDCs are therefore a great source of relief for women as their effective utilization positively affects the livelihood of mothers.

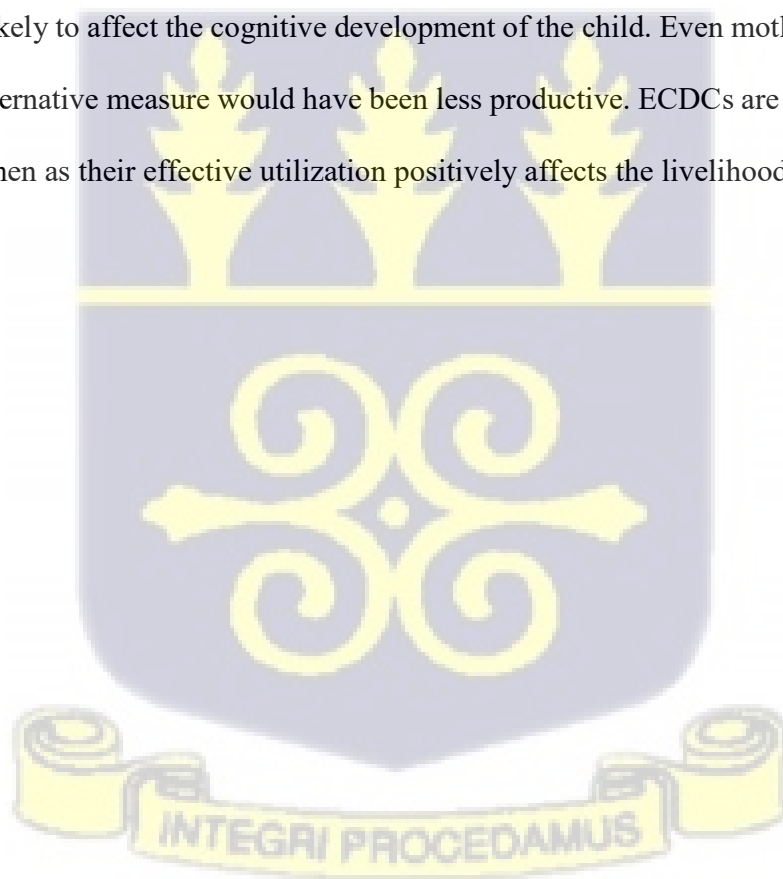
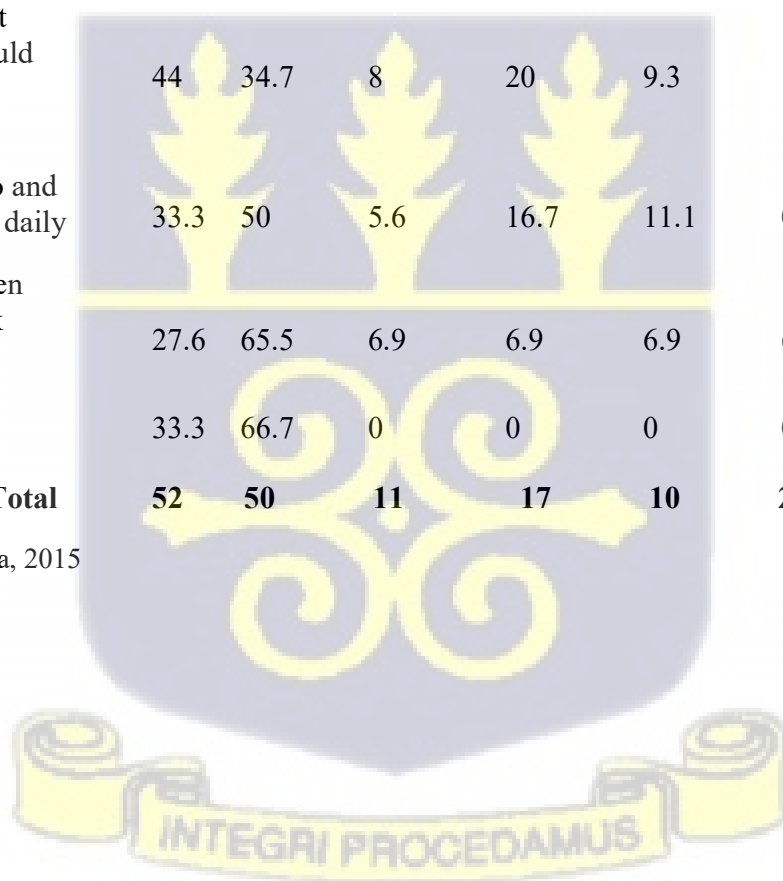


Table 4. 20: Challenges and Alternative Childcare Strategies Respondents would have taken

Challenges	Alternative Measures (%)							Total
	Stay home and take care of the child myself	Take the child with me to work	Grandparent(s) would have assisted	Other relatives would have assisted	Older siblings would have assisted	Leave child in the care of neighbors	Other	
It is expensive	57.1	34.3	11.4	5.7	8.6	0	0	35
Hours of work at ECDC is not sufficient	33.3	33.3	66.7	0	0	0	0	3
Closing time not suitable as I would still be working	44	34.7	8	20	9.3	1.3	0	75
Distance and transportation to and from the ECDC daily	33.3	50	5.6	16.7	11.1	0	0	18
My child/children often fall(s) sick	27.6	65.5	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	3.4	29
Others	33.3	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	52	50	11	17	10	2	1	120

Source: Field Data, 2015



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study sought to examine how the utilization of ECDCs affects the livelihood of women in Kasoa. A quantitative methodology was adopted where 120 women were selected and interviewed by convenient sampling at 4 ECDCs in the Kasoa Township. A descriptive statistical approach using frequencies, charts, and graphs was used in the presentation of the data. This chapter presents a summary of the key findings, conclusion, and recommendations for policy purposes.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study sought to achieve four main objectives namely: to examine the factors that motivate women to leave their children at ECDCs; to assess women's perception and satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs; to find out how the utilization of ECDCs impacts women's livelihood activities; and to ascertain the challenges women face in utilizing ECDC as well as the coping mechanisms they adopt.

