

**STUDENTS' INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AT HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: ARBA MINCH AND HAWASSA
UNIVERSITIES IN FOCUS**

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This study aimed at investigating major challenges of students' interpersonal communications and its impact on students' academic performance at higher education institutions focusing on Arba Minch and Hawassa Universities. It identified major challenges of students' interpersonal relationships, its impact over students' academic life and ways of managing disputes among students at higher education institutions. Data were collected using questionnaire and in-depth interview from the target groups selected by random sampling method. The analyzed data illustrated that students understood and valued interpersonal communication in their life. Ethno-centrism, language, culture and religious differences were identified as serious challenges for students' interpersonal relationships. Moreover, students' attitude about university life and family's orientation were also causes of tensions among students. Students' interpersonal relationships also had impact over their academic life at university. In order to alleviate the challenges, orienting students about the unique and diversified university life was indispensable. Furthermore, creating and widening opportunities for students to share their cultures and experiences was also essential. In addition, promoting multilingualism also assists students' interaction.

Key words: Interpersonal Communication, higher education, students, interpersonal relationship, academic performance, challenges, attitude

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is the highest hierarchy in the education stratum with the mission of quest for knowledge and truth. Higher education or universities are not only places where to seek knowledge and truth but they are also places of transferring knowledge and producing knowledgeable and productive man power for the market (Zanaton Haji Iksana E. Z., 2011; Gulec, 2012; Zanaton Haji Iksana E. Z., 2012). Beyond the production of knowledgeable manpower and knowledge transfer, Ortas (2002) strongly emphasizes that universities are the highest educational and research institutions that have been serving humanity at universal scale as centers where every kind of material and spiritual problems are scrutinized and investigated at the highest level (Ortas, 2002 cited in Gulec, 2012).

Higher education institutions boomed in the past two decades in Ethiopia. Numbers of students joining universities also rose dramatically from time to time. The growing numbers of students in universities increases the diversity of ethnic groups, social classes, religions and age groups among students at higher education institutions (Hyland, 2013). Discussions on issues of diversity at higher education institutions are crucial and the discussions on issues of diversity have begun in the 1950s. It is also a means of maximizing education access and encouraging academic and social growth of students (Adamu, 2014).

Ethiopia is one of the multiethnic countries in the world; hence, students come from different cultural, socio-economic, and political backgrounds. Though it is difficult to get the exact figure of students joining university from each ethnic group, number of students going to universities from different ethnic, socio-economic, religious and political backgrounds has been increasing with the expansion of universities in Ethiopia (Adamu, 2014 and Adamu, 2013b).

Therefore, diversity becomes a major concern for Ethiopia's higher education institutions and policy makers in the education sector. Scholars advise them to take the diversity in the country into consideration while designing the education policy and strategy (Latchanna, 2016; Adamu, 2014).

Students from different backgrounds gather together in universities and circumstances urge them to interact and form relationships i.e. interpersonal communication. According to (Hartley, 2001), interpersonal communication is as an ongoing two-way process of face-to-face meeting of people which is meaningful and intentional with various roles and relations. The interactions human beings make are many and highly dependent on individuals' communication skills and if communication breakdown occurs, it becomes barrier for both personal and professional success (McPheat, 2010)

Human beings are hemophilic and they tend to stay with people who have similar attributes. As Perlman explained, adolescents prefer friends whose attributes are similar to them on some dimensions and dissimilar on others (Perlman, 2006). In real life, particularly in students' life at higher education institutions, it is impractical to confine relationships to people whose attributes are the same. Situations urge students to interact with others whose attributes are different because students gather from different cultures, socio-economic groups, and religions.

Adamu and Zelalem (2007) cited in Adamu stated that the current public universities [of Ethiopia] seem to have a much more diverse population than other settings such as schools, residencies, and workplaces. Because of the diverse student population they have from every corner of the country, public

universities are often considered “mini-Ethiopia”(Adamu and Zelalem (2007) cited in Adamu, 2014, p.31).

Students’ communication skills determine how to manage versatile differences. Otherwise, these differences have impacts on students’ personal and academic success since interpersonal relationship has direct impact on students’ personal and academic life. High quality interpersonal relationships in students’ lives contribute to their academic motivation, engagement, and achievement (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Martin A. J., 2014).

Even though students’ relationships significantly contribute to their motivation and engagement, the relationships are not always harmonious. Sometimes they turn into disagreements and conflicts. Unless conflicting interactions are managed wisely, they cause serious problems in students’ lives. According to Williams and Zadiro, if people are unable to engage meaningfully with others, or are ostracized by them, the result is often loneliness, unhappiness and depression (Williams and Zadiro, 2001 cited in Dickson, 2004).

