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The Experience of Girl Intra-familial Sexual Abuse Survivors in Addis Ababa: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract

Any sexual behavior directed towards girls under the age of 18 by a family member or those close to the family is known as intrafamilial sexual abuse. Research conducted in Ethiopia to examine sexual violence against girls discuss the issue without highlighting intrafamilial sexual abuse. In addition, efforts to explore factors and contexts that precipitate these experiences are minimally addressed. This study used a phenomenological qualitative method to investigate the incidence of intrafamilial sexual abuse against girls. Accordingly, an interview guide was employed involving ten survivors of intrafamial sexual abuse, focusing on what happened, how it happened, when it happened, where it happened, and the factors that exposed them to the abuse within the ecological framework. The findings indicate that multiple factiors contributed to the intrafamilial sexual abuse. These factors include individual chatacteristics such as age and lack of information, microsystem factors such as family relationships, family structure and living condition, mesosystem factors including the girls' isolation, lack of networking, and the family relationships with relatives and the expectations attached, and exosystem factors like parents', especially mothers' work and working situation. In addition, microsystem factors including values given to female children and gender relationships and norms play a part in exposing girls to intrafamilial sexual abuse. Any intervention to address the problem of intrafamilial sexual abuse against girls should consider the various factors operating at these different levels.

Keywords: *sexual abuse, sexual violence, violence, ecological approach, child abuse*

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Background

Child sexual abuse is defined as involving children in sexual activity where the child does not fully understand, cannot give informed consent, for which the child is not physically, emotionally and socially ready to handle, and not in power to protect her/himself (WHO, 1999; Calder, 1999). This may include coercing a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity and exploitation through prostitution or pornographic performances (WHO, 1999). In this regard, a special attention is given to the vulnerability of the child caused by lack of emotional, maturational and cognitive development, and the power imbalance between the child and the perpetrator due to age difference and gender norms (Calder, 1999).

Child sexual abuse is a global concern, and data shows the magnitue of the problem and its seriousness. A meta-anlysis conducted by Barth et al. (2013) indicated that the according to 55 studies that were conducted in 24 countries, the estimated prevalence of child sexual abuse for girls ranged from 8 to 31 %, and 9 girls out of 110 are victims of forced intrcourese. Based on a meta-anlysis of studies carried out around the world, Stoltenborgh et al. (2011) reported that the estimated prevalence of child sexual abuse was 127/1000 in self-report studies. The lowest prevalence was found in Asia, 113/1000 for girls and the highest in Australia, 215/1000.

A multi-country national household survey conducted in Cambodia, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe to assess the extent of sexual violence against children showed that the lifetime prevalence of experiencing any form of sexual violence in childhood ranged from 4.4% among females in Cambodia to 37.6% among females in Swaziland. The prevalence in most of these countries was greater than 25.0%. The statistics showed that girls are more prone to sexual violence:

the prevalence for girls was 37.6%, for Swaziland, 32.5% for Zimbabwe, 25.7% for Haiti, and 4.4% for Cambodia (Sumner et al., 2015).

In many parts of Africa, child sexual abuse is a major unrecognized problem with devastating consequences and long-lasting effects that negatively impact physical, social and psychological development of children (Bowman & Brundige, 2014). At the 1999 regional office consultative meeting of WHO entitled "Prevention and Management of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)", participants from 28 countries representing all the African sub-regions reported that CSA is a serious concern in their respective countries. Although sexual abuse of both female and male children occurs, studies indicate that sexual abuse is more common among girls (WHO, 1999).

According to a report based on statistical analysis of available data conducted by UNICEF, out of the 18 countries included in the analysis, the prevalence rate of forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts for the 13 countries was 10% or more. Except for Nigeria and Sao Tome, a 10% prevalence rate was reported for West and Central African countries. Similarly, a prevalence rate of sexual violence above 10% was found in all countries of Eastern and Southern Africa (UNICEF, 2014).

A retrospective survey conducted in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda by the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) showed that the most frequently occurring forms of sexual violence were verbal sexual violence experienced by 53% of the young women (18 to 24 years) included in the study, and indecent touching was mentioned by 41.8% of them (ACPF, 2006). In relation to rape, ACPF (2006) highlighted that among the sampled young women who experienced sexual violence, about 30% were raped before they reached 18. Girls between the age of 14 and 17 were found to be most vulnerable to almost all types of sexual abuse.

According to ACPF and OAK Foundation (2019), the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence against children varied between 22% and 37.6% for Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Selengia et al. (2020) in their literature review showed that prevalence of child sexual abuse in Africa ranges from 2.1% to 68.7% for femlates in Tanzania and Ethiopia. They further indicataes though the risk of child sexual violences during pre-puberty and late adolescent is higher in both Africa and Asia, pre-pubertal vicitaimation was found to be higher in Africa, in some studies reporting upto 60% of victims of sexual abuse before they reach their teenage. Another study conducted in South Africa revealed that about 33.3.% of the girls are at risk of sexual abuse before they reach 17 (ACPF and Oak Foundation, 2019).

A similar pattern is noted in Ethiopia. A study on child sexual abuse using cases reported to Child Protection Units (CPUs) of Addis Ababa Police Commission and three selected non-governmental organizations showed that among a total of 64 cases reported between July 2005 and December 2006, 23% of them were victims of sexual violence. On the average 21 cases of child sexual abuse were reported each month, the majority (19) of the victims being female children. Most of them were abused in their own home by family members or someone they knew closely (Jibril, 2012), which is known as intrafamilial sexual abuse.

A cross-sectional study of female students in selected secondary school in Dire Dawa showed that 48.9% of the female students reported at least one form of sexual abuse. The study further indicated that 19% of them were raped before they reached the age of 15 (Abera et al., 2021). A meta analysis conducted by Mekonnen and Tsega (2024) uncovered that among the 5,979 children included in the various studies, 41.5%

were found to be victims of child sexual abuse, with female children being more likely to be abused.

The majority of the sexual abuse is commited in a family context by a familiar person, someone that the child or their family knows (Jibril, 2012; Gekoski et al., 2016; Kocturka & Yükselb, 2019; Selegia et al. 2020; ACPF & Oak Foundatio, 2019; Mekonnen & Tsega, 2024), which makes it intrafamilial sexual abuse. Intrafamilial sexual abuse is defined as any sexual behavior directed towards girls under the age of 18 by a family member or those who have relations with the family (Yllo, 1993). The abuse involved sexual intercourse, touching private parts of the girl or requesting the girl to touch herself, and verbal suggestions or comments to girls that threaten them sexually or otherwise to provide sexual satisfaction for one. Perpetrators are usually family members, including fathers and brothers or close family relations and friends (Dereje et al. 2006; McCrann et al., 2006; Lalor & McElvaney, 2008; Jibril, 2012; Kocturka & Yukselb, 2019).

Intrafamilial sexual abuse is considered to be a major social problem in many societies today, including Ethiopia. Bowman and Brundige (2014) explained that intrafamilial child sexual abuse is an extensive and massively underreported problem in Africa. Because it is a hidden phenomenon, there are no organized data on its prevalence. Statistics covers only the cases that are disclosed by child protection institutions or those reported to law enforcement bodies, giving some indication about the magnitude of the problem. For instance, in Ethiopia, the Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD) 2015 report shows that among the perpetrators of sexual violence against the girls staying in the center, 85% of the violence was perpetrated by family members or relatives. Studies also reveal that the problem exist,

and reporting is on a steady rise throughout the country (Dereje et al., 2006; Jibril, 2012; Teferi, 2014; Berhanu, 2014 & Nuru, 2017; Gebeyehu & Shebabaw, 2014; Mekuria et al., 2015; Abera et al., 2021). However, these retrospective survey-based studies conducted on the issue do not provide more than an overview of the problem (Jibril, 2012).

The survey-based studies conducted on child sexual abuse and intrafamilial sexual abuse, and study of cases reported to the police or admitted to hospitals focus on establishing prevalence and identifying associated factors (ACPF, 2006; Worku et al., 2006; Gorfu & Demisse, 2007; Endashaw, 2008; Mekuria et al., 2015; Le Mat, 2016; ACPF & OAK Foundation,2019; Selengia et al., 2020; Abera et al., 2021; Mekonnen & Tsega 2024). In addition, these studies focus on sexual abuse of children with no particular attention to intrafmilial sexual abuse except the mention that most of the violences were committed by people familiar to the children including family members. They miss the voices and perspectives of survivors disclosing what happened, how it happened, and the various factors working at different levels to expose the girls to intrafamilial sexual abuse and the thoeritical grounding that discusses the factors that operate at different levels to expose girls to intrafamilial sexual abuse. Accordingly, the current study uses a qualitative method to investigate the experience of intrafamilial sexual abuse of female children in Addis Ababa. The study uses an ecological approach to explain the individual and contextual factors that expose them to abuse, from the perspective of the girls themselves.

Theoretical Orientation

Sexual violence is influenced by an interrelated set of factors that operate at different levels (Krug, et al., 2002) whose dealing require a holistic approach. The individuals, both the perpetrator and the victim, the family setting, the culture in which the family is embedded, and the overall societal context play a role in the occurrence and perpetuation of sexual violence (Sidebotham, 2001). Therefore, an ecological approach is used to map the various factors working at different levels. "The utility of an ecological framework is that it can suggest multiple strategies, at multiple levels of analysis…" (Campbell et al., 2009, p. 226).

An ecological approach views violence as an outcome of factors working at multiple levels and explores the relationship between individual and contextual variables (Krug, et al., 2002). The approach has been adopted by different researchers. Belsky's (1980) model adopted Bronfenbrenner's theory of the ecology of human development to explain the etiology of child maltreatment discussing factors operating at individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and microsystem. In this context, microsystem is the immediate environment under which the person operates, such as the family, school and peers, while mesosystem constitutes the interactions taking place between the different variables of the microsystem such as family and workplace of parents. The exosystem, on the other hand, is made up of environmental factors that do not have direct presence but affect the development of the individual. The relation between parents' experiences at their workplace and their interaction with their families is one example of the effect of exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

In their study of risk factors for sexual violence among college students (Bhochhibhoya et al., 2019) employed an ecological approach using the individual,

interpersonal, community and societal layers. Although these studies used different levels of analysis, all of them share the notion of '… embedded levels of causality' (Heise, 1998). As highlighted by Campbell et al. (2009), the central advantage of an ecological model is that it can lead to developing multiple strategies for prevention of and intervention for sexual violence. Accordingly, in this study we used the ecological approach as our analytical framework with the five level of analysis: individual factors, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem.

Methods

Research Approach

The current study used a qualitative design as it is most appropriate to study complex issues that require exploring and investigating ideas and perspectives of study participants (Creswell, 2009). Among the approaches in qualitative research, the phenomenological design was chosen since it allows a better representation of participants' views on how they understand their experiences and give meaning to them. Vagle (2014) described phenomenology as a reflective and inductive methodology that explains the meaning people give to their everyday experiences.

We used descriptive phenomenology as our research paradigm because the research questions were concerned with understanding the lived experiences of children who encountered intrafamilial sexual abuse, which this approach is well-suited to examine. It helps to uncover how the children give meaning to the abuse, the exposing factors, and the reaction from others. It brings out the experiences of and the interpretation given by survivors, which is missing in current literature.

Participants

Availability sampling was used to get participants who are survivors of intrafmilial sexual abuse. In this case the situation was favorable since one of the researchers came to know sexually abused children who were beneficiaries of the support given by the NGO she worked for. We used this network to get in touch with survivors and their parents. The counselors who worked in the organization also helped in accessing research participants. This networks and snowballing that started with the children and parents facilitated gaining access to study participants.

Instruments

An interview checklist was developed to collect data from the children. The questions covered a wide range of issues including demographic background, living arrangement, the incidence of sexual abuse, where it happened, when it happened, how it happened, how they reacted to the abuse, how the incident was perceived by family members, reasons for not reporting in time, status of schooling after the incident, and the impacts.

Data Collection Procedures

One of the researchers met the girls who agreed to participate in the study and the objective of the research was explained to them. Informed consent was obtained from parents and foster parents for those who lived at home. The children as well as the individuals responsible for the children at the safe houses gave oral consent for those who lived at safe houses.

Prior to the interview, the children were asked whether they could sit for an interview. Those who were willing to sit for the interview were told that if they found

any of the questions to be upsetting or too difficult, then they should let the researcher know. It was further explained that the information they provide would be kept confidential, and that their names would not be mentioned in the report; instead, pseudonyms would be used. They were encouraged to stop the interview whenever they felt uncomfortable and were also encouraged to add anything that they thought was important. Throughout the interview, the researcher remained sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues, which led to the option of changing the subject. An interview with each of the ten survivors lasted for about 45 minutes to an hour.

Data Analysis

Written notes were taken during interviews. In cases where study participants allowed recording, the data was transcribed and compiled soon after completion of data collection. Prior to analysis, we reflected on our notion of intrafamilial sexual assault and the beliefs around it to keep our biases on hold, which is called bracketing (Priest, 2003).

The data was read thoroughly to make sense of it, paying attention to statements that capture the children's expereinces. Following this, coding was carried out focusing on each significant statement or phrase to identify themes and patterns. The codes covered the children's background and family status, living situation, the situation of the children at the time of data collection, the situations surrounding the abuse, the sexual abuse, the reaction of the children and those of their families, the impacts the children felt after the abuse. The coded materials were read further and recoded merging similar codes and eliminating others that did not recur (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Themes were identified and most commonly appearing themes captured (Moser & Korstejns, 2018). These included individual factors, family context and relationships

in the family, the expectations from and responsibilities of the family, relation of the family to close and distant relations, parents' work, and the cultural context. The findings were discussed in light of ecological theory. These themes centered around the incidence of sexual abuse the children went through.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion section presents the background characteristics of the study participants, their experiences of violence, and the discussion of the sexual abuses in the light of ecological approach.

Background Characteristics of Participants

The children's age ranged from 9 to 17. All except one were below 15 when the abuse took place. Most were born and raised in Addis Ababa, the capital city. All of them lived in Addis Ababa at the time of the abuse. None of them went past secondary school. All the abusers were close family members, including fathers, stepfathers, and uncles (see Table 1).

Table 1

Partcipants' Background Information

Informants	Age at the Time of Abuse	Age at the Time of Study	Education (in Grade)	Place of Birth	Abuser
Mitu	8	9	2	Addis Ababa	Father
Semira	14	16	5	Addis Ababa	Father
Beza	13	17	8	Gondar	Father
Almaz	13	17	6	Dessie	Father
Mulu	15	17	6	Addis Ababa	Stepfather
Hadas	14	15	8	Addis Ababa	Stepfather
Azeb	11	12	2	Dessie	Uncle
Gifti	11	12	3	Addis Ababa	Uncle
Aziza	13	15	6	Butajira	Brother in-law
Tsehay	14	16	Illiterate	Kersa	Cousin

The Violent Incidents

In all the children's cases, sexual abuse took place in their own home or where they lived at the time, unprotected and powerless. Tsehay lived in her uncle's house working as a nanny to take care of her uncle's newborn baby, and that was where she was abused at the age of 14. She explained:

> *It was one of the usual days. I was doing the household chores. While I was making the bed my cousin came from the back and grabbed by hips, I fought and shouted but I couldn't escape, he raped me (Tsehay, in-depth interview, March 20, 2017).*

Similarly, Azeb came from Dessie to Addis Ababa at the age of 10 to live with her uncle helping him with the household chores. He was, in turn, to send her to school. She was raped by her other uncle at home when she was 11.

> *I was doing the dishes after I put the baby to sleep. When I heard a song from my hometown on the radio, I went into the house to listen. It was, then, my other uncle who came for a medical treatment who choked me with a pillow and raped me" (Azeb, in-depth interview, March16, 2017).*

Similar to other studies (Lalor & McElvany, 2008; Mekuria et al. 2015; ACPF & Oak Foundation, 2019; Selengia et al., 2020; Mekonnen & Tsega 2024), in these girls' case, the abuse was perpetrated by family members or close relatives. The culturally expected roles and behaviors of boys and girls differ. Because they are females, most spend a lot of their time at home taking care of household chores (Camfield & Tafere, 2011) increasing the risk of abuse. Studies show that with regard to intrafamilial sexual abuse home is a high risk place for girls (Selengia et al., 2020; ACPF & Oak Foundation, 2019).

Mulu lived with her mother and stepfather after her father passed away. Her mother sold butter buying it from a town called *Sheno.* The incident happened when she was 15, when her mother travelled to get butter. She described:

> *He [her stepfather] was a nice guy for the first few months. Eventually his behavior changed not only towards me, but also towards my mom. He nagged her because of me. He constantly undermined me in front of my friends. But what I didn't like most about him was his touching my private parts, which made me feel uncomfortable. … That day he*

> *kept on touching me, and finally he raped me (Mulu, in-depth interview, March 15, 2017).*

Another girl raped by her stepfather is Hadas. He insulted, slapped and mistreated her when her mother was not around, but the worst happened when her mother was admitted to a hospital to give birth to her younger sibling. She said, "He knew my mom was not around and no one would be there; I was a 14 year-old girl when he raped me" (Hadas in-depth interview, April 3, 2017). Studies also demonstrate that in families where mothers and fathers do not live together, the absence of a mother coupled with the presence of a stepfather is a risk factor for girls' sexual abuse (Collin-Vézina1 et al., 2013).

The other culprits in intrafamilial sexual abuse are fathers. In this study four out of the ten girls were abused by their respective fathers. Almaz was raped by her father when she was 13. She moved to Addis Ababa to live with him upon his request. She explained:

> *… one night he came home late and knocked at the door. I opened and we slept on the same bed, as usual. Unlike the other days he touched my private parts and tried to kiss me forcefully, then he raped me. I got pregnant after that incident. (Almaz, in- depth interview, March 16, 2017).*

Beza was also raped by her father at 13. She explained:

> *I was born in Gondar and when I turned four, I came to Addis Ababa with my parents. When I was a twelve, my mother went abroad, which left me and my younger sister without a mother. At that time, all domestic chores fell on my shoulder. However, the responsibilities*

> *were minor compared to what I experienced. My biological father raped me (Beza, in-depth interview, March 16, 2017).*

At the age of 14, Semira was abused by her father multiple times. "My father raped me more than twice." (Semira, in depth interview, March 9, 2017). She believes that her mother's absence exposed her to the abuse. Despite the expectations that fathers take care of and protect their children, in the case of intrafamilial sexual abuse, they are among the individuals that sexually abuse their daughters (Girgira et al., 2014;; Kocturka & Yukselb, 2019).

Gifti recounted that she lived with her grandparents and uncle since her parents got divorced when she was a little girl. That was why she had to be raised by her grandparents until the age of 11, when she was raped by her uncle (in-depth interview, March 17, 2017).

In this study a brother-in-law is among the perpetrators. Aziza was raped when she was 13. She explained,

> *I lived with both my parents in Butajjra town. But when I grew up, I started getting sick. I couldn't even control my hands and legs. As it got more difficult to attend school, I dropped out at grade 6. My sister brought me to Addis Ababa so I could get religious treatment, Tsebel*[3]*. But sadly, her husband raped me and now I have a son from him … (Aziza, in-depth interview, March 14, 2017).*

Several factors have contributed to the children's becoming a victim of intrafamilial sexual abuse, including their age, their lack of connections, their responsibilities at home, their family's situation, and the socio-cultural context in which

[3] Holy water Orthodox Christians use to be healed from illnesses.

they live. In addition, the girls were abused by close family members including fathers, whom the girls would not suspect to perpertrat the violence. The next section analyses these factors in the light of ecological approach.

Individual Factors

The first level in the ecological model identifies the biological and personal history factors that an individual has, which makes her vulnerable to violence (Krug, Dahlber, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). In our study, despite the differences in their background, the study participants were all vulnerable to sexual violence. As also indicated in Table 1 earlier, the children were at an age which makes them dependent on and subordinate to adults.

Female children in Ethiopia are disadvantaged from two perspectives. Children in general are expected to obey adults and individuals who are older than themselves, and prioritize the needs of other family members over their own. As children who internalized these values, "They are likely to perceive their needs as interdependent with those of other family members rather than taking priority over them" (Abebe & Kjorholt 2009, 190). Bowman and Brundige (2014) further asserted that in most places of Africa, children hold the lowest rung in the status hierarchy. This is especially true for girls who may be considered as outsiders with the assumption that eventually they would be given to another family upon marriage. Additional to the hierarchical relation which puts all children in a disadvantageous position, female children experience another layer of subordination due to their gender. They are supposed to be quiet and care for the family, and thus spend most of their time at home undertaking chores before and after school (Camfield & Tafere, 2011; Pankhurst et al., 2016; Kebede & Belay, 2020). When the number of male children in the household is more, girls will have

more chores as they have to take care of the needs of all family members, and boys can command girls due to the gender norms (Mesfin et al., 2022). As shown earlier, Tsehay, Aziza, and Azeb were raped at home while carrying out household chores.

The girls practiced what Gilligan (1982) called ethics of care. Their actions and decisions considered the protection and welfare of their family members. Similar to the finding of Dibaba (2007), the children in this study reiterated that they reported or told another person about the problem after a long time, and for some after repeated violence. Beza explained it took her a long time and multiple abuses by her father since her father warned her that if she told anybody he would kill her sister and her mother. Beza explained. "For the last one year, the problems I was facing became my secret for the sake of my younger sister. When it became out of my control, I decided to leave." Almaz also decided not to tell anybody about the abuse by her brother-in-law, because her whole family depended financially on her sister and her brother-in-law. In addition, her brother-in-law warned her that if her sister found out what happened, she would die from her blood pressure. As Jones et al. (2021) explained filial obedience and loyalty to the family oblige children to keep themselves from talking about the abuse or reporting.

There are also times when the children did not know what happened and had difficulty articulating the sexual abuse, which might have restrained them from talking about it. One of the children in the study explained that she did not know whether it was something to talk about because there was no bleeding and no sign of bruise on her body (Aziza, in depth interview, March 14, 2017). Since sexual matters are not discussed in the family, some children were not aware of what sexual violence meant, they did not know what to do about it when they encountered one. Lack of discussion

about sexuality as one of the factors that exposes female children to sexual violence and a hinderance to address the problem in timely manner has been noted in other studies as well (Gebeyehu & Shebebaw, 2014; Mekuria et al., 2015; McKibbin et al., 2017; Abera et al., 2021).

The Immediate Context

The immediate points of interaction for children that play significant roles in their development include family, schools, and neighborhood, which according to ecological approach are termed microsystem. Since our focus is intrafamilial sexual abuse we give emphasis to the family environment, talking about related structures when relevant.

All the children in our study lived in families where one or both parents were absent: six lived with close and distant relatives, three with their mothers absent, and one with a mother that traveled out of town frequently. According to the data, living without biological parents or a mother is found to be one of the risk factors for female child sexual abuse.

Family structure is the most potential risk factor in child sexual abuse. Children who live with two married biological parents are relatively at lower risk for abuse. The risk increases for children who live with non-biological parents including those who live with stepparents or a single parent (Teferi, 2014; Gebeyehu & Shebabaw, 2014; Nuru, 2017; Adinew et al., 2018; Abera et al., 2024). Similarly, findings from other countries show that children living without either parent are ten times more likely to be sexually abused than children who live with both biological parents (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2011; Lippert et al., 2009).

Six of the children in this study lived with close and distant relatives. Some served as nannies or as a house help, indicating the position they hold in relation to other family members. For example, Tsehay was given to a relative at the age of 12, and after two years she ran away to live with her uncle serving as a nanny. Azeb came to Addis Ababa to help her uncle with domestic work, while her uncle was, in turn, to send her to school. Gifti lived with her grandparents since her parents were divorced. These children living without their biological parents are more prone to various abuses including sexual violence (Gebeyehu & Shebabaw, 2014; Abera et al., 2021).

The girls lived in crowded households, which plays a role in sexual abuse. None of the children had their own bedroom. They slept in a room along with other family members. Gifti explained, "We lived in a small room around Kolfe area, my younger sister and I slept next to our uncle." Semira also mentioned, "My parents rented one room around Addis Sefer. There was no other room to change our clothes or to prepare food or to sleep. All our activities took place in that same room." Almaz shared a bed with her father who raped her.

Living in a crowded home due to low income, along with other factors such as living with non-biological families, are microsystem factors that expose girls to interfamilial sexual abuse (Ezekiel et al., 2017). A study by Nuru (2017) explains that children in low socioeconomic status households are three times as likely to be identified as survivors of child sexual abuse. Teferi (2014) also highlighted that in Addis Ababa, most survivors were from Kolfe Keranio, Yeka and Nifas Silk Lafto sub-cities, which are densely populated and families are from lower socio-economic status with poor living conditions.

One of the features of intrafamilial sexual abuse is that, in most cases, both perpetrators and victims live in the same house (Paige & Thornton, 2015), where it is likely to increase threats and revengeful acts against victims in case they intend to report or talk about the abuse. This is, especially, scary for girls who witness violence. Aziza explained that her brother-in-law, the perpetrator, hit her sister in front of her and the neighbors. After he raped Aziza, he explained to her that her sister would die if she found out about the rape. Hadas was always slapped and mistreated by her stepfather which put fear in her. Gifti explained that her mother left because her husband had abused her, which left her exposed to being abused by him. In addition to the fear or threat of revenge, the girls who lived with the perpterators were more likely to be abused multiple times. Supporing this, studies reveal a number of factors that keep abused girls from reporting.These include lack of information about where and how to report, a need to protect the family, fear or retaliation from the abuser and financial dependence (Mekonnen & Tsega, 2024).

In some cases, the children were not supported by other family members when the violence was reported (Alaggia, 2010; Bowman & Brundige, 2014; Paige & Thornton, 2015). In our study Beza's mother asked her daughter to deny that she was abused when asked by the police, even when she knew what her husband did to his own daughter. Her intention was to save her husband from imprisonment and protect the family from collapsing. In her study of survivors of intrafamilial sexual abuse, Alaggia (2010) also found that, in some cases, mothers were not supportive of their children's attempt to disclose or report the abuse due to fear of disrupting or upsetting the family. According to Bowman and Brundige (2014), in Sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to the denial and disbelief that mothers show upon discovering the sexual violence, they are

themselves likely to be submissive to the authority of their husbands in fear of upsetting the economy upon which the entire family depends.

Relations and Connections

The relations the children and their families have with relatives and friends or the lack of them, as they relate to the incidence of intrafamilial sexual abuse are presented in this section. According to the ecological approach, relations within immediate circles fall under mesosystem. Mesosystem is about the interaction of different factors or structures existing in the microsystem. These include the relation of a family with close relatives, friends, and church. In our study, most of the children did not have much of these connections since, as girls, they had to take care of household chores. Some were required to stay home after school and never to stay late in school or elsewhere. Almaz's father did not allow her to go anywhere except school, and in the absence of a mother, she always felt lonely. Thus, she was not able to tell anyone about the abuse, and when it became unbearable, she left the house. The lack of social relations as a risk factor for violence has been underlined by Jones et al. (2021). They explained that those children who are socially isolated are at a higher risk for violence.

