

The Pedagogical Roles of Arsi Oromo Proverbs in Socializing Children: Implications for Aligning Indigenous Knowledge with Modern Education

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Abstract: The major purpose of the present study is to examine the pedagogic functions of Arsi Oromo proverbs in socializing children. In so doing, an ethnographic design was employed to guide the study. Data were collected from a sample of 37 discussants of four FGD sessions, where both the samples and the research site (Digeluna Tijo district of East Arsi Zone) were selected purposively. Moreover, the metaphoric analysis technique was employed to examine the philosophical and daily applications of Arsi Oromo proverbs related to child upbringing. The current study revealed several important findings. First, Arsi proverbs provide a rich context in preserving and transmitting the cultural norms, values and beliefs of Arsi society. Second, most of the Arsi Oromo proverbs told about children have pedagogic functions especially in socializing (disciplining, warning, training, shaping, advising, directing, and educating) children to have a better understanding of the cultural values, beliefs, norms and practices of the society. Third, some of the Arsi Oromo proverbs told about children do not reflect the existing situations and have negative repercussions on the developing child (e.g., indoctrinate sex-segregated roles; show preferences for baby boys to baby girls; promote harmful traditional practices like gender inequality; and limit child-parent interaction). The results of this study, generally, have implications for developing the school curriculum for elementary school children (teaching materials) that aligns modern education with the indigenous knowledge of the community and in designing manual for parental education.

Keywords: *Arsi Oromo, cultural values, ethnography, metaphor, pedagogical functions, proverbs, sex-role, socialization, transmission*

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Introduction

Contexts for the Study

It is well documented in the existing literature that oral tradition has long been used to convey people's feelings, thoughts, expectations, perceptions, values, beliefs and practices (Dabaghi, Pishbin & Niknasab, 2010). As to Mandova & Chingombe (2013) its applications were more popular where literacy is low. In an agrarian society, where literacy is low and written knowledge is limited, the upbringing of children predominantly took place at home and oral tradition (such as proverbs, folktales, folk songs and riddles) played the main role in educating and training children (Mieder, 2004; Rezaei, 2012). Similarly, Obiechina (1992) and Boke (2012) suggested that proverb has been the sole means of preserving and communicating people's way of life especially during the preliterate times. Dei (2013) also indicated that proverbs have long been used both in a non-literate and literate society as a valid source of indigenous knowledge system. Moreover, Bradbury (2002) stated that the way people think and look at the world, their culture, values, behaviors, aspirations and preoccupations can immediately be understood by looking at their proverbs.

Proverb scholars generally describe proverbs in terms of three attributes: their features, contents and functions (Bradbury, 2002). According to some proverb scholars, there are two features of a proverb: *preciseness* and *completeness*. For instance, Zhao (2013) described a proverb as a short, precise, and witty speech entity that is pregnant with meaning. Similarly, Rezaei (2012) stated that a proverb is a grammatical sentence that expresses an idea complete in itself. Moreover, according to Dei (2013), proverbs can be used to shorten a long speech into few words that have far-reaching meaning.

In terms of the content, proverbs reflect the wisdom, a set of thoughts, everyday life experiences, truth, moral and traditions of a given society

(Dabaghi, Pishbin & Niknasab, 2010; Dei, 2013; Jeylan, 2005; Mieder, 2004; Rezaei, 2012; Zhao, 2013). It is also well documented that proverbs remain, from time immemorial until today, a very powerful and effective instrument for the preservation and transmission of the culture, philosophy, social morality and values of people (Adeyemi & Salawudeen, 2014; Boaduo, 2012; Boke, 2012; Bradbury, 2002; Brosh, 2013; Dabaghi, Pishbin, & Niknasab, 2010; Eshete, 2008; Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006; Idowu, 2010; Kazeem, 2010; Mandova & Wasosa, 2013; Masaka & Makahamadze, 2013; Mieder, 2004; Omoገገጃጃ, 2012; Sumner, 1999; Zhao, 2013; Zibin & Altakhaineh, 2014). More specifically, Mieder (2004) asserted that proverbs reflect the cultural contexts of the society across the whole gamut of people's experiences. In addition, Sumner (1999) stated that the key components of culture (e.g., values, norms, institutions and artifacts) have long been communicated to the offspring through traditional proverbs. Similarly, Azeem (2010) and Zhao (2013) affirmed that people use proverbs in storing and retrieving any aspect of their cultural worldview (social life, philosophies, social experience as well as moral standards). In sum, proverbs have been used as a catalyst for the preservation and transmission of people's views, thoughts, values, perceptions, belief systems, life experiences, expectations, collective knowledge, wisdom, philosophy, ethics and morals across generations since the preliterate times.

In terms of function, proverbs have important pedagogical roles in providing guidance for people on how to train, discipline, warn, shape and teach their children about parental and socialization values (Mieder, 2004). This implies that proverbs play crucial roles in child socialization, where socialization can be defined as the process by which a child (through education, training, observation, and experience) acquires skills, values, attitudes and behaviors that are required for successful adaptation to a family and culture (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Kapferer, 1981). As to Grant and Asimeng-Boahene (2006), this process of socialization is partly informed by the traditional proverbs. This is, perhaps, because proverbs are carriers of the

societal values, beliefs and practices (Boke, 2012) and that it is within people's cultural values and beliefs that the socialization values and childrearing practices are embedded.

In addition, numerous literature sources (e.g., Ahmed, 2005; Akinmade, 2012; Boke, 2012; Brown & Wright-Harp, 2011; Constable, 2015; Dabaghi, Pishbin, and Niknasab, 2010; Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006; Idowu, 2010; Mandova & Wasosa, 2013; Masaka & Makahamadze, 2013; Mieder, 2004; Obiechina, 1992; Rezaei, 2012; Sumner, 1999; Wachholz & Yassuda, 2011) have documented the pedagogic function of a proverb in guiding parents on how to train, shape and socialize their children across the developmental years. In this vein, Masaka and Makahamadze (2013) stated that proverbs have educational values by means of vividly illustrating what people should do, the way they should do it, and how they should behave.

