A Narrative of Students' Lived Experience and Its Effect on their Academic Achievement

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Abstract: This study examined students' narrative retrieved from their past or lived experience and its effect on their academic achievement. I made use of a narrative case study research method and conducted an in-depth interview with participants. Drawing on purposive sampling technique, data were collected from selected students of the Faculty of Languages and Humanities, Kotebe Metropolitan University. Personal narratives were recounted by the students and analyzed by developing themes, until data saturated. The researcher made an attempt in order to uncover the students' lived practices that have harmed students' academic achievement. Findings reveal that harmful psychological, social and economic experiences, if adversely remained in the memory of students, also have negative effect on students' academic achievement. Accordingly, the psychologically wounding and socio-economically destructing experiences have corroded formative developments, and have undermined critical thought, and that believed to have affected students' academic successes.

Keywords: Academic achievement; Lived experience; Narratives; Projection, Trauma

1. Introduction

Major challenges in today's education system of emergent nations are matters related to students' lived experiences. Numerous experiences have been mentioned about students' academic success- as some are mentioned more than others. Most commonly stated aspects are students' psychological and socio-economic state (Berkowitz, Moore and Benbenishty, 2017). When students experience difficult socio-economic situations, these experiences can affect their learning appetite and success of academic achievement *per se* (Oorlog, 2016). Parts of the reasons influencing students' academic achievement are the most discussed issues in educational literature among legislators, education leaders, teachers, psychologists and educational researchers (Bruggencate, Luyten, Scheerens, and Sleegers, 2012). Students' psychological formative development and family socio-economic status have an effect on students' academic achievement, because they were the most cited reasons for lack of success in schools in the literatures (McIntyre, , Barowsky, and Tong, 2011; Karakas, 2020).

Psychological effects reflected in narratives: People organize their chaotic and disordered world of existence in a form of discourses and symbols in narrative (Adame, 2006; Dubi, 2012). A more specific version of this process involves the claim that, when a person, particularly a child experiences traumatic events, their psyche splits into two or more separate parts. One part experiences the traumatic event; the other part continues to function normally, with no awareness of the abuse (Laney and Loftus, 2005). It looks that it is unknown but it has a grave effect on once normal life. Then, it is claimed, at some point in the future when it is safe for the person to put these half-psyches back together, and this is necessary because the traumatic experiences have begun to leak out in some other way, i.e., educational success as far as this study is concerned (Collins, 2015).

A therapist can help the person to reconstruct memories of the original trauma and its possible relationships with their current academic situations. Amongst many, one way is through re-narrating of their previous stories in order to come across an account of personal records Chilton (2004), as cited in Hussein (2016). This method helps to closely study some of the reasons that affect students' academic success from the horse's mouth.

Hunter (2010) explicated that narrative help a self-reconstructing of deeply-personality by the vocabularies of our place and time, expressing dominant modes of discourses about the unique persona. Collins (2015) argued that the narrative of trauma is constructed and focused on serious of memories, bruises and abuses. The idea of the psychological concept of the personality or identity as a 'fixed inner core or essence' is influenced by childhood developmental experiences.

Socio-economic effects reflected in narratives: The influence of the socio-economic environment on the on-going construction of a sense of self is recognizable. Neimeyer (2010), as cited in Hunter (2010), saw that self is situated in language and embedded in social situations. Multiple challenges like poverty, victimization, family instability, and the perils of collective socialization can affect the formative development of individuals and narratives can help to analyse what effects have these problems on individuals' academic journey. The impact of these social and economic hardships can extend into the actual leaning settings (McKinney, Flenner, Frazier, Wendy, and Abrams, 2005).

Debilitating social conditions and facing continuing economic hardships depress individuals, especially a child. Numerous studies (Rush and Vitale, 1994; Banks, 2001; Rockoff, 2003) documented that poverty and the associated disadvantages negatively affect student learning and achievement. Fortunately, educators can ameliorate the impact of these problems by recognizing and responding to the socio-economic differences. Furthermore, the interweaving of these socio-economic conditions and hardships pose great challenges for students to concentrate on their education at all levels. However, these challenges persist from students' early education to their higher academic career. The reason amongst many is the nature of family socio-economic impact that is highly institutionalized and takes time to mitigate it (Banks, 2001).