University is not an island isolated from the established social and political economy of a society. Hence, universities manifest the socio political economy of a society. According to Abbinj (1997) cited in Abebaw and Crisis Group Report, EPRDF has fundamentally changed the political system and establishments in Ethiopia. The current government introduced an ethnicity-based federal system and redefined citizenship, politics and identity on ethnic grounds. Consequently, ethnicity has become the ideological basis of the government’s political organization and administration (Crisis Group Report , 2009; Adamu, 2013a). As a result, the society’s life reflects the political establishment on various ways. As Aalen (2011) argues ethnic base federalism in Ethiopia causes several ethnic

tensions and conflicts more than ever before in the country because of ethnic boundaries, ethnic identities, scarce resources and power rivalry (Aalen, 2011 cited in Adamu, 2013a & Abbay, 2009). The existing diversity is not only ethnic, even though it is the major one; there are also diversities of cultures, languages and religions. Acknowledging these diversities, the political system has been working to addresses the issues of diversities in Ethiopia. Emphasizing on diversity in Ethiopia promoted high ethnic self-awareness (Crisis Group Report , 2009). The rising of self-awareness among ethnic groups causes rivalry and conflicts. The conflicts become setbacks for intergroup and interpersonal relationships.

Since students are from the society, all the socio political trends are reflected in their lives at the university. Ethnic and religious awareness is very high among university students. This makes students to consider their relationships seriously. At any circumstance, communication and interactions are inevitable among human beings particularly among university students and when lives are intertwined, disagreements and interpersonal conflicts are inevitable and it may be manifested in terms of incompatible or opposing behaviors and views (Purcell, 2009). Disagreements and conflict of interests are natural in interpersonal relationship under normal situations. Beyond the normal circumstances, the political establishment that is based on ethnic federalism has a shadow over students' set relationships at higher education institutions.

As scholars explained, interpersonal relationships have impact on students' academic performance and success, health, satisfaction and happiness. It is also linked with key psychological needs in a way that boosts achievement and motivation. High-quality interpersonal relationships in students' lives contribute to their academic motivation, engagement, health, satisfaction, happiness and

achievement (Mary Lee Hummert John, 1994; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Martin A. J., 2014; Ahmadi, 2016).

However, Williams and Zaidi (2001) expressed that problematic situations in interpersonal communication are unavoidable and interactants need to engage meaningfully. If people are unable to engage meaningfully with others, or are ostracized by them, the result is often loneliness, unhappiness and depression (Williams and Zaidi (2001) cited in Dickson, 2004). Social problems related to factors such as ethnocentrism, sexism, violence and health can be alleviated, at least to some degree, if we connect interpersonally with others in more effective ways (Gamble, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

Mixed Methods Approach

Mixed methods were employed in this study because the study is a research in which the inquirer or investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods (Creswell, 2003; Given, 2008; Susan R Jones, 2006; Willing, 2008). The data were collected using survey and in-depth interview. The use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches provided a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach alone.

Sampling Techniques and Data Collection Tools

Samples were taken randomly from students above third year because these students assumed that they understand the circumstances better than fresh students. Three hundred sixty students, i.e., one hundred eighty students from each

university, were selected for the survey. Students from different ethnic groups, religions, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds were randomly selected for the survey and among these thirty students were taken randomly for the in-depth interview from both universities.

Questionnaires, which consisted of both open ended and closed ended questions, were set and disseminated to the three hundred sixty students selected through random sampling method. The questionnaire had two major parts and it consisted of thirty seven questions. The first part of the questionnaire focused on students' demography and the second part consisted questions that focused on the students base for relationships. The questions were set to identify how students set interpersonal relationships and setbacks for students' interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the questionnaire was also designed to figure out how students alleviated problematic conditions in their interpersonal communication. Questionnaire is quite popular, particularly in case of big enquiries.

In-depth interviewing helps in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 2006; D.Brewer, 2003; Scott, 2002). So, among three hundred sixty students that filled the questionnaire, thirty students were designated randomly for in-depth interview. The interview questions were semi structured.

Data Analysis Method

Thematic analysis is a data reduction and analysis strategy by which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within the data set (Given, 2008). The data collected through the above tools were analyzed according to their nature. The

qualitative data were organized and labeled in a systematic manner. Then, they were analyzed based on their themes. The quantitative data were presented in the form of tables and percentile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part of the study, the data collected through questionnaire, in-depth interview, and observation were analyzed and presented according to their nature. Quantitative data were presented in the form of tables and graphs. SPSS 16.0 version was used to analyze the quantitative data collected through questionnaire. The qualitative data are described and triangulated using the quantitative methods.