Beza, one of the girls, was abused by her father for over a year, after which the case was reported to the police. She explained that it was too difficult to accept the fact that her father was doing it to her and the fear that others would be skeptic, especially because her father was a priest and respected in the neighborhood. The fear that victims may not be believed has also surfaced as a reason for not reporting in other studies as well (Kocturka & Yuksel, 2019). This fear, in addition to the culture in Ethiopia that places children at a subbordinate position, discourages the children from reporting.

Another mesosystem factor in our study that indirectly affected the children's development and welfare was the relation the family and the children had with close and distant relatives, and the expectations attached. In Ethiopian society, children are expected to attend to the needs of parents and other extended family. "Children are often dutiful to family collectives; and kinship systems" (Abebe, 2019. p. 5). There is a feeling of filial obligations to provide support to parents (Tafere, 2015). Sometimes this sense of obligation and the responsibilities taken to attend to the needs of extended family members interfere with one's responsibility to immediate family. In the case of Mitu, her mother had gone for a month to take care of her own mother who was admitted to a hospital when the violence happened at the age of 8. In this situation, her absence exposed Mitu to sexual abuse. As shown in previous studies absence of a mother is one of the risk factors for intrafamilial sexual abuse (Abera et al., 2021).

Another dimension of relationships and responsibilities that exposed the children to intrafamilial sexual abuse is families' consent for their girls to be raised by relatives believing that they would be able to get opportunities for education or work. Four of the children lived with relatives; Azeb and Tsehay lived with their respective uncles, Gifti with her grandparents, and Aziza with her sister. All these girls were vulnerable and were abused by a relative who lived in the same house. Studies support the contention that living without parents is one of the contributary factors for sexual abuse of children (Gebeyehu & Shebebaw, 2014; Mekuria et al., 2015; Abera et al., 2021).

In all the circumstances, the children were not able to interact and communicate easily to have their concerns raised and voices heard. The relationships and communications they and many children in similar studies

had with family members were not favorable either because of inaccessibility or lack of support (Kocturk & Yuksel, 2019; Adinew et al., 2018).

Work and Work Situation

Work and working condition of a parent/parents is one of the factors that impact the lives of children. The interaction between work and family makes one important element of exosystem factors in an ecological approach. These are the factors that do not have direct relationship with the child, but which affect the child's development and the family environment. Like other studies (Kocturk & Yuksel, 2019; Kebede & Belay, 2020), all the children in this study came from low-income families. Some of the fathers were engaged in subsistence farming in the village from which the children came, while others were daily laborers. One was sick and unable to work. Mothers undertook small trades such as selling butter, food, and other small items to earn a living and support their children. The data in the study showed that economic status of families have bearing on sexual abuse against female child.

As mentioned earlier, in all the cases where mothers lived in the family, they were busy working to take care of their families. They were engaged in small businesses away from home, which left their daughters vulnerable as they spend most of their time at home to carry out the household chores. As explained earlier, Mulu's stepfather raped her when her mother went out of town for her small business. Beza's mother was not in the family for a few years while she worked as a housemaid abroad. Beza explained,

> *We were living in poverty and my mother decided to go to United Arab Emirates (UAE) to work so that we could be provided better. If we had*

> *had money my mother would not have gone and my father might not have raped me (Beza, in depth interview, March16, 2017).*

In this context, work situation of family members, especially that of mothers and the lack of supportive structures in their environment have been contributing factors.

Gender Norms

The cultural beliefs and attitudes that encourage male dominance are part of the gender norms that fall under macrosystem. These may encourage violence through creating a convenient climate for violence and reducing inhibitions. Ethiopia, being a patriarchal society, bestows more power upon men than women whose basic manifestation is family relationship (Kebede & Belay, 2020). A study undertaken among 11 ethnic groups in Ethiopia showed that men participants in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) wanted women to remain at home, bear and raise children, be obedient to their husbands and become good cooks and mothers. They indicated that women should be abided by their culture and tradition, keep low profile and help their husbands in every possible way (Habtamu et al., 2003). This domination by men, which sometimes tolerates violence against women is highly internalized and accepted by members of the society including women themselves. According to Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS), 63% of the women surveyed indicated that a husband is justified in beating his wife for reasons such as leaving the house without informing him, neglecting the children, burning food, or arguing with him (CSA, 2016). In this study, Gifti explained that her mother left due to the violence she suffered from her husband making her vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Men always have the upper hand even in matters that affect the entire family, and they are more heard than women and children. Beza's father told neighbors that his daughter might be sexually active and that she was not a virgin, even though he was the one who abused her. She elaborated,

> *I spent all my time at church and when I returned home he had told our neighbor that I was not a virgin, and that he suspected I was sexually active, and thus wanted to get me tested to find out if I was virgin or not. I was the only person who knew about what he did to me. No one would believe me because he told everybody that I was indecent (Beza, in depth interview, March 16, 2017).*

None of her family members including her mother believed Beza's side of the story. Other studies also reveal the lack of support from families and stigma in the neighbourhood that victims face for reporting the violence (Alagia, 2010).

Children in the Ethiopian society are highly valued, but they do not take part in decision making in the family, schools and communities at large. The child rearing system is predominantly authoritarian, which implies that parents or guardians of children are overly strict and believe in absolute obedience to authority. Supporting this, Jones et al. (2021) explain the child rearing practices in Ethiopia as repressive accompanied by corporal punishment.

The absence of validation and support from family members, which is influeced by the culture also deprive children of the power to talk about the violence. Beza further explained that despite the sacrifies she made in caring for the family bearing the sexual violence perpetrated by her father, her family did not want to stand by her when she wanted to report. In addition the lack of family support, the possibility of getting the

blame, embarrassment and fear of stigma discourage the children from talking about the abuse or reporting it (Kocturka & Yuksel, 2019; Mekuria et al., 2015). Embarassment and stigma further isolate the girls depriving of necessary services. Regarding this, one of the participatns in this study mentioned, "I don't want to go anywhere because all my friends heard about my case, so I don't even want to go to school" (Mulu, in depth interview, March 15, 2017).

In this study, more than half of the children came to report after multiple abuses. What the data show is that in addition to the other factors, the gender norms that place women in subordinate position, and push female children to be reserved and obedient, create a fertile environment for girls' exposure to intrafamilial sexual abuse and failure to report in case it happens.

Conclusions

Child sexual abuse is a reality in Ethiopia. Retrospective studies mostly conducted on school girls or college students to find out prevalence of sexual violence show a percentage ranging from 23 to 61%. However, much is not known about interfamilial sexual abuse except some reports that come from hospitals, shelters and associations working on the area.

Shifting the focus from prevalence to the lived experience of children who went through intrafamilial sexual abuse, the current study investigated the incidence, the context in which abuse happens, and the various factors that make children vulnerable to intrafamilial sexual abuse within the framework of an ecological approach.

The girls in this study were abused by family members, at their own home.

Fathers, step-fathers, uncles, bothers-in-law, and a cousin were seen as the perpetrators. The children were all young, lacking the information and the ability to articulate what intrafamilial sexual abuse meant, and who did not know what they needed to do when they were abused, or who were unable to report when they were attacked. In the context of the ecological approach, all these characteristics made them vulnerable to violene.

Most of the children lived in homes where one biological parent was missing or with close relatives such as grandparents or uncles. In all the cases they continued living together with the perpetrators, which led to multiple abuses and fear of revenge that prohibited them from reporting. Their homes were crowded with the girls sleeping in one room with a parent, a stepfather, or other males relatives. In one case a girl shared a bed with her father. In some cases family members were not supportive and the girls were discouraged from talking or reporting the abuse. The home environment which makes up the microsystem created a fertile situation for the vulnerability of the girls to intrafamilial sexual abuse and constrained their actions.

The children spent most of their time at home taking care of household chores. Even those who go to school were required to stay home after school. They lacked networks to get information and talk about their problems. The relationship of the family with extended families and the expectations attached made some of the children to live away from the family, either to support extended family members or with the expectation that extended family members would help out the children in their education. Parents' responsibilities to their extended family memebers took them away from home leaving the girls alone. In all the situations,

the children missed a nurturing social relationship with their close families, age mates and other adults in the sphere of mesosystem that makes an important factor for their healthy development and wellbeing.

The exosystem factors were not favorable either. All the girls lived in poverty, as reflected in their living conditions, and the absence of mothers who engaged in engagement in economic activities that took them away from home, burdened the girls with responsibilities and exposing them to violence. The working situations of parents had a direct impact on the abuses encountered by the children.

The macrosystem, the context, which shapes the values given to female children, their assigned gender roles, and the gender relationship which disempower girls and in women in general played a role in the incidence and perpetration of sexual abuse against the girls. Based on the findings and analysis, a diverse set of factors operating at different levels of the ecology contributed to the girls' vulnerability sustainined the practice. Therefore, in order to address the problems of intrafamilial sexual abuse, all factors operating at these different levels of ecology need to be considered.

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Curriculum Differentiation in Ethiopian Secondary Education: Practices of Boarding and Special Day Schools and Student Experiences

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Abstract

The study examined curriculum differentiation practices and student experiences at special day and boarding schools. Seven teachers, two principals, and 16 students participated in a multiple-case study design. Interviews were conducted with teachers and principals, and focus group discussions were held with students from each school. The National Curriculum framework and student grade rosters were reviewed. The data were analyzed through qualitative descriptions of themes. The study reveals that boarding and special day schools adhere to the standard secondary school curriculum and streams, with minimal curriculum differentiation, by deepening curriculum contents, providing local language options, and improving laboratory activities. Both boarding school and special day school students work for academic excellence. This drive stems from the favorable educational environment provided by schools, which includes competent teaching staff, well-equipped laboratories, and modern ICT facilities. Students appreciate the collaborative environment and support from peers and teachers. Boarding school students reported improved time and self-management skills. However, students are concerned that excessive focus on academic excellence and competition has increased stress levels and limited the development of non-academic skills. Special day school students question whether curriculum differentiation would widen inequitable access to educational resources. It is concluded that boarding and special day schools fall short of meeting the core principles of curriculum differentiation, as their curriculum, streams, and expected outcomes are similar to mainstream secondary schools. It is imperative that the bodies concerned deliberate on the purpose, student selection process, provision of differentiated curriculum (in any form), and the formulation of a policy to guide the establishment and management of these types of schools.

Keywords**:** *curriculum differentiation, secondary education, boarding school, special day school, student experience*

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Introduction

One of the main goals of education in today's society is to produce well-rounded and critical people who reach their full potential as learners (Adam, 2020). To this end, education should be organized in such a way that it is relevant for different groups of people and also for each individual (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; Seifert & Sutton, 2009). For instance, Seifert and Sutton stated that students differ from one another in terms of learning pace and motivation for learning. Students vary as groups in terms of social, academic, linguistic, and culture for learning. Therefore, many argue that an educational system needs to diversify its delivery approaches to support students in accordance with their diverse abilities and equitably address the diverse interests of individuals and groups (Abodey & Ansah, 2017; Seifert & Sutton, 2009; Tomlinson, 2014).

What is curriculum differentiation?

The main idea of curriculum differentiation (CD) revolves around the fundamental question of whether countries should design a common curriculum for all students in general education (primary and secondary) or develop different curricula or streams for diverse students (Terwel, 2005). Under this fundamental question belongs an academic debate on streaming, ability grouping, and tracking between or within boarding schools and/or special day schools. Wermke et al. (2024) argue that "differentiation signifies transformations from the homogenous to the heterogeneous. Such transformations refer to processes of dividing (e.g. people and institutions) and clarifying boundaries (e.g. of curricular contents and educability)" (p.2). Proponents of differentiation argue that both group and individual diversities are increasing and curriculum and teaching should be responsive to these growing

diversities (Kanevsky, 2011). By varying how an educational system and its general curriculum are delivered, CD is one of the strategies for supporting students with various needs (Adewumi et al., 2017; Reis & Renzulli, 2015). The CD is conceptualized as systems, structures, and processes that provide distinct curricular opportunities to diverse individuals or groups of students to meet their specific learning characteristics, interests, and abilities (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022; LeTendre et al., 2003; Perry & Lamb 2017). For example, LeTendre et al. (2003) developed a typology of CD that incorporates five distinct types to create diversified curricula. The first type of CD is by type of schools, for example, between academic, technical, and vocational schools. This is a common practice in many European countries such as Germany, Czech, and Finland. Students will be placed in different types of secondary schools which prepare them for various purposes. The second type of CD is by course of study. This is the provision of various paths of study to students within the same school. Students will be expected to take similar courses for each path of study in a country. The natural science, social science, and vocation fields available to Ethiopian students in grades 11 and 12 appear to fall under this category. The third type is CD by streams, which gradually differentiates students in the number, type, and difficulty of their courses. This differentiation considers students' past achievements and interests. The fourth type of CD is ability grouping, in which students in the same class are grouped into different ability levels, or instruction is arranged to these different types of students in different classes in the same school. These are ability groupings in reading, mathematics, or classes for gifted or talented students. The fifth type of CD is based on geographic location that occurs between the

same types and levels of schools across regional states due to local funding bases and/or socioeconomic status.

From reviewing empirical evidence, Eikeland and Ohna (2022) also identified four different levels of CD. These are (1) individual level, characterized by a focus on the uniqueness of each student's learning process; (2) group level, characterized by an emphasis on specific groups of students who are often targeted in terms of their abilities or language skills; (3) classroom level, characterized primarily by the focus on the instructional context of all students in a heterogeneous or diverse classroom; and (4) system level, characterized by emphasizing the importance of contextual factors such as school culture and leadership, education systems, and education policies as conditions for CD. Ledwaba (2017) and Ronksley-Pavia (2010) stated a CD should be implemented in an inclusive classroom with diverse learning abilities and characteristics rather than in separate settings or classes with homogeneous students. This type of CD differentiates curriculum components, such as the content of the curriculum, instructional processes, assessment strategies, and learning environments. However, Eikeland and Ohna (2022), Reis and Renzulli (2015), and Tomlinson (2014) characterized such differentiation of curriculum components in an inclusive classroom as differentiated instruction rather than CD.

The main purpose of CD is to help all students, as individuals or groups realize their full potential by offering educational services that cater to their diverse needs and abilities (Abodey & Ansah, 2017). So, it is crucial to develop differentiated curricular systems and strategies to support students in accordance with their diverse needs because CD is firmly rooted in the idea that there is diversity within any group of students and that school leaders and teachers accommodate the students'

educational experiences accordingly (Watson & Reigeluth, 2008). Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning are the theories that serve as the foundations of CD. Both theories acknowledge that teachers and educational leaders must differentiate a curriculum to meet students' diverse needs and potential abilities. The underlying principle of CD in these theories is that each student is unique and learns differently from others through being given a variety of opportunities to experience multiple ways of learning. Thus, teachers, school leaders, students, and parents must all be involved in CD practices to support each student's learning potential, talent areas, learning profiles, readiness, and interests (Abodey & Ansah, 2017; Seifert & Sutton, 2009; Tomlinson, 2014). Thus, while CD has received support and criticism in the scholarly debate, it essentially refers to establishing different types of schools tailored for the potential abilities of students, various streams or programs in the same school which students can choose to study, organizing selected type of education (mathematics or science or arts) based on the abilities of students, and tailoring or adapting instructional activities to diverse students in a heterogeneous classroom.

Curriculum differentiation practices

The practices of CD are offered in a variety of ways. Grouping students between school types and within a school (between classes or within a classroom) is among the most common forms of CD. In this regard, the placements of students into vocational and academic schools in the form of boarding schools and special day schools in addition to comprehensive or regular schools are included in the practice of CD that involves structural differences and grouping students between school types

(Ayalon, 2006; LeTendre et al., 2003; Perry & Lamb, 2017; Terwel, 2005). The general secondary school (Hauptschule), advanced secondary school (Gymnasium), and intermediate secondary school (Realschule), and others in Germany; academic, technical, and vocational/trades upper secondary schools in the Czech Republic; general academic and vocational upper secondary schools in Finland; and voluntary, vocational, and comprehensive secondary schools in Ireland are a few examples of the usual form of structural differences in CD practices between school types (Bol & Van de Werfhorst, 2013; Perry & Lamb, 2017; Smyth, 2017).

The other examples of CD practices between school types are the three different types of specialized/ boarding schools in Korea that exist for mathematically gifted students. The main purpose of these boarding high schools is to cater to mathematically and scientifically gifted students since regular high schools are unable to meet their special needs (Choi & Hon, 2009). Choi and Hon stated that one of the three boarding schools practiced an acceleration system, which allowed students to complete the regular 3-year mathematics curriculum in a year and enter the best higher education institutions. The other boarding school has a distinctive, innovative curriculum in nonacademic abilities in leadership, sports, and artistic performances, in addition to offering courses within the Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines. Still, the other boarding school has implemented professional courses that include accelerated and enrichment courses in mathematics, sciences, and technology in addition to a national curriculum used in all high schools. There are also several types of CD practices within the majority of regular, boarding, or special day secondary schools (Ayalon, 2006; LeTendre et al., 2003; Perry & Lamb, 2017; Terwel, 2005).

Although the practice of CD between school types and within a school type is widely acknowledged as a useful practice to accommodate the diverse learning needs and abilities, levels of readiness, and interests of students, there are concerns that it does not promote equal learning opportunities for students from all backgrounds; provide students with the skills they need to be productive; and socialize students (Bol & Van de Werfhorst, 2013). There is also research that shows CD practices in a variety of school types, including boarding schools and special day schools, have drawbacks in attaining students' educational goals and their psychological development (Demirel & Kurt, 2021; Friborg et al., 2020; Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2009; LeTendre et al., 2003; Terwel, 2005). For example, depending on the context, students may encounter a variety of challenging issues such as traumatic experiences, bullying, sexual abuse, homesickness, and friend deprivation, and subsequently, the majority of them experience a sharp decline in their grades (Ahmed et al., 2019; Behaghel et al., 2017; Demirel & Kurt, 2021; Laiser & Makewa, 2016). Moreover, some studies identified increasing social class disparities, inequality in educational opportunities and learning outcomes between student categories, as well as a decline in average achievement when differentiating students among school types (Ayalon, 2006; Bol et al., 2014; LeTendre et al., 2003; Perry & Lamb, 2017; Smyth, 2017).

Curriculum differentiation in Ethiopian secondary education

In Ethiopia, secondary education has spent several decades working towards the goal of providing a general education that enables students to recognize their needs, interests, and potentials through the choice of streams between social science and natural science (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009). Since the founding of Haile

Selassie I Secondary School in 1943, various attempts have been made to differentiate secondary education in Ethiopia, although there is still uncertainty about the rationales and purposes of differentiation in secondary education. The only exception in this case is the curriculum differentiation guideline developed by the Ministry of Education in 2012, which is essentially about differentiated instruction rather than curriculum differentiation. Based on the recommendations of the Long Term Planning Committee for General Education in 1953, it can be seen that there were two types of secondary schools: academic secondary schools and special schools (Kiros, 1990). The specialised secondary education prepares people with medium qualifications for technical subjects, agriculture and forestry, veterinary science, commerce and teaching. UNESCO's recommendation in 1962 also shows curriculum differentiation in secondary education:

> *In secondary education, the numbers are so small that nearly half of those completing 12th grade go on to higher studies--a situation which seriously imperils University standards and which fails to provide anything like the requisite number of persons with middle-level education who are needed for various sectors of the national economy (Kiros, 1990, p. 27).*

In 1962, secondary school curriculum differentiation based on school type and stream was introduced. Some secondary schools were converted into comprehensive secondary schools with academic and vocational streams. The vocational streams were meant to prepare middle-skilled individuals for the country. During the Dergue period, secondary education was organised into comprehensive secondary schools and secondary schools; in which the former was intended to prepare students for medium-

skilled work in various professional sectors in addition to academic subjects. There were also schools that prepared students for vocational and technical subjects and offered the opportunity to pursue higher education. During the EPRDF period, secondary education was divided into preparatory schools (grades 11 and 12) and basic secondary education (grades 9 and 10). Students who pass the school leaving exam at grade 10 would be promoted to the 11th grade and prepare for higher education. Those who have not passed the exam at grade 10 or are interested in studying technical and vocational subjects would be admitted to the technical and vocational institutes or colleges. Technical and vocational education was shifted from secondary schools to special training institutes and colleges.

In Ethiopia, the CD discourse has been critical of curricular differentiation. When the education and training policy was introduced in 1994, the introduction of technical and vocational education from grade 10 onwards was derided by much of the Ethiopia academia and the political elite alike, with the claim that all secondary school students should complete twelve years of academic training before they are differentiated into vocational and academic tracks. However, educational practice in different parts of the world shows that in some countries the differentiation of curricula begins at the primary and middle school levels.

Ethiopia's educational system before 1991 struggled with a lack of clearly defined policy, access, equity, and quality (Joshi & Verspoor, 2013; MoE, 2018). According to Joshi and Verspoor (2013) and MoE (2019), the General Secondary Education Curriculum Framework required revision to incorporate CD principles and practices. Accordingly, a new general education curriculum framework (MoE, 2020) was introduced. The framework explicitly incorporates the concept of CD for grades 9

through 12, which seeks to offer all students equitable access to the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for a variety of career paths, to maximize each student's development and success for further learning, and to align with the present and future labor markets (MoE, 2018, 2020, 2023). Furthermore, in its National Guidelines for CD, the MoE (2012) stated that implementing CD in line with students' learning profiles, readiness, and interests is encouraged.

Differentiation studies in Ethiopia focus exclusively on differentiated instruction. A review of the available studies shows that its focus is on the attitudes and practices of teachers, students, school leaders, and teacher trainers in adapting curriculum content and teaching and learning to the educational needs of diverse learners (Abraham et al., 2022; Girma, 2022; Girma & Dawit, 2022; Solomon, 2019; Tadesse, 2018; Zewudie, 2019). Although differentiated instruction is an important component of CD, the conceptualization focuses on instructional practices and interactions between teachers, school leaders, and students. Differentiated instruction remains a viable way to address the group and individual needs of learners, but it cannot capture differentiation practices at the education system or at the national level. As already mentioned, the differentiation of curricula has sociological, philosophical and political foundations and goes beyond school or classrooms.

Conceptualization of curriculum differentiation

In summary, based on the literature review and the current context in Ethiopia, CD is conceptualized as shown in Figure 1.

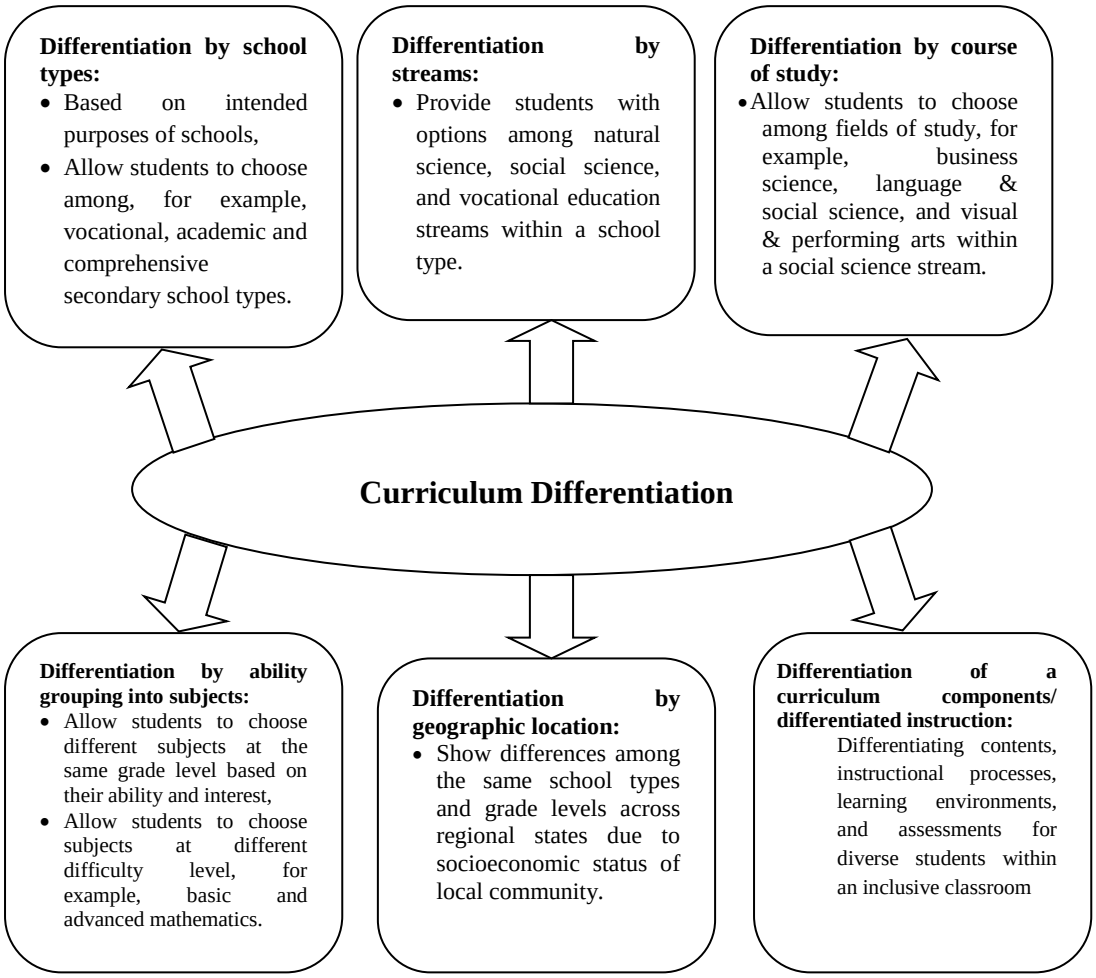

Figure 1

Conceptualization of Curriculum Differentiation (Source: Authors' synthesis)

Currently, streaming (among natural sciences, social sciences and vocational education) is practiced in Ethiopian schools based on the curriculum framework and new education and training policy (MoE, 2023). Although not explicitly enshrined in the country's general education curriculum framework or education and training policy, establishing boarding schools and special day school types appears to be the trend in Ethiopia. This new enthusiasm or infatuation for boarding schools and special day schools deserves further research as there appears to be little or no policy guiding the establishment, operation, and practice of these schools. Nor is there empirical research on boarding schools or special day schools, teachers, students, and community members. Therefore, this study examined the available types of CD practices such as differentiation by school types, differentiation by streams, differentiation by courses of study, subject differentiation, and differentiation of curriculum components along with student experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia's education system has experienced various ways of tracking or ability grouping. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, students completed a common elementary and middle school curriculum. Students in grades 9 and 10 also had similar programs. When students reached 11th grade, they were enrolled in natural science, social science, and vocational programs for two years. During this time, there were practices in which students from selected schools were divided into different ability groups. The students with the best results were placed in selected classes to differentiate the curriculum according to the needs and abilities of these students. The then education and training policy of 1994 introduced standalone vocational and

training colleges or institutes and completely removed vocational subjects from secondary school education. Secondary school students who completed the 10th grade either switched to vocational subjects or continued their education in the 11th grade, choosing either social science or natural science stream.