Tadesse (2014) contended that a number of studies witness that there are severe problem of education quality in higher education of Ethiopia. The researcher of this study was also initiated by

the question that why the target participants (students) of the study area were not successful in their academic results- focusing on those who scored less.

Moreover, the purpose of this paper is to study the lived experience of students as reflected in their narratives and how it affected their academic success. Based on this principal objective, the specific objective of this study is to:

1. analyse what lived experiences and memories of students reflected in narrative and how those affected students' academic achievement; and
2. identify the psychological, social and economic problems that affect students' academic success.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Research Context

The target group, selected from the Faculty of Languages and Humanities at Kotebe Metropolitan University, had different socio-cultural backgrounds. The students who were enrolled by the Ministry of Education to the University were basically generic students. Kotebe Metropolitan University is one of the oldest academic institutions situated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The University has been redefined as the National University of Education in 2021, basically to address the quality of education in the country. This truth fosters the need to think about Kotebe University of Education, as the center of excellence in education. The Department of Foreign Languages and literature is currently expanding its programs following the transformation of the University to the University of Education. More importantly, the researcher teaches in the same Faculty's of the research participants- Faculty of Languages and Humanities.

2.2. Research Design

The study applied a narrative case study method. Narrative case study is a means by which researchers investigate selected participants' personal experience through narrative form (Ferrari, 2016; Krishnaswammy and Junita, 2005). This paper, therefore, reviewed and analyzed narratives of students from the Faculty of Languages and Humanities, Kotebe Metropolitan University in the year 2020. In this study, therefore, I employed a narrative research design in collecting data. Narrative research designs, as Ferrari (2016), Creswell (2002) and Greenhalgh and Russell (2005: 15) describe, are inquiries that "describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives of individual experiences." As such, by making use of in-depth interviews, this study explored the students' lived experiences. This study focused on problems that have been faced by the students in their academic journey- from the past to the present. These personal narratives were analyzed by developing themes and grouping these themes under categories that answer the research questions.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Procedures

At Kotebe Metropolitan University, the Faculty of Languages and Humanities has enrolled students from different backgrounds. Drawing on purposive sampling technique, out of the eighty-four students, about seven students were selected based on their academic results. More specifically, the selection was based on purposive sampling from students who meant to have scored less. Purposive sampling technique can be employed- in which cases are selected for intensive interviewing and analysis (Bogdan and Taylor, 1990).

Students who did not maintain a passing mark or "C" in average of all courses and subjected to re-exam, remedial and tutorial classes were first-rated as informants for this study. The researcher made an attempt in order to address the recurrent recounted practices that were/are experienced by the students and how they harmed/affected students' academic achievement.

2.4. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Semi-structured interview questions were constructed for this study. Students' personal narratives served as data in order to collect incidents that affected students' life in general and their academic success in particular, from the perspectives of students' lived experiences. Recording was administered by the independent trained data collectors, recruited by the University's budget. The reason the researcher did not carry out the interview was to give more freedom of discussion to the participants. In organizing the data, the researcher revisited each interview and listened to each audiotape while evaluating the transcripts to make certain the accuracy of data.

In analyzing and interpreting the narrative data, the researcher dealt with the recorded narratives of the target students. To this end, the researcher listened to the recorded data several times and categorized them thematically. Next, the researcher focused on interpreting meaning driven from data. This is what we call interpreting or analyzing the data- inferring meanings and significances from the analysis.