Moreover, as parents are the primary institution for socializing children, they have a big responsibility of instilling the cultural values, beliefs and perceptions of the larger society into their offspring (Obiechina, 1992). In fact, the normative socialization values of the society have been passed on to children for centuries via parenting and traditional proverbs (Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006; Masaka, & Makahamadze, 2013; Sumner, 1999). This implies that proverb plays an influential role in informing parents of the societal values and beliefs to be instilled into the offspring (Mieder, 2004). It also implies that proverbs as the carrier of the past history, identity, values, beliefs and practices of people (Mandova & Wasosa, 2013) and as central to indigenous education (Akinmade, 2012) instruct parents of what the society thinks and wants to instill into children (socialization values) (Ahmed, 2005; Boaduo, 2012; Masaka, & Makahamadze, 2013; Mieder, 2004), what parents need their children to possess (parental values) (Akinmade, 2012; Idowu, 2010) and how parents should discipline, encourage, guide, advice, warn, treat and shape the behavior of their children (parenting practices) (Brown and Wright-Harp, 2011; Obiechina, 1992). Moreover, proverbs fulfill the important function

of maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior (Dabaghi, Pishbin & Niknasab, 2010) and are used as a means of applying social pressure and exercising social control (Rezaei, 2012). In summary, proverbs are used consciously to educate children of the dangers of life (Boke, 2012); are central to abstract thinking and reasoning (Wachholz & Yassuda, 2011); and are used to correct children's behavior (Kawich, 2012). At the same time, proverbs teach children that the care and protection of the elderly is their eventual responsibility, and about the importance of patience, wisdom, fairness, and social justice (Grant & Asimeng-Boahene, 2006).

In a similar vein, Boke (2012) also asserted that some traditional proverbs have been informing the childrearing parents of assigning differential roles to the male and female members of the society and of treating boys and girls differently. According to Boke (2012), in the traditional society where sex-role stereotypes are highly prevalent, cultural proverbs are generally used to teach male children to be strong, powerful and dominant and the female children to be humble, submissive and subordinate.

Numerous literature evidences (e.g., Boke, 2012; Constable, 2015; Idowu, 2010; Masaka & Makahamadze, 2013) also confirmed the didactic functions of the proverbs in the bible. For instance, according to Constable (2015), biblical proverbs were written to give correction that result in the building of the child's character. Similarly, as to Boke (2012), the proverbs in the Bible have long been used for teaching people and children moral values, faithfulness, justice and duty as well as for warning, guiding and explaining issues. Moreover, according to Idowu (2010), biblical proverbs also deal in themes of religion, society and politics as well as draw comparisons between the righteous and the sinner, the wise and the foolish, and rewards and punishments. For instance, the biblical proverb *'train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it'* informs parents that the way you up-bring children determines the way your sons and daughters turn out as adults. This proverb mainly emphasizes the

importance of early training and instruction, and conveys the message that early foundations are critical for later behaviors. Similarly, a biblical proverb '*discipline your son, and he will give delight to your soul*' informs parents that gives wisdom but undisciplined child brings shame to his mother. This proverb primarily expresses the importance of correcting the child's behavior through the use of punishment. In addition, the biblical proverb '*teach your children to obey their parents*' stresses that teaching children obedience through discipline and correction is one of the most basic responsibilities of parenting.

Likewise, metaphoric theory suggests that most proverbs are used for presenting meanings, intentions, thoughts or messages in metaphoric, implicit or figurative ways (Adeyemi & Salawudeen, 2014; Bailey, 2003; Bradbury, 2002; Brosh, 2013; Rezaei, 2012; Zibin & Altakhaineh, 2014). This is because metaphor is often used to describe abstract concepts through reference to more concrete or physical experiences, creates strong mental images, is based on analogy and arises when one concept is viewed in terms of the properties of another (Mele, 2013; Mieder, 2004; Wachholz & Yassuda, 2011). The following metaphorical proverbs may help understand the situation in a better way. '*Actions speak louder than words* (what you do is more important than what you say); '*Necessity is the mother of invention*' (being in a difficult situation makes you think hard about a workable solution); '*Variety is the spice of life*' (you have to try doing different things or have experiences of various kinds to enjoy fully); "*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*" (used when someone must be warned to be more careful with health issues); "*Strike while the iron is hot*" (used when explaining that the time for action has come); "*The early bird catches the worm*" (it means the sooner you start, the more successful you will be and the sooner you will achieve your goal); and "*Don't count your chickens before they are hatched*" (used when warning someone against unreasonable anticipation).

On top of this, few of the local studies undertaken so far demonstrated the important roles played by Arsi Oromo proverbs (*makmaaksa*) in

child socialization. For instance, in his study of the 'image of women in selected Arsi Oromo folktales, folksongs and proverbs' Ahmed (2010) found that the deep-rooted attitudes and beliefs that are embedded within the patriarchal Arsi Oromo proverbs established the superiority of men and subordination of women in the society. Similarly, in his study of the social and ethno-cultural construction of masculinity and femininity in African proverbs, Jeylan (2005) indicated that the Oromo proverbs as the most widely used pieces of oral traditions have been facilitating the transmission of knowledge and in the vanguard of mobilizing gender ideology. Sena (2008) also stated that Arsi Oromo often use proverbs to teach their children about the past, honesty, politeness, faithfulness and criticize misbehavior. Relatedly, Tadesse (2004) suggested that while some Oromo proverbs reflect aspects of customary practices (the values of morality and the strictness of social laws) others function as a means of correcting misbehaviors. In addition, Eshete (2008) stated that the Oromo parents use proverbs in order to express their beliefs about how a child should be reared, to teach the appropriate behaviors they value for their children, to educate children about the history, taboos, and customs of their society, and to advice children on the challenges of life. Moreover, as to Dame (2014) Arsi also use proverbs for communicating the values entrenched/embedded within the *Gadaa* and *Safuu* worldviews.

Statement of the Problem

The Oromo people have rich cultural values. However, much of their inheritance does not exist in written form. Hence, for centuries, the Oromo cultural values and wisdom have been preserved and manifested through its oral traditions and language. Since the majority of Arsi are agrarian society with low literacy rate (CSA, 2008), the upbringing and training of children were based solely on oral traditions like stories and proverbs rather than on written knowledge. As previously mentioned in the background section, Arsi Oromo have rich and countless oral traditions (folktales, folksongs, riddles and proverbs), which are closely intertwined with the local identity, culture and history of the people. This, in fact, is indicated in the writings of many scholars. For instance, Asmarom (1973) wrote that since the Oromo did not have written literature in the past, oral traditions remained as the sole source of knowledge about the society's socio-cultural experiences. Similarly, Alemayehu (2009) indicated that it is through language and oral tradition that children learn about historical events, values and norms peculiar to Oromo society. In addition, Jeylan (2005) also showed that the Oromo people reflect their life experiences, national character and personality traits through their own oral traditions.