During the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) period, boarding schools were introduced in some regions. Students were selected based on their academic performance in regional grade 8 exams, and those with the best results were admitted to special day or boarding schools. These schools, initiated by the political elites, were not founded based on education and training policy, as the educational policy at the time postulated inclusive educational practices at different grade levels. Under the education and training policy, the special needs/inclusive education strategy and its implementation strategy were also introduced in 2012. Students in special day/boarding secondary schools performed well in school leaving exams, prompting other regions to open similar schools.

Regional governments are now pushing to establish special day schools and boarding schools. Universities have also established such schools, and many universities in the various regional states consider opening such schools as the best way to serve their community and train the best local minds. The top leadership at the Ministry of Education also seems to emphasise establishing special day schools and boarding schools to provide quality educational opportunities to the best-performing students.

The curriculum, the subjects, and the streaming options in boarding schools and special day schools seem similar to regular secondary schools so far. In recent years, these schools have been praised because almost all of their students passed their

school-leaving exams given to grade 12 completers. In fact, special day or boarding school students are the best 8th-grade students and have the best teachers and resources compared to the underfunded public high school students. Therefore, they are highly likely to perform better in school-leaving exams.

In the study area, there are two boarding schools and one special day school managed by Addis Ababa City Administration. The special day school provides daytime instruction to all grades 9 to 12 students , who return to their homes after school. On the other hand, boarding schools provide dormitories, food, and education to all students in grades 9 to 12. In these three secondary schools, one boarding school admits only boys, the other only admits girls, while the special day school admits both boys and girls. Students with excellent academic standards in the 8th grade are accepted into boarding and special day schools. In this regard, several researchers have agreed that many boarding schools and special day schools admit a particular group of students (in this study's case, high academic achievers) with adequate teaching and learning facilities (e.g., Kaltsas & Gkaintartzi, 2021; Laiser & Makewa, 2016; Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2009). Even though boarding schools and special day schools have a reputation for academic excellence, researchers in Ethiopia rarely pay attention to this area of study.

As stated earlier, there is still debate on the appropriateness of CD, although there are strong psychological foundations and national needs for differentiation of education. Studies in other countries reported various drawbacks to student placement practices, in general, in boarding and special day school types. For example, studies by LeTendre et al. (2003), Ayalon (2006), and Smyth (2017), among others, showed the detrimental effects that tracking practices in various school types have on

reproducing social and academic inequalities as well as curricular segregation. Curricular segregation based on gender and socioeconomic background also hurts students' chances of academic success and post-secondary education pathways. On the other hand, the current practice of placing students into special day and boarding secondary schools in Ethiopia based on academic achievement and gender is not supported by empirical evidence in Ethiopian secondary school contexts. Hence, this study has vital contributions in the field to fill in knowledge gaps for the practice of secondary school principals and teachers in the context of Ethiopian secondary education. Hence, the objectives of the study were to:

1) examine the types of curriculum differentiation practices offered by boarding and special day government secondary schools in Addis Ababa.
2) explore the academic and psychosocial experiences of students in boarding and special day secondary schools.

Methods

Research Design

This study used a multiple-case study design to examine and understand different types of CD practices and actual experiences of students in boarding school and special day school contexts. The students' actual experiences in learning and psychosocial experiences are taken into account. According to Yin (2018), a multiple case study design is a widely used qualitative study design. It allows researchers to examine and understand the same case study that includes multiple cases, such as a boarding school and a special day school. This study focused on a case study of a special day school and a boarding school. A multiple case study first examined each

school as a single case study before conducting the types of curriculum differentiation for each school and drawing conclusions and insights from each case study.

Research Sites

Three government secondary schools (two boarding schools and one special day school) in Addis Ababa City Administration enroll a small number of students from grades 9 through 12. These three schools admit high academic achievers, and they are supposed to practice CD types to meet the various needs, interests, and abilities of those students. Among the three schools, one boarding school coded as School 1 and one special day school coded as School 2 were selected as study sites. The two schools were founded in 1931 and 1957, respectively. These two schools were chosen in part due to their familiarity and proximity. These were thought to make it possible for the researcher to gather in-depth information about the different types of CD practices and the experiences of students within these schools with ease. The other boarding school was excluded from the pilot testing due to its distance

Participants

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), researchers use "purposeful sampling" to specifically select people who are knowledgeable about and understand the underlying phenomenon (in this study's context, the types of CD practices and experiences of students). Leaders, teachers, and students from School 1 and School 2 were chosen using a purposeful sampling technique. The principal and the teacher had master's degrees or above. The total number of students, teachers, and school leaders from School 1 and School 2 during data collection (in the 2022/23 academic year) is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Total Numbers of Accessible Populations across Sex in School 1 and School 2

Population	School 1			School 2		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Principal	1	2	3	1	1	2
Teacher	42	8	50	28	7	35
Student	---	402	402	174	138	312

One principal, three subject teachers, and eight students from School 2 and one vice principal, four subject teachers, and eight students from School 1 participated in the study. One male and one female student from each grade level (i.e., grades 9th to 12th) were selected purposively as the study participants. Table 2 shows the demographic information for the participant teachers and school leaders from Schools 1 and School 2.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of School Leader and Teacher Participants

Participants	Position	Sex	Education level	Work experience in years	School code
Principal 1	Vice Principal	M	MA	11	School 1
Principal 2	Principal	M	MA	17	School 2
Teacher 1	Amharic teacher	F	MA	11	School 1
Teacher 2	English teacher	M	MA	20	School 1
Teacher 3	Biology teacher	M	MSc	12	School 1
Teacher 4	Physics teacher	M	MSc	9	School 1
Teacher 5	Biology teacher	M	MSc	14	School 2
Teacher 6	Maths teacher	M	MEd	14	School 2
Teacher 7	Physics teacher	M	MSc	10	School 2

Note: M=Male, F=Female, MA=Master of Arts, MSc=Master of Science, MEd=Master of Edu.

Instruments

To gather in-depth information about the different kinds of CD practices and the experiences of students within the schools, the study used face-to-face FGDs with students and interviews with school principals and teachers. A document review was also employed to gather data about the different types of CD practices in the schools.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), face-to-face individual or group interviews enable researchers to safeguard participants' emotional states while eliciting further information, elaboration, and explanation of responses. Five leading open-ended interview questions, or FGD probing statements, were developed, and for each FGD with students and interview with school leaders and teachers, an audio recorder was used to capture the reliable conversations precisely. Besides, the data collection instruments were pilot-tested in one boarding school, which was excluded from the main study. The revision was made to improve the clarity of the instrument and the use of words that fit the selected school contexts.was made with eight students selected from each school. The purpose of the FGD, according to Cohen et al. (2018), was to gain a group opinion instead of an individual one through a sort of group interview with four to twelve participants in each group. Following extensive reading of relevant literature from multiple sources, open-ended questions for the FGD were created. Critical reviews were conducted on documents pertaining to CD practice indicators in School 1 and School 2 (such as national curriculum policy documents, and student mark lists or documented grade rosters). Scott and Morrison (2005) contend that documents can be used to assess educational practice in addition to group and/or individual interviews. Additionally, any case study issue is probably relevant if it has documentation (Yin, 2018).

Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Issues

The data collection procedures encompassed a variety of activities, ranging from obtaining permission letters to conducting data analysis. Initially, permission letters were obtained from Addis Ababa University and the Addis Ababa City

Education Bureau. Subsequently, the boarding and special day secondary schools, along with their respective accessible populations (i.e., students, teachers, and school principals), were compiled. Following this, focus group discussion (FGD) and interview guides were developed. The instruments were pilot-tested in a similar school context, and appropriate revisions were made.

Next, the participants were selected, and the necessary data were collected through FGDs with students, interviews with school principals and teachers, and document reviews of curriculum frameworks and school documents (e.g., grade rosters). The FGDs and interviews were recorded using audio tape recorders. Document reviews, which included examining curriculum frameworks and grade rosters, were carried out to analyse the available types of curriculum differentiation (CD) in the general education curriculum frameworks and the documented CD practices in boarding and special day secondary schools. Grade rosters in each school provided clear insight into the number of subjects taken by students in each grade level and stream, as well as how students were grouped into specific subjects and streams between or within classes in a school.

Finally, the qualitative data obtained through various instruments were categorized and analyzed using themes, along with detailed descriptions. Moreover, ethical considerations were meticulously addressed throughout the data collection and analysis processes. For instance, all study participants were briefed about the study's purpose and provided oral consent before participating. Private settings were utilized during FGDs and interviews to ensure confidentiality, and the participants and their school names were anonymized during data analysis through the use of codes.

Adhering to these ethical principles not only safeguards participants' identities but also bolsters the study's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Results

The available types of CD practices and the academic and psychosocial experiences of students in boarding and special day secondary schools are presented in this section.

Types of Curriculum Differentiation Practices within Boarding and Special Day Schools

The qualitative data regarding the common types of CD practices were gathered from reviewing the national curriculum framework, the school document, the interviews with school principals and teachers, and the FGDs with students, which are presented in this section. Since the newly revised curriculum framework of 2020 has not been implemented yet, it is essential to examine the types of CD incorporated into the previous curriculum frameworks of 2009 (i.e., still under practice) and the intentions of the revised curriculum framework of 2020 as benchmarks for the practices of boarding and special day schools. Thus, the types of CD incorporated in Ethiopia's General Secondary Education Curriculum Frameworks are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Types of CD Incorporated in the General Secondary Education Curriculum Frameworks

Streams	Subjects for grades 11 and 12 students in the framework of 2009	Fields of study for grades 11 and 12 students in the framework of 2020
Natural Sciences	**Specialized subjects**: Biology, chemistry, physics, and technical drawing. **Common subjects**: Civics and ethical education, English, ICT, mathematics, and physical education. **Elective subject**: Mother tongue/ nationality language or Amharic.	**Fields of study:** Manufacturing (comprises 7 general subjects and 4 field-based subjects), construction (with 7 general subjects and 4 field-based subjects), ICT (with 7 general subjects and 5 field-based subjects), agriculture (with 6 general subjects and 4 field-based subjects), and health science (with 7 general subjects and 4 field-based subjects).
Social Sciences	**Specialized subjects**: History, general business, geography, and economics. **Common subjects**: Civics and ethical education, English, ICT, mathematics, and physical education. **Elective subject**: Mother tongue/ nationality language or Amharic.	**Fields of study:** Business sciences (contain 6 general subjects and 5 field-based subjects), language and social sciences (contain 6 general subjects and 4 field-based subjects), and performing and visual arts (contain 6 general subjects and 5 field-based subjects).

Table 3 depicted that boarding and special day secondary schools have legitimacy to practice stream differentiations (between natural and social sciences), subject choices (among elective subjects), and differentiation by fields of study (among five natural sciences and three social sciences study areas) for students in grades 11 and 12.

Additionally, Amharic as a second language, English, mother tongue, mathematics, ICT, physics, chemistry, biology, civics and ethical education, geography, history, and physical education were all incorporated into the curriculum framework of 2009 and offered to students in grades 9 and 10 (MoE, 2009). Ten compulsory and two optional subjects are currently incorporated in the newly revised curriculum framework of 2020 but not implemented yet for students in grades 9 and 10 (MoE, 2020). English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography,

history, citizenship education, economics, and IT are the ten subjects that are intended to be offered. First language, a federal language, a foreign language, health and physical education, and performing and visual arts are the optional subjects, from which students in grades 9 and 10 may select two.

However, in the 2023/24 academic year, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education wrote a "tentative letter" in February 2023 that included subjects to be offered to all secondary school students from grades 9 to grade 12 across Ethiopia. According to the letter, all grades 9 and 10 students across Ethiopia shall take twelve compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, history, citizenship education, economics, IT, health and physical education, and mother tongue, with the option to choose either a federal language or a foreign language or a performing and visual arts subject. Similarly, all grade 11 and 12 natural science students across Ethiopia shall take seven compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, IT, biology, chemistry, physics, and agriculture, with no opportunity to choose additional subjects. On the other hand, all grade 11 and 12 social science students across Ethiopia shall take six compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, IT, geography, history, and economics, with no opportunity to choose additional subjects.

Types of Curriculum Differentiation Practices within the Boarding School

The data from the students' grade roster was gathered and is presented here on specific types of CD practices at the boarding school for students in grades 9 through 12. The document review data show that the types of CD practices in the boarding school are the natural sciences and social sciences streams for students in grades 11 and 12 and Amharic and Afan Oromo languages are elective subjects in grades 9

through 12. Particularly, the subjects offered in 2022 for grades 11 and 12 natural science students were nine compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, technical drawing, civics and ethical education, ICT, and physical education. Additionally, they can choose either Afan Oromo or Amharic subjects. All grades 11 and 12 social science students also took nine compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, geography, history, economics, general business, civics and ethical education, ICT, and physical education. Additionally, they took both Amharic and Afan Oromo subjects. Similarly, grades 9 and 10 students took ten compulsory subjects: English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics and ethical education, geography, history, ICT, and physical education. They have also the option to choose either Amharic or both Amharic and Afan Oromo subjects.

The FGD conducted with boarding school students shows that the choice of natural sciences and social sciences streams is the dominant practice in the school, with the majority of the students joining the natural sciences stream. The students believed that natural sciences are more preferred to social sciences. One of the FGD participants also stated that "these boarding school staff members have completed all the admission and placement processes into both Afan Oromo and Amharic, or Afan Oromo, or Amharic separate classes." According to an interview with Principal 1, "There is stream differentiation in the boarding school between the social sciences and the natural sciences for students in grades 11 and 12." Principal 1 further noted that:

> *Afan Oromo classes are open to students who have an Afan Oromo language background and attend primary schools in both Addis Ababa city and the Oromia Special Zone (closest to the Addis Ababa city administration). Students from Addis Ababa City's primary schools who speak Amharic are*

also welcome to enroll in Amharic classes. There is officially approved subject differentiation between Afan Oromo and Amharic subjects in secondary schools, to be implemented for students in grades 9 and 10.

Furthermore, Teacher 3 stated, “I taught in grade 11 natural science classes in which students were grouped into separate classes for Afan Oromo and Amharic subjects; however, they were in a mixed class for other compulsory subjects." Teacher 3 added that students, who are taking both Amharic and Afan Oromo subjects in grades 9 and 10, as well as grades 11 and 12, in the social science stream, were grouped into mixed classes for Afan Oromo and Amharic subjects; they were also in a mixed class for other compulsory subjects. According to Teacher 3, "Students in grades 9 and 10 who are taking only the Amharic subject, and natural science stream students in grades 11 and 12 who are taking either an Amharic or an Afan Oromo subject are placed in their respective separate classes for all subjects.” Generally, boarding school teachers thought that there is no instructional practice beyond content coverage given in textbooks. Students also mentioned that the teaching practices of most subjects in boarding schools were more focused on content coverage than providing students with in-depth and advanced content. It is similar to the regular school teaching practices except for the laboratory equipment and practice available for science subjects in the boarding school.

Types of Curriculum Differentiation Practices within the Special Day School

Table 4 presents data regarding the types of CD practices used at the special day school. The special day school's subject and stream offerings to students in grades 9 through 12 were obtained from the students' grade rosters.

Table 4

Available Types of Curriculum Differentiation Practices within the Special Day School

Grade level	Streams	Subjects offered for students in grades 11 and 12 special day school in 2022
Grades 9 and 10	---	**Compulsory subjects:** Amharic, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics and ethical education, ICT, physical education, geography, and history.
Grades 11 and 12	Natural Sciences	**Compulsory subjects:** Amharic, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics and ethical education, ICT, physical education, and technical drawing.

Table 4 shows that students in the special day school are admitted only to the natural science stream at the beginning of grade 11. Grades 9 and 10 students also take the same kind of courses offered in the regular national curriculum of grades 9 and 10. Participants in the FGD from the special day school also disclosed that all students in grades 9-12 have no opportunity to choose among subjects, and students in grades 11 and 12 join only the natural science stream. A student noted that:

> *In our school, students in both grades 9 and 10, as well as grades 11 and 12, study the same set of subjects. Specifically, students in grades 9 and 10 have access to courses in Amharic, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics and ethical education, ICT, physical education, geography, and history. Meanwhile, students in grades 11 and 12 are offered courses in*

Amharic, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics and ethical education, ICT, physical education, and technical drawing.

The participants in the FGD further revealed the presence of highly qualified teachers in the school. The students reported that the teachers enrich the regular textbooks with advanced or university-level content. One of the participants mentioned that "Despite containing only two paragraphs of content in the biology textbook, the topic of bacteria is extensively covered by teachers. They delve into the subject matter deeply, dedicating entire chapters to it both in the classroom and during laboratory sessions."According to Principal 2 "The existing common curriculum is the minimum requirement to cover in our school because committed teachers who have at least a master's degree try to meet the exceptional learning needs of our students by updating and expanding the existing curriculum contents." Principal 2 continued, "We have made an effort to meet the interests and choices of our students by employing university instructors who are highly qualified and dedicated and provide well-equipped and resourced learning classrooms, laboratories, and the library." Teacher 5 also affirmed that:

Certainly, our school caters to exceptional students who have achieved top marks at the eighth-grade level. However, we do not offer a social science stream nor do we assign students to different subjects based on their placements. Instead, our students benefit from highly qualified teachers who can meet their academic needs by digging deeper into and advancing the content of the common national curriculum. Each teacher is committed to imparting advanced knowledge and skills by utilizing supplementary materials

and alternative teaching methods while covering the same topics outlined in the textbooks.

Strengthening this, Teacher 6 stated that "… students uniformly possess the highest academic abilities, enabling them to grasp the subject matter outlined in the national common curriculum independently. Consequently, we focus on extending their knowledge and skills to advanced levels by implementing diverse instructional techniques." Teacher 7 affirmed that although the curriculum is the same for all students across the country, our school is exceptional in meeting the needs of our students due to its small class sizes, teaching-learning resources, and teachers' emphasis on advanced knowledge, creativity, research skills, project work, worksheets, and laboratory rather than tests and examination practices.

Although the special day school has no additional subjects or streams for students, its teachers take the responsibility of enriching the common curriculum to meet the students' needs and abilities. This is similar to what has been categorized as differentiated instruction in the literature. As there is no national guideline or standard that guides special day school curriculum, teaching, or assessment, this practice, however, rests mainly on the practice of teachers.

Student Experiences in Boarding and Special Day Schools

The data obtained from the participants about academic or schooling and psychosocial experiences of students in boarding and special day secondary schools are presented hereunder.

Academic Experiences of Students in Boarding and Special Day Schools

One of the boarding school's FGD participants stated, "Unlike regular schools, the boarding school gives far more focus to academic learning success than other components of success like social relationships with others." Another student also mentioned the contribution of the teaching and learning environment to their excellence in academic achievement:

> *The boarding school's environment fosters higher academic achievements among students due to several contributing factors. These include the presence of highly dedicated and specialized teachers, easy access to the Internet for obtaining a variety of learning sources, students with extraordinary abilities that allow for cooperation and mutual assistance, a well-resourced library, functional laboratory facilities, and a favorable dormitory environment.*

One of the students in the special day school also stated that "the only resource available for our academic success is our teachers' quality and their appreciable roles supplemented by well-equipped laboratories, internet access, and the presence of many high achievers who cooperate and help each other to attain our maximum potential." Compared to other regular schools, students claimed that the special day school does not offer any unique academic-related services to meet their demands and interests. They argued that their exceptional academic excellence during national school leaving exams in this special day school (compared to other students' achievement in regular schools) is influenced by their ability and teachers' effort to delve into the in-depth learning of academic contents.

While students are relishing the teaching and learning environment, there appears to be frustrations and stress due to the stiff competition. One of the students in the boarding school stated that "being in the boarding school, we often feel frustrated due to the intense competition among high-achieving students to secure a position among the top three ranked high achievers in each classroom."

The principal also reiterated that the boarding school has better educational inputs, better teacher qualification and preparation, special care for students, and full-time attention to students' learning compared to regular government schools. The principal reported, "There are costs incurred by the government, teacher effort, and sacrifices made by parents and students to enhance academic achievements." Teacher 1 further stated, "girls in our school are free from household tasks, and they devote their full attention to their learning. The unique benefits also include each student and teacher having access to a personal computer, as well as to the internet and a digital library. Teacher 5 of the special day school added, "Since all of our students were selected as high achievers, grouping them into special day schools helps them to cooperate and support each other in learning and searching for scholarships." Principals of both schools reiterated that the presence of quality educational inputs, teachers, and highly able students compared to other government regular schools contributed to almost all students' higher achievement during the Ethiopian secondary school leaving exams. Principal 2 noted that "the availability of quality resources in the special school coupled with the students' strong academic background has consistently propelled all of our grade 12 students to achieve top-ranking results in the Ethiopian secondary school leaving examinations over the past five years."

Schooling Experiences of Students in Boarding and Special Day Schools

Some of the students in the boarding school are relieved from financial expenses. The principal of the school stated that "in our boarding school, students need not worry about financial constraints, as the institution covers all educational expenses, including the provision of personal computers, internet access, meals, and accommodation. Additionally, students can receive financial aid from sponsors, further alleviating any financial burdens." The principal also underlined that the boarding school protects the students from sexual abuse or harassment as they receive proper protection in the school. The teachers also reported the importance of providing students with dormitories, meals, internet, and other teaching and learning resources, which enables them to focus on academic tasks and excel in their performance. Additionally, a teacher noted that high-achieving students often collaborate in completing assignments, fostering a supportive academic environment.

Psychosocial Experiences of Students in Boarding and Special Day Schools

Students in the boarding school reported that the school environment is very conducive to teaching and learning. They specifically identified the absence of peer pressure and the presence of a strong disciplinary culture in the boarding school. One of the students stated "Unlike regular schools, our boarding school fosters an environment free from peer pressure, abusive behavior, or negative interactions among students. Adhering to the strict school rules is paramount for students to succeed in this environment." Students in boarding schools have also recognised significant improvements in their time management and self-control skills, as they are required to manage various situations independently, without the direct support of

parents. One of the students reported that “at our boarding school, we have improved our time management and self-control skills. Without the pressure of additional tasks imposed by parents, we have gained independence in managing our studies and personal hygiene practices.” Furthermore, students highly appreciate interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds and with varied behaviors.

Students in the special day school appear to be stressed because of the excessive focus on academic performance. One of the students in the special day school reported that “the special day school’s main emphasis is academic success or full concentration on students’ academic progress. Even if some parents attempt to address this burden, such a practice disregards many of our needs and abilities outside of the academic area." Another student asserted that “the school's exclusive emphasis on academic achievements fosters a demanding and competitive environment among students, leading to psychological stress for many of us."

While the boarding school students did not report feelings of detachment from their parents or stress, the principal and teachers expressed concern over the emotional detachment students may experience from their families and the presence of some degree of stress among them.

Lack of equitable access to all students

Students in the special day school raised equitable access to special day school. One of the students in the special day school proposed that “special schools in Ethiopia should prioritize enrolling all eligible students across Ethiopia, as these institutions utilize valuable public resources to provide enhanced knowledge and skills to only a small fraction of eligible students, leaving the majority excluded.”

Interestingly another student also argued whether enrolling small number of students in special day school is efficient and equitable utilization of resources. The student inquired that "treating only small numbers of students results in a small number of qualified graduates who are employable and a large number who are not."

One student comprehensively appears to question the usefulness of special day school for the majority of the students who have no access to special day school. The student stated that:

> *Attending this special day school enables us to learn a lot from our peers and better-trained teachers, which can positively impact our academic performance. However, it is concerning that the school only admits a limited number of high achievers, leaving out many exceptionally talented students due to various factors, such as a lack of access to school announcements through social media and the school's limited capacity for new students. If this trend persists, it may lead to inequality and inequity among individuals in their future societal roles, with some students being favored over the majority in terms of educational opportunities.*

The unintended impact of the expansion of special day schools on regular school students

Some teachers questioned whether enrolling high-achieving students in special day schools could impact the teaching and learning in regular secondary schools. One teacher inquired if the focus on boarding and special day schools would weaken regular secondary schools. Another teacher also suggested that regular secondary schools could benefit from enrolling high-achieving students as they would become role models for other students.

Discussion

Although the Ethiopian Ministry of Education's general education curriculum framework in 2020 provides for various types of curriculum differentiation, this has not yet been implemented in secondary education. All 9th and 10th-grade students across the country must take the same subjects, with the option to include additional subjects in their mother tongue and a federal language but no opportunity to choose other subjects, fields, or other types of CDs. In grades 11 and 12, students can choose either the natural sciences or the social sciences stream. Now, in the 2023/24 academic year, all students in grades 11 and 12 in regular secondary schools are required to study seven subjects in the natural sciences stream and six subjects in the social sciences stream. The practices of stream differentiation in grades 11 and 12 and the option to include the mother tongue and a federal language subjects in grades 9 and 10 are mandated by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education letter written on February 2023 to regional states and city administrations.

It is often reported by top regional and federal education leaders that the primary aim of both boarding and special day secondary schools is to cater to the exceptional abilities of high academic achievers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which cannot be fully addressed in regular secondary schools across Ethiopia. However, it is notable that all boarding school students in grades 9 and 10 in the study area are required to take subjects similar to students in regular secondary schools. The only difference is that students in boarding schools have the option to study either Afan Oromo or Amharic, or both languages. Additionally, boarding school students in grades 11 and 12 have the choice of selecting either a natural sciences or a social sciences stream, similar to their

counterparts in regular secondary schools. Consequently, boarding school students in grades 11 and 12 have virtually identical subject choices and stream options to those available to regular students.

All students in grades 9 and 10 at the special day school are required to study only compulsory subjects, while students in grades 11 and 12, particularly those in the natural science stream, must complete only compulsory subjects. This is entirely identical to the curriculum requirements for regular students in grades 9 to 12. However, students in grades 11 and 12 have no opportunity to enroll in the social science stream. Unlike boarding school students, language subject choice and stream differentiation are not available for all grades 9 to 12 students at the special day school.

The special day and boarding schools in Ethiopia have the same curriculum as regular secondary schools. They teach their students the same subjects and streams, contrary to the literature on curriculum differentiation and practices in many other parts of the world. The primary distinction lies in the superior educational facilities and teaching staff of boarding and special day schools. In fact, teachers in special day schools enhance curriculum content and instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of high-achieving students.

Students and teachers at the special day school have reported that the curriculum is enriched through the use of various instructional strategies and resources aimed at deepening subject knowledge and skills. As part of this enrichment, students in the special day school engage in various practical and well-equipped laboratory work in subjects such as physics, chemistry, ICT, biology, and language laboratories. These practices suggest that the special day school has

differentiated at least the contents taught, the instructional strategies used, and the learning environments employed to address the academic abilities and interests of its students. In support of this, several researchers (e.g., Reis & Renzulli, 2015; Tomlinson, 2014) have acknowledged that differentiation of curriculum components—such as content differentiation, instructional process differentiation, and classroom learning differentiation—is a common and effective method of meeting the diverse academic abilities and interests of students within an inclusive classroom.

Based on the current practices observed in both the special day school and the boarding school, it is evident that there is no curriculum differentiation by school type compared to regular secondary schools in Ethiopia. All three types of schools offer similar streams and subjects, with variations of content difficulty levels mainly introduced by teachers during the implementation of the formal curriculum. Consequently, the practices of boarding and special day secondary schools may not effectively address the needs of students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) significantly differently from regular schools.