As far as the ethical consideration is concerned, students were guaranteed for confidentiality of the information they provided; and names of the participants were not mentioned in the analysis part. The research participants were not subjected to any harm or benefit in any ways in this study. In narrative case study, ethics is not necessarily a matter of correct behavior but of responsibility in human relationship (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2007). Due respect was given and the participants were vowed not to be mentioned in names- and fully their personal narratives were confidential.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Narratives of Students' Past Experiences- from 'There to Here'

The successive interview results have already witnessed the modus operandi of the societies' living condition that echo with the difficult time of the students. Young people develop critical memories from their early maturity age. Dubi (2012) asserted that some of these memories are structured and simple to remind and some are still repressed and difficult to tell- but they are projected consciously to the external reality. Even the overt memories and motives are not good enough to narrate, although they are recalled easily. The following excerpt states incidents that are mostly memories of bumps and bruises of an individual exploitation and affirm the roles as painful subjects. In fact, in the day-to-day life of schools, multiple issues have oppressive aspects. In regard to this, in a very discreet mood a narrator reminds his childhood hard-work as,

> ልጅነቴን ሳስብ ህዘን ይገባኛል፤ ያ ሁሉ የተጫነብኝን ሳስብ በእኔ ላይ ሳይሆን የማዝንለት ሰው ያለ ይመስለኛል። ከአቅሜ በላይ ብዙ የማገዶ እንጨት እሸከም ነበር። እቤት ለማድረስ ብዙ ሰዓት ስለሚወስድብኝ አብሬው እወድቅ ነበር። የሚያሳዝነው መሸከሜ ሳያንስ ምን ያህል ተሸክሜ ይሆን የሚለውን አለማወቄ ነው። ካልቻልክ ያው ዱላ ነው።
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> when I remember my childhood moments, I feel a pity; I feel like am sympathetic as if the burden was against someone whom I knew and not about me. I carried bunch of fuel woods, beyond my strength. I fell down with it and it took me long time carrying it to home. What I regret is not for what I carried; it is about the weight of the thing I carried? I was beaten for what I could not able to perform.

The above narrator recounts his painful memories and experiences from his conscious mind. Given past moments there is a trend of child labour in the offing of the family. Many African countries, including Ethiopia, have developed child labour abuse as a crime very recently and policy issue is such a matter. Acting within these constraints, and drawing on cultural practices, for example, among families, communities and schools there are the areas where individuals fade up about their future hope and dreams. Adame (2006) noted that in order to organize their existence within this world, persons pass through difficulties and narrate their experiences and in doing so recount life narratives that remind their painful past to their present. Likewise, the aforementioned narrative of the student's life provides insight into one's psychological meaning-making processes. What is recounted by the narrator is his miserable childhood living condition- he tried to recall from the time of his yore.

The narrator recounts his personal story as if it is fresh and it happens now. His face fades up and his voice is in somber mood- looks tiresome and appeared as if he engaged in the situation just at the moment-as reported by the interviewer. On the other hand, the speaker's narrative represents every individual's lived experience, and the alternative signs of repression projected from even unspoken symbols that we decipher from our traditional understandings of normality.

The narrator seems to have been in a state of stream of consciousness, when he tries to tell the victim subject skeptically as he says, "I feel like am sympathetic as if the burden was against someone whom I knew and not about me." He dissociates in a defense mechanism for what had happened against him. "Dissociation" is a traumatic matter from consciousness as a central defense against overwhelming experience. Here, for the narrator, dissociation provides a critical psychological get away from emotional and physical distress associated with overwhelming hard experience, including childhood maltreatment, from which no actual physical escape is possible (Kluft *et al*., 1985, cited in Lanius, 2015). The speaker wants to dissociate his physical and emotional childhood maltreatment into someone else, where there is no chance to escape from it physically.

The speaker has also attempted to resume his normal formative development since the aftermath of trauma, because he was a college student at the time of the data collection. Unrelieved trauma can have destructive effect in all aspects of life. The speaker tells it was compulsory to carry out what he had been ordered to do. Though the resilience of the student to join University education is appreciable- 'other matters considered', his past lived experience has had an effect on his academic scoring. As good educational background has a positive effect for successive academic career, no doubt the other way round has a negative impact. The narrator remembers the severe punishment awaiting him at home'. As such, many Ethiopian families' background is similar to the narrator's experience. Child labour is mandatory amongst many rural areas, even today.

Accordingly, the psychological and economic impacts of such memory are uninterrupted. It leads an individual to feel distress about the inevitable tough activities and poor living condition in his life. In regard to this, the effects of society's poverty are exacerbated when there is a high concentration of low-income families and individuals in the society. The shared problems that also emanate from collective socializations, depressed attitudes and motivation may be considered as normative, thereby reducing student's expectations and hope for the future, and success in their academic success (Haberman, 2005; Ferrari, 2016).