Demography of the participants

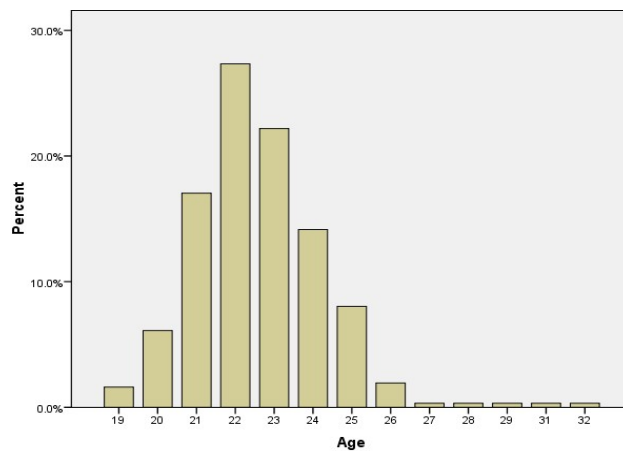


Figure 1: Age range of the participants

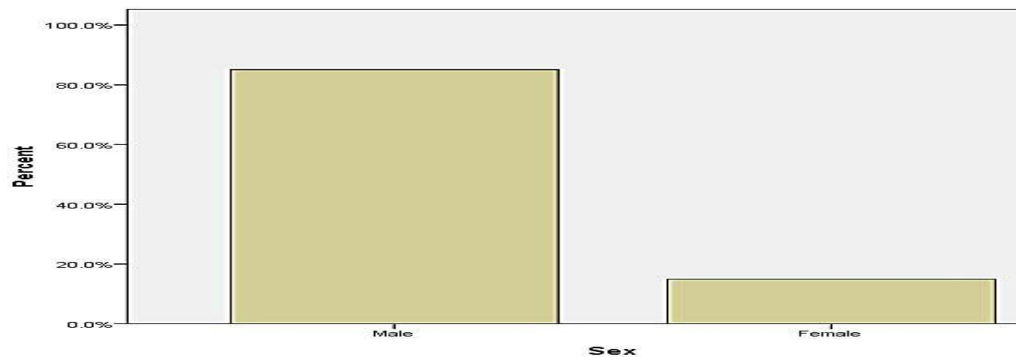


Figure 2: Participants Sex

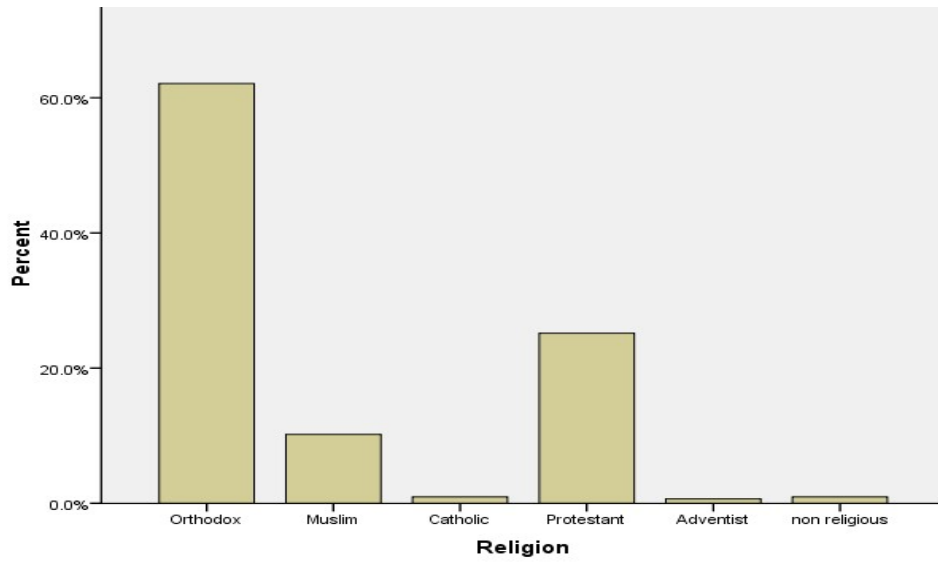


Figure 3: Participants' Religion

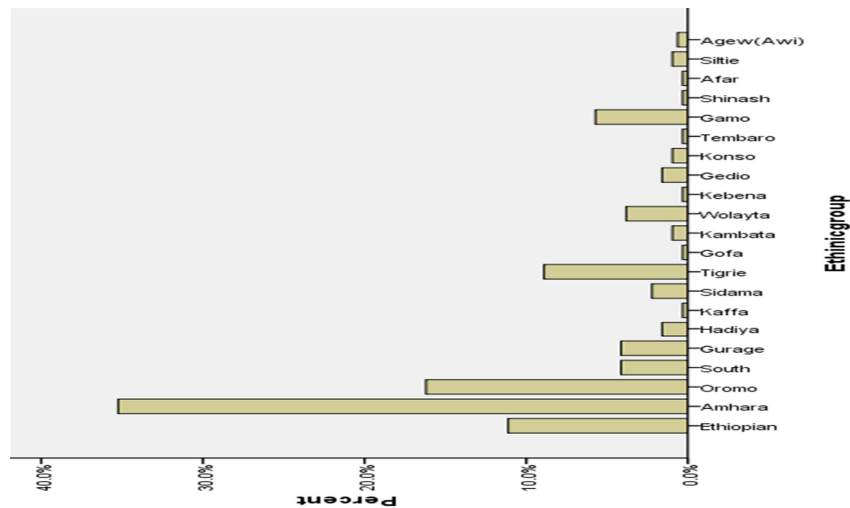


Figure 4: Participants' Ethnic Group

Age range of participants was between nineteen and thirty two. Majority of the participants were in early twenties and males. It was due to the data collectors. The data collectors were selected through students' council in order to smoothen and ease the process. Unfortunately, the council was male dominated; thus, they distributed most of the questionnaire to their male friends accidentally. Regarding participants' religious compositions Orthodox, Muslims, Catholic, Protestant, Adventist and even people with no religion took part in the study. Moreover respondents were also from different ethnic groups. An insight here is an Ethiopian and south sense of nationalism was being developed in the form of identity.