In this regard, the three Korean special or boarding schools can demonstrate the practices of CD by school type. For example, Choi and Hon (2009) stated that there are three different types of special or boarding high schools for mathematically gifted students in Korea. Its main purpose is to support gifted students in mathematics and science, as regular high schools cannot meet their special needs. As a result, one of the three secondary schools practiced an acceleration system, allowing students to complete the regular three-year mathematics curriculum in one year and facilitating these gifted students' entry into the best universities in their field. The other boarding school has a unique, innovative curriculum in non-academic skills such as leadership,

sport, and artistic performances, as well as offering courses within the national curriculum. The third boarding school introduces advanced courses in mathematics, science, and technology, in addition to a national curriculum. Therefore, all three boarding schools or specialized high schools have different curricula to cater to mathematically and scientifically gifted students because regular high schools are unable to meet their special needs. Although the purpose and practice of such schools should be adapted to the country's context and lessons learned accordingly, the above evidence shows that boarding schools or special day schools do not merely offer the same curriculum and streaming as the mainstream or regular secondary schools. Without such provisions, it is difficult to envision how these schools can effectively nurture the abilities and skills of their students in ways that differ significantly from what students could attain in mainstream schools. In addition, the practice described above shows that universities should be responsive to academically able students in terms of admissions and curriculum organization.

In addition, students in special day schools and boarding schools scored very high grades in the Ethiopian school leaving examinations. Both the boarding school and the special day school place a high value on students' academic achievement. As these students are the highest achievers at grade 8 regional examinations, they would succeed when their secondary education is supported by the best available teaching and learning resources in the country. In this regard, it is necessary for future research to discern the effect of boarding and special day schools on the examination results of grade 12 students, as the current discourse in Ethiopia appears to attribute the high pass rates of boarding school and special day school students in grade 12

examinations exclusively to the schools, rather than considering the strong academic background of the students.

One of the main findings of this study is that students are stressed due to the high level of competition for a top three spot in the class, although some students reported cooperation and support from their peers. Students also reported that excessive focus on academic excellence and separation from parents led to psychological stress. In this regard, several researchers (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2019; Bass, 2014; Behaghel et al., 2017; Kaltsas & Gkaintartzi, 2021) asserted that stringent rules, demanding coursework and students' psychosocial well-being all have negative effects on the boarding school students' academic success.

It is also interesting that boarding school students feel safer and have no peer pressure or harassment. This may be due to the fact that the boarding school only accommodates females. Previous studies showed that teen sexual abuse is more prevalent in boarding schools than in special day schools, which is inconsistent with the present study finding (Demirel and Kurt, 2021; Pfeiffer et al.. 2016). The boarding school in Ethiopia's secondary school system may have stricter rules and regulations than a special day school, which may cause a discrepancy in this finding.

Conclusion and Implications

Boarding and special day schools do not offer an organized differentiated curriculum. Instead, they provide stream differentiation (natural science and social science), and differentiated instruction through improved facilities, qualified teachers and improved laboratories. The absence of clear guidelines regarding the purpose and management of these schools may have contributed to this situation. Due to their

strong academic background and the quality education these schools provide, students often perform exceptionally well on school leaving exams. However, this singular focus on academic achievement falls short of the purpose of boarding and special day schools in the literature. International evidence suggests that boarding and special day schools aim to develop students' potential and abilities by offering them various forms of differentiated curricula. They offer students diverse curricula, flexible choice of advanced subjects based on their ability and interest areas, and offers them flexible pathways to higher education.

If these schools are to continue to function in Ethiopia, organizing differentiated flexible curricula that respond to the abilities, interests, and aspirations of students should be designed. Additionally, since boarding schools and special day schools place great emphasis on academic excellence, it is important that they also focus on promoting students' overall development through various interventions. The organisation and structure of schools should respond to the needs of these students and comprehensive career guidance and counseling services should be provided. These emphasize the need for developing a clear policy or guideline that sets out the purposes, student selection processes, teaching and learning methodologies, structure, and financing of boarding and special day schools.

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The Practice of Using Appropriate Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disability in two Primary Schools of Gondar City

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Abstract

The aim of the present qualitative case study is to explore teachers' current practice of using appropriate curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities (SwID) in special classes of primary schools in Gondar city. The study involved six special needs education teachers using purposive sampling. The data collected through interviews, classroom observations and document review were analyzed using thematic analysis technique. The analysis revealed four major themes: Conceptualization of curriculum for SwID, the kind of curriculum content being offered, preference of functional curriculum to the academic curriculum and challenges teachers faced during curriculum implementation. Teachers' limited knowledge and skills in adapting curriculum for SwID and consecutivelythe absence of adapted curriculum for SwID were found to be the major challanges. Implications for practice and recommendations were forwarded including the need for arranging a series of short term training for these teachers to help children with intellectual disabilities that they have the right to quality education using appropriate curriculum.

Keywords: *Intellectual disability, special needs education, teachers, curriculum, academic.*

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Introduction

People with intellectual disabilities have been given different labels, definitions, and classifications throughout human history.They were also denied access to many opportunities including education (Keith & Keith, 2013). They have been ill defined and labeled as those who cannot be educated, but trained. In this study, the concept of intellectual disability (ID) is understood based on the definition given by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAID) and World Health Organization (WHO).The current AAID manual, defines intellectual disability as: *"a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates during the developmental period*(Schalock et al., 2021, p. 1). Based on the above authoritative definition, students with intellectual disabilities (SwID)are those who have limitations in general mental ability, that consists of the ability to reason, solve problems, plan, think abstractly, make judgment, academic learning, comprehend complex ideas and learn from social experience(AAID, 2019; Moljord, 2018).They also have limitations in adaptive behaviorthat involve daily living skills such as language and communication, social participation, independent living skills across multiple environments, including school (American Psychiatric Association , APA, 2013).

Classification of ID has also shown a shift of emphasis over years from focusing on the severity of the disability—mild, moderate, severe, and profound—to focusing on the intensity of supports required: intermittent, limited, extensive, or pervasive according to AAIDD manual. This has changed the whole conceptualization of ID and its classification system (Harris & Greenspan, 2016).

The development in cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior, requires special educational provisions such as appropriate curriculum, which means a curriculum adapted to students needs and level of intellectual disability such as modifying the curriculum content, which is the focus of the present study. If proper adaptation in the design and delivery of a curriculum is well done for SwID, they can benefit and develop educationally, socially and psychologically in the school system (APA, 2013). Since AAIDD gives equal emphasis to both intellectual and adaptive functioning, the overall functioning of these children may improve over time, if they get proper support (Moljord, 2018). However, due to societal misconceptions about people and the absence of competence to support them, SwID have long been mistreated, excluded and denied access to education (Mcdonagh, Goodey & Stainton, 2018; Keith & Keith, 2013; Winzer, 2009).

Later, society started to show some humane treatment to people with SwID as a result of changes in social, education philosophy and legislation at international level (Keith & Keith, 2013; Metzler, 2016; Winzer, 1993). Now, children with disabilities, including those with ID have access to a continuum of educational services ranging from special schools to inclusive educational settings.Regardless of educational settings, the main objective of teaching SwIDmust be preparing them to make a smooth transition to adult life (Alodat, Muhaidat, Algolayla t& Alzboun, 2020) with destination of living an independent life. This can basically be realized based on the type of curriculum they learn.

A Curriculum for Students with mild and moderate Intellectual Disabilities

According to Hanreddya&Östlundb (2020), the term curriculum is broadly defined as *"what happens in the classroom to meet the learning goals defined by the state. This includes: lessons, assignments, and materials teachers use"* (p. 237). Abbott (2014), cited in Ramirez (2021) specifically defined Curriculum as *"…the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons the teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to the students."* (p. 14). Al-Zboon(2021) also presents a set of curriculum components for students with disability (SwD):*"General and specific outcomes documentation, student textbooks, teacher textbooks and supported learning resources"* (p. 61). In this study, the definition of curriculum is viewed as the content of instruction or what Shurr&Bouck (2013) define as *"the 'what' of teaching or knowledge and concepts driving pedagogy and assessment in instruction"* (p. 76). An appropriate curriculum, in the present study, means a curriculum content that is adapted to address the learning needs and capacity of SwID in special class.

Over the decades, there was a shifting philosophy in the field of SNE and legislative acts. Against the backdrop of these changes, the nature of curriculum content also continued to evolve over time, i.e., shifting from developmentally appropriate curriculum to functional curriculum, and now to standards-based curriculum (also called general education or academic curriculum) (Ain, 2018; Downing, 2010; Griffen, 2017).The developmental approach to curriculum was based on the student's mental age and was used regardless of the chronological age of the person with disabilities. In the developmental model, instruction has failed to

consider the student's chronological age and *"created learning environments that looked very juvenile"* (Downing, 2010, p. 18). Besides, it did not allow for the students acquisition of the skills needed to become independent (Downing, 2010;Griffen, 2017) in their life.The question, *"which type of curricular approach should be appropriate for students with Intellectual disabilities?"* is still a critical one that has been the subject of debate among the professionals in the field, focusing mostly around standards-based(academic) versus functional curriculum models, both of which have significant supports in the field (Ain, 2018;Alodat et al., 2020; Ayres et al., 2011; Courtade et al., 2012).

To see a clear picture of each approach, it is then important to understand the underlying assumptions behind each side of the argument. As a result of the inherent limitations in the developmental model, functional curriculum was introduced and became the dominant curricular content for SwID through the 1980's and 1990's. A functional curriculum is defined as *"a curriculum that focuses upon independent living skills and vocational skills, emphasizing communication and social skills"* (Evans & Fredericks, 1991, cited in Ramirez, 2021, p. 15). Functional curriculum gives emphasis to the general life skills needed for productive and independent living in the community. It includes: self-determination skills, and community participation skills, functional reading and writing (Alodat et al., 2020; Ayres et al., 2011). The whole decision of selecting a curriculum for SwID, of course, needs to be based on their needs and potentials.

According to proponents of functional curriculum (Ayres et al., 2011), to plan a curriculum for SwID, one should take into account the students' current and future needs and learning potentials.They further argue that since students are in a school

for a limited period of time, focusing on a general education curriculum alone may give them no chance to learn functional skills (Ain, 2018). Supporters of this approach (Ain, 2018; Alodat et al., 2020; Ayres et al., 2011), also argue that since limitation in adaptive behavior is one major characteristic of SwID that entails lack of practical, social and conceptual skills that have to be learned and are performed by people in their everyday lives (Schalock et al., 2021), teachers are expected to fill these gaps by setting students' individual education plans (IEP). In this case, a functional curriculum would, then, be the best curriculum model in realizing these goals (Ain, 2018; Moljord, 2018) and meeting the needs of SwID.Besides,proponents of functional curriculum question the content of standards-based curriculum for taking too much time that could have been used for teaching vocational skills, which are important for these students adult lives (Alodat et al., 2020; Ayres et al., 2011).According to Alodat et al. (2020), for example, standards-based curriculum fails to provide these students *"with opportunities to develop skills they will need to succeed after school"* (p. 1238).

Proponents of standards-based curriculum (Courtade et al., 2012) on the other hand, claimed that the content of the curriculum should focus on instruction, assessment, and grading in various core subject areas including language, mathematics, science, social studies, etc.Courtade et al. (2012) put forward seven reasons for why they believe standards-based curriculum is the best curriculum model for SwID. In their first justification, for example, they argue that a standards-based curriculum provides SwID the right to full educational opportunity.. Theyasserted that to have full access to standards-based curriculum content is a fundamental right of every student.Supporters of SBC stressed the importance of providing an academic curriculum for SWID that

would help them later in life such as getting jobs, and living independently.Courtade et al. (2012) further elaborated that since some jobs require academic knowledge and skills such as mathematics, it is important to provide an academic curriculum for SwID (Almalki, 2018). These authors also defend the use of standards-based curriculum model on the ground that since the academic potential of SwID is still largely unexplored and not yet known, it is not right for teachers to restrict these students from learning academic contents (Courtade et al., 2012).

From the above discussion, it is possible to conclude that both functional curriculum and a standards-based curriculum approaches have sound rationales behind their arguments. Many researchers agree on the importance of using both approaches to help SwID learn effectively. Even proponents of standards-based curriculum (Courtade et al. (2012) admitted that it will be unfair to *"focus on grade-aligned state academic content standards without providing opportunities for community-based instruction and job tryouts"* (p. 4), which is the domain of functional curriculum.Whereas, functional skills enable SwID to integrate themselves within the community they live in and to make important life decisions. The general education /standards-based/ curriculum helps them not only have the right to learn in general-education classrooms with their peers who have no disability, but also develop academic proficiency that is critical to prepare themselves for the world of job. To provide SwID meaningful access to the general education curriculum, teachers must be well prepared (Hanreddya&Östlundb, 2020) to adapt curriculum.

Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum adaptation refers to *"efforts to modify the way in which content is represented or presented in which the student engages with and responds to the curriculum"* (Lee, et al. 2006, p. 200).Although access to the general education curriculum has often been practiced in the regular classroom, legislations in many countries recommended access to this curriculum regardless of the setting, where students are being educated (Hanreddya&Östlundb, 2020; Jia-Wei, 2014), through curriculum adaptation. Using a content-analytic review method, Moljord (2018) reviewed studies conducted on curricular contents for SwID from 1994 to 2016 and concludes that research articles on standards-based curriculum content had the highest coverage in terms of the number of publications. One possible reason for this could be the *"influence of the ideology of inclusion and access to the general curriculum, which implicitly may shape research interest"* (Moljord. 2018, p. 19).

To enable SwID participate in both general and special education processes and have access to classroom instruction and assessment procedures, they need adaptations (Kurth et al., 2012, cited in Finnerty, 2015; Sarva, 2016). Regarding the curriculum adaption process, scholars propose a number of different strategies. The major curriculum adaptation strategies involve, "instructional goals, instructional contents, instructional strategies, instructional settings and student behavior needs" (Jia-Wei, 2014, p. 262). However, according to Hanreddya & Östlundb (2020), many teachers, including SNE teachers, often fail to take into account the strengths and needs of each student, which is the basis for curriculum adaptations.

Some studies documented the problems in the areas of the curriculum and teaching SwID. Alyazori (2017), cited in Al-Zboon's (2021), for example, reports that the

curriculum for SwID has a low priority in the Arab world, resulting in a lack of resources and funding. Similarly, using content analysis and field observations, Al-Zboon's (2021) study also revealed such challenges as absence of resources as "general framework document, reference book or teacher guidebook to help in designing or delivering the curriculum" (Al-Zboon, 2021, p. 64) that would have increased the ability of teachers to teach SwID.

Another challenge these teachers face is related to lack of competences in designing and delivering curriculum for SwID. According to McBride & Al-Khateeb (2010), cited in Al-Zboon (2021), this is is due to lack of teachers' adequate training in curriculum adaptation and their engagement in education without having enough training to teach SwID.

Generally the major challenges SNE teachers face in the implementation of the curriculum for SwID is mainly summarized by Al-Zboon (2021) in his findings: the absence of reliable assessment tools to determine students' current performance levels; teachers' low expectation for SwID, inaccurate diagnosis and categorization of student disabilities; and teachers' inadequate proficiency in adapting the curriculum, to mention some.

The problem is also more evident in Ethiopia as the government official documents clearly attest (MOE, 2012a, 2016). Children with intellectual disabilities have long been among one of the most excluded group from both social life and educational settings, in Ethiopia. This has been confirmed by Kassahun(2014) in a study using survey research design on the nature and difference of prejudice and discrimination society has towards people with various types of disability in a

preparatory school in Addis Ababa. The result shows that the level of prejudice and discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities were stronger than those with other types of disabilities.

To properly address the problems observed in making education accessible for all, including those with ID, the government has taken some important policy measures. The 1994 Education and Training Policy and its revised version (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia [FDRE] (2021), which are all based on the country's constitution, are significant ones. A series of Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP) has also been developed to be implemented within some years interval (from ESDP I to ESDP VI). It was Education Sector Development Program III (ESDP III) (MOE, 2005) and the subsequent programs that gave serious attention to SNE (MOE, 2016). During ESDP III (2005/06-2010/11), the Special Needs/Inclusive Education Program Strategy (MOE, 2006), which is the first of its kind in the country, was launched and was revised later in 2012. According to this strategy, children with severe disabilities are required to receive education in special schools and special classes, attached to regular primary schools (MOE, 2012a) and will be integrated in the regular classroom after completing grades 3 and 4 in special classes, developing basic communication skills

Ethiopia follows three different systems of education: Special schools, integrated schools, and "inclusive education." Special schools are schools for certain category of learners with disabilities such as the deaf, the blind and those with sever and profound ID. In an integrated system, for example, special units/classes are organized within the compound of primary schools and are meant to serve students with severe disabilities in separate classes (MOE, 2016). In *inclusive education*,

children with disabilities are placed in regular classes, supported, fully participated and are expected to become successful like any other children without disabilities, which happens rarely in Ethiopia (Alemayehu, 2016). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2016) also introduced a ten year "Master Plan for Special Needs/Inclusive Education (2016-2025), during which a curriculum review was planned from preprimary to Grade12, which are appeared in the General Education Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2020). This curriculum framework allows teachers to maximize the individual growth and success of each student. The new General Education Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2020),like its predecessor, adopted a competency-based approach, and is intended to be:

> *a more cross-curricular, thematic, inter-disciplinary and collaborative approach that reflects real life situations and encourages transfer of skills from one learning area to another and discarding an exclusively subject-based approach that favors fragmentation and compartmentalization of knowledge (MOE, 2020. p. 25)*

Following these policy measures, tremendous progress has been made at all level of the education system. For example, the number of students with special needs who had access to education, increased dramatically (MOE, 2021; Getachew, 2004); teacher education programs in all institutions of higher learning are made to offer *Inclusive Education* as a common course, and institutions of teacher education (ITE) have also organized departments to train teachers specialized in special needs/inclusive education from diploma to PhD level (MOE, 2016). Although considerable progress is made in the education of students with special needs,

including those with intellectual disabilities, there is much to be done to realize quality inclusive education for SwID. This is evident from some evaluation reports made at national level. For example, the revised strategy (MOE, 2012a) reveals that there was *"no guideline for the implementation of curriculum adaptation and/or modification at the school level*" (p. 16). These problems have repeatedly been reported in the ministry of education documents, but no concrete measures were taken to solve it. As a result, some studies show that SwID have faced frequent repetition in grade one and experienced very high dropout rate (Chanie, 2010). To study teachers' practice in relation to applying appropriate curriculum for SwID is, therefore, critical in understanding how the needs of these students are catered for, in special classes at primary school level.There are some studies in relation to the curriculum for children with intellectual disabilities in a general sense (Ain, 2018; Al-Zboon, 2021; Ayres et al., 2011; Courtade et al., 2012; Downing, 2010; Griffen, 2017; Shurr & Bouck, 2013) but to our knowledge, little research has been conducted on adapting or using appropriate curriculum content for SwID in special units/classes at primary schools in Ethiopia in general, and in Gondar city in particular. Hence, the present study will focus on the research gap related to teachers' experience in applying appropriate curriculum for SwID in the Ethiopian context, particularly in two primacy schools of Gondar city administration.

Statement of the Problem

Although the choice of curriculum content for SwID is central to address their educational needs and potentials (Moljord, 2018), few studies were conducted on special needs education (SNE) teachers' perception and experiences related to

teaching the curriculum for SwID. Even though SNE teachers are responsible for curriculum adaptation, many experience uncertainty on how to deliver the right support for SwID (Finnerty, 2015).

The problem is more evident in Ethiopia, where there is no official guideline for curriculum adaptation (MoE,2016). To our knowledge, little research has been conducted on adapting or using appropriate curriculum content for SwID in special units/classes at primary schools in Ethiopia in general and in Gondar city in particular. Hence, the present study will focus on the research gap related to teachers' experience in applying appropriate curriculum for SwID.

Ethiopia, a signatory of Salamanca framework for action (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,UNESCO, 1994), issued education and training policy the same year and adopted an inclusive education strategy in 2006 (MoE, 2006). Teacher education for children with disabilities has been offered since 1993; however, the majority of students with intellectual disability still do not get their education through the adapted curriculum; rather, they are forced to follow only standards-based (general education) curriculum without adaptation, that does not consider their mental capacity. Teachers engaged in supporting SwID in Ethiopia have difficulty making curriculum adaptation, for there have been no guideline for curriculum adaptation (MOE, 2012b).

Furthermore, having lived in the Amhara region as a teacher educator for many years in colleges of teacher education,the first author had the opportunity to observe SNE teachers being confused on what contents to teach SwID. Teachers, of course, tried to teach the readymade curriculum for all, regardless of the level of intellectual capacity of the learners in special classes. Many teachers are heard

complaining that the lessons being provided to SwID in primary schools are not meeting their needs and potentials. From the authors' many years of experience in observing SwID, it was also evident that these students were not making progress in their education; rather, they are often neglected, and their learning is largely overlooked or negleced. In fact, their destiny seems to stay in "O" class for more than half a decade in their twenties.As the role of SNE teachers in using appropriate curriculum for SwID is critical, we found it essential to understand their experience and practice form their own perspective through empirical research.

The main purpose of the present study is, therefore, to explore the current practice of using curriculum content for SwID who were reported to have mild and moderate level of ID in special classes of the primary schools in Gondar city with the basic research questions listed below.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the current study and help toexploretheexperiences of SNE teachers in relation to teaching the curriculum contentfor SwID in their classroom settings:

1. How do special needs education (SNE) teachers conceptualize curriculum for students with intellectual disability (SwID)?
2. How do SNE teachers describe their experience ofteaching the curriculum contentforSwID?
3. What difficulties did teacher participants face in teaching SwID?

Methods

To understand SNE teachers' perceptions and practices in dealing with the curriculum content for SwID in special classes, qualitative research methodology was found to be the best approach, which is based on *Interpretive/Constructivist* paradigm. Unlike *positivist/post-positivist* paradigm, the interpretive/constructive paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed that there is no such a thing as single observable reality; rather, there are multiple realities or interpretations of a single phenomenon (Merriam &Tisdell, 2016), in relation of the teaching of teachers and the learning of SwID. Unlike a quantitative research approach, qualitative research gives more detail descriptions of the practical teaching experiences of the teachers in words and meanings rather than numbers (Cohen et al., 2018). This enabled the researchers to effectively explore the complex practices of SNE teachers about the curriculum they were teaching for SwID in two selected primary schools.

Research Design

A qualitative case study research design was used to understand teachers' practices on the appropriateness of the curriculum being taught for SwID in special units of two primary schools in Gondar city. This design allowed us to make an in-depth exploration of teachers' everyday school experience from a holistic perspective (Merriam, 2009).Yin (2014) also defined a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (p. 18), which is also the intention of the present study to describe the details of the phenomenon of the practice of teachers teaching SwID.This design was selected as the most appropriate design, that enabled the researchers to explore teaching which

is a complex social phenomena (Yin, 2018) and focus on *"understanding"* (Merriam, 2009) teachers' practices in teaching the curriculum for SwID in primary schools.

Research Site

The research was conducted at two primary schools that are found within the jurisdiction of Gondar city administration. Gondar city is a historic city found 724Km northwest of Addis Ababa.Wechose the two schools, because they are the only primary schools in Gondar city admitting SwID in special units/classes.Besides, the city is the home town of the first author whois working atthe University of Gondar that is situated near the two schools. This helped the first author have easy access to the schools and keep in touch with the participants to collect data going back and forth using ample time and explore in depth. Although teachers in the two special units are serving students with three major types of disabilities (i.e., visual, hearing and intellectual) from grade "O" class to grade 4, those with intellectual disabilities (ID), those who were reported to have mild and moderate ID assigned in "O" class are the primary area of interest for the present study. The problem is more pronounced in teaching these students than students with other disability categories. Progress in education is relatively much better for students with the above mentioned sensory impairments compared to SwID, those are detained in "O" class for years and limited progresses have been observed.

Sampling technique

Purposeful sampling was employed (Patton, 2015)as a technique to select the two schools and the teachers to describe their practice of curriculum implementation for

SwID. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to understand and gain insight into the phenomenon of interest and therefore must select a sample from which someone can learn the most (Patton, 2015), because of their rich experiences in the issue under investigation. Some criteria weresetto select the participants (Creswell, 2013). These criteria include that the teachers: should be working as a special needs education (SNE) teacher, in a public primary schoolat least for more than three years' experience of teachingSwID and is willing to participate in the study. Since qualitative case study research focuses on interpretation and meaning, not on generalization (Merrium&Tisdell, 2016), only sixSNE teachers who met the criteria were selected purposefully as potential samples from nineteenSNE teachers in the two primary schools. It was strongly believed that the sampled teachers were key informants as they have served for more than three years which helpedus to explore in-depth data (Hennink& Kaiser, 2021).

Instruments

In the present study, three instruments were employed: semi-structured interview, observation and consultation of some documents.

***Semi-Structured Interview Guide*:** The main data collection instrument used in this study was *semi-structured interview*. This instrumenthelped us to find out what is *"in and on someone else's mind"* (Patton, 2015, p. 426). It also gives more insight into the meanings the practices of the teachers and complexity of their experiences, attitudes, and behaviors (Merrium&Tisdell, 2016) in teaching SwID. To gain contextual understanding (Seidman, 2006) of the participants, we developed a semi-structured interview guide based on the research questions and on extensive reviews of literature specific to curriculum for SwID. The interview questions were written

in English and then translated into Amharic language for making communication easier with participants. Some of interview items include:"How do you describe curriculum?""What kind of curriculum do you use in teaching SwiD?""Tell me about the kind of curriculum you think is appropriate for SwID?" "What challenges do you face in using appropriate curriculum for SwID?" Such open-ended questions of the interview were used to explore in-depth practical experiences of teachers' on the nature and appropriateness of the curriculum they are teaching for SwID.

The interviews with teachers were conducted in a separate room in the school compound in order to secure their information. The interview time, place and all conditions were as convenient as possible for participants. Before the interview took place, all necessary information was discussed with the teachers, such as the purpose of the study, the way of securing their information and the like. Then, the first author, conducted the interviews in person in each school setting, in a place and time convenient to the participants. Each interview lasted from 40 to 50 minutes. The data was recorded on audio-tape, and then transcribed for analysis.

Observation checklist:Another instrument we employed in this study wasobservation checklist that helped to gain additional information about the classroom environment. The observation checklist was recorded by note taking in the actual teaching and learning process in the classroom designated for SwID. To remain unbiased and refrain from influencing teachers' behaviors, the first author conducted classroom observations as "an outsider of the group under study…recording data without direct involvement with activity or people" (Creswell, 2013, p. 167).The actual data collection was conducted after strong

rapport was established that has helped to decrease the level of biases on the part of the participants and also helped to collect reliable data for the study. It was finally proved that the participants did consider the data collector as a colleague rather than a supervisor to reduce teachers' bias. The first author observed the six lessons being offered for SwID in each school for about 30 minutes for each lesson. During these classroom observations, the author looked for evidence on the type of curriculum content and instructional strategies being used.