3.2. Socio-economic and Psychological Situations Affecting Academic Achievement

Prejudicial socio-economic biases and apparent partiality in family and society, become more socially responsive, and exhibits profound impact on students' academic achievement in school (Haberman, 2005). As the country is one of the under developed nations, many of the students are from the disadvantaged families and societies that demonstrate a need for support in order to mitigate effects of poverty. Although supports give relief to their immediate needs, the impact of being needy harms their desire to learning. A narrator recounts "I passed through difficulties. Life was hard to me as my family was poor….Even now, I have no one to help me. I was flunking out of college due to continuous sickness."

The narrator describes his frustrating situation that his current predicament is the same as his previous one. As a college student, he says that still he feels he has no one to help him. He had had a continuous dreadful health condition which led him to drop out his college education and back to high school to redo his opportunity. He repeatedly talks about his shocking experiences caused by poverty and led him to bad health condition.

Students without financial support are particularly susceptible to an emotional disequilibrium and internal distress that results from the frequently contrasting their shortage with other's gains (Karakas, 2020). Failure to provide timely treatment measures, due to the belief that poor students normally experience great anxiety when they have no money for purchasing school materials and receiving health services; this has an impact on serious psycho-social consequences such as stress, depression,

or delinquency (McIntyre *et al.*, 2011). Equally, the speaker attended school in high poverty and consequently, he faced multiple challenges: family poverty, ill-health, and the perils of collective socialization when he says, "I returned to family to treat myself. I was in difficulties. I faced challenges and I am not as such successful [in my education.*"* The impact of these social conditions and hardships can extend into the actual academic. The cumulative effect might lead the narrator to dropout.

Students from under developing countries are not experiencing highest academic success and are dropping out before they achieve their educational requirements needed and required to respond to the complexity of today's society. Moreover, students who drop out of their school in today's society have less chance of employed, earn lower incomes, and have more medical, psychological, and emotional problems than did past drop-outs (Rumberger, 1987, cited in McKinney *et al.,* 2005).

Facing continuing hardships and debilitating social conditions can be overwhelming and depressing for any individual. A female narrator recounts her narrative as "My families were not sure about the success of my education, just because I am female."

Gender bias in families is often noted as the biggest psycho-social challenges that students have been facing. The concept of consciousness pervades in the above piece of genre. The speaker seems to be engaged in challenging the already existing supremacy of men suggesting the adoption of ideology. In view of Psychoanalytic- Marxism, she tries to explicate the dominant ideology of patriarchy. She also comments on a wide range of male-domination, that exploitative tendencies in her family devastatingly affected her life (Smith, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov, 1997, as cited in Bibi, 2015).

Simply put, the repression of the past catastrophe of being isolated might affect the students' academic achievement. Many of these problems are not overt; students may not recognize why they are hateful of learning or so bored of their education. They may not also recognise how their academic achievement will affect their bright future.

3.3. Drawing on Narratives of Poverty

Poor quality of life influences a child's perceptions, interactions, and relationships and its effect develops to challenging academic achievement up to maturity age (Gill, 2000, as cited in Lipman, 2004. Educational achievement of low-income students can be affected by family poverty. Poverty depresses attitudes and motivation, accepted as normative, thereby reducing children's expectations and hope for the future, and determines their success in college (McKinney *et al*., 2005). 'The following speaker' is sensitive and responsive about her early childhood:

> ቤተሰቦቼን በአስቸጋሪና ይሄ ነው ለማለት በሚያስቸግረኝ ሁኔታ ነው ስረዳ የነበርኩት፦ ሴት ሆኜ ምንም እንኳን ሴቶች የማይሰሩትን ግብርና ነበር የምሰራው፤ አረም አርምያለሁ ከብት ጠብቂያለሁ፦… ከባድ ነው በዚያ እድሜ ለራስህ ማሰብ፤ አሁን እዚህ ደርሻለሁ ምንም እንኳን በምማረው ፊልድ ባልደሰትም፦

> I helped my family in different and difficult ways. I am female, although women do not engage in agriculture in our vicinity; I helped my family wedding farms and keeping cattle. It is difficult to take responsibility for oneself at this age. Now I am pursuing my university education although I am not as such interested in the field I am studying.