As it has also been mentioned earlier, the Oromo people, especially the Arsi society, rely too much on proverbs as one means of preserving their culture and educating their youth on their religious belief, tradition, philosophy and moral values (safuu). Perhaps one possible reason for this is that since the majority of Arsi are agrarian society with low literacy rate (CSA, 2008), the upbringing and training of children were based solely on oral traditions like stories and proverbs than on written knowledge. This suggests that as in the case in other cultures, most of the Arsi Oromo proverbs are relevant and active in reflecting the life (perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes) of the people; particularly among the rural society where literacy is scant and oral traditions are dominant.

Similarly, it is indicated that Arsi proverbs are a verbal art that are closely linked to children's education and socialization and meant to educate the young about the nature of the universe, the nature of knowledge and the appropriate standards of human conduct. Though Arsi proverbs have cognitive, social and pragmatic values in people's daily lives in so far as they direct the lives of people (Jeylan, 2004, 2005), they were not studied well and supported by up to date research data.

In addition, though proverbs are commonly and widely used among the Arsi Oromo to inculcate truths, reprimand those who violate the moral code (*safuu*) of conduct, sharpening one's thought processes, informing people of spiritual presence in human activities as well as informing parents of how they should deal with their children, little or no attention is given to them in research. In fact, the study of proverbs, their functions, and effects on child development were limited to the western-contexts and no or little is said about them in the context of Arsi Oromo.

Generally, even though there is an increasing recognition that proverbs are a vital part of the Arsi way of life; serve as means of preserving and transmitting cultural values, religious beliefs and enforcement of moral code (*safuu*); inform parents to instill or preserve the basic cultural values in the *Gadaa* and *Safuu* system (conformity, respect for authority, generosity, honesty, justice and hard work) of Arsi society; and serve as an instrument for instilling these cultural values into children, no adequate attention was given to studying the didactic functions of these Arsi proverbs particularly in socializing children.

In fact, the absence of adequate and up to date research data about these Arsi proverbs might result in failure of identifying proverbs that have positive and negative repercussions on the developing child; limit the awareness and knowledge of experts and professionals in the area to decide what appropriate interventions should be planned and taken

to improve the situation; and hamper the decision to incorporate indigenous knowledge into modern school curriculum.

Generally, Arsi proverbs are interesting to study since it is through them that we can extract many ideas on how we think, how we conceptualize and categorize the world, and how we transmit traditional folk knowledge from generation to generation. Similarly, since oral tradition was the sole source of knowledge for up-bringing children, especially in the context of Arsi society due to limited access to written knowledge, the didactic functions of Arsi proverbs deserve studying and need to be supported by up to date research data.

This study is intended to focus on the following:

- Whether there are specific proverbs in Arsi Oromo culture that inform parents on how to raise their children
- The specific functions these Arsi Oromo proverbs serve in child socialization

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, ethnographic design of the qualitative research approach was employed in order to gather Arsi Oromo proverbs that are actively used in the day to day conversation and in the process of socializing young children. This is because the researcher is an insider to the Arsi Oromo culture, on the one hand and the Arsi proverbs as one genre of the Oromo oral traditions can be gathered through a field work involving ethnographic study, on the other hand. Similarly, ethnographic design allows rendering a truly faithful understanding of the cultural practices of a given society from an insider's perspective.

Data Sources and Description of the Study Site

Parents, community elders, religious leaders, Afan Oromo teachers and high school students were the major sources of data for the present study. Generally, in this study, a total of 37 Afan Oromo-speaking informants were involved. In terms of gender, 17 of the participants were females and 20 of them were males. In terms of educational level, five of the participants completed elementary education, 10 of them completed high school education, six of them have diploma, five of them have 1st degree and 11 of them can read and write. In terms of professional career, eight of the informants were primary school teachers, eight of them were farmers, five of them were high school students, four of them were religious leaders, four of them were community elders, five of them were childrearing parents and three of them were business men. Finally, in terms of age category, the participants ranged from 17 to 68 years old. In fact, the selection of these participants as samples of the current study was made through purposive sampling technique. This is because the participants are part and parcel of the typical culture of Arsi Oromo, have rich experiences of the cultural values of the society, and have good access to the typical Arsi proverbs told about children in the site. Moreover, the study participants were contacted through the Afan Oromo teachers teaching in the nearby primary schools and who had prior contact with the researcher.

Similarly, the selection of the study site (Digeluna Tijo district of East Arsi Zone) was made through purposive sampling technique. Primarily, it was based on the researcher's familiarity with the area (for I grew-up in the area and I am part of the Arsi culture); the assumption that the insider to a given culture can bring rich contexts and experiences to the generation of data and interpretation of the findings; the researcher's belief that he has easy access to the study participants; and that quite a range of proverbs are widely told in the study area in the context of child socialization.

In view of this, according to the 2007 Population and Housing Survey Report (CSA, 2008), the total population of Arsi was 4,610,810; of which 2,635,515 reside in East Arsi Zone and 1,975,295 reside in West Arsi Zone. The majority of the population (almost 87%), that is, 4,028,758 out of 4,610,810, live in the rural areas (CSA, 2008). Arsi Oromo live in the south-eastern part of Oromia Regional State. Currently, Arsi is divided into two administrative zones, namely East Arsi and West Arsi zones. East Arsi Zone is further divided into 24 administrative districts (Asella being its capital town), while west Arsi zone is divided into 12 administrative districts (Shashemenne being its capital town). Arsi also shares boundaries with East Shoa Zone in the North, Sidama and Bale Zones in the South, Alaba Zone in the West, and Western Hararge Zone in the East. The agrarian Arsi society practices a mixed economy of animal husbandry and subsistence farming. Like other Oromo, the Arsi Oromo maintain high regard for livelihood and their economy is based on cattle and farming (Jeylan, 2005). The following map shows the specific location of the study site (Digeluna Tijo district of East Arsi Zone).