A socio-demographic analysis of the respondents shows that majority of them were traders and had basic to secondary level education. Their monthly income ranged from less than GH¢ 100 to above GH¢500. It also shows that 81.7% (98 out of 120) of the women interviewed were married and almost half of them were Akans. Kasoa is in the Central Region which is predominantly an Akan region. The dominance of Akan among the respondents was therefore an expected reflection of ethnicity pattern in the Central Region.

5.1.1 Factors Motivating Women to use ECDCs

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the women had used ECDC for their previous child/children. The major reason why some did not use ECDCs in the past was that they did not have a child. The decision to send a child to an ECDC was mostly made by both parents (in the case of married women) and the mother alone in the case of single mothers.

The two major reasons that influenced mothers to send their children to ECDCs was to enable the child to have early education, and to give the mother time to go to work, sell at the market, go to the shop, or go to school. Other reasons were to help mothers have more time at home to do household work and to engage in other livelihood activities. The results indicated that the major reason affecting the choice of an ECDC was the quality of the ECDC in terms of the polite attitude of ECDC staff, neatness, and the clean environment of the ECDC. Other reasons included the proximity of the ECDC to place of residence, suitable hours of care and affordability of fees.

The findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between the utilization of ECDCs and women's livelihood outcome because it enabled women to go about their livelihood activities uninterrupted by childcare. It was also revealed that most mothers in this study had at least attained JHS level of education. Therefore, they knew the importance of education and that is why they sent their children to ECDCs because they wanted them to have early education.

This study also revealed that even though women were content to leave their kids at ECDCs, they considered the quality of services ECDCs provided. There were 100 responses to the quality of the ECDC as a determining factor to place a child in an ECDC in this study. This was because mothers mostly prefer a person who can substitute for mother's love since they have fears about the possibility of their child's learning undesirable habits (Hand, 2005). Therefore, mothers are more attentive in the selection of childcare centers (Byrne, 2006).

The determining factors that led respondents in the research to utilize the services of ECDCs conforms to the determining factors in the conceptual framework. As per the conceptual framework, the determining factors that made women utilize ECDCs for childcare were, the satisfaction of childcare services, the ability of women to engage in economic activities and women wanting their child/children to have early education. Sixty-four (64) respondents indicated that they enrolled their children in ECDCs to give them time to work, while 77 respondents noted that they enrolled their children in ECDCs to give the children early education.

5.1.2 Women's Perception and Satisfaction with the Services provided by ECDCs

Virtually all the respondents rated ECDCs as important to them. Concerning the quality of the services rendered at ECDCs, majority rated it as high though few considered it as medium. In terms of the overall satisfaction of mothers with ECDCs, only 6 of them indicated that they were not satisfied but all the remaining 114 mothers indicated that they were satisfied with the operations and services provided by ECDCs.

This study revealed that an overwhelming majority of the mothers within the various employments categories viewed ECDCs as important and were satisfied with the ECDCs' services rendered. They also considered the quality of ECDCs as high. This is simply because the utilization of ECDCs afforded them the opportunity to engage more actively in their livelihood activities.

Also, the findings relate to what was conceptualized in the conceptual framework. In the conceptual framework, the satisfaction of women with the services provided by ECDCs is in line with the quality services ECDCs rendered. These are important considerations women made when they make the decision to utilize ECDCs for childcare. One hundred of the respondents stated that the quality of ECDCs was a key factor when they considered the usage of ECDCs.

5.1.3 Impact of ECDCS on Women Livelihoods

Majority of the respondents indicated that the use of ECDCs had enabled them work normal hours without interruption and this had enabled them to earn more money as compared to those times when they had to stay home and look after the child because they were not using the services of ECDCs. Others indicated that they were able to go about their business duties more efficiently, enabling them to engage more in economic activities without worrying about taking care of a child. Using ECDCs also gave women (especially those who were not working) more time to take care of their homes and for some others to get time to go back to school. The effect of all these was that mothers were able to contribute to household expenses, work longer hours and enlarge their businesses. At the household level, mothers were able to engage in more household duties and had more time to rest. Some further indicated that they were able to pay attention to older children and attend to their husbands better.

Key points revealed in this study were that the usage of ECDCs relieved women of household duties and burdens such as childcare and increased their level of participation in economic activities. This is evidenced by the improvement in the respondents' earnings revealed by the study. A significant impact of ECDC utilization on women was the increase in earnings because mothers who sent their children to ECDCs were able to work normal hours without any interruption and get more money. Some mothers were even able to expand their businesses. Therefore, holding all other factors constant, using ECDC increased women's earnings.

The findings in this study showed that there was a strong positive relationship between access to childcare centers and female labor force participation. This was also conceptualized in chapter two. It was predicted in the conceptual framework that when women utilize ECDCs for childcare,

this would have a positive effect on their livelihood. The findings revealed an improvement in earnings for all respondents. In table 4.14, the three groupings, unemployed, employed in the formal sector, employed in the informal sector all show an increase in earnings after the usage of ECDCs. This is in support of other findings that when mothers patronize the services of ECDCs, it enables them to participate in the paid workforce and increase the family's income (Garcia, Pence & Evans, 2008). Also, it was revealed that the utilization of ECDCs did not only contribute to sustenance and growth of women's businesses or improvement in their livelihood outcomes, but it also contributed to their personal welfare as well as household welfare. Therefore, one major effect on the women was that they were enabled to actively engage in the workforce and hence contribute to household expenses and economic development.

5.1.4 Challenges and Coping Strategies

Despite the enormous benefits outlined above, women faced some challenges. This was also an expected outcome in the conceptual framework. It was predicted that women who utilize the services of ECDCs for childcare would have challenges however, they would adopt some coping mechanisms or strategies. Some of the challenges revealed in the study were: the closing time of ECDCs was not suitable to many since they would still be working at the closing time of 3pm – 4pm. Others lamented that the fees some of the ECDCs charged were expensive and their children often got sick. Distance of place of residence to the chosen ECDC was also cited as a challenge.