***Document analysis*:**We also found document review yet another important means of data collection for the study. We must first decide what documents are relevant to the present study. We then decided to collect documents that are believed to reflect the participants' instructional practice using appropriate curriculum and theavailability of policy guidelines that help teachers execute their roles effectively as major criteria. Accordingly, we reviewed such documents as curricular materials (e.g., lesson plans, subject area manuals, etc.) that highlighted their choices of classroom activities, records of students' profile in each school and relevant national and regional policy documents.By collecting these documents, the first author was able to observe the participants' actual practice in teaching appropriate curriculum for SwID (Patton, 2015)

Data Analysis

In order to gain a deeper insight into the practice of the participants, a thorough data analysis is critical (Creswell, 2013). Attempt was then made to accurately represent the stories and experiences of the participants while teaching the curriculum used

for SwID.Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study, because it enabled us to explore themes and patterns within and across cases (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yin, 2003). It also provides an opportunity to identify patterns and themes of the issue under investigation that transcends the participants' perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The results of the interviews from teachers were transcribed and translated. The interviews conducted with teachers in the Amharic language were transcribed from the recorded tape as stated by respondents, translated into English, word by word. The transcription and translation were carried out all the time, immediately after data collection is over. The transcribed information in the Amharic language and its translation into English were written down on a notebook, analyzed, typed in a computer using Micro-soft word, and was printed out. The data that appear in transcriptions were selected, focused, abstracted and transformed.The analyzed data were systematically organized and presented to answer the research questions.

For Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis has six phases. These six step-by-step guidelines include: (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. We tried to follow this procedure strictly. Applying a multiple case study design, the data were first analyzed on individual responses, under eachtheme side by side (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and later cross-case analysis was made to identify similarities and differences between the cases based on their relevance to the research questions (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014).Due to limited space, all the data were not displayed and described. Data reduction helped the analysis to be focused, organized and condensed for final discussion and conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are given due consideration, such as considering confidentiality principle to protect participants from any type of harm. We, for example, used no participants' or schools' actual names in the report. Instead, we assigned letters and numbers to teacher participants (e.g., T1, T2 T3…) and schools (S1 & S2) so as to respect the principle of confidentiality. To maintain the scholarly and scientific standard of the study, we also strictly followed some ethical standards developed by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) and Addis Ababa University.

Trustworthiness /quality of the Study

To ensure the quality or trustworthiness of the study, we used different strategies. One of these is observing credibility principle and maintaining accuracy of responses from each participant (Merriam, 2009). To do this, we consistently applied such strategies as member checks with the participants as well as triangulation throughout the data collection and analysis process. Credibility/validity/ was enhanced by the use of multiple methods for collecting data (e.g. interviews, observation/field notes and document review). Another way of securing trustworthiness was making repeated interviews of the same issues with all the informants after sometime, verification. Furthermore, the findings of the research were also reported in depth along with the basic research questions (Creswell, 2013).

Results

The present study aimed at exploring teachers' practice of using appropriate curriculum for SwID in special classes of the primary schools in Gondar city. The

findings are presented based on the research questions as well as the themes emerged during data analysis. Results and discussion includes demographic characteristics, teachers' conceptualization and practice of curriculum for SwIDandchallengesteachers faced during curriculum implementation.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Table 1 indicates the number and qualification of the research participants in the two sample schools.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristicsof the Study Participants

Qualification	School 1			School 2			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1st Degree	1	10	11	1	3	4	2	13	15
2nd Degree	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	4	4
Total	1	12	13	1	5	6	2	17	19

Source: Field data (2022); M=Male; F= Female

As indicated in Table 1, only two teachers were males and the rest were females. As to the educational qualification,of all 19 SNE teachers, 15 have 1st degree and four teachers have 2nd degree in SNE. From all SNE teachers in the two schools, six participants were selected as sample, of which three from school 1 (all female) and three from school 2 (1 male and two female) participants.All participants have graduated from SNE departments of different teacher education colleges and universities in the country. This makes them qualified to teach SwID

even though no one was specialized exclusively in teaching SwID or had any practical training after graduation as almost all participants reported during the interview.

From the data gained through interview, observation and the review of students' admission records, it was found that there were students with three major types of disability categories in the special units of the two primary schools: visual impairment, hearing impairment and intellectual disability. The total number of students with these disabilities enrolled in the two schools in the 2022/2023 academic year was 104 (male 72, female 32), of which the majority were those with intellectual disabilities (56). S1 was serving 40 (27 male, 13 female) SwID and S2 had 16 (9 male and 7 female) students. Unlike those with visual and hearing impairment, SwID are all assigned in a single classroom in both schools.

The major findings of the study presented below are based on the research questions as well as the themes evolved as the data analysis was underway. The major themes are: (1)Conceptualization of curriculum for SwID (2) The kind of curriculum content being offered (3) Preference of functional curriculum to the academic curriculum and (4) Challenges teachers faced during curriculum implementation. The subthemes are discussed under each major themes but they are treated separately under the overarching theme:"Theme Four: Challenges Teachers Faced During Curriculum Implementation" The findings will then be discussed with some illustrative quotes taken from teachers' interviews integrated with the data gained through observation and document review.

Theme One: Conceptualization of Curriculum for SwID

In this part, teachers' understanding of the very concept of curriculum, their practice of the specific curriculum contents and the appropriateness of curriculum for SwID are discussed.. With regard to their conceptualization of curriculum, some participants from both schools have defined it from their own perspective as follows: "*Well, I think, curriculum involves the materials with which we deliver our lessons such as student text books and teacher's guide"* (T4 from S1). Another participant also added: "*It means what students learn in a classroom*" (T2 from S2). Finally, a participant from the same school defines Curriculums : "*To me, curriculum includes both the student text book and teachers' guide like we have for students in the regular classrooms*" (T1 from S2).

Interview data analysis revealed that all participant teachers seemed to have no comprehensive understanding of a curriculum except mentioning some components of it such as student textbook and teacher's guide. To know more about the nature of curriculum currently offered to SwID, interview was conducted with participant teachers, classroom observation was made and lesson plans were reviewed and described in the next parts.

Theme Two: The kind of curriculum content being offered

When asked what specific curriculum areas they are actually teaching to SwID at the moment, most participants described what they have actually been doing in the classroom as follows: "*As a teacher of fine arts & handicrafts, I teach my students such skills as fine motor skills as dressing, sewing, etc. Dressing skill, for*

example involves such sequence of activities as buttoning & unbuttoning; fastening; zipping; tying one's shoes, etc."(T2).Another participants from school 1 also added, "*I'm now teaching general physical exercise which includes such contents as running, jumping, various games and other related physical activities that help to develop their gross motor skills"* (T5).

Form the document review, it was also confirmed that SNE teachers choose curriculum contents selected arbitrarily, i.e., based on what they think was right for SwID, not based on official curricular material. These subjects include: Amharic language (reading and writing), mathematical skills, daily living skills (hygiene or sanitation), physical exercise, fine arts, handicrafts, and social skills, for which annual, weekly and daily lesson plans need to be developed. The annual plan for each subject area was designed at the unit level at the beginning of the school year from which each individual teacher would develop a weekly lesson plan for their specific subject. All teachers were found to have weekly lesson plans but no daily lesson plans at all. Why teachers did not prepare daily lesson plans?A participant explained it as follows: "*I don't have a daily lesson plan, because I believe that it is difficult for SwID to learn or master these skills in a short period of time. We all agree on this issue*" (T3 from S2).Similarly another teacher commented: "*We find it impractical to design a daily lesson plan because SwID are unable to easily understand even a single alphabet or number. To your information, what we plan for a week will often be repeatedly taught for a month or two*" (T1 from S2).

The data analysis also revealed that all participants in the two schools identified six curriculum contents for SwID with minor difference. For example,

while participants of S1 teach a subject simply called "fine arts" the nomenclature given to this subject by S2 is "fine arts and handicrafts" the rest five subjects are all the same. A list of subjects mentioned by teachers was not based on an official curriculum guideline. They just teach the contents of each subject as part of the curriculum based largely on their personal choice, for there is no curriculum framework document specifically adapted for SwID.These subjects were initially taken from a short training manual or trial curriculum that was prepared at a workshop in 1994. It was the school director of one of these two schools who brought a copy of the manual after attending that workshop. Then, those who were teaching in the school, where this director was in charge, have tried to adapt it to their school context.

Theme Three: Preference of functional curriculum to the academic curriculum

The participant teachers were asked about the appropriate curriculum for SwID. Almost all participant teachers in the present study seemed to favor the functional curriculum as presented in the following ways: "*I believe vocational and life skills are more important than academic skills in my classroom context. I think these children need more than reading and writing. They need to have vocational skills that are meaningful to their lives*" (T1).Another participant also added: "*Most of these students are not good at academic subjects. For some, it takes a year or two to learn even the first two Amharic letters. In my classroom, I have just two students out of 40 who can perform well in reading and writing Amharic letters* (T4).

Similarly, another participant from S1 was critical of the provision of too much emphasis to academics for those students who are adolescents and fit for doing

vocational activities, "*Given their productive age and physical fitness, I think it's a waste of time to keep them for years, here in the same grade-level, just for reading and writing Amharic letters* (T6). The data from classroom observations and records of students' profile also confirmed that most of the students in SwID classroom were adolescents having good physical strength and some of them are capable of doing amazing physical activities such as sports, watering plants, but, had difficulty reading letters or numbers. Almost all of them have been in the same classroom for more than five years attending lessons that are more of pre-primary in their contents. Detaining SwID in the same class for five years is not morally acceptable for any one and it is more frustrating for parents and teachers who are engaged in serving these children.

Theme Four: Challenges Teachers Faced During Curriculum Implementation

Teachers were **a**sked about the challenges they have faced in relation to the curriculum they are teaching. The major challenges SNE teachers were facing in teaching SwID were found to be the absence of adapted curriculum, teachers' lack of competence to adapt curriculum and lack of resources.

Subtheme One: Absence of a curriculum designed for SwID

The majority of participants singled out the designed or adapted specifically for SwID as the most serious problem as presented in the following ways: "*We do not have any textbook, manual or teacher's guide. I, for example, teach my students entirely based on the lesson plan that we always design at the department/unit/ level using our common understanding and agreement among ourselves"* (T1). T5 was

also of the same opinion: "*There is no curriculum or manual prepared specifically for SwID as such. The only material that has been serving as a manual for teaching SwID is the one prepared in a workshop held more than 30 years ago. That piece of paper is not even adequate and it has not been updated since then".* Some teachers from S2 describe that they do not even know the existence of such a manual at all, as disclosed by one of the participant: "*Even though we teach similar subjects with S1, we have no uniform contents or methods of teaching. So it is a critical to have a standardized curriculum or manual that describes the contents or subject areas that are appropriate for SwID*" (T3).

From the data obtained through classroom observation and document review, it was found out that the curriculum material available were minimal. There were only annual and weekly lesson plans, which were often designed based on what they assumed was appropriate, not on any standards of curricular document. In fact, most teachers depend on lesson plans they developed based entirely on their personal experience.

Subtheme Two: Lack of teacher's professional competence

Most participants reported the importance of having a curriculum designed specifically for SwID because they find it difficult to adapt the general education curriculum as they often do to teach students with other disability category. This was due largely to lack of professional competence in curriculum adaptation, among other things. The data analysis revealed that there were three major areas in which SNE teachers reported to have poor professional competences: subject area

knowledge, designing and using individual education plan (IEP) and curriculum adaptation as participants from the two schools obviously admitted:

The first challenge identified by participants was related to ***subject area knowledge*** as reported by participants: "*We don't know what to teach and how to teach. For example, I'm currently teaching fine arts, but, I had no background knowledge or training on it. First I had hard time drawing a simple picture on the chalkboard."* (T6)

Another from school 1 also reflected:"*The subjects or contents we are currently teaching are designed based simply on an agreement among the staff. We identified contents that we believe are appropriate to the level of SwID capacity with no sound assessment"* (T5).

Most teachers also experienced difficulty in ***designing IEP***, as one participant obviously admitted: "*My lesson plan is for the whole class and I don't use IEP, because, it is very difficult to implement in a class of 40 students. It is just impractical. By the way, I also teach students with other disabilities in other classes in addition to SwID" (T1).Another participant also added, " Basically, I don't use IEP for my students simply because I have no sufficient skill to design IEP"* (T4).

With regard to ***curriculum adaptation***, unlike the ones being offered to students with visual impairment and hearing impairment, the contents currently being taught for SwID are not related to the general education curriculum, as described by almost all participants: "*We actually don't use the regular curriculum, because it is too difficult for SwID to understand. Even if we want to adapt it, we*

have no skill and knowledge to do that because we had no training on curriculum adaptation" (T6).

T1 from school two was also of the opinion:

> *If I want to teach grade one text book of the regular class, it will be difficult to apply it in classroom for SwID. Besides, I do not know how to adapt the curriculum, based on needs and potentials of SwID. There should be a series of in-service teacher training in curriculum and current teaching strategies for those providing educational service for SwID.*
>
> *I don't actually use the general education curriculum, simply because they are too difficult for SwID to understand. Besides, I had no professional competence in adapting the regular curriculum. There is no adapted/designed curriculum in our region. This makes the learning of children and our teaching waste of time* (T4).

Generally, data from the interview revealed that most SNE teachers from the two schools consider themselves as having inadequate professional knowledge and skills in the specific area such as knowledge in each subject areas, in developing IEP and curriculum adaptation which are all important to meet the needs of students with intellectual disability. Besides the incompetence of the teachers, there are also scarcities of resources to fully accommodate the learning of SwIDand meet their needs. The shortage of appropriate instructional resources was yet another challenge SNE teachers encountered in relation to implementing the curriculum as indicated

by participants in both schools: "*As a teacher of fine arts & handicrafts, I teach my students such skills as fine motor skills as dressing, sewing, etc. To do these activities, we need some materials and facilities*" (T5).A participant from another school also emphasized: "*The school I am teaching is a resource center/a cluster schools. There are some instructional media in the resource room, but they are very few in number and, above all, they are not designed specifically for SwID*" (T1).Furthermore, data analysis of resource room observations and school document reviews also revealed that the shortage of instructional materials are relatively more evident in S1 than S2 because the later has been selected and funded by the Amhara regional government as part of its project to expand the resource centers that serve the surrounding satellite schools.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore teachers' practice of using appropriate curriculum for SwID in special classes at the primary schools in Gondar city. This study used qualitative case study design to describe the current practice of curriculum for SwID from the teachers' perspective. In this section, the main findings are presented interwoven with theories and our own theoretical and practical knowledge. Some selected literature reviews were also used to discuss the findings.The findings are then presented based on the research questions as well as the themes evolved as the data analysis was underway.As a result,fourmajor themes emerged as discussed below.

Conceptualization of Curriculum for SwID

The findings reveal that the majority of participants had a limited knowledge of what curriculum means and define it in its narrow sense. Some of them, for example, consider textbooks and teacher's guide as the only components that constitute a curriculum as the data from the interview indicated. Curriculum as the sum total of all experiences learners undergo during school life (Igbokwe et al., 2014). According to another author:

> *Curriculum is the totality of experiences that a pupil receives through the manifold activities that go on in the school, classroom, library, laboratory, workshop, playgrounds and in numerous informal contacts among pupils, peer, teachers, parents, family members as well community members (Taneja, 2012, p. 292).*

In sum, curriculum is regarded as all learning experiences a learner has under the guidance of a teacher.

The Kind of Curriculum Content Being Offered

In actual practices, the curriculum areas being taught in special classes of the primary schools in Gondar city are a combination of both academic (reading, writing and mathematical skills) and functional skills (daily living skills, social skills, motor skills, etc) The functional skills were relatively more favored and practiced by teachers compared to the teaching of academy. Although a new curriculum framework was introduced in Ethiopia in 2010 and its revised version in 2020 (MOE, 2020), the curriculum says little about the inclusive education of SwID. Absence of

inclusion means, SwID are admitted to school, but without receiving support, full participation and the achievements of the learners, inclusion cannot be in a place (Alemayehu, 2016). Practically, however, these students are currently learning different curriculum contents separately in special classes, where we can say little about inclusive education.

Teachers from the two schools utilized curriculum that they had developed themselves. The self-developed curriculum focuses on teaching academic skills and life skills. Many participants reported that it took a week or a month for SwID to learn even a single Amharic letter.

Teachers Favored Functional Curriculum over Academic Curriculum for SwID

The need to identify appropriate curricular content has long been an important issue in the field of SNE in general and for students with intellectual disability in particular (Ain, 2018; Bobzien, 2014).In the present study, almost all participants seemed to favor the functional curriculum as more appropriate for SwID, even though they do not call it by name as such. For example, one participant from S1 was critical of the provision of too much emphasis to academics for those students who are adolescents and physically fit to do vocational activities, "*Given their productive age and physical fitness, I think it's a waste of time to keep them for years here in the same grade-level teaching writing letters or numbers"*(T6 from S1).

Some studies, of course, concur with the present study's findings on relative importance of functional curriculum over academic curriculum for students with severe intellectual disabilities(Almalki, 2018; Alodat et al., 2020), for it was thought

that it could help these students engage in the vocational activities to achieve independence and success in their future lives (Ayres et al. 2011). Many studies show that curriculum adaptation provides increased access to learning content among SwD (Zhang et al., 2014; Buli-Holmberg et al., 2014); adaptation helps SwID to develop potential at their own level (Zhang et al., 2014);education should be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual learners (BuliHolmberg, et al., 2014). This means, modifications in the curriculum conveyance allows learners with various learning needs to access the content. Hence, Teachers should have adequate capacity to adaptcurriculum and make differentiation in the curriculum implementation to meet the needs SwID.

But the fact that some teachers described their belief that the nature of curriculum to be offered to SwID should be easy and should focus on such simple daily living skills; not on academic subjects, irrespective of the severity of their disabilities (Courtade et al., 2012) because this leads teachersto have low expectations to all SwID including even those with mild ID. Low expectations are often considered to be factors negatively affecting the progress of SwID (McGrew & Evans, 2004). This is tantamount to ascribing students' failure solely to their intellectual limitations instead of looking for other factors such as faulty teaching methods and inaccessible school environment, etc. Saad et al. (2015), cited in Al-Zboon (2021), indicate that there is *"a high probability of mastering this content, if SwID are provided with materials of interest to them throughout the learning process"* (p. 60). Teachers should have adequate knowledge and skills to meaningfully adapt curriculum in relation to the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of children (Caengolosi, 2015). In general,in adapting a

curriculum teachers should have adequate competences that help them to offer differentiating instruction, modifying resources, adjusting the learning environment and differentiating assessment as SwID learn and make progress, instead of detaining them in grade one for half a decade.

Challenges SNE teachers face in teaching curriculum for SwID

The other major finding is related to challenges teachers faced in teaching curriculum appropriate for SwID which include: absence of curriculum adaptation for SwID, lack of teachers' professional competence and lack of resources.

The data analysis reveals that there are almost no officially recognized curriculum resources available for SwID. This finding is contrary to the principle and practice in many countries as many studies (Ain, 2018; Bassey, 2020), confirm that curriculum standards are available in almost many countries to provide a clear guideline for schools in the development of appropriate curriculum for SwID. This means SwID in the study are not provided with adapted curriculum to learn according to their needs and potentials.

Additionally, lack of teacher training on how to adapt curriculum, such as adjusting teaching materials, methodologies and handling large class sizes made learning of SwID difficult (Faiz et al. (2019). Similar study also indicated that in many local schools, teachers in Jordan were found to be not familiar with the adaptation of the curriculum (Manley, 2018). The education of children with intellectual disabilitiesappears to be the most neglected one and need serious attention. The curriculum should be adapted to the level of their potentials so that they can progress in their learning and lead independent life.

It was then observed in the two schools that the curriculum being usedincludethose subject areas whose contents were randomly selected by teachers themselves. These subjects were based more on what teachers assumed appropriate rather than on any official standard curricular document. Lesson plans were often designed accordingly. This is because of the absence of both curriculum framework document for SwID as well as a guideline for the implementation of curriculum adaptation and/or modification at the school level (MOE, 2012b), which are both criticalin identifying the curriculum objectives and contents as well as in designing and delivering the curriculum (Al-Zboon, 2020). In fact, the data analysis shows that most teachers use lesson plans they developed based entirely on their experiences, rather than following certain guidelines.

The data analysis revealed that there were three major areas in which SNE teachers reported to have lack of professional competence: (1) the content of a subject area, (2) IEP development and (3) curriculum adaptation as participants from the two schools reported. This finding is in line with previous study (Al-Zboon, 2021) that focuses on the low level of professional competence regarding curriculum related issues among SNE teachers. Participants of this study were expected to adapt the curriculum for SwID from five perspectives: instructional goals, instructional content, instructional strategies, instructional settings, and student behavioral needs (Jia-Wei, 2014)

Most participants also admitted that they have lack of ***subject area knowledge (content).***Curriculum content is not, of course,the only core element of the whole teaching and learning process, but it is also a critical aspect of curriculum development and adaptation (Bassey, 2020). Therefore, it is important for teachers

to have a mastery over the contents of the curriculum they wereteaching because unless they have adequate knowledge on the contents of the curriculum, it would be difficult for them to deliver it in a manner suitable to students' needs and potentials.

Designing and implementing IEP is another skill area, where many participants identified as yet another challenge. IEP is of critical importance in realizing the educational progress of this group of students (Al-Zboon, 2021). Since IEP is a part of a curriculum, it was important to see how teachers apply it in a classroom for SwID. The results revealed that all teachers from both schools do not develop IEP for SWID because of three reasons: the first one is due to the large class size (e. g., as much as 40 students in a class in School 1); teachers' workload and lack of skill and knowledge to design IEP. If SNE teachers do not have adequate pedagogical knowledge and feel ill-prepared to teach SwID, they were more likely to, *"adopt a deficit-view of the students with severe disabilities and have low expectations for academic achievement*" (Eswine, 2021, p.34).

Teachers' inadequate professional knowledge on areas related to curriculum adaptation to address individual needs of their students is also a serious problem thatteachers from the two schoolsidentified. This was attributed to: poor college preparation and lack of in-service training in this particular area, lack of teachers' guidelines for curriculum adaptation, absence of published relevant reference materials that help teachers update themselves on the current teaching strategies appropriate and scarcity of instructional resources hampered the education of SwID. This finding is similar to other related studies that came out with the same finding that SNE teachers werefacing a challenge in developing and implementing effective teaching strategies by adapting and integrating the general education

curriculum with functional life skills for SwID(Al-Zboon, 2021; Asaaju, 2015; Bobzien, 2014; Faiz et al., 2019).

Implications

As the result shows, teacher education institutions should recognize the urgent need for improving SNE teachers' knowledge and skill in identifying and adapting appropriate curriculum for SWID.The schools in collaboration with the nearby colleges and local education authority (Woreda) should give more attention to professional development programs for teachers and organize a series of workshops to update teachers' professional and practical skills in designing and implementing curriculum for SWID. Furthermore, the study suggests that local education authority should avail resources such as equipment and facilities necessary for schools so that the individual needs of SWID will be met. Finally, the study suggests that it would be essential for SNE teachers to make themselves updated with the current knowledge and skills on current trends in curriculum for SWID by consulting the latest literature and sharing from each other's experiences on a regular basis.

Conclusions

The findings show that six curriculum contents were being offered toSwID, which were partly self-developed, not based on an official curriculum guidelineor the general education curriculum. In actual practice, the curriculum contents being taught in special classes of the primary schools in Gondar city were a combination of both academic skills and functional skills.There were no official standardized curriculum or adapted curriculum for SwID and SNE teachers were teaching contents that they believe are convieninet for the students. Almost all participant

teachers favored the functional curriculum as appropriate for SwIDthat includes daily living skills, keeping personal hygiene and doing physical exercises but not on academic subjects.Lack of teachers's professional competencies in curriculum adaptation, subject matter knowledge anddesigning individual education plan (IEP) were the major challenges which were attributed to poor college preparation and lack of in-service training as well as absence of a guideline for curriculum adaptation anda chronic shortage of instructional materials necessary for supporting students with intellectual disability.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is not without limitation. In a case study research design like this, the small sample size and the involvement of teachers only as participants cannot make the findings generalizable to other contexts.Even though qualitative research cannot be statistically generalized, this does not mean that there is no information to be learned from a qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 2009). Anyways, to make the study more comprehensive and complete, further study need to be designed involving parents of SwID,SwID themselves, school principals and experts from local authority.

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Beginning from the Very Beginning: The Role of Family Environment in Shaping Adolescents' Nonviolent Behavior

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Abstract

Based on the prevalence of violence in our current world, including Ethiopia, the importance of nonviolent behavior (NVB), and the scarcity of empirical studies of factors that contribute to NVB, this study sought to examine the role of Ethiopian adolescents' family environments (FEs) in their NVBs. The study employed a quantitative approach and was conducted on Ethiopian adolescents attending secondary school (grades 11 &12) in Addis Ababa. 274 randomly selected adolescents (170 females, 104 males) participated in the study. Questionnaires[composed of demographic questions and two scales, the Family Environment Scale (FES) and the Diamond Scale of Nonviolence (DSN)], were used to collect data. The data was analyzed by descriptive statistics, correlation, and structural equation modeling (SEM). It was found that the six components of FE accounted for a substantial amount of variance (R^2 = 31.80%) in NVB. The structural model that guided the study (which was labeled the Peace Engineering Model) was found to fit the adolescents' data adequately and thus was applicable in explaining the relationships between NVB and components of FE. Overall, it was concluded that the adolescents' FEs play vital roles in shaping NVB. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings were discussed.

Keywords*: nonviolent behavior, peace, family environment, Family Environment Scale, adolescents*

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Background and Rationale of the Study

Our modern social world is replete with conflict and violence. There is a need for an urgent and radical transformation of our society away from a culture of violence to a culture of peace (COP). Mayton (2001) considers nonviolence as a positive strategy to build COP. Sometimes referred to as nonviolent behavior (NVB), nonviolence refers to interactions involving words, deeds, and experiences with others and the self that are not intentionally harmful but geared towards peacefulness (Mayton, 2009). According to the United Nations General Assembly (UN, 1999), COP is a culture characterized by values, attitudes, and behaviors that reject violence, prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes, and solve problems through dialogue and negotiation. UN proposed that COP is composed of eight components: peace education, equitable and sustainable development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, international security, and free flow of information.

Ethiopia's cultures have many pro-peace values, including hospitality, cooperation, respectfulness, and tolerance (Alagaw, 2012; Habtamu, 1995; Habtamu, 2013). This culture also has long-held traditions of nonviolent conflict resolution at the local level, such as Aba Gedas, Mereto, Weresh, and Beaalalti, which play important roles in maintaining collective security, peace, order, equality, and justice (Mitiku &Tilahun, 2019). Nonetheless, history witnesses that this cradle of human ancestry is not immune to violence. As in other developing countries, the Ethiopian socio-political culture has been characterized mainly by a rigid hierarchical structure. This rigid social structure is the antithesis of nonviolence. Throughout recorded history, including the *Zemene Mesafint* or Era of the Princes' warlords, violence has

been part of Ethiopians' life. Power struggle and war among its various regional groups as well as the Ethiopian state and foreign powers (e.g., Egypt, Sudan, Italy, and Somalia) and the resulting oppression, authoritarianism, and exploitation were characteristics of the country's polity (Alagaw, 2012; Habtamu, 2013; Paulos, 2011; Vaughan & Tronvoll, 2003). Even currently, Ethiopia is experiencing intra-state violent conflict.