The question to be given due attention in this part begins with why the narrator is not interested in the field she studies. The speaker's age, background, family setting and living status may be informing her perception of gendered roles. She spells out that she was engaged in hard work confined to men (that men are working) in addition in addition to managing domestic chores. This indicates that the speaker is overburdened with hard works these might have negative impacts on learning desires. Albert (2011) contends that learning by members of associations is basically affected by the background of the student- and that influences activities and motivations of professionals' decisions to engage in educational programs. Owing to this, the narrator tells that she was separated from her family during childhood. After the narrative of her personal experience, she notifies that she is not interested in in her field of study. Consequently, her lack of interest in the field she studies can have a negative effect on her academic achievement.

The narrator seems she used to worry to work in traditionally male fields that women are not supposed to engage. She did not note that children should not engage in difficult works. Oorlog (2016) implicates "the moment of impact" and the succeeding effects towards a projected future by influencing the psychological, biological, and cultural situation of an individual who has trauma upon him. From her stream of consciousness, she reminds that her moment of impact is hard working. As a child girl, this has negative biological effects in the formative development.

The lady's successive burdens across her growth had harmful psychological, biological and cultural impacts. These projected memories have had impacts on the narrator's future academic career. She takes a positive perspective: minimizing her frustration like all hardships were for the purpose of helping her poor family. She also came to understand that by doing so she was responsible for her family and helpless for herself. This is a kind of trauma that might affect the narrator's educational success and she now be consciously making dissatisfaction on her current career when she says, "Now I am pursuing my university education although I am not as such interested in the field I am studying." The narrator draws a miserable self-narrative from past experience and projected her dissatisfaction in education. Her past experience has an indirect influence in her education. The narrator said she is not interested in her education; consequently, her academic achievement is poor. From her narrative of resilience, it can be understood that the narrator is the brave survivor of life's ups and downs. In a similar case, a narrator recounts his challenge in life when he says, "… my childhood was difficult. We were seven in family. You know how life is difficult in rural area". The narrator tells the family earned very little and they were seven, so the family lived from hand to mouth. He draws upon past experiences of poverty. He also plots a course from the present and reinterprets the past through the lens of the present by constructing unenthusiastic narrative of his experiences of scarcity.

Likewise, the speaker narrates a series of sad memories; but he does not tell or know how his past life affected his choices, particularly on his academic achievement. He states that:

> እንግዲህ ቤተሰባችን ብዙ ናቸው ያለው ገቢ ደግሞ ግብርና ብቻ ነው። ስለዚህ ህይወት ጥሩ ነበር ለማለት እቸገራለሁ። … አልፎ አልፎ ነው ለውጤት የምታስበው፤ ዩኒቨርስቲውን አመሰግናለሁ የተወሰነ ድጋፍ ስለሚያደርግልኝ። … የህን ዲፓርትመንት የገባሁት በዝቅተኛ ውጤት ነው ።
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> The family size is large and agriculture is the only source of life. So, I cannot say life was good. … it is sometimes that you think about success in education. Thanks to the University, it has provided me some support. …It is with low grade that I joined this department.

What he knows is his current field of study is not his option rather he joined due to his low scoring. He preferred to use communal expressions in order to dissociate when he recounted his own memories, using terms like 'you know'. He physically looked hurt and uncomfortable as I observed him during the interview session, beyond the suffering memories that he expressed verbally.

For this, Olson and Jerald (1998), as cited in McKinney *et al.* (2005: 3), concluded that "concentrated school poverty is consistently related to lower performance on every educational outcome measured." They further noted that "school poverty depresses the scores of all students in schools where some of the students are eligible for subsidized from the university, and seriously depresses the scores when the majority students live in low-income situations".

3.4. Reflection of Trauma Narrative

The trauma narrative is a reflection of both the individual and the collective culture of this period and existing reality. For this reason, we are living in the "age of trauma". In trauma narrative, narrators react to traumatic events depending on their own contexts of past experiences of psychic history (Stolorow, 2007, cited in Oorlog, 2016).