It was revealed that eighty-four (84) of the women worked in the informal sector where business was normally high during the closing times of ECDCs. Even workers in the formal sector close at 5:00pm, an hour or two after ECDCs had closed. This made it difficult for working mothers to pick children from ECDCs. Therefore, it was crucial that the most pressing challenge presented to respondents across all occupations or economic activities in both the formal and informal sectors

and all marital statuses was the closing time of the ECDC. Cost was another challenge revealed and this was in line with other studies. Himmelweit and Sigala, (2004) found that unaffordable fees shape mothers' decisions on child-caring differently. Hence, where mothers were able to afford the fees the ECDCs charged, the level of utilization was high but where they were unable to afford it, the level of utilization was relatively low (Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004).

To cope with these challenges, some of the mothers asked their relative or friend to help them drop off or pick up child/children from school. For the sick children, it was revealed that mothers decided to stay home to take care of ailing child/ children or asked a relative/ friend to help take care for the ailing child/ children. To meet the fees, some mothers cut down on other expenses to take care of fees.

The studies revealed that alternative measures women would have adopted included staying home to take care of the child themselves or take the child to work. Others would have asked grandparent(s) or other relatives to assist or even use older children's assistance. Others also indicated that they would have left their child in the care of neighbors.

The alternative measures clearly showed the importance of ECDCs to women's livelihood. It demonstrates that without ECDCs, women would have to stay home, abandon work or source of livelihood and become completely dependent on their partners or other relatives and friends for their needs as well as that of the child. Some of the coping mechanisms such as leaving children at the care of older siblings and neighbors can potentially put the child in a risk of improper care, which is likely to affect the cognitive development of the child. ECDCs are therefore a great source of relief for women, as their effective utilization positively affects the livelihood of the mother.

5.2 Conclusion

In the chapter two, the researcher perceived a relationship linking the factors responsible for the utilization of ECDCs to women's livelihood outcomes. It was conceptualized that there were two key determinants involving both the mother and child that enabled the usage of ECDCs. These included the ability for mothers to go about their economic activities without interruption and for the child to have an early education. However, it was also perceived that there were some factors that motivated women to choose a particular ECDC and these were the perceptions women held about the quality of the ECDCs in relation to child development, the social influence from other mothers in the community, the proximity of an ECDC to the residence or place of work of a mother and the educational level of mothers. Also, some challenges that hindered the usage of ECDCs and adoptive coping measures to help mitigate these challenges were expected to unravel during the research. Challenges revealed included the expensive nature of fees, closing hours of ECDCs, distance and transportation, and the frequent illness of children. Adopted coping mechanisms included the cutting down on other expenses to be able to meet expensive fees, seeking assistance from friends and relatives, taking child to work, or staying home to take care of child. The expected resultant effect was the assumption that women's livelihood and social status would improve when they use ECDCs for childcare. This was revealed in the study that there was a positive relationship between the utilization of ECDCs and women's livelihood outcomes even though a control group was not explored to accurately assess the full impact.

It was found that there were two major reasons why women enrolled their children in ECDCs. Prime amongst the two was to give the child early education and second, to enable the mother to go to work, market, shop or attend school. It was also revealed that factors that motivated women to use an ECDC were proximity, favorable operating hours, and quality of care and affordable costs of the ECDC.

Challenges revealed by the study included closing hours of the ECDC as the major problem because at that time, women are still busy with livelihood activities followed by distance of the ECDC and transportation costs. Major mitigating measures revealed included asking assistance from relatives and friends to help take care of child when ill, pick up of child from school as a result of unfavorable closing hours, cutting down expenses to accommodate younger child and staying at home to take care of child or taking the child to work.

In this study, the relationship between the usage of ECDCs for childcare and improvements in women's livelihood outcomes was noteworthy. This was predicted in the conceptual framework. Most of the factors that determined the usage of ECDCs for the respondents were directly in line with the conceptual framework. It also revealed an increase in earnings especially, for women in the informal sector as a result of the fact that mothers who sent their child to ECDCs were able to work normal hours without any interruption and get more money or expand their businesses. In the conceptual framework, it was preempted that factors influencing mothers' choice of ECDCs were perception, social influence, proximity, quality of the ECDC and the mother's educational level. However, the study revealed that the reasons why mothers placed their children in a specific ECDC was also based on proximity, quality of care as well as favorable operating hours and cost. This study aligns with the conceptual framework constructed based on literature and the researcher's perceptions.

The study has shown that some of the respondents in this study have come to accept and appreciate the important role of ECDCs in child upbringing. Mothers have in the past utilized the services of ECDCs and given the benefits they enjoyed; they continue to use it. The utilization of ECDCs cuts across all socio-demographic characteristics of women, irrespective of educational level, employment level or income level. This study has also shown that the utilization of ECDCs have

an effect on women's livelihood, especially in terms of giving them enough time to engage more in their economic activities and giving them income to be able to support household expenses. Thus, the effective utilization of ECDCs does not make childcare a burden to mothers as it used to be in the past where mothers had to stay home and take care of children.

5.3 Recommendations

Despite the benefits of ECDCs, there are some personal and institutional challenges that respondents encountered while using ECDCs in Kasoa. Given the important role of ECDCs to women in this study, there is a need for some of the challenges to be addressed by the Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly (ASEMA), and other local groups in ASEMA.

This study lacks the use of a control group; hence, it falls short of making a huge impact. It is recommended that another researcher further this study to encompass all other aspects of research that will make the impact more significant.

The study revealed that the quality of an ECDC was a major factor that determined the usage of ECDCs. According to the Educational Directorate in Kasoa, ECDCs are opening illegally all over Kasoa. This study recommends an effective supervision of the activities and operations of the ECDCs by the Educational Directorate. The Municipal Education Directorate should strengthen their supervision team to make sure that any ECDC that is set up in the municipality meets the required standards. This will minimize the reported cases of sick children in the ECDCs and ensure that children are getting quality early education.

Mothers largely assessed the quality of the services provided by ECDCs and rated them high. However, some mothers rated the quality as medium. ECDCs should therefore make personal

efforts to improve upon their services. This should be enforced by the Educational Directorate in Kasoa.

It was revealed in the study that the closing time of 3:00pm – 4:00pm was a challenge to working mothers across all occupations in both the formal and informal sectors. Hence, it is recommended that ECDCs consider extending their operating hours to 6:30pm to give women the opportunity to pick up their children from school and minimize the support from relatives, neighbors, etc. as stated in the coping mechanisms.