The direct and indirect impact of such large-scale violent conflict on Ethiopian youth/adolescents is incontestable. Adolescence is a risk period for violence (Marcus, 2007); in addition, Ethiopian adolescents experience violence at schools, both in actual and broadcasted sports and in their families (Mitiku &Tilahun, 2019). This implies that, let alone realizing COP by achieving positive peace (i.e., absence of violence and presence of justice), even attaining negative peace (i.e., absence of violence) has been challenging for Ethiopia.

Although some scholars find it hard to imagine that nonviolence has a place in our violent world today, others believe that it is precisely in such a world that nonviolence must persist (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2008; de Rivera, 2009a; Hess, 2009). In line with the UN's COP, an important lesson for Ethiopians is that conflict resolution must move beyond military response and address the root causes of conflicts to come out of the long history of the vicious cycle of violence. Thus, nonviolence, tolerance, human rights and democracy have to be inculcated in every citizen (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2008; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2005).

In the academic literature in general, violence has been more at the center of empirical attention than nonviolence. It appears that both empirical inattention and

practical invisibility of nonviolence thwarted the development of advanced theories and models (Mayton, 2001; Mayton, 2009; Quinn, 2019); Tanabe, 2016). However, the feasibility of nonviolence in the social and political arena has been realized recently. Supporting this argument, Summy (2005) indicates that while nonviolence has been part of the Taoist, Buddhist, Jewish, and New Testament scriptures, it is only in the past 100 years that, through one of the oft-cited exemplars of nonviolence, namely Gandhi who led the Indian independence from the British colony, nonviolence became an indispensable force in shaping people and their political lives. While Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. approached nonviolence from a political perspective, peace psychologists have been considering nonviolence as the heart of peace psychology because both peacemaking and peacebuilding employ nonviolent techniques (Mayton, 2009).

According to Mayton (2009), some theories and models of nonviolence were developed in peace psychology (e.g., the Theory of Nonviolence developed by Kool and the Model of Peaceful Selfhood developed by Brenes). Unfortunately, as indicated by Mayton (2009), data to support these theories and models are either nonexistent or just starting to emerge. Moreover, Mayton (2012) points out that although both Kool's theory and Brenes's model deal with nonviolence at the individual level, neither of them delineates the dynamics between different levels of nonviolence. The Diamond Model of Nonviolence (DMN) developed by Mayton et al. (2011) was in response to the demand for a comprehensive model that examines dynamics among the levels of nonviolence. DMN, which is used to conceptualize NVB in the present study, delineates four distinct types of nonviolence: *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *societal*, and *world nonviolence* (see Table 1). In the present study,

DMN was selected as a theoretical framework because it addresses levels of nonviolence broadly along with the Diamond Scale of Nonviolence for measuring them.

Yet, the DMN does not hint at the environmental aspects from which one would start building COP. Azar et al. (2009) contend that "the attainment of peace begins with one of the smallest building blocks of society: the family." (p. 319). Through the quality of the family environment (FE), a family can be considered the first school in which its members learn a myriad of behaviors, including love or hatred, nonviolence or violence, and harming or helping others. FE is the perceived social functioning of the family of two or more persons living in a house (Moos & Moos, 2009). The writer of this article believes that if it is incorporated into a person's lifestyle, beginning from the family and promoted by other institutions, including schools, nonviolence can be an effective tool for building COP within and between nations. This article examines components of the FE that might foster or impede NVB.

In the present study, FE is conceptualized from the perspective of the social climate model (Moos & Moos, 2009). According to this model, perceptions that people attach to an environment or a setting can be used to conceptualize the psychological effects of that setting. Accordingly, environments have three major dimensions: relationship (R), personal growth (PG), and system maintenance (SM). These dimensions, in turn, comprise 10 components, from which six were selected and examined in the present study (see Table 1). According to Moos and Moos (2009), some of the 10 FES subscales relevant to a study can be selected and used. Thus, in the present study, it was thought that combinations of scores on each pair that

make up the dimensions (two subscales for each of the three dimensions) will produce a more balanced and high-quality score. For instance, families high in cohesion and low in conflict can be said to have high-quality relationships. Likewise, a family that focuses on achievement orientation at the expense of ethical and moral issues may not successfully promote healthy personal growth. Similarly, focusing on control without providing the necessary organization may stifle the desired effect that the family envisages to bring about in its members.

The social climate model was chosen because it helped to capture broader aspects of the FE as it contains dimensions and specific factors along with a well-established scale (i.e., the

Table 1

Dimensions and Descriptions of the Subscales of the Family Environment Scale and the Diamond Scale of Nonviolence

Variable	Dimension	Component	Description
Family Environment	Relationship (R)	Cohesion	The degree of perceived commitment, support and help family members provide for each other.
		Conflict	Amount of openly expressed anger, aggression and conflict among family members.
		Expressiveness	The degree to which family members are encouraged to express feelings and problems.
	Personal Growth (PG)	Achievement Orientation	The extent to which school and work activities are cast as indices of achievement or areas of competition.

		Moral-Religious Emphasis	The extent to which family members emphasize ethical and religious issues and values.
		Independence	The extent to which family members are assertive, make own decisions, and are self-sufficient.
		Intellectual-Cultural Orientation	The extent to which family members show interest in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities.
		Active-Recreational Orientation	The extent to which family members emphasize participation in social and recreational activities.
	System Maintenance (SM)	Organization	The extent to which the family endorses clear organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities.
		Control	The extent to which rules and procedures are followed and enforced by family members.
Nonviolent Behavior	Intrapersonal Nonviolence		Nonviolence that can be experienced within individuals.
	Interpersonal Nonviolence		Nonviolence toward people with whom an individual interacts frequently including the family and friends.
	Societal Nonviolence		Nonviolent behavior directed toward one's community and larger society.
	World nonviolence		Nonviolence on the international stage between nations.

Source: Timko& Moos (1996); Charalampous et al. (2013); Mayton et al. (2011).

Family Environment Scale) for measuring them. One of the family environmental factors that the social climate model addresses is Conflict (see Table 1). Owing to an amalgamation of the traditional patriarchal societal structure, poverty and, high levels of illiteracy, family violence/conflict are everyday realities for women in Ethiopia (Tayechalem, 2009). A review of 15 empirical studies in the Ethiopian context by Agumasie and Bezatu (2015) indicated that more than 60% of women experience domestic violence. This indicates that Ethiopian women experience a higher rate and more intense family violence than many others in the world. Worst of all, Agumasie and Bezatu found that wife beating is seen as an acceptable phenomenon among 80% of women; the wives were of the opinion, "he is my husband and he can kick me" (p. 9). This implies that Ethiopia's progress towards building COP is being challenged because the FE is hampering gender equality and modeling of nonviolent conflict resolution for its members.

Furthermore, in Ethiopia, retaliation appears to be commonplace. Mitiku and Tilahun (2019) studied the violent and nonviolent experiences of Ethiopian university students and found retaliation as one of the sociocultural factors that obstruct the development of NVB. Such FEs and socio-cultural contexts are less likely to enhance NVB of their members. If the current situation of Ethiopian families is allowed to continue, the likelihood of realizing COP in this country will be doubtful. Thus, the findings of this study will help concerned bodies start enhancing nonviolent behaviors (NVBs) by improving the quality of the adolescents' family environments (FEs). Strengthening the capacity of the family to raise nonviolent children can help to reduce conflict, enhance NVB, and eventually contribute to the development of a

culture of peace (COP) and the well-being of people in general and the Ethiopian people in particular.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was conducted in Addis Ababa which has been serving as the capital city and cultural hub of Ethiopia for about 130 years. The general objective was to examine the dynamics of relations between FE and NVB, thereby contributing to the endeavors of building COP. Specifically, the study was intended to:

- assess the fitness of the model relating components FE and NVB (see Figure 1) to the data.
- examine the nature of the relationships (statistical significance, direction, strength proportion of the variance explained) between NVB and components of FE.

Operational Definitions of Constructs

The two major constructs examined in this study were nonviolent behavior (NVB) and family environment (FE). NVB was assessed by items adapted from the Diamond Scale of Nonviolence (DSN) (Mayton et al., 2011). FE was assessed by items adapted from the Real Form of the Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos & Moos, 2009).

Based on the separate frameworks used to conceptualize FE and NVB, as depicted in Table 1, the major variables were presumed to relate to the manner shown in the structural model that guided the present study (see Figure 1). This model is recursive in that all structural relations are depicted using one-sided arrows indicating unidirectional effects. This direction of influence is informed by social learning

theory. Empirical studies guided by social learning theory have amassed evidence of intergenerational transmission of violence indicating that children who observe family violence will become adult perpetrators (Barnish, 2004; Fuhrer &Uslucan, 2009; Tamene, 2016). It is argued in this paper that the same evidence may hold true for intergenerational transmission of nonviolence. Nonviolence may be transmitted from the family to its members as long as the family provides positive FEs. Thus, the analysis was planned in such a way that the arrow points from the components of the FE to NVB.

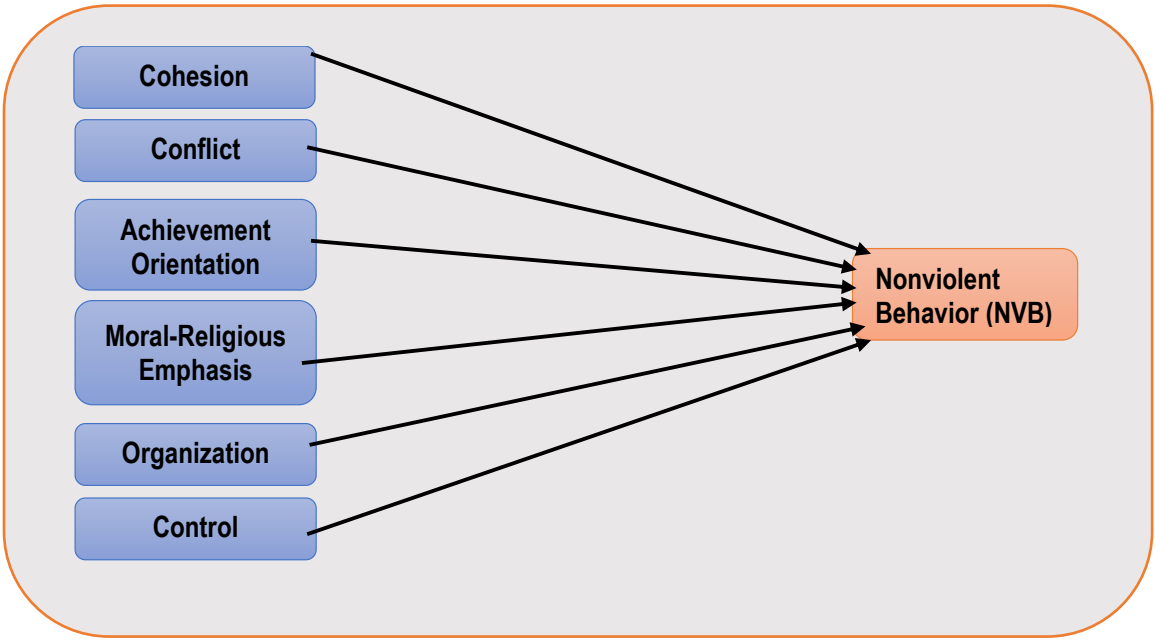

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Author

Methods

The objectives of the present study led to the use of a quantitative research approach. An explanatory correlational design was employed (Creswell, 2012) because the major intention was to examine the amount of covariation among the variables using correlational statistics.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study was conducted in one randomly selected government school in the Bole Subscity of Addis Ababa City (─Beshale Secondary School). After realizing that the study would not harm the instructional time and the students in any way, the school administrators allowed the researcher to collect the data. At the time of data collection, there were 893 (Male = 338, Female = 555; Grade 11 = 488, Grade 12 =405) regular students in this school. Thus, 893 was considered the accessible population of the study. Because it was intended to use Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the fitness of the model to the data and the minimum suggested sample size for this purpose is >200 (Kline, 2016), the sample size was determined to be 250. Nonetheless, anticipating that some responses may be incomplete and inappropriate and, therefore, would be discarded, 30 more participants were added to increase the sample size to 280. In order to select participants in accordance with this sample size, a proportionate stratified random sampling method (sex and grade level as stratum) was used. In order to decide the number of participants that was to be selected from

each stratum, the following formula for proportional stratified sampling was used (Brown, 2007).

$$K_s = n\left(\frac{Ns}{N}\right)$$

Where K_s = Number of sample participants selected from stratum S; n = sample size; Ns = Number of participants in stratum S; N = Overall population size. This formula allocates sample sizes according to the number of participants in a stratum.

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Although all of the participants (280) were present, able and willing to participate in the study and therefore filled in and returned the questionnaire (response rate = 100%), data screening indicated that 6 of them did not fill in the questionnaire appropriately (e.g., some acquiescence response sets and zigzag response patterns were observed). These 6 participants (4 females, 2 males, 3 from Grade 11, and 3 from Grade 12) were dropped. As a result, a total of 274 participants remained in the analysis (see Table 2). To identify the actual participants relative to their numbers in sex and grade strata, serial numbers were assigned to their name list obtained from the school records. Then, a random number generator was requested to generate a random list of numbers of the predetermined size for each stratum. Because the numbers generated corresponded with the names of the students on the name list, the participants were identified readily.

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of participants who remained in the analyses. The majority of the fathers or male guardians (n=134, 48.91%) and

mothers or female guardians (n =139, 50.73%) of the respondents had completed general education (Grades 1-12).

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants (n = 274)

Variable		**N**	**%**
Sex	Male	104	37.96
	Female	170	62.04
Grade	11	150	54.74
	12	124	45.26
Duration of Living in the Family	From Birth Date	173	63.10
	From 10-15 Year	20	7.30
	From 6-9 Years	18	6.60
	From 2-5 Years	44	16.10
	From 5-12 Months	7	2.60
	Less than 5 months	12	4.40
Family Structure: With whom were they living?	Father and Mother (Nuclear Family)	136	49.60
	Only Mother (Single Parent Family)	43	15.70
	Blended or Extended Family	65	23.8
	Relatives (Uncle or Aunt)	30	10.90

The participants were living in family sizes that ranged from two to 12 members (Mean = 5.2; SD = 1.87). The age of the participants ranged from 16 to 26 years (Mean = 17.91; SD = 1.18).

Data Gathering Instruments

A questionnaire consisting of two scales (Family Environment Scale, FES, and Diamond Scale of Nonviolence, DSN) and demographic items was administered in a paper form. The scales were adapted from previously developed instruments. FES was used for assessing a family's social functioning as perceived by the adolescents. The original version of the scale has 90 items in 10 subscales and three dimensions (Moos & Moos, 2009; Saucier et al., 2007). In this study, 30 items in six subscales: conflict, cohesion, moral-religious emphasis, achievement orientation, control, and organization were used. Since multipoint response options yield more reliable scores than the original dichotomous response options of the FES (Greene & Plank, 1994; Moos, 1990), a four-point scale that ranges from *definitely true for my family* (4) to *definitely not true for my family* (1) was used.

The DSN was used to measure the nonviolent behavioral tendency of the adolescents. Developed by Mayton et al. (2011), the DSN assesses the four dimensions of the DMN: intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and world nonviolence. The response categories of the DSN range from *definitely true for me* (4) to *definitely not true for me* (1). The present study adapted 30 items of the three subscales: *intrapersonal* (e.g., I am at peace with myself), *interpersonal* (e.g., when someone is rude to me, I am rude back; reverse coded), and *societal* (e.g., I have talked to people locally to advocate for positive community action) from a short 40-item Diamond Scale of Nonviolence (DSN40) (Mayton et al., 2014). The *world nonviolence subscale* was excluded because, unlike in the Western contexts in which it was developed, the intended participants in this study had no exposure in exhibiting NVB regarding international issues. Thus, the combination of items from

intrapersonal (6 items), *interpersonal (6 items)* and *societal* (5 items) subscales were used to represent NVB in the present study.

Mitiku (2023) adapted the 90 items of FES to secondary school students in Addis Ababa City and found promising results. Nonetheless, because the quality of the FES items should be examined further and the present study used only 30 of the 90 items, FES items were presented for content and context relevance analyses along with that of the DSN. Content validity and context relevance were examined by a panel consisting of 12 experts from the School of Psychology, Addis Ababa University. The content validity ratio (CVR) of the items was determined statistically using Lawshe's formula and procedures (Ayre & Scally, 2014). Lawshe's formula for computing the CVR is given as:

$$\mathrm{CVR} = \frac{(\mathrm{ne}) - (\mathrm{N}/2)}{\mathrm{N}/2}$$

where ne = number of experts rating an item essential and N = total number of experts.

The instructors were provided with a scale that ranged from not necessary (1), useful, but not essential (2) to essential (3). Items that were rated as *essential* were regarded as the most relevant and, therefore, that best serve the intended purpose. The value of CVR ranges between -1.00 and +1.00. A CVR of zero indicates that 50% of the panelists rated the item *essential*. While positive values of CVR that exceed the critical values corresponding to the number of panelists were considered to support the content validity of an item, negative CVR values caution that the item should either be removed or refined. In the present study, a total of 60 scaled items (30 FES items and 30 DSN items) were presented for the analysis. For 12 experts, a one-tailed

critical value of CVR at .05 is .475 (Ayre & Scally, 2014). Thus, the hypotheses that at least 9 out of the12 experts rate each item as *essential* (3) ($CVR_9 > CVR_{.475}$) were tested for each of the items. Most of the items (i.e., all of the FES items and 19 of the DSN, about 81.67% of the 60 items) had a CVR of greater than .475, supporting the hypotheses. This implies that 49 of the 60 items were judged by at least 9 of the experts to be relevant both to the content domain they assess and to the Ethiopian adolescents pursuing their secondary schools in Addis Ababa City as research participants. Eleven of the DSN items which could not pass this test were refined more.

Then, the questionnaire was translated to the working language of Ethiopia (i.e., Amharic) by following procedures of backward translation (Hambleton, 2005). Initially, the questionnaire was adapted to the English language. Then, the questionnaire was translated into Amharic by a bilingual (English and Amharic) language expert. Upon completion, another bilingual (English and Amharic) language expert back-translated the Amharic version into English. Moreover, the equivalence of both versions was checked by other professionals. These professionals indicated that most of the Amharic version items were good representations of their corresponding English versions. However, depending on their suggestions, some Amharic items were modified in such a way that they represent their English versions more accurately. Reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha produced the optimum number of items per subscale with the highest possible reliability coefficients (see Table 3).

The commonly used lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is .70. However, Cronbach's alpha doesn't always provide the best index of reliability of a tool (Saris

& Gallhofer, 2014). Indeed, according to Hair et al. (2010), Cronbach's alpha tends to understate reliability in spite of the fact that it is commonly used in the empirical literature. Besides, Cronbach's alpha does not use factor loadings to estimate reliability and it is not a very good indicator of whether a set of

Table 3

Reliabilities (Cronbach Alpha, α; Index of Quality, IoQ) of the Subscales of the Family Environment Scale (FES) and Diamond Scale of Nonviolence (DSN) in the Present Study (n=274)

Scale	Subscale	Current Study		
		K*	α	IoQ
FES	Cohesion	5	.78	.80
	Conflict	3	.52	.73
	Achievement Orientation	3	.45	.72
	Moral-Religious Emphasis	3	.28	.64
	Organization	2	.50	.77
	Control	3	.59	.76
DSN		17	.75	.71

** K = number of items*

items measures a single factor (Kline, 2016). The other limitation of Cronbach's alpha is that reliability varies dramatically with varying number of items (particularly for more than 10 items). Thus, in the present study, following the suggestion of Hoekstra et al. (2018) to report more alternative measures of reliability besides Cronbach's alpha, a reliability measure derived from factor loadings, index of quality (IoQ) (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014; Schwartz, et. al., 2012), was used for further examination of the reliability. It is evident from Table 3 that for most of the subscales, IoQ produced acceptable reliability coefficients (greater than .70) than did Cronbach's alpha. This indicates that the lower Cronbach's alphas of the subscales were not only due to the

problems inherent in the items but also because of the approach used for estimating the reliabilities.

Data Analysis Techniques

Correlation and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed to analyze the data. In order to examine assumptions of normality and linearity, graphical and scatterplot methods (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) were employed. Generally, these assumptions were found to be tenable. For the multivariate data analysis technique (i.e., SEM), the assumption of linearity was found to be tenable, and Mahalanobis d-squared did not reveal troublesome outliers; the result for the normalized approximations of multivariate kurtosis was found to be 5.145, a value that did not much surpass the critical value (i.e., 5), indicating that the data is approximately multivariate normal (Byrne, 2010). The analyses were carried out using version 23.0 of Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Correlational analysis was used to examine zero-order relationships between NVB and components of FE. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for this purpose. SEM was used to test the fitness of the structural model (Figure 1) and to examine the contributions of components of FE to NVB. Criteria for establishing a model's fit is an ardently controversial topic in the SEM literature. In keeping with recommendations by Hair et al. (2010), multiple fit indices were reported as evidence of goodness-of-fit for the model tested in the present study. Accordingly, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI),

Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Browne-Cudeck Criterion (BCC), Bayes Information Criterion (BIC), Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI) and Hoelter's Critical N were used to investigate the fitness of models in the present study (Blunch, 2013; Byrne, 2010).

Results

Fitness of the model to the data

The first objective of the present study was to assess the fitness of the model that guided the study (see Figure 1). Examining the fitness of the model before analyzing the relations between nonviolent behavior (NVB) and components of family environment (FE) was mandatory. This is because unless the fitness of the model to the data is adequate, the structural relations will not be reasonable (Byrne, 2010). Thus, the structural model depicted in Figure 1 was tested. The output model from AMOS is depicted in Figure 2. This model was found to fit the data well [$\chi 2$ (12) = 21.79, p = .04; GFI = .983; IFI = .970; CFI = .968; RMSEA = .055 (90% CI = (.012, .091), PCLOSE = .374)]. The recommended cutoff criteria of for a good fitting model is: for RMSEA less than 0.06 to 0.08 with confidence interval; for IFI, GFI and CFI, values close to .90 or .95 are considered as acceptable level of fitness (Schumacher & Lomax, 2010). AIC, BCC, BIC, CAIC, and ECVI for this model were also adequate, as their values were the smallest compared to the saturated and independent models. Similarly, Hoelter's Critical Ns at both alpha levels: .05 (N = 264) and .01 (N = 329) were good as they were greater than 200. Thus, this study found the fitness of the model was adequate.to the data.

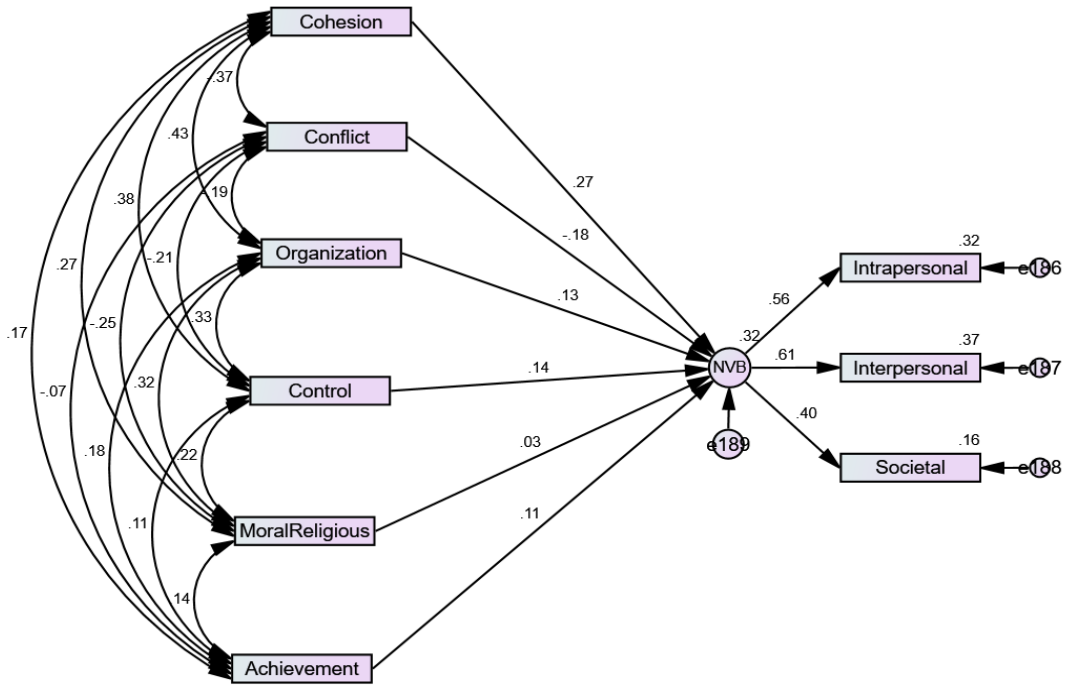

Figure 2

A Structural Equation Model Output

Contributions of Components of FE to NVB

The second objective of the present study was examining relations between NVB and components of FE. As can be observed from Table 4, five of the six correlations were

found to be statistically significant at least at α = .01 level. The correlation coefficients ranged from r = .109 to .296. It was also found that all of the components of the FE except *conflict* were related positively to NVB.

Table 4

Correlations Between Nonviolent Behavior (NVB) and Components of Family Environment (n =274)

	Cohesion	Conflict	Control	Organization	Moral Religious Emphasis	Achievement Orientation
NVB	.296***	-.258***	.220***	.206**	.180**	.109

**p < .01; ***p < .001.

Variances explained by components of FE in NVB were also inspected using squared multiple correlations from AMOS output (i.e., R^2). As Table 5 shows, of the six components of FE, Cohesion explained the largest independent variance in NVB (R^2 = 20.80%, β = .456, p<.001). In a decreasing order, the independent contributions of the other components of FE to NVB are: Organization (R^2 =10.10%, β = .317, p<.001), Control (R^2 = 9.60%, β = .310, p<.01), Conflict (R^2 = 9.0%, β = -.300, p<.01), Moral-religious Emphasis (R^2 = 3.60%, β = .189, p<.05) and Achievement Orientation (R^2 = 1.90%, β = .139, p>.05).

From pairwise contributions of the components of FE, Cohesion, and Conflict (i.e., the relationship dimension) explained the largest variance (R^2 = 23.90%), followed by Organization and Control (i.e., the System Maintenance Dimension) (R^2 = 17.10%) and Achievement Orientation and Moral-religious Emphasis (i.e., personal growth dimension) (R^2 = 6.10%). Together, the six components of FE explained 31.80% of the variance in NVB. Compared to the other pairwise contributions,

Cohesion, and Conflict components contributed about 75% (i.e., .239/.318 = .75) to the variance explained in NVB (see Table 5).