Figure 1: Location of the study site (Digeluna Tijo district of East Arsi Zone)

Source: Extracted from the map of Oromia, 2013

Instruments

After identifying the potential informants of the current study using purposive sampling technique, the researcher collected data (Arsi proverbs that have didactic functions in socializing children) through FGD, in which he took audio/tape records and field notes. Here, the researcher used FGD as an instrument to collect the typical Arsi proverbs about children, and the contexts in which they are used. Generally, four FGDs (one FGD in Tijo village, one FGD in Sagure town, one FGD in Digelu village and one FGD in Lole village) were formed so as to gather the sample Arsi proverbs communicated in the day to day conversation of child socialization from the study site (Digelu na Tijo district of Arsi Zone). In each of the FGD session, 8-10 discussants were brought together from various strata (parents, community elders, religious leaders, Afan Oromo teachers and senior high school students) to express their views on the issue. Generally, the selection of the FGD as a method of data collection is based on the assumption that it allows interactive conversations and hot debates among the participants as well as generating interactive and in-depth qualitative data.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the metaphoric analysis technique, which is a branch of the discourse analysis technique (He, 2007; Janks, 1997; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Qmqlòşó, 2012; Van Dijk, 1983), was adopted as an analytical tool to analyze the Arsi proverbs collected through FGDs and identify their pedagogical functions. According to Hong-bo and Wen-juan (2010), the premise behind this technique is that by examining the metaphors that human beings use in describing their experiences and beliefs, people can begin to discover the hidden meanings beyond those directly and consciously set forth by the speaker. Similarly, Mele (2013) stated that metaphor plays important roles in the representation of objects and events as well as in the construction of mental images in terms of basic everyday experiences. Moreover, metaphoric analysis is

considered by many scholars in the field (e.g., Bondarouk & Ruël, 2004; Okechukwu, 2012) as an appropriate approach for examining the direct and indirect meanings of the proverb and understanding the underlying epistemological aspects of a culture enshrined in proverbs.

Result

In this section, samples of Arsi Oromo proverbs relevant to child socialization, as captured through FGDs, are presented and their metaphoric meanings are identified and elaborated in light of the themes that emerged from the data. In each of the FGD sessions, the discussants were asked to list as many proverbs as they can that are actively communicated by the households as well as by the general society and that are directly related to child socialization with their implications and didactic functions. Accordingly, the discussants reported a number of specific Arsi proverbs that are used in the context of child socialization. For the purpose of this research, these proverbs are categorized into various thematic areas that emerged from the data, and are analyzed as well as interpreted as per these themes as follows.

Arsi Oromo Proverbs that Encourage the Importance of Early Training

Generally, some of the Arsi Oromo proverbs that inform the childrearing parents of the importance of providing continuous support, training, supervision and guidance to children from early age are communicated by the FGD discussants and their direct as well as indirect meanings are analyzed by the researcher as follows:

For instance, examples of the Arsi proverbs: '*korma moo'u mooratti beeku* (literal meaning: a strong bull is known while a calf in a stable); '*jibicha korma ta'u haada irratti beekan*' (literal meaning: A bull for breeding is judged by the rope it is tied with); and '*buddeen nama quubsu eelee irratti beekan*' (literal meaning: a meal that satisfies the stomach is known while it is on the baking dish) inform the childrearing

parents that the way children are treated, brought-up and trained during the early years is indicative of whether they can grow into good, productive and responsible adults or not. This, in fact, is in line with Sigmund Freud's theoretical perspective that suggests 'early behavior predicts later behavior' or 'early foundations are critical' (Haslam, 2007). In other words, if children are treated, directed and shaped from early age, they will develop good manners and socially acceptable behaviors that will help them to make successful adaptation with the society in their later age. Generally, the contents of these proverbs teach the childrearing parents about the importance of proper early training.

Another example of a proverb '*guddisa badduun mataa jallatti*' (literal meaning: the head of someone who is not properly brought-up cannot be straight) warns the childrearing parents that they should train and shape their children by way of strict discipline from early age and that failure to do this at the right time will have serious negative consequences on the future life of the growing child.

At the same time, the proverbs: '*haadha ilaalii intala fuudhi*' (literal meaning: study the mother before you marry her daughter); '*sibiilli nama tume fakkaata*' (an iron resembles the one who molds it) and '*haadhatu caffee oolaa ilmoon dololdho oolti*' (literal meaning: children stay at swamp because their mother stayed in the mud) inform the childrearing parents that what parents do and how they act/ behave as well as how they deal with life events or tasks, in turn, influence (both positively and negatively) the behavior of their children. The metaphoric meanings embedded in these proverbs teach the childrearing parents to be good role models or exemplars for their children. In fact, these metaphoric meanings are in line with Bandura's social-cognitive learning theory that suggests that children learn by copying, imitating or observing the behaviors of their models.

Similarly, the meaning that the cultural proverb: '*daa'ima fi fuulli hin dhaamotu*' (literal meaning: children and the human face do not feel

cold) conveys to the childrearing parents that parents should not over-protect, indulge/pamper or give too much attention to children. The implication is that too much attention spoils the child.

In addition, the Arsi proverb: '*mari'atan malee marataniif mana hin bulchan*' (literal meaning: a house can be managed through discussion, not through madness or shouting alone) informs the household to be wise, patient and diplomat in dealing with children and even situations. Moreover, it also notifies the childrearing parents to develop the culture of bringing issues and disputes to a discussion forum; participating children in family conversations and interactions; and circumventing fights or violence in dealing with children or in managing the family.

Moreover, the traditional proverbs: '*harree ganama bade galgala kurkuriin hin argan*' (literal meaning: you can't look for a donkey in the evening if it was lost in the morning); and '*kan tika moggaa barbaachi ogeessa*' (literal meaning: careless herding later on involves an adult for searching the lost livestock) inform the caregivers that the whereabouts of children should be regularly monitored; that children should be properly brought-up throughout the developmental years; and that timely feedback and measures should be taken to correct, guide and shape children's behaviors. The implication is that carelessness results in negative consequences. Generally, the meanings conveyed through these proverbs advise parents to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability; use the piece-meal approach when training children; and follow the protective principle (taking the necessary interventions prior to the occurrence of the problem) rather than the preventive principle (treating the disease) in socializing children. Moreover, the contents of these proverbs also warn the caregivers that once undesirable behaviors are instilled into children due to lack of proper and timely supervision, feedback and training, they may require either too much investment to correct them or it can be a lost opportunity to correct such behaviors. Consequently, it means that the 'earlier is the better.'