Given the importance of ECDCs to women's livelihood, women should be encouraged to utilize the services of ECDCs. This initiative can only materialize with the full participation of all the stakeholders. From the side of the government, the local directorate of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) can add it to its itinerary to educate women in ASEMA on the need for and importance of using ECDCs. The local media institutions in ASEMA can also encourage its members to increase education on ECDCs on radio and television programs. The various women's associations in the communities and workplaces in Kasoa (e.g., the association of market traders among such other groups) can also use their meetings to educate women on the utilization of ECDCs. The Ministry for Gender and Social Protection can also help with the education. During local women gatherings and functions in ASEMA, time can be given to educate mothers on the need to send their children to ECDCs. All these measures can increase the utilization of ECDCs in Kasoa, which will in turn have a positive outcome on women's socioeconomic livelihoods in Kasoa.

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Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

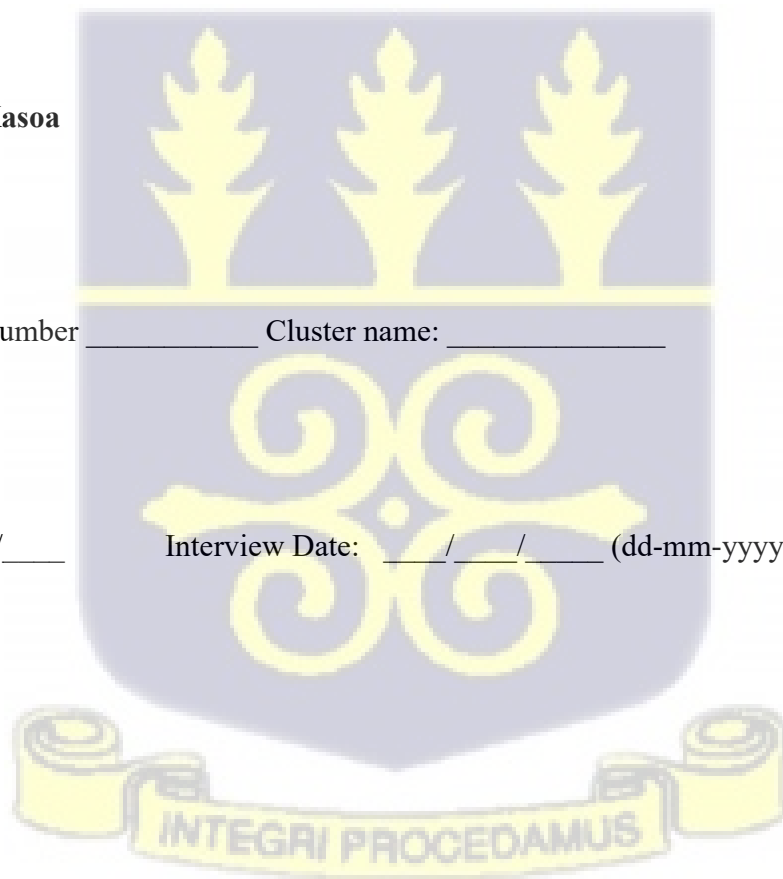
INSTITUTE OF STATISTICAL, SOCIAL & ECONOMIC RESEARCH

Utilization of Early Child Development Schools for Childcare and its Impact on Women's

Livelihood in Kasoa

Questionnaire Number _____ Cluster name: _____

Cluster #: ____ / ____ Interview Date: ____ / ____ / ____ (dd-mm-yyyy)



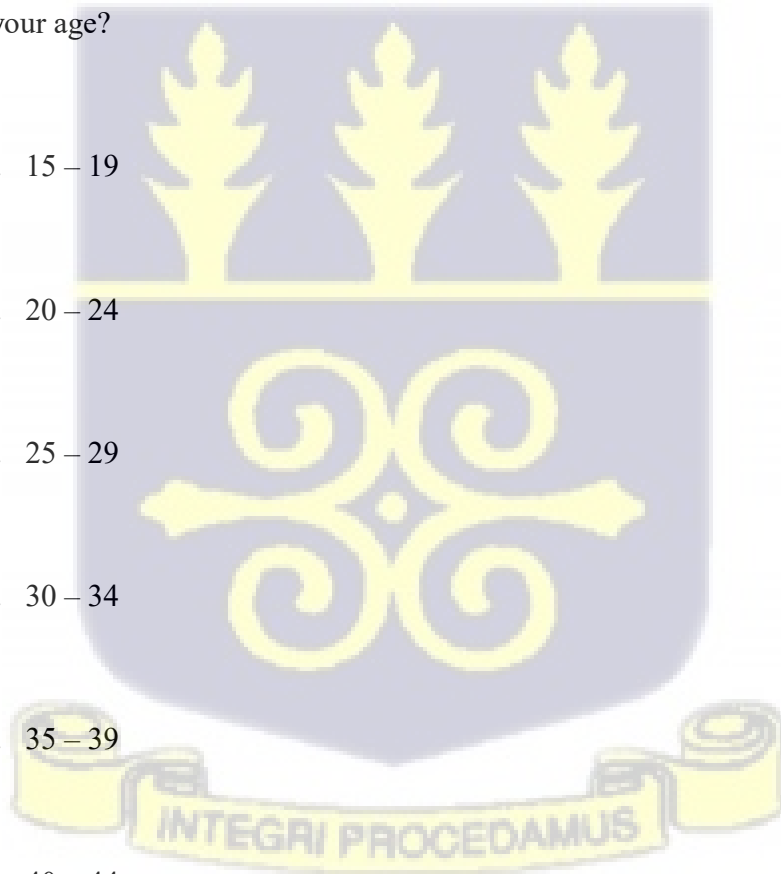
Socio-Demographic Background

1) What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

2) What is your age?

1. 15 – 19
2. 20 – 24
3. 25 – 29
4. 30 – 34
5. 35 – 39
6. 40 – 44
7. 45 – 49



8. 50+

3) What is your level of education?