The following narrator tells his painful story where he was raised, what he had been experiencing an outward collective trauma which became an inward practice of physical deterioration of his family structure. He says:

> Kanan guddadhe daangaa walittibu'iinsi itti hammatutti, Oromiyaafi Beenishaangul Gumuzutti. Muuxannoon jireenyaa koo walxaxaa ta'us waan haaraa hin qabu. … Anillee asi Yuniversiitii keessa

> nama na gargaaru osoo hin qabaatinan jiraadha. Walitti bu'iinsa ummataa waggoota lamaan darbaniin maatiin koo buqqa'aniiru. Amma waa'ee koo osoo hin ta'in kan isaaniitu na yaadecha. … Asitti xiyyeeffattee barachuu hin dandeessu yaaddootu jira.
>
> I grew up on the border of Oromia & Benishangul where frequent border disputes occurred. My experiences, while life-altering for me, are not unique. …I am here in the University without help of any one. At least, I am better than my family who are even currently displaced and lost all their properties because of the conflict that happened two years ago. I am worried not about myself, but about my family… I lost concentration here in the University. Currently I experienced a wide range of distress.

In order to understand individual's trauma, one must first be aware of the institutional forces in place, which are ethnic conflict and family's displacement in this sense. In this sense, these forces affect his life and leave a trauma in his life. While the experience of trauma varies greatly from person to person, individuals in today's world experience both individual and collective trauma with greater frequency than ever before (Oorlog, 2016; Collins, 2015).

The ethnic conflict around border mark on the collective conscience of the young generation and ends with violence, devastation, pain, and resentment felt by those who lost loved ones in the chaos. From the aforementioned narrative we can consider that the student became victim of ethnic conflict, and consequently his academic achievement had been affected negatively. When fear of the past is repressed in young generations instead of hope, they become more pessimistic in dreaming their future (Goehrun, 2017; Krishnaswammy and Junita, 2005). In the same way, the following speaker narrates his despondent life experience as follow:

> Obboleessi koo bara darbe walitti bu'iinsa daangaan lubbuun harkatti darbe. Nama gaddisiisa, maatiin namicha du'ee maatii koo yookin anatti haaloo ba'uu danda'u. Barumsa barana waanan itti fufu natti hin fakkatu. Sababbiin bilbila wayii jiraataa naannoo Yunivarsiitii irraa naaf bilbilamee ture. Namni firri namicha sanii naannoo kana jiru jedhu dhagaheera. Waa tokko bitachuuf mooraa kanaa ba'ee hin beekuu baay'een sodaadhe. Rakkisaadha addaan kutee asiyis deemuun koo hin oolu. … Walitti bu'iinsi saboota naannoo lamaa nu biratti kan baratameedha; achittan guddadhe. Yeroo baay'ee buqqa'uudha.
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> My brother killed someone during the sudden ethnic conflict of last year. That was terrible because I have a fear that the deceased family member will revenge one of my families, including me. I am not sure if I continue my education this year. The reason is I received a call from someone here around the University, I have information that the relatives of the deceased are around this sub-city. I am fearful now; I have never gone out outside of this campus even to buy something. This is difficult situation and I decided to withdraw and leave from here too. … Ethnic- based conflict is common in the remote area of two regions' border where I grew up. We had been evicted many times.

From "the moment of impact"—the period of the narrator, spanning after his brother killed someone, is the moment the student has almost stopped thinking about his academic career. Fear that is parallel with anxiety, already overwhelmed repression. He could not envision how to successfully compete for his education, because he started to turn his thought to an issue that concerns him-escaping from the university due to the atrocity occurred by his family member. He has processed the memories and emotions from the time of bad incident (almost about the time he joined the University) to this period (time of narration). He was worried about both his family's fate and his personal responses to collective traumas that he has faced in the context of the past conflict. Consequently, the student's academic fate is unpredictable.

The speaker suffers from two distinct internal conflicts: the memory of his past experience, or the physical surroundings he grew up and his current situation, or his imagined landscape of the University education. In these overlapping tensions, two very different realities exist for the subject at the same time, as stated by (Oorlog, 2016). Such juxtaposes are contrasting images that the narrator draws the irreconcilable nature of narrative memory. These competing images are: life and death, success or failure, distress and peace furthered across his narrative, signifying a broken narrative.