Furthermore, the Arsi proverbs: '*abukaatoo ijoollee ganama mataan waaqa ilaala; galgala lafa ilaala*' (literal meaning: the head of children's lawyer turns-up in the morning and turns-down in the evening) and '*kan daa'imni bukeessite irbaataaf hin dhaqabu*' (literal meaning: the dough that children knead will not be spared for dinner) warn the childrearing parents to be cautious not to make quick and erroneous decisions based on imprecise information obtained from kids; critically examine the validity and reliability of the information obtained from children; and triangulate the information received from children from a variety of sources prior to taking any actions or measures.

Similarly, the cultural proverbs: '*yoo guyyaa guuran halkan daakkatu*' (literal meaning: you can grind at night if you only collect/gather during the day); '*ol kaayatan malee ol kaataniif hin fuudhan*' (literal meaning: you can take what you have saved, not what you have run for); and '*yoo ajjeera tolchan dhimmuu hin sodaatan*' (literal meaning: If the roof is well covered by straw, there is no fear of leaked rain) advise caregivers that it is only when the necessary and appropriate investments/interventions are taken at the right time (during the early years) that children can be the most productive and effective members of the society during the later years. The contents of these proverbs show that laying strong foundation during the early years bears confidence in caregivers that too much investment is not needed during the later years. The implication is that when caregivers invest their resources within the critical or sensitive periods of the child's development, they will harvest a promising outcome.

Likewise, the traditional proverb: '*ijoollen warra gooftaa bulluqa fuula dibatti*' (literal meaning: children of the master apply dough to their face) warns the childrearing parents that children who are not properly brought-up, disciplined and shaped will behave ill-mannerly, unethically and irresponsibly. This saying is in line with Sigmund Freud's assumption that over-gratification results in fixation, which, in turn, is manifested as abnormal behaviors as an adult (Haslam, 2007). Hence, the major implication of this proverb is that parents need to teach their

children about moral values (what is good or bad), good manners and socially appropriate behaviors from early years.

Finally, the traditional Arsi proverbs: *'osoo hin gogne jiidhatti, osoo hin fagaanne dhiyoott'* (literal meaning: before it gets dry while it is wet, before it gets farther away while it is near) and *'teepha jiidhaa maran'* (literal meaning: you can roll a leather rope only when it is wet) inform the childrearing parents that there is a critical or sensitive period in the life of children in which children develop age-appropriate behaviors and in which much investment is needed to be made. Of course, the message conveyed through these proverbs is compatible with Freud's view that 'early foundations are critical' (Haslam, 2007). Generally, the meanings carried on by these proverbs imply that the early years are the most flexible periods in which it is possible to instill appropriate behaviors; easily change and modify inappropriate behaviors; lay strong foundations for turning 'today's flowers into tomorrow's fruits'; build children's behavior on good foundations; and parents should invest much on their children so as to make them healthy and responsible citizens. In addition, these proverbs also warn the childrearing parents that failure to invest (regularly monitor, support, shape, discipline, control and train) in children at this early age will have the risk of developing anti-social behaviors by children.

Arsi Proverbs that Promote Differential Sex-role Socialization and Boys' Preference

In this section, a sample of cultural Arsi proverbs that are captured through FGDs and that emphasize sex-segregated role socialization as well as that promote the preference of baby boys to baby girls are presented along with their literal and figurative meanings.

For instance, the traditional Arsi proverbs: *'dubartiin kan nyaaphaati'* (literal meaning: *female child belongs to aliens*); *'taa'uu mannaa durba dhalchuu wayya'* (literal meaning: *instead of sitting idle, it is good to bear a girl*); *'intala ganama sirba jajan maayi ulfa jajan'* (literal meaning:

a daughter appreciated in the morning for her dancing skill, would be appreciated in the afternoon for her pregnancy); '*namni dhalaan boone booddee ni salphata*' (literal meaning: a father boast by his daughters ends by shame); and '*dhabaa fi intalti illee tokkuma*' (literal meaning: having only a daughter is like having no child) inform the caregivers that daughters are not a symbol of pride for and pillars of the family compared to the male child who has the right to inherit the family property. They also notify to the childrearing parents that giving birth to a baby girl is almost of no value; that a female child is not a permanent resident in the family of origin (leave the family of origin upon marriage); that the female child is inferior to the male child; and that having only a daughter is almost equivalent to an empty nest. The major implication of these proverbs is that the male child and the female child should be differently socialized and assigned different roles in the process of socialization. Of course, these proverbs reflect the belief systems and attitudes held by the wider society towards female children and advise the childrearing parents to strictly control, discipline, watch-up and prepare female children for adequately managing the household tasks and future marital life, in a way that they should be obedient and loyal not only to her family of origin but also to her future husband and in-laws. As a result of such a deep-rooted belief system and attitude both at the societal and household levels, daughters are not allowed to maintain the status and names of their family of origins; represent their families and clans in arbitrations, decision making processes or ritual ceremonies; and deserve equal rights and treatments as of the sons.

Similarly, the meaning that the cultural proverb: '*kazaraa fi dubartiin jilbaa gaditti*' (literal meaning: a hook--a curved walking stick--and women are better when handled below the knee) conveys to the childrearing parents is that unless girls are strictly disciplined, treated and trained from early years, they could be challenging when they grow older, uncontrollable, troublesome, ill-mannered and may reach a stage where it could be very difficult to manage their behaviors during the later years.

At the same time, the central message that the typical Arsi proverbs: '*beektuu intalaatii mannaa wallaalaa ilmaa wayya* (literal meaning: an ignorant boy is preferable to a knowledgeable girl); '*ilmii (beekumsaa) fi ilma guddisuun ganamaan*' (literal meaning: it is good to nurture education and a male child starting from early stages); '*gowwoomu illee ilmuma dhiiratitu nama dhaala* (literal meaning: even if he is foolish, it is the boy who takes over his family property); '*qe'ee abbaan irraa du'e ilmatu itti hafa* (literal meaning: the home of a deceased father is owned by the baby boy); '*xiqqaatu illee bofa mataa irra hin ejjetan* (literal meaning: regardless of its size, one does not tread on the head of a snake); '*namni ilma dhabe intala taphsiisa*' (literal meaning: a person who does not have a son plays with his daughter); and '*ilmi dhiiraa gaachana warraati*' (literal meaning: a male child is a shield to his family) communicate to the childrearing parents is that regardless of its size a baby boy should be respected and given priority to a baby girl; a male child should be properly shaped and supported from early age since he is a pillar for the family and the entire clan; has the *legitimate* right to inherit the family property; brings honor and glory to the family; maintains the name and the status of his family of origin; is the symbol of pride; represents the family and the clan in arbitrations, decision making processes as well as ritual ceremonies; and takes care of his family of origin throughout his life time. Hence, the major implication of these proverbs is that, in the process of socialization, baby boys should be trained for public administration; possess adequate managerial and decision making skills; develop a sense of superiority and pride, sense of responsibility for the family and good psychological make-up; and be shaped to have strong physical as well as cognitive maturity compared to the baby girl who will leave the family of origin upon marriage.