0. None

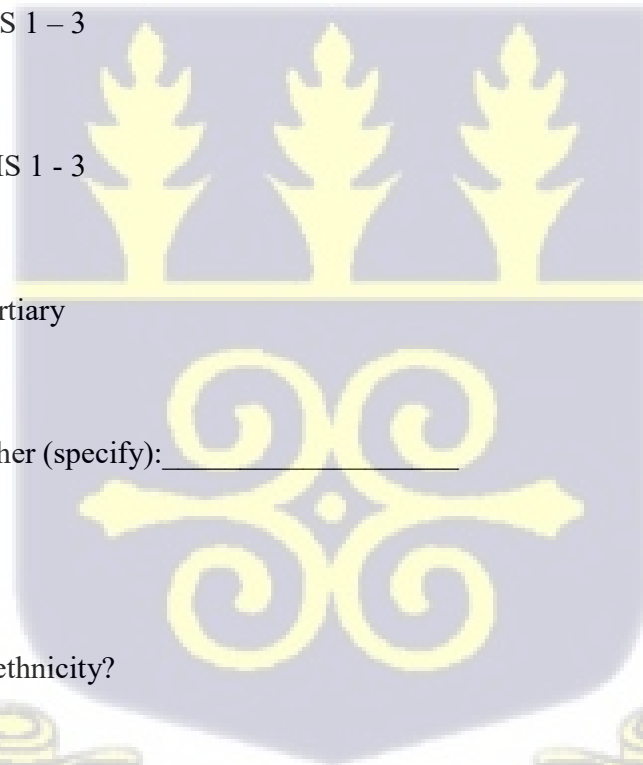
1. Primary (1 – 6)

2. JHS 1 – 3

3. SHS 1 - 3

4. Tertiary

87. Other (specify): _____



4) What is your ethnicity?

0. None Ghanaian

1. Ewe

2. Ga-Adangbe

3. Akan (for example, Ashanti, Fanti, etc.)

4. Guan

5. Mole-Dagbon

6. Gurma

7. Grusi

8. Mande

87. Other (specify): _____

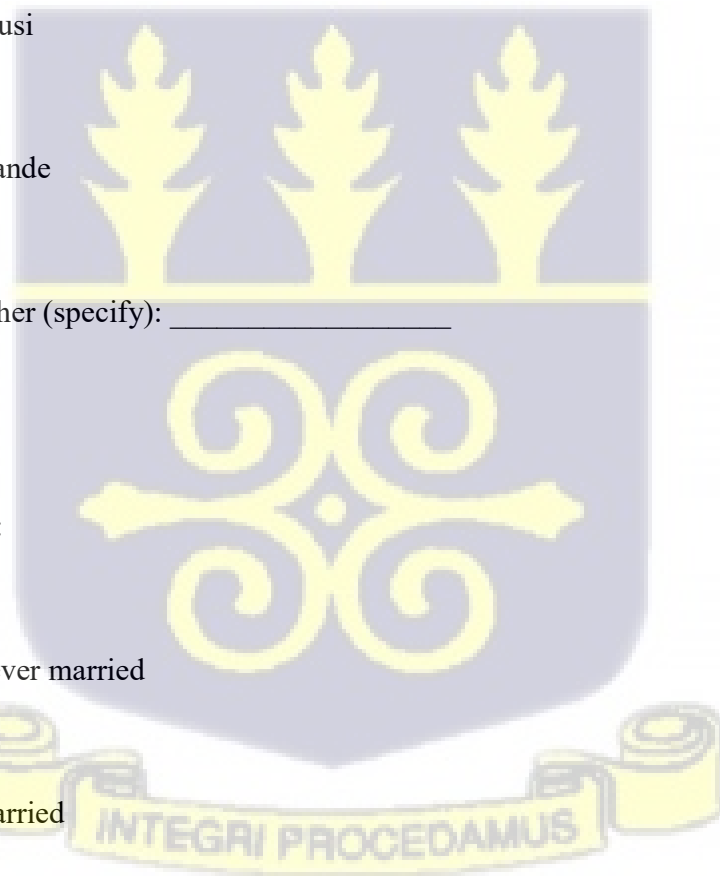
5) Marital status:

1. Never married

2. Married

3. Divorced

4. Separated



5. Widowed

6. Cohabitation

6) What kind of economic activities are you engaged in/ what do you do to earn money? (If possible, tick more than one)

1. Unemployed

2. Salaried worker

3. Trading

4. Farming

5. Seamstress

6. Hairdresser

7. Shop/Market Assistant

8. Household worker

87. Other (specify): _____



7) What is your monthly income?

0. N/A

1. Below GH 100

2. GH 100 - 200

3. GH 201 - 300

4. GH 301 - 400

5. GH 401 – 500

6. Above 500

87. Other (specify): _____



8) How many children do you have?

1. 1

2. 2

3. 3

87. Other (specify): _____

Factors that motivate women to leave their children at ECDCs

9) How many of your previous child/children ever attended an ECDC?