Table 5

Contributions of Components of Family Environment to Nonviolent Behavior (n=274)

Components	**R^2**	**Standardized Structural Coefficient (β)**
Cohesion	.208	.456***
Conflict	.090	-.300**
Cohesion and Conflict	.239	.375***; -.205*
Organization	.101	.317***
Control	.096	. 310**
Organization and Control	.171	.252**; .255**
Achievement Orientation	.019	.139
Moral-Religious Emphasis	.036	.189*
Achievement Orientation and Moral-Religious Emphasis	.061	.139; .186*
Cohesion, Conflict, Achievement Orientation, Moral-Religious Emphasis, Organization and Control	.318	.268**; -.182*; .113; .035; .129; .143

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

These results indicate that the SEM models composed of separate and pairwise components of FE were statistically significant. According to Cohen's (1988) classification of the effect size of R^2 (i.e., $f^2 = R^2/1\text{-}R^2$, where for $f^2 = .02$ represents a

small effect, f^2 =.15 a medium effect, and f^2 =.35 a large effect), Cohesion (effect size = .26), Cohesion and Conflict (effect size = .31), Organization and Control (effect size = .21) explained variances of medium effect in NVB. Moreover, the contribution of the combination of the six components to NVB (effect size = .47) was found to be large. From the independent contributions of components of FE, Cohesion explained NVB very strongly (β = .456, $p<.001$; see Table 5). This means when Cohesion increases by one standard deviation unit, NVB increases by .456 standard deviation unit and vice versa. The conflict had the opposite influence in such a way that one standard deviation unit increment in Conflict is accompanied by a .300 decrement in NVB and vice versa.

Discussion

This study was intended to examine the role of adolescents' family environment (FE) in their nonviolent behavior (NVB). Accordingly, as its first objective, the present study examined the relation between components of FE and NVB by developing and testing a structural model of these variables. The fitness of the model to the data indicates that the model can be used to elucidate the link between FE and NVB. This finding further implies that the FE matters because the "beta press" is at work (Walsh, 2003); that is, adolescents' FEs are influencing their NVB.

The theoretical contributions of this model to the field of peace psychology appear to be manifold. Even though the most recently developed model of nonviolence that was used in the present study as a theoretical framework, the Diamond Model of Nonviolence (DMN), appears to be comprehensive in the sense

that it addresses the dynamics among different levels of nonviolence, it does not pinpoint factors that augment or obstruct NVB. The present study attempted to overcome this limitation by developing and testing a model that addresses the relations between FE and NVB. The major concerns of peace psychology are peacebuilding and peacemaking thereby reducing structural and direct violence (Christie et al., 2001). While peacemaking involves reducing the intensity and frequency of direct or physical violence such as war, rape, and homicide (i.e., achieving negative peace which focuses on reacting to violence after it occurs), peacebuilding is concerned with the promotion of social justice (i.e., achieving positive peace which focuses on preventing structural violence). Peacebuilding does not occur overnight. As the term *building* in peacebuilding implies (and as any physical building which must endure), peacebuilding requires a strong foundation. As argued in the background part of this article, the foundation for peacebuilding, the starting place for developing nonviolent individuals, is the family (Azar et al. 2009).

The inclusion of FE in the present study and the phrase *Beginning from the Very Beginning* in the title of this article implies this gradual process of peacebuilding by augmenting the development of nonviolent individuals within a family, which may eventually contribute to developing a nonviolent community, then nonviolent society and then realizing COP. One of the distinguishing features of a COP is that families in such a culture transmit strategies of nonviolence to the next generation by raising nonviolent children (Bonta, 1996). Hence, peacebuilding starts from the foundation of a social strata□the family. Building or constructing is at the heart of engineering. Thus, by borrowing the term *engineering* from the fields of applied natural science,

the researcher labeled the model that guided the present study as the *Peace Engineering Model (PEM*). Unlike the usual meaning of the term in the applied natural sciences, however, *engineering* here is intended to denote what Rogers (2003, p.31) referred to as "humaneering"□that is, the task of social psychology (and therefore that of peace psychology) that involves understanding human nature and using this understanding to make the world a better place through social changes. Although the task of engineering peace may require encompassing myriads of other variables than those included in the PEM in the present study, it was in the sense that any relevant environmental variable like FE and any relevant personal variable may join in an intricate network of effects which eventually augment or inhibit NVB that the label *PEM* was used. Thus, in the PEM, it is assumed that any relevant environmental and personal variables have a place to fit in; however, the efficacy of the added variable and the resulting model should always be subjected to empirical scrutiny. It was also thought that such nomenclature may ease the task of referring to the model in future studies.

As regards its second objective, the present study examined relations between NVB and components of FE. The study found statistically significant and positive relations between NVB and Cohesion, Organization, Control and Moral-Religious Emphasis indicating that as quality of FE increases, NVB also increases and vice versa. On the other hand, the relation between FE and Conflict was found to be significant and negative. This implies that as quality of FE decreases (i.e., as level of conflict in a family increases), NVB decreases andvice versa.

Generally, these findings are consistent with the empirical literature. For instance, Azar et al. (2009) contend that for an individual, living in a family can

produce both positive and negative experiences. Wolfe and Korsch (1994) found that, compared to children coming from nonviolent families, behavioral problems were more prevalent among those coming from families characterized by domestic violence. Other studies (e.g., Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989) have identified violent childhood FEs as risk factors for social interactional problems, delinquency, and even for perpetrating violence as adults. Likewise, studies conducted on adolescents report similar patterns of relationships between FE and behavioral problems, which led some researchers to assert that when other ecological factors are examined, an aspect of family relationships (parenting) remains a salient factor in explaining the development and progression of adolescent aggression (Murray et al., 2013).

Moreover, a longitudinal study conducted by Henry et al. (2001) showed that compared to youth from families with low-quality social relationships, the likelihood of associating with violent peers and engaging in delinquent behaviors was less for youth from families with high cohesion. A study by Avci and Güçra (2010) also found that conflicts, problems related to behavioral control, and general functioning were characteristics of violent adolescents' families. By the same token, using a longitudinal study design and SEM, Garthe et al. (2015) found in a school setting that adolescents who perceived that their parents supported violent responses were more likely to engage in aggression. Moreover, one category of aggressive behavior that affects the social and emotional functioning of adolescents, bullying, has frequently been related to FE. For instance, Eşkisua (2014) found that the more families have a deficiency in such roles as problem-solving and communication, the more adolescents coming from these families bullied or were bullied. Similarly, Bowers et al. (1992) pointed out that the absence of a biological father at home and lower overall family

cohesion scores were the characteristics of most of the students involved in school bullying. Likewise, in a study conducted on Ethiopian adults in intimate relationships (Tamene, 2016), adverse childhood exposure was found to predict physical and psychological violence perpetration significantly.

The present study also examined the contributions of components of the FE to NVB. The results indicate that the SEM models composed of separate and pairwise components of FE were statistically significant. According to Cohen's (1988) classification of the effect size of R^2, the combination of the six components of FE to NVB (i.e., 31.80%) is considered as large. This implies that FE accounts for a remarkable variation in NVB. Of the six components of the FE, Cohesion and Conflict's contributions were outstanding. Indeed, when the effects of the other components were statistically controlled, regression coefficients of only cohesion and conflict reached statistical significance (see Table 5). Nonetheless, this does not mean that the other components do not contribute to NVB; rather, it means Cohesion and Conflict play the most salient roles in NVB compared to the other components of FE.

As far as the writer of this article is aware, although no study examined the contributions of FE to NVB using the same tools as in the present study, the results of this study are generally consistent with the results of studies that link families and behavioral problems. One such a study was conducted on Ethiopian adolescents by Adunga (2005). Adunga found a statistically significant difference in aggression with respect to authoritative and nonauthoritative (i.e., neglectful, authoritarian, and indulgent) parenting styles in such a way that adolescents from authoritative families (i.e., positive FE) exhibited less aggression. Assuming that a more nonviolent tendency suggests a less aggressive tendency, the result of the present study that

positive FE substantially contributes to NVB appears to be in consonance with Adunga's finding that adolescents from authoritative families were less aggressive. Likewise, it appears that, in line with Adunga's finding, nonauthoritative families contribute more to aggression, which may obstruct NVB. In a similar manner, Tamene (2016) reported that the adverse childhood experiences that participants in his study had at home explained nearly 63% of the variance in psychological violence perpetration and 81% of the variance in physical violence perpetration as adults. Assuming that participants in Tamene's (2016) study who had adverse childhood experiences at home were living in low-quality FEs, it appears that low-quality FEs contribute more to violence than nonviolence. Furthermore, Tamene reported that out of home adverse childhood experiences explained less variance in psychological violence (37%) and physical violence (48%) perpetrations than adverse childhood experiences at home. Thus, the present study's results that low-quality FE is related to low levels of NVB is in support of Tamene's findings. Studies conducted outside of Ethiopia (e.g., Avci & Güçra, 2010; Murray et al., 2013; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989; Wolfe & Korsch, 1994), just as the above local studies, are tangentially related to the results of the present study because they did not address FE and NVB directly. Nonetheless, they all appear to point to the notion that a family can influence its members both positively and negatively (Azar et al., 2009) and that while these positive FEs substantially contribute to NVB, low-quality or negative FEs inhibit NVB by providing fertile ground for the seeds of copious of behavioral problems including aggression and violence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study sought to examine the role of family environment (FE) in nonviolent behavior (NVB). From the findings of this study, the following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn.

First, the structural model linking components of FE and NVB fits the adolescents' data adequately. Thus, the model that guided the present study (see Figure 1) is applicable to explain the relationship between FE and NVB. Second, while Cohesion, Moral-Religious Emphasis, Organization and Control components of FE contribute positively to NVB, Conflict influences NVB negatively. This indicates that whereas positive FE nurtures NVB, a negative FE, that is a conflictual FE, inhibits NVB. Moreover, the six components of FE explained a considerable amount of variance (R^2 =31.80%) in NVB. From these components, Cohesion and Conflict together accounted for about 75% of the variance explained in NVB. This implies that, in general, FE is a crucial factor that may, depending on its quality, enhance or impede adolescents' NVB. The direction and amount of contribution of FE to NVB implies that enhancing the level of NVB requires enhancing the quality of the FE. Particularly, Cohesion and Conflict components of FE, that is, quality of family social interaction needs to be improved because they contributed to NVB more than the other components in the present study.

Thus, parents and other family members should strive to solve conflicts nonviolently so that their children will be exposed to nonviolent experiences early in their lives. Likewise, schools, in collaboration with other concerned bodies such as universities, may take initiatives to identify at risk adolescents for their less nonviolent tendencies, contact parents of the adolescents, assess quality of their FEs

and improve parenting practices and family social interactions so that NVB of the adolescents will be enhanced. Such intervention approaches that start from the family, in addition to programs that help the adolescents resolve conflicts nonviolently, may foster the peacebuilding process thereby increasing the likelihood of realizing COP in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, the results of the present study have policy implications. Recognizing that peace and development are two sides of the same coin, there is a need to coordinate the fragmented peacebuilding efforts in Ethiopia by developing a national peacebuilding policy (United Nations Development Program, 2012). The present study suggests that such a policy may benefit from focusing on adolescents' FEs. Furthermore, the peacebuilding policy may be productive if it emphasizes ways in which parenting education, peace education, and parent-school relationships may boost the adolescents' NVBs.

Limitations and Future Research

Although lower reliability coefficients may be tolerated in studies that employ latent variable models (Kline, 2016) as in the present study, the psychometric qualities of the FE items have become an issue in cross-cultural studies (Mitiku, 2023), the reliability coefficients of some subscales (particularly Achievement Orientation and Moral-Religious Emphasis subscales of the FES) were low. Thus, future researchers should improve the subscale items and explore the associations among variables in the present study with higher scale reliabilities. The model developed and tested in the present study, the Peace Engineering Model (PEM), is also limited in that it addresses only one environmental variable (FE) and no mediator/moderator variable between

FE and NVB. Thus, future researchers are recommended to further test validity of this model. By introducing person-related variables, including values, religious orientation and commitment, and altruism, as mediating variables into the PEM, researchers can test and enhance the explanatory power of the model. Moreover, apart from the role of FE in NVB, the role of other environmental aspects that are delineated by the social climate model, such as educational and correctional institutions and work settings, can be explored. The practical implications of the results from such studies for building COP in Ethiopia will be far-reaching. Moreover, only adolescents in one school participated in the present study. This limits the generalizability of the results. Thus, future studies should extend the present study and test the validity of the PEM in other schools, grade levels, on college and university students, and even among the youth outside of the educational system (e.g., the unemployed and employed youth).

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Begging among Physically Healthy Adults in Addis Ababa: Reasons and Strategies

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Abstract

Currently, in Addis Ababa, several people including physically healthy are leading their life through begging. The present study sought to examine the reasons that led physically healthy adults engage in beginning to make a living. The strategies they employed while begging were also assessed. A total of 33 physically healthy beggars from different begging spots found in four sub-cities of Addis Ababa were selected through purposive, availability and convenience sampling techniques. In addition, three officials from the Labor and Social Affairs Bureau of Addis Ababa city administration were drawn purposely. Physical Health Screening Tool, developed by the researcher, was used to identify physically healthy participants. Data were collected using interviews and FGDs and analyzed thematically using a deductive approach. Findings reveal that poverty, unemployment, and invitations by other beggars were among the major reasons for begging. The researchers recommend that to decrease or ultimately eliminate begging, reasons accounting for begging need to be given attention by City Government Administration, Labor and Social Affairs Bureau and all concerned government and non-government organizations. Furthermore, serious regulations need to be put in place by the House of People's Representatives to discourage begging by physically healthy individuals.

Key Words*: begging, physical health, physically healthy beggars, reason*

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Introduction

Depending on the type of people engaged in begging behavior and on the purpose of begging, the term begging is defined in several ways. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Ethiopia defined begging as "…A method of earning one's living from the income obtained by other sectors of the society using age, health, and economic conditions" (MOLSA, 1992, p. 2). The following definitions were also included in the document:

> *Begging is an activity emanating from poverty and destitution where the person tries to feed him/herself. It is a behavior practiced to obtain from others what one is unable to get by oneself. Begging is a request directed to the rest of society to bring oneself out of misery and poverty. Begging is an act of asking for alms that is essential for survival, for solving temporary problems, or for fulfilling some cultural and religious commitments.*

Groce and his associates defined begging as:

An activity which allows an individual to call upon people with whom he or she has no close ties for small donations to meet his/her basic needs. It is a mechanism through which the community ensures that its very poor members will not starve (Groce et al., 2014, p. 9).

Developing nations, especially those in Africa, suffer from inadequate health infrastructure, scarce education opportunities, internal conflict, poverty, and the like (Sireen, 2017). Ethiopia has been characterized as one of the developing countries stricken by as high unemployment and displacement because of war. Abebaw (2003)

affirms Ethiopia is entangled with several challenging conditions, including famine, political instability, unemployment, underemployment, ethnic conflict, and so forth. Researchers (for instance Güneralp et al. 2017 and Sireen (2017) have found urbanization to be among the precursors of some social problems in developing nations. Citizens' vulnerability to such dire conditions has exacerbated problems such as begging in Ethiopian cities particularly in Addis Ababa (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Jelili, 2006).

Begging is a global issue (Ahamdi, 2010; Groce et al., 2013; Jelili, 2006; MoLSA, 1992; Woubishet, 2005) with its being more conspicuous in developing countries (Abebaw, 2003; Ebenezer et al., 2018; Woubishet, 2005). Thes research works of Abebaw, Ebenezer et al., and Woubishet 2005 have reavealed high prevalence of begging in several African countries. Research also indicate that the practice of earning a living is on begging is widespread in Ethiopia (Antehunegn & Abduselam, 2019; Abduselam & Belay, 2021).

In Ethiopia the genesis of begging is linked to religious practices and the wanting of the tradition of support (Negese, 2008). In the olden times, the needy used to satisfy their basic necessities mainly with the help from kins, cultural and religious institutions, and clans. However, the collapse or such a support system, coupled with the booming individualistic culture, paved the way for begging in the country (MoLSA, 1992; Negese, 2008).

Addis Ababa, a fast-developing city, hosts apparently all Ethiopian ethnic groups (PEFA, 2008). The city has a size of 527 square kilometers. The population density is estimated to be around 5,165 persons per a square kilometer available. The

estimates of the Central Statistics Agency of Ethiopia show that the population of the city is more than 4.5 million (CSA, 2020). Its better facilities, infrastructure, and industries has made the city to be the preferred destination for people migrating from rural locations. The internal migration has been identified to be among the factors leading the city to suffer from high population density, disintegration of social fabric, crime, violence and eventually poverty (MoFED, 2006; Netsanet, 2009).

The rate of poverty in Addis Ababa is worsening and a substantial portion of its inhabitants are presumed to lead a dire life. Netsanet (2009) asserted that poverty is more severe in the city's center than its outskirts.

Researchers have identified several factors that predispose people to resort to begging. The major factors include poverty (Fireyihun, 2011; Teweldebrhan, 2011; Woubishet, 2005), family breakdown (Fireyihun, 2011), societal crumbling and illiteracy, (Teweldebrhan, 2011), rural-urban migration and drought, famine and war induced displacement (Tatek, 2009), religious obligation (Kerebih, et al., 2007), peer pressure and illness (Lucas, 2007), political challenges, unemployment and underemployment (MOLSA, 1992), and urbanization (Woubishet, 2005). As the local studies focused on physically unhealthy people making a licing on begging there is the need to uncover factors that push or pull physically healthy people to engage in begging In this study, therefore, an attempt was done to examine if there are any different factors, other than those found amongst physically unhealthy beggars, that pushed the participants of the study to earn a living from begging.

It has become a common place to see physically healthy adults begging in the in the streets of Addis Ababa (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Groce et al., 2014; Negese,

2008; Samuel, 2017). Albeit social bans, overwhelming evidence exist in written documents, videos, and television programs that Addis Ababa has become a house of healthy adults who make a living by begging (Negese, 2008; Tatek, 2009). In Ethiopia, the practice of begging among physically healthy is unwelcome. Even though beggary is not encouraged by several religions (Jelili, 2010; Negese, 2008) it is drawing a substantial number of physically healthy people (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Antehunegn & Abduselam, 2019).

Therefore, the objective of this study was to identify the reasons that push physically healthy adults to earn a living from an activity that is socially and culturally prohibited in Ethiopia. It was also attempted to identify the strategies they used to get pity of others so as to earn alms for a living. In the context of this study, begging refers to asking people with whom one has no close ties for a non-reciprocated charity, such as money and food, as can be seen when individuals beg in public spaces. Similarly, physical health refers to a state of external physical well-being enabling an individual to perform his/her daily activities without restrictions as measured by physical health screening tools and confirmed by observation. Physical health was also considered as being free from major diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, inhibiting the person from engaging in various formal businesses.

Methods

Research Design

To attain the objectives of the study, primary qualitative data collection tools were employed. Since data were gathered by employing interviews and FGDs, thematic analysis was conducted to make meaning out of the data. In addition, demographic characteristics such as sex and age were tapped and analyzed quantitatively.

Research Setting

Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia and is found 7,726 feet above sea level. The foundation, growth, and development of Addis Ababa are not linked to colonization (Bahru, 2001). Nearly every ethnic group in Ethiopia is represented in this city (PEFA, 2008). The capital city is 527 square kms. It is estimated that about 5,165 people live in a square km area (CSA, 2020).

The population of Addis Ababa is growing at a faster rate mainly due to the influx of people from rural areas pushed by drought, political instability, regional wars, government compulsion, depletion of natural resources, pursuit of better job opportunities, and lack of basic services (Abduselam & Belay, 2021; Woubshet, 2005). A substantial proportion of the migrants usually are confronted with dire socio-economic conditions upon their arrival to the city. Many of them are forced to join various types of jobs to lead their lives without having the opportunity to choose among the available jobs due to the prevailing soaring unemployment rate in Ethiopia (CSA, 2020).

Among the ten sub-cities of Addis Ababa, four sub cities namely. Addis Ketema, Arada, Lideta, and Kirkos were selected for the present study Begging is more commonly practiced in these sub-cities than in other sub-cities. Additional reasons for selection of these sub cities as study sites are:

1) These sub-cities host more than 40 % of the capital's population (Netsanet, 2009).
2) With their locations being at the center they are easily accessible.
3) These places are observed to have high business activities attracting people who lead their lives by begging.
4) These sub cities have places including bridges, worshipping areas and marketplaces where beggars can spend their nights.
5) In these places there are popular churches and mosques wherein beggars can easily find almsgivers.

Population and Participants:

The study's participants were physically healthy adults in Addis Ababa, ranging in age from 18 to 40, who made their living by begging. The people in this age range are thought to be the backbone of the nation and are productive. This segment of the population could have contributed to the economic prosperity of their nation, since nations primarily depend on this demographic for economic growth.

In an interview with representatives of the Addis Ababa city government's Labour and Social Affairs Bureau, it was learned that it was unclear how many physically healthy adults in the city were making a living by begging. However, the agency has pinpointed the sub-cities were where the majority of physically fit adult

beggars reside. Additionally, the agency has pinpointed particular locations where beggars frequently engage in this activity. While there are beggars in every sub-city, the study's target group was often seen in particular sections of several sub-cities. The target groups' densely inhabited areas are indicated in Table 1

Table 1:

Specific Areas Where the Target Groups are Highly Populated

Awutobustera	Ras Mekonnin Bridge	Biherawi	Mexico square
Merkato	Arat Kilo	Sengatera	Legehar
Gojam Berenda	Megenagna	Tikuranbessa	Urael church
Teklehaimanot	Filwuha	Kazanchis	Kality

Following the identification of the precise locations where the target population can be available, four sub-cities and certain areas within them were selected to choose the participants.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Using purposive and convenience sampling procedures, twenty-three physically healthy beggars—ten of whom were female and the remaining thirteen of whom were male—from specific regions of Addis Ketema, Arada, Lideta, and Kirkos sub-cities were chosen for the interviews. Because the research's target population consisted of beggars in good physical health, the purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample was physically normal. Convenience sampling was also employed since it makes individuals conveniently accessible. Regarding the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) samples, six male beggars and four female beggars were chosen through availability and purposive sampling procedures.

Because it was so difficult to gather beggars who through other means availability sampling was used. This was because of making a living by begging required them to move from one place to another and from one street to another. If beggars were discovered to be physically healthy and in close proximity to one another, they were invited to take part in the focus group discussions.

As a result, 33 beggars in all (19 men and 14 women) took part in the research. The data saturation approach was used to determine this sample size. Through the use of a purposive sample technique, three officials from the Labour and Social Affairs Bureau (LSAB) of the Addis Ababa City Government—two men and one woman—were also included in the study. The Addis Ababa city government's LSAB executives were invited because their organization was one of the ones that worked directly with the impoverished and vulnerable populations.

Table 2:

Sub-Cities and Specific Areas from which Samples Were Selected

Addis Ketema Sub-City	Arada Sub-City	Lideta Sub-City	Kirkos Sub-City
Awutobus Tera	Piassa	Teklehaimanot	Filwuha
GojamBerenda	RasMekonnin Bridge	TikurAnbessa	Biherawi
		Megenagna	Mexico
			Legehar

Data Gathering Tools: In the present study two types of tools were used. The first was used to. To distinguish obviously physically healthy beggars from other categories of beggars (such as children, elderly, disabled, etc.). The tools were observation and

screening tools. The second type of tools were interview and FGD designed to get firsthand information from participants. A close ended questionnaire was used to tap data on demographic factors including sex, age and educational level.

Observation: The purpose of the observation checklist was to assess the physical health of beggars. As the target participants were physically healthy adult beggars, first beggars were evaluated using an observation checklist. The checklist included measures evaluating physical conditions such hearing and vision impairments, as well as the state of hands, legs, and mobility. The screening tool was administered if the beggar satisfied the requirements listed in the primary observation checklist. Items on this checklist included "Are the beggar's hands normal?" "How are his/her legs?" "Can she/he hear a sound at a volume others find audible?" and "Can she/he see and recognize objects at a distance others can detect?"

Screening Tool: The screening instrument, like the observation checklist, sought to distinguish between physically healthy and the unhealthy adult beggars. The researcher created tools to help distinguish physically healthy beggars from unhealthy ones because the study's participants were beggars who could participate in other legal businesses requiring physical health and strength and who were physically fit enough during the data collection period. The tool was created by contacting medical experts and drawing on medical research studies. The screening tool's components primarily addressed serious health issues that prevent people from participating in activities that demand physical fitness and how participants perceive their level of physical strength.

The screening tool comprised of 11 items. Major illnesses including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and the like were the emphasis of the instrument. (e.g.). It

was also focused on the condition of eyes, legs and hands (."). On top of these, the screening test asked participants if they believed their physical health was sufficient to do any tasks requiring strength. (e

Each item was answered "YES" or "NO." The beggar was regarded as a study participant if they provided a "YES" response for each question. The beggar was deemed physically unhealthy and was removed from the study if they answered "NO" to any of the questions.

Interview Guide: Following the determination of a beggar as a study participant the interview guide was administered with the help of an observation checklist and screening tool. The guide consisted of two parts. The first part evaluated demographic factors such as age, sex, birth place and higher educational level attained (e.g., "Your Sex", "Age in Years", "Level of Education / 1. Unable to read and write, 2. Elementary, 3. High School, 4. Certificate and above/"). The second part assessed causes for begging (e.g., "Select the reason/s that forced you to begin begging in the street"). This part also was set to solicit information regarding strategies participants employed to draw almsgivers' attention (e.g., "What kind of strategy/strategies you employ to easily solicit money or other alms from people you beg").

Focus Group Discussion: The FGD guide comprised of two questions inquiring participants on the causes for begging and strategies they employ in begging (e.g., "Tell me the reason/s that forced you to lead your life through begging", "What kind of strategy/strategies do you employ to easily get the sympathy of people you beg?").

The location of the first FGD was Piazza, Jegole Square. The conversation took place with four female participants. Six male beggars participated in the second FGD, which was conducted in the Filwuha neighborhood. The researcher created the FGD items in English, and he and a language specialist from Addis Ababa University translated them into Amharic. The duration of each FGD was between 18 to 22 minutes. The participants were unhappy with the length of time they spent on the discussions because they took place during their begging hours albeit their consent to participate in the FGD. It was deemed impossible to conduct the FGDs at other times for it would have necessitated sufficient compensation.

Data Analysis

In the present study thematic analyses was employed to make meaning of the qualitative data gathered. A deductive method was used for doing thematic analysis. Prior to going over the data, the researcher had certain themes ready that he anticipated might appear in the data. Then, a detailed review of all the data was conducted in order to become acquainted with the data.

Sentences, phrases, and idioms that were pertinent to the themes were shaded different colors to generate codes. Each code was designed to represent the concepts that the participants had mentioned. Codes such as "Undeserving Beggars," "Strong Beggars," "Healthy Beggars," "Street Dwellers," "Being Uncertain," "24-hour Incidence," "Profitable Business," "Well-Known Job," "Qifela," "Yegile," "Derash," "Teqetari," etc. were developed. Upon closely examining the codes, the researcher was able to identify the patterns that led to the themes. Unusual Amharic phrases used by the participants were replaced with more widely understood terms, and irrelevant codes

were removed (for example, "Qifela" was changed to "begging" and "Teqetari" to "full-time beggar). Every theme was identified and given a name based on the codes. (e.g. 'Undeserving Beggar' is termed as 'Physically Healthy Beggar'). At last, the developed themes included Physically Healthy Beggars, Commonness, Incidence, Full Time Beggar, Attractive Daily Income, Profitable Job and Yegile (to mean 'My Own'. All the above themes were summarized to two broad themes, namely Reasons and begging Strategies.