Furthermore, the typical Arsi proverbs: '*qodaa fi intalti gara golaa*' (literal meaning: a place for a girl and utensils is in the kitchen); '*dubartiin manaan tolti; dhiirri alaan tola*' (literal meaning: it is good if a female is placed at the home, and male at outside works); '*dubartiin meeshaa manaati dhiirri meeshaa alaati*' (literal meaning: woman is

like a material for home, and man is like a public material) communicate to the caregivers that the appropriate place for a girl is in the kitchen since she is expected to support her mother in household tasks, she is not allowed to represent the family in public places, and she has to be prepared for future marital life than for public management. Hence, the main implication of these proverbs is that parents should train and prepare girls for indoor tasks (cooking, cleaning, bearing children, fetching water and taking care of children) and boys for outdoor tasks. Generally, the message conveyed through these proverbs teaches the childrearing parents that they should promote gender segregated roles in male and female children starting from the early socialization years.

Arsi Proverbs that Encourage the Importance of Strict Control and Discipline

In this section, an attempt is made to present a sample of Arsi proverbs communicated through FGDs with their literal and figurative meanings. As to the FGD discussants, these proverbs are commonly told among the wider society and at the household level and have the function of maintaining discipline and order in children throughout the socialization years.

For instance, the meaning that the cultural proverb: '*uleen qodaa qofa cabsa*' (literal meaning: a stick breaks only clay objects) passes on to the childrearing parents is that beating with thin stick does not harm a child, rather it leads her/him to the right track or the normal path and gives her/him lessons or guides her/his life. The major implication of this Arsi proverb is that parents are welcome to apply physical punishment in managing their children's behavior or maintaining good discipline.

Similarly, the message that the traditional proverb: '*rabbiin ijoollee uleedha*' (literal meaning: the god of children is a stick) transfers to the caregivers is that out of the range of possible disciplinary measures it is

a stick that children fear and respect most and that makes children shut their mouths down. Hence, it advises childrearing parents to apply physical punishment in maintaining order and discipline in children.

In addition, the meaning that the Arsi proverbs: '*ijoolen hin qunxuuxamiin gaafa ijaan ilaalan boochi*' (literal meaning: children not pinched in the growing-up years burst into tears a day someone looks into their eyes) and '*ijoollee nyaaran bulchan*' (literal meaning: you deal with children having firm stand) transfer to the childrearing parents is that strictness and consistency are important in dealing with children. It also implies that children who are not subject to strict discipline or punishment throughout the formative developmental years tend to be disappointed when they are warned. The major implications of these proverbs are that children should be strictly disciplined and well-mannered through proper punishment and that in upbringing children parents should be very strict in their actions and have a firm stand as well as consistent behaviors.

Moreover, the meaning that the traditional proverbs: '*ijoollee fi harreen uleen qajeelti*' (literal meaning: children and a donkey are directed by a stick); '*saree fi dubartii adabaan guddisan*' (literal meaning: you bring up a dog and a girl through proper punishment); and '*daa'imni kanuma adabamtetu sirna horata*' (literal meaning: children who are properly punished tend to be more well-disciplined than those who are not) pass on to the childrearing parents is that instruction, correction, guidance and punishment make children well-disciplined, good-mannered, respectful and more decent. Generally, the societal values and beliefs embedded within these traditional proverbs notify the caregivers that they can use physical punishment as the main weapon for shaping the behavior of their children during the early years of child socialization.

Finally, the meaning that the cultural proverb: '*ijoolen fuula bareeddi malee sirna hin bareeddu*' (literal meaning: children have good-looking face, not character/manner) articulates to the childrearing parents is

that it is an appropriate intervention nor measure that should be taken during the up-bringing years, not nature, that molds or shapes the character/manner of children. The major implication of this proverb is that parents have the responsibility of molding or shaping the natural behavior of their children through continuous guidance, training and punishment from early years.

Arsi Proverbs that Direct Parent-Child Interaction

In this section, cultural Arsi proverbs communicated through FGDs and that are actively told among the wider Arsi society and at the household level and that will have direct as well as indirect implications for the parent-child interaction are presented along with their meanings.

For instance, the meaning that the cultural proverbs: '*daa'imman fuula yoo itti agarsiisan eegee namatti agarsiifti*' (literal meaning: if children see your face, they incline to show you their back/tail); '*daa'imman waliin qiixxaa yoo nyaatan qixxee nama seeti*' (literal meaning: if you eat '*qiixxa*'-a kind of cultural bread with children, they may consider you as their peer); '*ijoollee waliin yoo kolfan kofa nama banti*' (literal meaning: if you laugh with children, they may reveal your private life); and '*ijoollee waliin yoo taphatan falaxaa nama keechi*' (literal meaning: if you play with children, they may give you a stick blow in your head) hand on to the childrearing parents is that if you bring children very close to yourself and if you let them play, discuss, debate and interact freely with you, children will lower your status, will not give you the respect you deserve as a parent or you may spoil them. The major implication of these proverbs is that familiarity breeds contempt. Generally, the meaning conveyed through these Arsi proverbs suggests that children should be kept at an arm's length or at a distance, treated with caution, instructed to respect limits or boundaries and controlled properly. Similarly, through the message conveyed in these proverbs, parents are also instructed to establish clear structure, boundary, roles and rules that help them maintain their status and respect; appropriate distance and socially approved relations between their children and themselves.