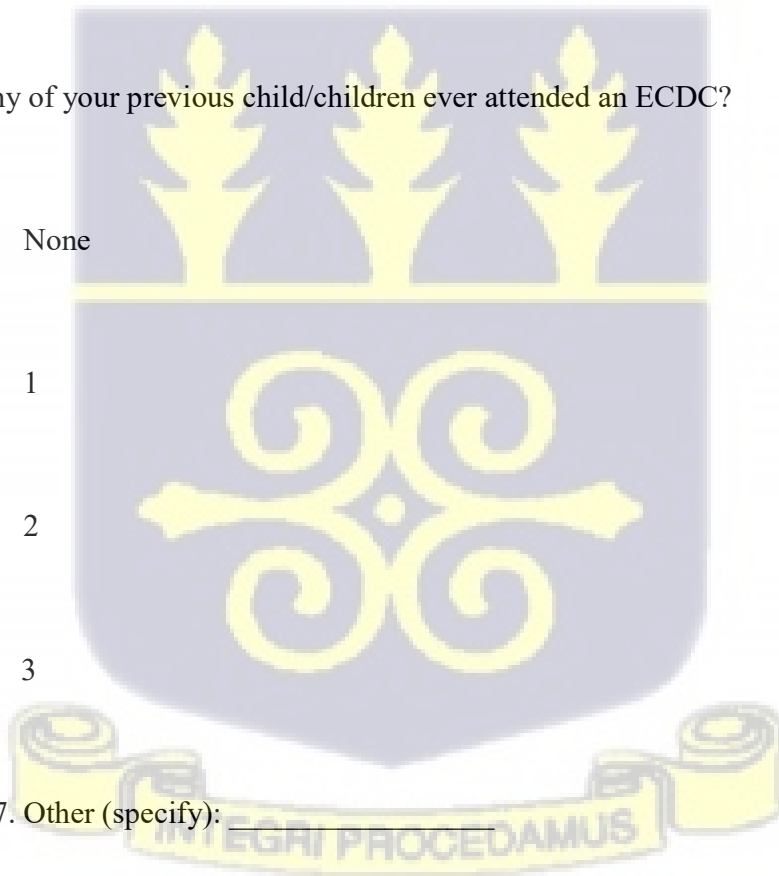
0. None

1. 1

2. 2

3. 3

87. Other (specify): _____



10) If none, why did you not previously utilize ECDC? (If possible, tick more than one)

1. I did not need it
2. I did not know about it
3. I did not know how it worked
4. Could not afford (expensive)
5. I did not have a child before

6. Other (specify): _____

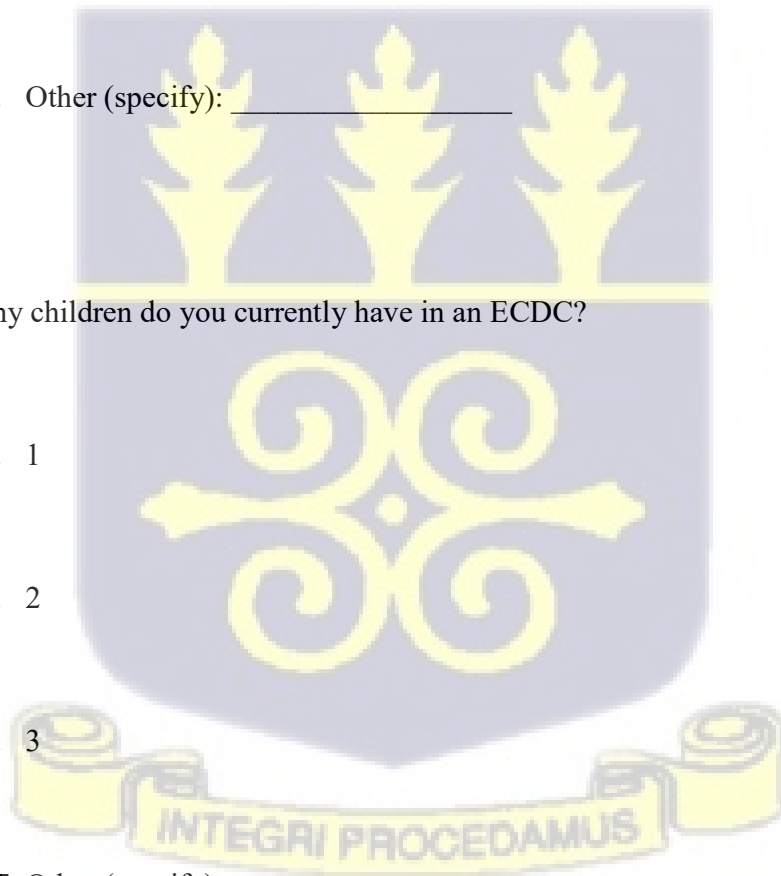
11) How many children do you currently have in an ECDC?

1. 1

2. 2

3. 3

87. Other (specify): _____



12) Why have you enrolled your current child/children into an ECDC? (If possible, tick more than one)

1. To go to work, market, shop, school
2. To have more time at home to do household work
3. Wanted child to have early education
4. I realized that I needed more time to engage in my livelihood activities.
87. Other (specify): _____

13) Who influenced your decision(s) to use an ECDC? (If possible, tick more than one)

1. Child's father and I
2. My own decision
3. Husband
4. Friend
5. Family members



87. Other (specify): _____

14) How many days does the ECDC open in a week?

1. 3

2. 4

3. 5

4. 6

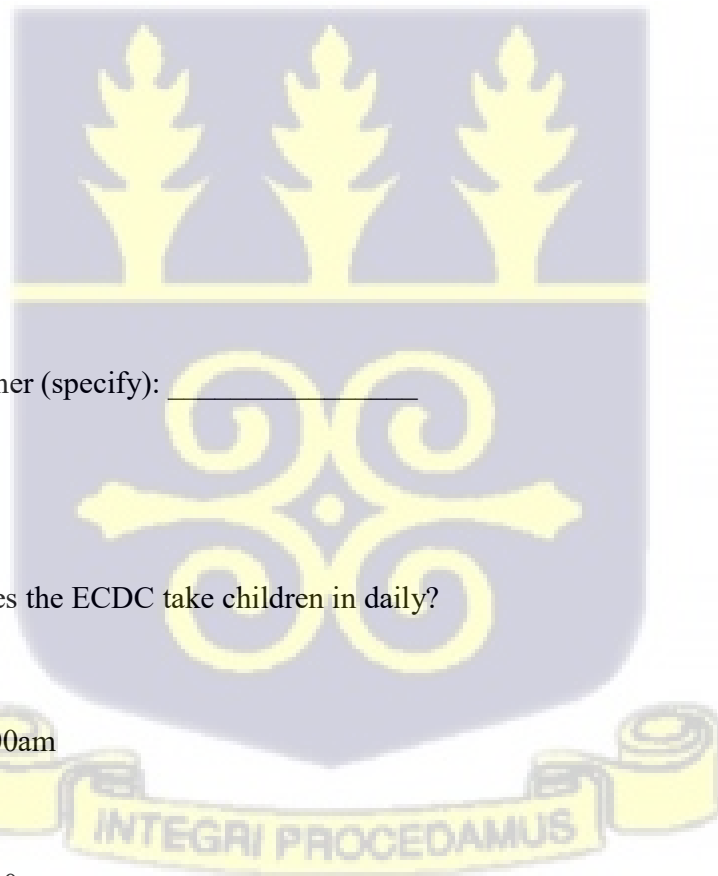
87. Other (specify): _____

15) What time does the ECDC take children in daily?