Some interviews were audio recorded with the consent of interviewees. The researcher first took notes while listening to the recorded audio in order to find pertinent phrases, statements, and expressions and phrases. The materials were then finally transcribed and organized by theme. Furthermore, percentages were used to analyses data regarding demographic factors.

Ethical Considerations:

While ethical considerations remain important in all types of research, their significance is more pronounced in studies involving populations such as beggars. As a result, basic ethical principles were closely adhered to.

The data gathering tools, including the audio recorder, were accompanied by an informed consent form, and participants were made aware that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary. In order to ensure their anonymity and data confidentiality, the respondents were identified by letters and numbers they generated

When respondents received the informed consent form, they expressed that they were deceived on many occasions by many previous researchers. In the present study utmost effort was exerted to control and eliminate any attempt of deception.

Findings

Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved 33 physically healthy beggars (14 females and 19 males). 23 participants (10 female and 13 male) took part in interviews, and 10 (4 female and 6 male) participated in the FGD. In addition, 3 other participants (1 female and two male officials) from LSAB of Addis Ababa City administration participated in an interview. Thus, a total of 36 people (15 female and 21 male) were participants of the qualitative section of this study.

Table 3

Summary of the Participants Involved in the Study

	Beggars			Officials	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Interview	13	10	23	2	1
FGD	6	4	10	_	_
			33	3	

The 33 beggars were asked about their place of birth. The data revealed that 10 (30.3%) of the total number of beggars were born in Addis Ababa, the capital city. The remaining (n= 23, i.e. 69.6%) stated that they were originally from different regions

outside the capital city. Table 4 presents the overall characteristics of the participants of the study.

Table 4

Characteristics of Beggar Respondents

Age in Years			Level of Education			Number of Children		
	F	%		f	%		f	%
< 20	7	21.2	Don't read and Write	2	6	No children	22	66.6
20-30	16	48.4	Elementary	20	60.6	One child	4	12.1
31-40	10	30.3	High school	9	27.2	Two children	7	21.2
			Certificate and above	2	6	> two children	0	
Total	33			33			33	

Note: f = frequency; % = percent

One can learn the following points from the data in Table 4:

1) There existed people who made beginning their source of living, even after having graduated from higher education institutions.

2) Over a third of the beggars had children who were dependents.

Reasons Accounting for Begging

It has been noted that physically healthy adults tuned their lives into begging as a means of survival. This section further explored why these individuals were driven to begging. Prior to that the researchers attempted to understand the pushing factors for deserving beggars (disabled beggars, child beggars, old-age beggars, etc.). It was thought that there could be potential reasons why the physically healthy individuals were driven to make begging their life choice. The findings have indicated some new perspectives about why the healthy people were pushed to begging (see Table 5). The reasons accountable for begging to both physically healthy and unhealthy groups to practice begging were found to be similar.

Results in Table 5 show the factors involved in compelling the participants to do begging for their survival. Participants were given the chance to select more than one reasons from the list.

Table 5

Reasons Accounting for Beginning Life in Streets.

Reasons	**Female**	**Male**
* Recommended by others	6	2
Unable to find job	5	11
Poverty	10	14
Family problems	5	11
Political reason (war, displacement, etc)	2	
Profitable job	3	4
* Other jobs are physically too demanding	4	2
I have no one to take charge of me	3	

One can see from the characteristics of the respondents section that the majority of the respondents came to the capital city from regions for various reasons. Eight of them migrated to the city to make money from begging. In other words, they came to the capital with the aim of earning a living from begging.

Previous research studies conducted on begging among disabled beggars, old age beggars and child beggars revealed the reasons such as inability to find job,

profitability of begging and political reasons as some of the causes forcing individuals to begin to earn a living through begging; in addition to being disabled and aged (Ahamdi, 2010; Groce, et al., 2014; Negese, 2008). Although these research works focused on begging, the nature and characteristics of this study was totally different from participants of earlier studies. As mentioned frequently in previous sections, the current study focused on beggars who were physically healthy so that able to do formal jobs. Nevertheless, the reasons accounting for begging, in previous research findings, were also found to be identified as reasons pushing participants of this study to earn a living through begging.

Furthermore, some participants of this study reported that they began to beg in streets because begging do not require unique knowledge and skill. They did not try to look for other legal or formal jobs since they are too demanding when compared to begging. Similarly, some of the participants began to earn a living from begging just by receiving requests from other beggars who previously joined the activity of begging.

An official working at LSAB of the Addis Ababa City indicated that the factors that pushed out to streets for begging included religious beliefs, work habits of the community, profitability of begging, and the culture of the society associated with almsgiving. One of the participants stated:

> *Many of the healthy beggars observed in streets are not actually poor. They are not the right person to beg. They beg because they know that begging is currently a profitable job. As I heard the healthy beggars are fighting with disabled beggars in streets. Disabled beggars are complaining to our office that the healthy ones did not allow them to beg in areas where they are available.*

> *The reason is clear that if both able bodied and disabled beggars beg together, obviously people prefer to give to the disabled ones* (LSAB, 14).

Another official in the same bureau further explained why people opted to beg, instead of work.

> *It is agreed that we, Ethiopians, are lazy people. We want to be rich as fast as possible. I think religion played its own role on us to develop poor work habit. We collected beggars and other street dwellers from streets and gave them training on various professions. After completing the training, we provided them 12,000.00 birr believing that they can begin their own business. Some of them were found while begging in streets. Mindless, it is after taking the training and the money that they were found in streets. This is simply because they don't want to exert maximum effort to get money from other jobs. You know, begging is so simple that everybody can do it* (LSAB, 15).

Strategies Used by Physically Healthy Adult Beggars

Begging by physically healthy people is conceptualized as asking others for money, food, and clothing. The data reveals that strategies the healthy and physically normal beggars employed to ask for money from almsgivers were more or less the same as those used by beggars with non-healthy ones including people with disability, old-age beggars, child beggars, and other types of beggars in previous research findings. The only strategy, especially used by the physically healthy beggars, was to walk alongside the almsgivers, trying to explain their problems by way of appealing to their pity.

Data from the focus group discussion has shown that beggars employed several techniques to draw the attention of the almsgivers. "*In most cases, I show respect for people I beg by using words of respect such as 'Yene Geta' (My Lord), 'Yemesafint zer' (Royal Family Member), 'Yelij Habtam' (Deep Pocketed Young), etc."* (Discussant Number 2, Filwuha).

The other participant said:

> *Although I have to frequently change techniques, I often appear as if I ate nothing for hours. I sometimes go certain distances with the person I beg so that I will get room to get sympathy of the person* (Discussant Number 1, Piassa).

A beggar who was 28-year old revealed that she used religious words, dressed down with older clothes, and occasionally new clothes. She also expressed that she would show a sign of starvation, telling almsgivers that she had dependent children to take care of.

In general, the strategies physically healthy beggars employed included:

- Acting as sick
- Wearing worn-out clothes and occasionally new clothes
- Using religious words and pretending to be a religious person or leader
- Making use of words that demonstrate respect to almsgivers
- Looking starved
- Mentioning that they have several responsibilities, such as upbringing children, educating children, taking care of older parents, etc.
- Going some distance with the person they beg

As already mentioned in this section, many of the strategies employed by the participants of the current study to meet their goal (to get money and food) were found to be similar to strategies previously identified by other researchers. For instance, Abebaw (2003) and Fireyihun (2011) found that beggars look starved and sick and wear worn-out and dirty clothes while begging.

Discussion

Reasons for Begging: People who are physically fit to do any type of work opted to make begging as a means of their survival in the city of Addis Ababa. The reason is perhaps there is a tradition by the people to help others who are in need, so the beggars used this as a loophole. According to Groce and his colleagues, the disappearance of the traditional support systems among the members of societies has been a major factor for many individuals to get themselves in streets to beg (Groce et al., 2014).

Previous research works on begging mainly focused on beggars who had culturally accepted reasons (e.g., disability, being old enough) to beg. In doing so, some of these researchers tried to mention that physically healthy people are being observed while begging in the streets of Addis Ababa (Elshaday Relief and Development Association, 2007; Negese, 2008; Ogunkan, 2009). However, this research exclusively focused on individuals who had no culturally accepted reasons to lead life through begging.

Among the commonest reasons that pushed people to the practice of begging were poverty, family problems, and lack of a job or unemployment These reasons or factors appeared to have been in congruence with the findings of the previous studies

(e.g., Abebaw, 2003; Fireyihun, 2011; Groce et al., 2014; Samuel, 2017). Many reported also that the physically healthy beggars went out to the streets because they were solicited by others who had formerly become beggars themselves, as they observed begging as a better source of income. Begging is something that is done without any knowledge or skill unlike what professional careers demand. On the contrary, professional jobs require one to pass through formal education, preferably higher level learning.

***Strategies Physically Healthy Adult Beggars Used*:** The initial assumption by the researchers was that the physically healthy beggars would use begging strategies that were not previously used by others such as physically disabled, and old-age beggars. However, the data has shown that there existed no major difference between strategies used by physically healthy beggars and the others beggars who had some form of disability in their ways of approaching almsgivers. As indicated earlier, one exception is a strategy the physically healthy beggars used walking alongside the almsgivers, panhandling them. This tactic was found very helpful because it allowed them extend their begging in extra time, the time they try to solicit the almsgivers.

Physically healthy beggars who participated in this study were found engaging themselves in begging activity without any culturally and legally accepted reasons. Though some reasons seem justifiable (for instance, war and displacement), physically healthy beggars should have engaged in culturally acceptable formal businesses.

In general, it was learnt from the findings that physically healthy beggars were earning a living from begging due to the fact that begging has become a profitable activity.

Conclusion

This study has identified the factors that are associated to begging among physically healthy people. The central reason why people came out to the streets for begging was poverty. Other reasons included unemployment and family-related problems. Some beggars were also invited to beg by their other beggar fellows. Friends, relatives, and former neighbors were among those who invited many to come to the 'business' of begging which was considered to be an important source of income. Begging was considered to be a profitable 'business'. This study observed that beginning helped the participants make better income than other professional jobs could do. Among other responsible factors that contributed for such people to come out for begging were religion, poor work habit, and the community's almsgiving tradition showing compassion and empathy.

Political instability, inter-ethnic conflict and internal war need to be given attention by future researchers as these factors are believed to play significant roles in forcing people to resort to socially unaccepted ways of earning a living in the Ethiopian context.

Recommendations

A very good lesson one may deduce is that no country can prosper in a situation where a significant number of people are increasingly flooded to the streets with the aim of making a living from begging. Even though begging may be considered a righteous practice for those who are physically disabled and hardly find jobs, the potential risk of begging outweighs. Accordingly, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- Poverty, unemployment and political instability were among the major reasons that forced participants of this study to lead life through begging in the streets. The researchers of the study believed that these reasons could be improved by government organizations such as the Labor and Social Affairs Bureau, the Addis Ababa City Administration and the office of the Prime Minister. If these and other concerned organizations work on improving poverty, unemployment and political instability, the number of physically healthy beggars will reduce.
- Government and non-government actors who are concerned about the social and economic affairs ought to aim to develop strategies that could reduce the rate of unemployment through targeting poverty eradication.
- The participants of the study did not have any logically acceptable reason to practice begging as a means to live their lives. Almsgivers therefore need to discourage the physically healthy beggars by discriminating them from the needy ones.
- Beggars employed various techniques to get the attention of almsgivers. Those who give money to beggars and those who regularly support beggars need not be deceived by mere strategies beggars employ. They have to be able to differentiate between those who require genuine support from others.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and consent to participate

The data gathering tools as well as the audio recorder, were used upon consent of participants was secured through an informed consent form. Participants were made aware that their participation in the study is voluntary.

The interview and FGD guides, including the methods in the present study, were approved by the School of Psychology of Addis Ababa University.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Competing Interests

The authors of this article declare that there is no competing interest.

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Child Work: A Strategy to Fitting Children to the Macro-Environment in the Ethiopian Context

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Conceptualizing Child Work in the Ethiopian Context

The understanding that children's involvement in over demanding activities at home and outside is recognized as harmful to their development and should be replaced with universal primary education is an established social goal (Larsen, 2003). Indeed, engaging children in unacceptable forms of child labor continues to exist in all parts of the world. Poverty, household situations and school environment force children to participate in labor and ultimately threaten their future physical, psychological and social development. These children could also be victims of discrimination and all forms of maltreatments which eventually deprive them from their human rights and more particularly child rights. In its comprehensive sense, therefore, harmful practices including child labor can be perceived as one form of child abuse. According to Befekadu and Tsegaye cited in Deaslegn(1998, p. 21), child abuse is defined as " any act of omission by individuals, institutions or society as a whole and any condition resulting from such acts which deprive children of their equal rights and liberties and/or interfere with their optimal development ".

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This does not necessarily mean that all forms of child work are detrimental to the child's physical, psychological and social development. Children play pivotal role in generating income and supporting the livelihood of households. The contribution of children in farm plots, household chores and out of home activities is characteristics of societies at all levels of development. However, Children's involvement in work seems to be misunderstood and its negative repercussion on children's physical, psychological and social developments has been over emphasized. Contextualizing the issue of child rights, therefore, seems to be important. Agbu (2009, p. 1) writes:

> *On the subject matter of children and youth, it is very important to examine the issue from the perspective of the African environment, and in particular the existential conditions of the children. The social and economic environment of African children is completely different from that of a European child, for example.*

Children's engagements in customary household chores and in fields with their parents and elders would allow them to learn basic survival skills and may prepare them to cope with demands of particular situations. Apart from developing practical competencies and matured coping strategies related to their local situations, the contribution of work can be viewed as a necessary ground and often regarded as mode of transmission of social skills and cultural heritages. This paper is tuned in light of the contribution child work has on children's psycho-social development. The engagement of children in economic and non-economic activities, especially their contribution to the household income in rural areas, has made many people to perceive child labor as part of

everyday life and a natural process of assimilating them to the wider culture. The prevailing view that assumes work as a means to acquire social skills has narrowed the distinction between the abusive side of child labor and its other dimension. However it seems that there is a tendency to use these two aspects interchangeably and put them into one melting pot. For ILO, child work refers to any work for pay or unpaid, family (domestic) work, as part of the socialization process; whereas, child labor refers to children working in hazardous work environment for long hours in an exploitative relationship that requires intense physical effort that are detrimental to their physical , mental and social wellbeing. The literature draws a distinction between child labor and domestic work in which the later refers to the everyday tasks children have always done for the general maintenance of the family unit and as part of the normal run of socialization(Verlet,2006, cited in Agbu:2009). For Oloko (1997), as cited in Agbu (2009, p. 14):

> *Child work is work in which the primary emphasis is on learning, training and socialization. As such, the work schedule is flexible, tends to be responsive to the developing capacity of the child and encourages his or her participation in appropriate aspects of the decision making process.*

Conceptualizing child work as an indigenous socialization strategy, however, should not obscure the child's educational rights. As stated in ILO's declaration, there is a need to make a distinction between light work and child labor. Accordingly:

> *ILO describes light work in article 7 of convention 138. Such light work should not be confused with the continuing high prevalence of other non-educative forms of child labor among some indigenous peoples. Rather than being taught traditional occupations and livelihoods by their parents, many indigenous and tribal children are denied access to education and are often caught in hazardous working conditions struggling to survive in areas with little or no law enforcement. These children are in need of immediate attention (Larsen, 2003, p. 3)*

The household composition hypothesis takes into account the household characteristics as explanatory variable in understanding child work. Education of parents, children's relationship to household members, the gender composition of the household, the presence of siblings and several other household factors have important bearings in the explanation of child work. The relative importance of these household factors which give rise to the decisions made in the household and which have important bearings on children's development need to be studied carefully. In light of this argument, this paper attempts to analyze the relationship between family structural patterns, contextual and cultural issues associated with the socialization of children through the process of child work.

The Family as a Socializing Developmental Niche: Like in any other agricultural societies, the Ethiopian family has its own way of inculcating the values, beliefs and other behaviors in the mind of the child. The family becomes a principal institutional setting by which the child socializes itself to the wider

community. One of the mechanisms by which the family accomplishes this is by letting children involve in productive activities in which adults take part. Children start to take active part in domestic and out of home activities as early as age five and six. In many instances, the Ethiopian family can be characterized as extended family. The extended family type provides unique and diversified life experience for the developing child. Every individual older than the child takes active part in this socialization process. Most of the socialization experiences of children take place in informal settings within the family or on work places. As stated by Cushner (1990) cited in Gardner and Kosmitzki (2008, p. 67) "The responsibility for learning falls mainly on the learner, making it rather personal , with extended family members often playing a critical role in the act of instruction, change, discontinuity and innovation are highly valued".

Although there can be similarities across all agricultural communities in Ethiopia, ethnic differences in nurturing socialization through work may be attributed to particularities such as socioeconomic status, parental livelihood and mode of transmission of these skills(Goh & Gardner, 2004 cited in Gardner & Kosmitzki, 2008).

Therefore, a particular Eco-Cultural System of developmental niche emphasizes different skills. In communities where farming is predominantly an activity to support the livelihood of the family the child tends to spend his time in farm plots. For instance, in many parts of the country children engage in these same activities. Certain cultures, however, specialize in some kind of activity typical of certain ethnic groups. The Dorze ethnic groups which are best known

for weaving and making of the traditional 'shema' begin to foster the indigenous work culture of spinning and combining different colors by children as early as age four and five. The Konso ethnic groups, for example, are best known for curving status and other varieties of usable objects out of stone and wood. Although documented sets of evidence are not available to back up the assertion, from my personal observation, Konso children engage themselves in such activities in middle childhood period. The astonishing entrepreneur skills of the Guraghe children can be attributed by the unique tendency for them to be economically independent and contribute towards sustainability of the family.

These culture specific modes of socializing the child through work, apart from establishing the habit of work, contributes to the development of imagination, better muscular coordination and effective intrapersonal relationships. I have made an attempt to show how ethnic based work culture is transmitted to the young in the process of socialization in these three ethnic groups.

In many cultures, the transition from childhood to adolescence is marked by some sort of public recognition, called rites of passage. These are ceremonies or rituals that recognize or symbolize an individual's movement from one status to another along the developmental span. According to Schlegal and Barry (1991) cited in Gardner and Kosmitzki(2008), rites of passage are found in most non-industrialized societies where nearly 80% of girls and close to 70 percent of boys go through some form of initiation. Rites of passage related to children's involvement in home and outside activities are not uncommon in the Ethiopian context. For example, in agricultural communities, at some point during the day

time in which the father sits under the shade to get rest or have his meal, the first child starts to practice plowing in which this is taken as a sign of taking adult responsibility.

Birth Order and Its Relationship to Children's Role in the Family

The birth order in the Ethiopian family has significant implication in determining ones role in the family. Be it male or female, first born children are growing with high expectation from the family and the community at large. As a matter of fact, children happily accept this image and prepare themselves psychologically to discharge this adult responsibility as early as middle childhood period. According to Gardner and Kosmitzki (2008):

> *The unique structure of the self-concept as well as some of the psychological processes related to it , are largely influenced by ones developmental niche and the level of the ecological system (micro-system, meso-system, exo-system,) in which one finds oneself at a particular time in the life span(p.142).*

In the Ethiopian context, the rural first born child assumes a bigger responsibility compared to the urban child. He/She is not only responsible for caring younger siblings but also other members of the extended family especially grand fathers and mothers. In a single parent home the first born child takes the role of the missing parent. He/She is responsible for maintaining the family cycle. First born children enter the world of work much sooner compared to second and third born children in the Ethiopian context. In families where livelihood is based on farming, first born children start to socialize themselves to the wider ecological system taking over the work load from their parents.

Entering the world of work creates more positive image of one's self and promotes independence. Parents have higher expectations for, exert greater pressure toward achievement and acceptance of responsibility, and interfere more with the activities of first born than later born children. Triandis (1989) cited in (Gardner & Kosmitzki, 2008) writes:

> *Culture-specific views of the self-result from early exposure to differing values and beliefs about the person in general. For example, child rearing practices in collectivist cultures tend to introduce and reinforce the welfare of the collective over the welfare of the individual. In contrast parents in individualistic culture teach their children that the individual's primary goal is independence and the establishment of a unique self. Based on these fundamentally different approaches, it seems logical that individuals in collective and individualistic cultures should vary in how they view themselves (143).*

Such relationships define the role of the first born child to be responsible, protective and caring for other members of the family. The transition from adolescence to adult roles appears to be much smoother in the Ethiopian context. As a result, it is unlikely for the individual to face role confusion. Societal expectations coupled with positive self-image may contribute for early identity formation. Gardner and Kosmitzki, (2008, p. 155) for example, writes:

> *"If the first born child is expected to take over the family business and assume care of the aging parents, it is not*

> *necessary for him to explore a variety of different social roles, thereby making the search for identity more difficult and of longer duration".*

Child work: a Means to Resolve the Industrious versus Inferiority Stage Conflict

The age range between six to puberty is especially important in the development of competence. Erik Erickson in his psychosocial theory of child development named this stage as industry vs. inferiority stage. Children at this stage like to plan, carry out and complete projects in their own. The conflict between the two extremes is resolved when children are allowed and supported to be engaged in the kinds of activities that revolve around adults. Essa (1999) marked this period particularly important in fostering the habit of work.

> *This period is particularly important in the development of workmanship, persistent greater understanding of social rules, and citizenship. Children who do not develop an adequate sense of industry will settle for mediocrity and do less than they are able, with a resulting sense of inferiority. Older preschools and school aged children should be allowed time, space, materials, and support to engage in the kinds of activities that build a sense of industry (p.110)*

I see a sharp contrast between children reared in the rural and urban settings in the Ethiopian context with respect to making them industrious. In the rural areas where agriculture is predominantly the main activity and means of livelihood for the family, children are actively involved in this labor intensive activity. Children born and brought up in urban settings seem to lack this

opportunity either due to the urban way of life or parental misconceptions on the nature of work and its virtues for the psycho-social development of children.

Ethnic Based Work Culture and Its Contribution to Socialize Children

Ethnographic studies conducted in different regions of the country, for example, showed how cultural values to a particular ethnic group tend to shape attitude of its young towards work. Each ethnic group in Ethiopia is known for a particular kind/type of work culture and ways of fostering this unique fabric to the young. It is this aspect of uniqueness among the ethnic groups that gives flavor and richness to the Ethiopian culture. Although not exhaustive, in the following paragraphs, an attempt is made to discuss how the culture of work enables children to fit into the macro world and its contribution as a strategy to socialize children.

The Dorze Ethnic Group

The Dorze Ethnic Groups are living on the highlands west of Lake Abaya. The Dorze Ethnic Groups are traditionally famous for weaving and the production of the traditional cloth '*Shema'*. The eye catching combination of colors coupled with meticulously knitted and designed women's long dresses and the traditional blanket type '*Shema'* is a symbolic representation across most cultures of Ethiopia. Although the '*Shema'* making still remains at a cottage level, it has shown much change in style so as to fit the fashion of the day. These new developments have attracted even people of other cultures to

include it into their list of costumes. '*Shema'* making passes through series of stages before we get the end product. These series of stages require division of labor among every Dorze family. Literally speaking it is impossible to think of an indigenous Dorze child who has not acquired the '*Shema'* making skill. The acculturation of the child to the making of '*Shema'* begins at early childhood age in which children contribute their share in the process. A significant portion of the income generated by the Dorze family comes from the sale of *Shema*. Children's share in this income generating activity in the family niche cannot be underestimated. Hence, it is not uncommon for the Dorze child to cover his school expenses from the sale of cotton made scarf which marks the rite of passage to 'Shema' making.

The Konso People

Another ethnic group in the south west part of Ethiopia, respected for hard working and ingenuity, is the Konso. The Konso people are especially appreciated for the terrace farming practices and stone work. The skillfully constructed terraces that cover the Konso landscape makes them to be described as megalithic people (Jensen, 1936; Amborn, 1998; Straube, 1963; Ministry of Agriculture, 1988) Cited in (Watson &Regassa, 2001). Among other things, the convictions that work is an inherent constituent of Konso culture has been acknowledged by several ethnographic researchers who have made extensive visit to the setting. Hallpike(1972) cited in Watson and Regassa (2001) writes:

> *The Konso take intense pride in their agriculture, and have a strong work ethic. Visitors to the region have remarked that the Konso go to work in the fields with*

> *such vigour and passion that it looks as though they were going into battle (p.246).*

The work-ethics established through time in the history of Konso people helped the formation of ethnic identity. It is this strong belief that helped them to cope up the effect of environmental degradation, low and unpredictable rainfall which eventually affects the maximization of harvest. The writer of this paper had an opportunity to live and work among these people. Socialization of children to this work-oriented society is an important milestone in their development. Konso children have strong musculature, athletic physique and never give-up composure. The industrious nature of the society at large makes the Konso child to resolve the confusions and contradictions of the psycho-social stages of development adequately. Does this relentless effort to fit into the macro-environment corroborate with school achievement? Does this work-based life style inculcated into the minds of Konso children, as a function of the socialization process, pay tribute in other areas as well? The answer to these call for empirical investigations.

The Guraghe People

The "Sebat bet" Guarghe are celebrated ethnic groups for their entrepreneurship skills and business orientation taken as symbolism by most Ethiopians. This work oriented style of life and feeling of early economic independence is transmitted as cultural heritage to children as early as four and five years. According to Fecadu (1972); Worku(1995); Getnet(1995) cited in Nahu Senay(2001):

> *The Sebat bet Guraghe, confederation of seven houses have long been known as early migrants to Addis Ababa and other urban areas, where they have pioneered the development of associations and have sought to assist their home communities (p.30).*

Although men from other ethnic groups as well have had success stories in the business world, the Gurghe ethic groups are uniquely associated with all aspects of trade and manufacturing.

Conclusion

This paper has examined how child work can be used as a useful strategy in socializing the Ethiopian child into the wider world of life. It has aimed to see the moderating effects of the family setup, birth order and the work ethics most relevant to particular ethnic groups. Apart from its economic importance, the participation of children in multi-faceted activities of the society has quite immense contribution in socializing children into the wider culture. Despite this positive aspect, there seems a trend to make children alien to the world of work.

Exposure of children to the world of work as early as the late child hood period (of course without denying their educational rights), is a useful avenue to nurture socially acceptable behavior. It is not only the formal schooling system that transforms the growing child into a matured adult. The informal socialization process taking place in the family developmental niche combined with the most structured school based education can bring the required social

and cognitive changes. It is by doing so that we can help the child to practice values, attitudes and habits of the wider culture within which he/she lives. The issue is so broad that a number of family and cultural variables are involved to shape the overall development of the Ethiopian child. Hence, there is a need to address the issue in a better and systematic way.

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