Similarly, the message that the traditional Arsi proverb: '*wanta warri waarii jedhu ijoolen waareen baati*' (literal meaning: what parents talk at midnight, children talk it at midday) transmits to the caregivers is that if you disclose the secret or confidential information of the family to children, they may leak it to their peers, and this, in turn, may affect the family life or put the existence of the family at risk. The implication of this proverb is that as children are not matured-enough to understand the consequences of their deeds or actions, parents should be cautious in deciding the family matters on which children should be involved or should not be involved for discussions or conversations. This is because it is strongly assumed that if children get access to confidential information or top secret of the family and leak it to others, it may harm the life and unity of the family.

In addition, the cultural Arsi proverb: '*daa'imman akka ijaa ilaalan ija nama keessaa baafti*' (literal meaning: a child for whom you gave care as you do for your eyes may take your eyes out) hands on to the caregivers that over protection and too much attention yield in disrespect and spoil children. Its implication is that familiarity breeds contempt. Hence, through this proverb, parents are instructed to bring-up children with optimum level of stimulation and make proper interaction with children.

Arsi Proverbs that Reflect Societal Attitude towards the Education of Female Children

In this section, an attempt is made to present and analyze the meaning of Arsi proverbs collected through the FGD and that reflect society's perceptions, beliefs, values and attitudes toward educating female children, particularly in the typical rural settings.

For instance, the crux of the Arsi cultural proverbs: '*dubartiin barattus kan nyaaphaati*' (literal meaning: whether educated or not a female child belongs to aliens); and '*dubartiin dheertu malee beektuu hin qabdu*' (literal meaning: *females may be tall, but not knowledgeable*) is

that women join strangers upon marriage leaving their family of origin and that women are not knowledgeable and intelligent to take over family and clan responsibilities and represent their families and clans in decision making processes as well as in ritual ceremonies. The major implication of these proverbs for childrearing parents is that making educational investment on female children is a waste of resources. Therefore, instead of sending female children to schooling, it is good to prepare them for marital life or managing household tasks.

Similarly, the message that the traditional proverb: *'intalli barattee fi lukkuun balaliite eessa geess'* (literal meaning: an educated girl and a flying chicken do not show progress) communicates to the childrearing parents is that even if female children are educated they will not show-up success in their academic life. The implication is that parents should train female children to be competent in household chores and prepare them for future marital life than sending them to schooling.

At the same time, the meaning that the Arsi proverbs: *'allaattin waaqarra soqaa biyyaa baati'* (literal meaning: a bird leaves her territory in search of something in the sky), and *'saree fi beerti yoo magaala baate deebitee hin galtu'* (literal meaning: if a dog and a woman go to town, they will not come back home) conveys to caregivers is that once female children are sent to schooling, they may eventually detach themselves from the family of origin, they may get farther away from the influence and control of the family, they may be empowered to make decisions on their own without consulting their family and the probability of getting back to home and serving mothers in household chores is rare.

Moreover, the traditional proverb: *'dubartiin barnootaaf yoo baate wayiin galtu'* (literal meaning: if you send a girl to schooling, she will bring you home something) warns the childrearing parents that sending female children to schooling has the consequences of engaging in pre-marital sexuality, conceiving unnecessary pregnancy or being soiled with reproductive problems. The implication is that as these crises

violate the society's cultural norms (safuu), make the entire family feel ashamed and may add another burden to the family, childrearing parents should take the necessary care (like making regular supervision, monitoring their whereabouts) after sending female children to school to pursue their education.

Discussion

The major purpose of the current study is to examine the didactic roles of Arsi Oromo proverbs in child rearing. In order to realize this and guide the current study, two basic research questions: '*are there specific proverbs in the Arsi Oromo culture that inform parents of how to raise their children*' and '*what specific functions do these Arsi proverbs serve*' were formulated. At the same time, in order to answer the research questions, data (the typical Arsi Oromo proverbs related to child socialization and their didactic functions) were generated through four focus group discussion sessions conducted with childrearing parents, community elders, Afan Oromo language teachers, religious leaders and high school adolescents (where all of them were sampled purposively from the typical Arsi Oromo culture).

From the analysis of data generated through the focus group discussions, it is found out that proverbs are generally considered as an important part of Arsi culture, that there are specific proverbs targeted to child socialization and that these cultural proverbs serve different functions in the context of child rearing. Generally, an analysis of the figurative/metaphoric meanings of the cultural Arsi Oromo proverbs that were generated from the FGD discussants indicated that some of these Arsi Oromo proverbs serve the function of preserving and transmitting the core cultural values embedded within the *Oromo Gadaa* and *Safuu System*, beliefs, perceptions, expectations and attitudes of the society to the child rearing parents and children while others serve the pedagogic function of informing parents of indoctrinating differential sex-role socialization; promoting the

importance of proper early training; inculcating boys' preference to that of girls; emphasizing the importance of physical punishment in child socialization; directing parent-child interaction; and reflecting the attitudes and beliefs of the society toward educating female children. At the same time, a critical examination of the contents of these Arsi Oromo proverbs shows that childrearing parents use them to remind children of performing the chores; warn them to avoid mistakes; remind children to be cautious and honest; inform children of strengthening their abilities, potentials and skills; remind children of recognizing their personal weaknesses that need to be improved; advise children to get back to the right track; and warn children of the consequences of their actions.

In fact, the finding that the Arsi Oromo proverbs told in relation to children preserve and transmit the values and beliefs embedded within the Oromo moral (*safuu*) and *Gada* system (respect for elders, conformity, tolerance, wisdom, honesty, justice, cautiousness, generosity, moral code, religious ideals, hard work and sense of self-worth) is consistent with the existing body of literature. For instance, according to Mieder (2004), proverbs reflect the cultural contexts of the society across the whole array of people's experiences. In addition, according to Sumner (1999), traditional proverbs play the role of transmitting key components of culture (e.g., values, norms, institutions and artifacts) across generations. Similarly, as stated by Kazeem (2010), people use proverbs in storing and retrieving any aspect of their cultural worldview.

At the same time, the finding that Arsi Oromo proverbs are frequently told among the Arsi households and the wider society for advising, training, disciplining, shaping, directing and warning children of the consequences of their own actions from early years is also consistent with the existing body of knowledge. For instance, Mieder (2004) suggested that proverbs have important pedagogic roles in providing guidance for parents on how to train, discipline, warn, shape and teach their children about parental and socialization values. Similarly,

according to Masaka and Makahamadze (2013), proverbs have educational values by means of vividly illustrating what and how people should do, and how they should behave. The existing literature confirms that proverbs are used consciously to educate children of the dangers of life (Boke, 2012); are central to abstract thinking and reasoning (Wachholz & Yassuda, 2011) and are used to correct children's behavior (Kawich, 2012).