1. 7:00am

2. 7:30am

3. 8:00am



87. Other (specify): _____

16) What is the ECDC closing time daily?

1. 3:00pm

2. 3:30pm

3. 4:00pm

87. Other (specify): _____

17) How many hours does your child stay in the ECDC

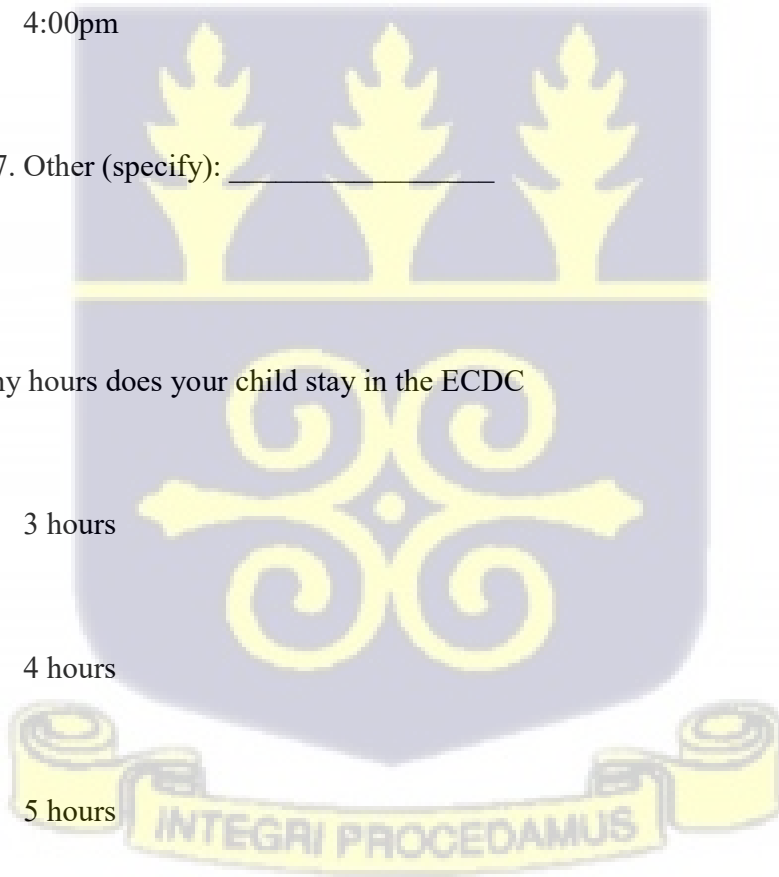
1. 3 hours

2. 4 hours

3. 5 hours

4. 6 hours

5. 7 hours



6. 8 hours

7. 9 hours

8. 10 hours

87. Other (specify): _____

18) What is the cost of placing your child/children in an ECDC per term?

1. Below GH 100

2. GH 100 - 200

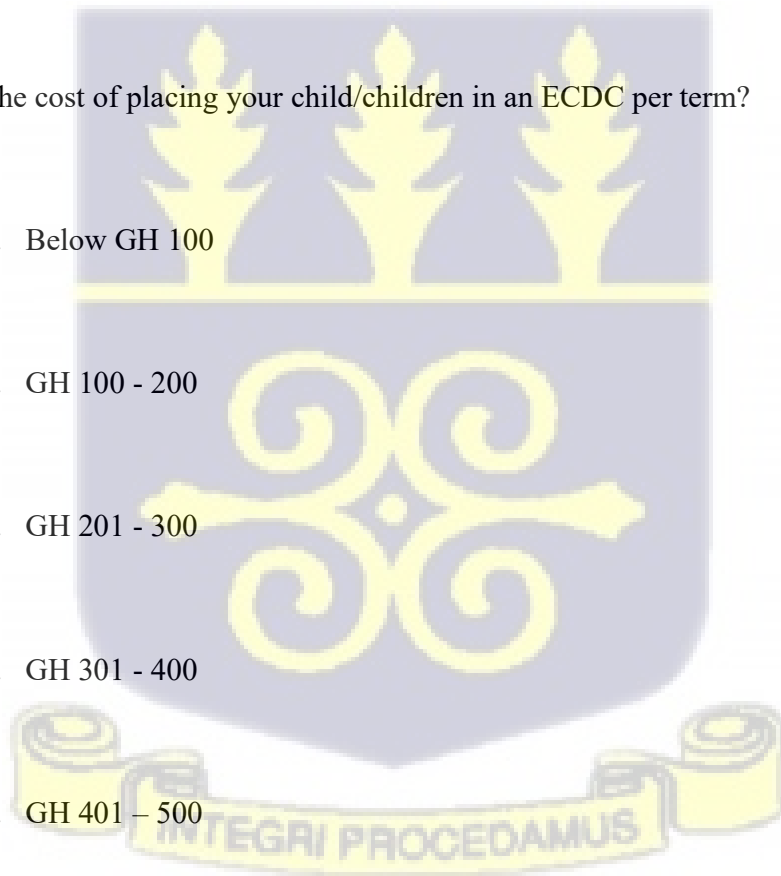
3. GH 201 - 300

4. GH 301 - 400

5. GH 401 - 500

6. Above 500

7. Below GH 500



87. Other (specify): _____

Women's perception and satisfaction with the services provided by ECDCs

19) How significant is the usage of ECDC to you?