Trauma narratives also include memories of violent behavior. Schools should be free of violent acts and be safe havens for the entire academic community. The impact of violence in rural neighborhoods and within the society structure inhibits both the educational and social development of the rural

child, and places them at particular risk to victimization (Schwab-Stone *et al.*, 1999). The narrator recounts/The student's narration witnesses the above fact as follow:

> ትምህርት ቤታችን ከሰፈሬ ይርቅ ነበር፡፡ በተለይ 1ኛ፣ 2ኛና 3ኛ ክፍል ስማር ይርቀኝ ነበር፤ ትምህር ለመማር አይመቸም ነበር፡፡ … እኔና ጓደኞቼ ወደ ት/ቤት ስንሄድ እርቀን ስለሆነ ብዙ ጊዜ መንገድ ላይ እየጠበቁን ይመቱን ገጠር በማናልፍ መንገድ በቡድን ይመቱን ነበር፡፡ ጠዋት ስነሳ የሚያስጨንቀኝ ያለ ምክንያት እየጠበቁ በጭካኔ ከሚመቱን እንዴት እናምልጥ የሚለው ነው፡፡ እነሱ እሚደሰቱብን ይመስለኛል፤ ለኛ ግን መከራ ነበር፡፡

> My primary school was far from my residence. It was too far for me especially during my early childhood, when I was grade 1,2,3 this time it was difficult to attend school. … I, with my neighbor friends, were beaten by rural boys who found us on our way to school. When I got up early in the morning, I used to worry about how I survive from cruel group who attack us for nothing. I think it was enjoyment for them, but it was a misery for me.

From the past memory of the narrator, it could be easily understood that children are regularly harmed, both emotionally and physically, within their own homes and neighborhoods. For many of these children, violence has become an integral part of their lives. Violent behaviors have often been accepted and have become the norm among family and peer groups in many communities. Consequently, children develop repression which that has a latent effect on their educational success.

Because of the constant violence that surrounds the rural children, many frequently act out of their hostility and frustration by being disruptive in the classroom learning environment. Frustration and depression are common feelings that are experienced during childhood and adults who live in depressed areas witnessing violence.

This abiding frustration level may present itself as some form of aggression, which may be expressed as violence towards self or others. It can also take the form of passive resistance, where students lose their sense of hope, will, and self (Haberman, 2005). Such repressing emotions can also interfere with the ability to feel empathy for others. When children's energies are distracted because they are anticipating violence or danger, this fear may cause them to experience difficulty in learning and staying focused in their further education (Haberman, 2005; Lanius, 2015). If this becomes a regular occurrence, they can become academically discouraged and are more likely to fail in schooling.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Psychological, social and economic situations of students in higher education can affect their academic success. The previous life situations of students were quite difficult to fulfill their basic needs, like food, water and home due to economic insecurity and poverty.

The consecutive interview results have already witnessed the modus operandi of the societies' living condition that echo with the difficult time of students, driven by the psycho-social and economic imperatives of the society. The majority of students who scored less have suffered mal-nutrition, lack of hope for a better future due to poverty and fear, painful memory of emotional and physical distress- and perils of collective socialization due to continuing hardships and debilitating social conditions. In this way, educational achievements become a fatality of experiences like unfairness, restraint of critical thought and action, and restriction of academic participation.

Although the research participants or students have got the opportunity to pursue their studies in higher education of university education, their past socio-economic background, and their current financial constraints have depleted their interest in education and their academic achievement. That is why psychological and socio-economic conditions/practices play an essential role in shaping people's thoughts and attitudes. The strong relationship between the psyche of the students and their lived practices is sporadically reflected in students' narratives. Poverty affects the success of individuals' academic achievement. Similarly, a crucial aspect of this reflection is also social practices in everyday life that render students discouraged, unresponsive and conforming. In this context, I recommend that we need to rethink how to deliver therapeutic treatment for low-achiever students who are believed to be the victim of the past psychological, socio-economic and political situations.

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