Moreover, as the Arsi society is organized into a patriarchal and patrilineal kinship system whereby the family name and property is passed along the male line and marriage is often patriarchal (male dominated), certain traditional Arsi Oromo proverbs promote the preference of male children, especially the elder sons, to the female children. In fact, such a preference may be based on the assumption that the male child is culturally given the right to inherit the family property and considered to be the shield of the household as well as the clan as a whole. The current finding, in fact, is consistent with the study conducted by Daniel (2002). In his study of continuity and changes in the status of women among Arsi Oromo, Daniel (2002) found out that the male child is highly valued among the Arsi community and that a boy is not only a symbol of pride for his immediate parents, but also for his close relatives and the lineage as a whole.

The finding of the current study also showed that deep-rooted gender-based division of roles or the differential socialization of boys and girls is highly endorsed through the cultural Arsi Oromo proverbs. Generally, the traditional proverbs and actual practices on the ground evidenced that female children are less valued compared to male children in the typical Arsi Oromo culture. The study also evidenced that there is a clear gender segregation of roles for male and female children starting from the early socialization years in the context of Arsi society as indicated in these traditional proverbs. In fact, this may be associated with the intention to transmit the traditional values, attitudes and beliefs embedded within the *gadaa* and *safuu* systems and the nature of a

typical Arsi family's patriarchal structure. Of course, this finding is consistent with some of the reviewed literature. For instance, according to Boke (2012), cultural proverbs are generally used to teach male children to be strong, powerful and dominant and the female children to be humble, submissive and subordinate. Similarly, Jeylan (2005) indicated that the Oromo proverbs, as the most widely used pieces of oral tradition, are in the vanguard of mobilizing gender ideology.

The findings of the current study also indicate that certain Arsi Oromo proverbs encourage the utilization of physical punishment as a method of maintaining order and discipline in children in the context of Arsi culture. Of course, this use of physical punishment, as indicated by the traditional Arsi Oromo proverbs, is consistent with the contents of some articles in the revised family code of Ethiopia. For instance, Article 258 of the revised family code of Ethiopia (FDRE, 2000) states that *'the guardian may take the necessary disciplinary measures for the purpose of ensuring children's upbringing.'* However, the provisions stated in this article and Arsi cultural proverbs for using physical punishment in child socialization and in maintaining discipline is contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UN, 1989) and the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE, 1995). For instance, Article 36 (1e) of the Ethiopian constitution states that *every child has the right to be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhumane treatment in schools and other institutions responsible for the care of children.* Similarly, Article 2 (2) of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) states that *parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.*

Generally, though the current study showed that proverbs are widely and actively told among the Arsi Oromo society and households, particularly in the context of rural settings, and have pedagogical values in socializing children as well as transmitting core societal

values from one generation to the other, they are not properly and adequately aligned with the formal school curriculum. In fact, there could be many reasons for failing to do this. Perhaps, one reason could be lack of adequate awareness and knowledge among the policy planners and curriculum developers about the informative values of these Arsi Oromo proverbs. The other reason could be lack of up to date research/empirical data on the didactic functions of Arsi Oromo proverbs that serve as input for education policy planners, the school curriculum designers and the education experts assigned to various levels of administration.

Implications

Based on the findings of the present study and the discussions made above, the researcher draws the following implications. Firstly, the findings of the current study indicate that Arsi Oromo proverbs serve the function of preserving and transmitting the core cultural values embedded within the Oromo Gada system. Secondly, the findings of this study show that the traditional Arsi Oromo proverbs have pedagogic functions of guiding, training, advising, correcting, instructing, shaping, disciplining and warning children of the dangers of life. This means that the cultural values and beliefs embedded within the essential layers of the Oromo social structure (gadaa and safuu) and that are conveyed through the traditional Arsi Oromo proverbs can exert powerful influences on the growing child through parenting behaviors and the school curriculum. Hence, the researcher hopes that the results of this study will have both theoretical and practical values for childrearing parents, policy planners and curriculum designers. In view of this, the results of this study will have theoretical values for childrearing parents in gaining adequate awareness and insights on accentuating those proverbs which have educative functions in nurturing children and promoting positive child development. The result of the current study also has practical values for policy planners and curriculum designers in designing and preparing school curriculum for elementary school children (teaching materials such as story books

and student textbooks) in which proverbs having educational values and reflective of indigenous knowledge are aligned with modern education so that elementary school children could get informative insights on the cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, wisdoms and practices of their society. In so doing, much emphasis should be placed on the proverbs that teach the values embedded within the *safuu* (moral) world view and *gadaa* system (respect, conformity, tolerance, honesty, hard work and sense of self-worth).

Thirdly, the findings of the current study showed that few of the Arsi Oromo proverbs communicated about children do not reflect the existing situations and have negative repercussions on the developing child. This means that some aspects of the core societal values and beliefs carried on by and expressed through traditional Arsi Oromo proverbs inform childrearing parents of treating boys and girls differently (indoctrinate sex-segregated roles); emphasizing the preference of baby boys to baby girls; promoting harmful traditional practices like gender inequality; and limiting child-parent interaction. In view of this, the results of this study will have theoretical values for childrearing parents in gaining adequate awareness and insights on the negative repercussions of using proverbs that do not reflect the existing situations on the developing child; dropping those proverbs whose message or metaphor do not fit with the times any longer (e.g., those which encourage harmful traditional practices and which reinforce gender parity) out of use; and instead adding new proverbs that reflect the mores and situation of the present constantly into the proverbial repertoire.

The finding of the present research also has practical values in designing manual for parental education/training from which parents can gain adequate insights and knowledge base on their parenting roles and responsibilities, their children's age,-appropriate development, the importance of early training and intervention in the life of their children and the existence of critical and sensitive periods in

which foundations are laid and appropriate interventions are taken to enhance the later development of their children.

Finally, the researcher suggests that future researchers can take this study as a base-line and extend the scope of the current study by further exploring additional proverbs related to child socialization from different data sources and sites of the Arsi Oromo community and the wider Oromo society.

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