1. Important

2. Very important

3. Not important

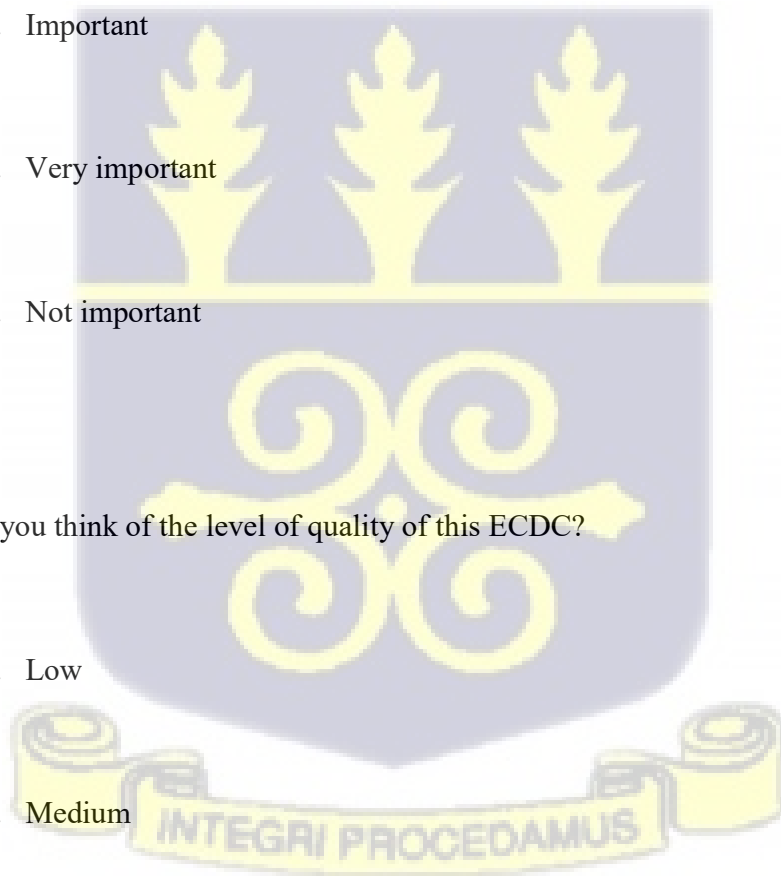
20) What do you think of the level of quality of this ECDC?

1. Low

2. Medium

3. High

4. Nothing at all



87. Other (specify): _____

21) What is your overall level of satisfaction?

1. Not satisfactory
2. Satisfactory
3. Very satisfactory
4. Very unsatisfactory

22) What influenced your choice of this ECDC? **(If possible, tick more than one)**

1. Easy access because it is closer to home; therefore, anyone can help me pick up the child
2. The hours of care available is suitable for me
3. Early opening hours enable me to get to work on time
4. Late closing enables me to leave work and pick up my child/children

5. The ECDC provides good care
6. The ECDC is neat and clean
7. The staff at the ECDC is very polite
8. This ECDC is much cheaper

87. Other (specify): _____

Impacts on women's livelihood as a result of using ECDCs

23) What two major impacts have the use of ECDC made on your livelihood?

1. I earn more income
2. I can now work normal hours without interruption
3. I can now trade/do business more efficiently
4. I now have time to focus on expanding my business, farm, etc.

5. I can now engage in more economic activities without worrying about taking care of a child

6. I can now go back to school

7. I have more time to take care of my home

8. I see no difference

87. Other (specify): _____

24) If you earn more income, what did you earn before and what do you earn now?

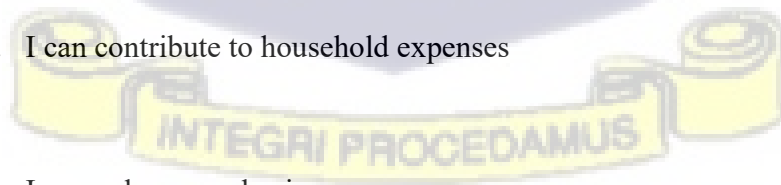
1. I used to earn _____ now I earn _____

25) What two major differences have it made to you?

1. I can contribute to household expenses

2. I can enlarge my business

3. I can work longer hours and get compensation



87. Other (specify): _____

26) What two major impacts have the use of ECDCs made on your household activities? **(If possible, tick more than one)**

1. I can now engage in more household duties (cooking, washing, ironing, etc.)

2. I now have more time to rest

3. I can pay attention to older siblings

4. I can attend to my husband better

87. Other (specify): _____

Challenges women face in utilizing ECDCs

27) What are two major challenges that you face using ECDC?

1. It is expensive

2. Hours of work at ECDC is not sufficient

3. Closing time not suitable as I would still be working
4. Distance and transportation to and from the ECDC daily
5. My child/children often fall(s) sick
87. Other (specify): _____

Adoptive Coping Mechanisms

28) How have you managed to cope or mitigate these challenges? (If possible, tick more than one)

1. A relative/friend help me drop off or pick up child/children
2. Ask a relative/friend to help take care of ailing child/children
3. I cut down on other expenses to take care of costs
4. Stay home to take care of ailing child/children
87. Other (specify): _____

29) What else could you have done about the upkeep of your child if you did not use an ECDC? (If possible, tick more than one)

1. Stay home and take care of the child myself
2. Take the child with me to work (market, farm, office, shop, etc.)
3. Grandparent(s) would have assisted
4. Other relatives would have assisted
5. Older siblings would have assisted
6. Leave child in the care of neighbors
7. Other (specify): _____



Appendix 2: Tables

Table A2.1: Time ECDC take Children in Daily

The time ECDC take children in daily					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7:00am	70	58.3	58.3	58.3
	7:30am	25	20.8	20.8	79.2
	8:00am	22	18.3	18.3	97.5
	Other	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

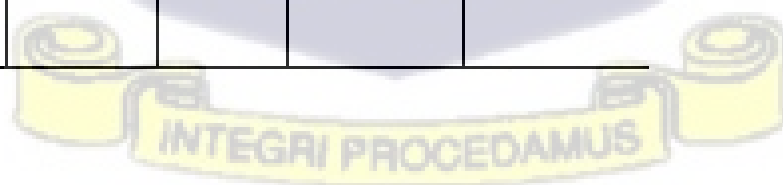


Table A2.2: CDC Daily Closing Time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1:30PM	23	19.2	19.2	19.2
	3:00PM	31	25.8	25.8	45.0
	3:30PM	23	19.2	19.2	64.2
	4:00PM	40	33.3	33.3	97.5
	Others	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	



Table A2.3: Cost per Term in Placing Child at ECDC

Amount	Frequency	Percent
none/free	18.00	15.00
below 100	33.00	27.50
Sub-Total	51.00	42.50
100-200	36.00	30.00
201-300	13.00	10.80
301-400	6.00	5.00
Sub-Total	55.00	45.80
401-500	3.00	2.50
Above 500	8	6.7
Below 500	1	0.8
other	2	1.7
Sub-Total	14.00	11.70
Grand Total	120	100