An Overview of Students' Interpersonal Relationships

Students have knowledge of interpersonal relationships and its importance. They consider different attributes for their interpersonal relationships. Of all the

attributes, having the same interest is the primary one. Then, having the same religion, ethnic group, hometown, sex, interest, skills, department, similar political affiliation, and sharing dormitory together are the major attributes for students' interpersonal relationships at higher education institutions. Being positive thinker is also another basis for students to set interpersonal relationships.

The graph below summarizes students' bases for interpersonal relationships.

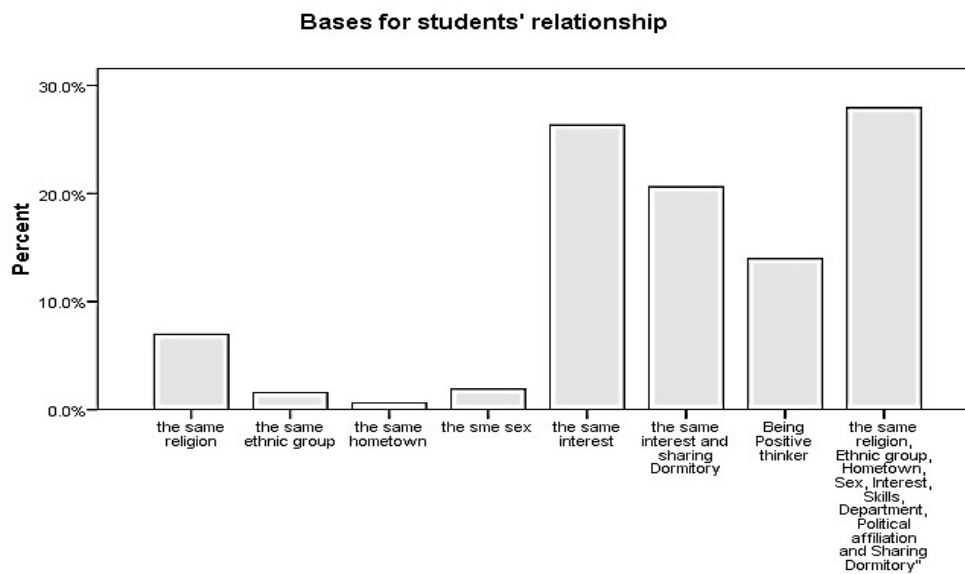


Figure 5: Bases for Students' interpersonal relationships

The data gathered through questionnaire illustrated that majority of the students believe that interpersonal communication is crucial in their life at higher education institutions. From research participants, 299 students, which represented 94.9%, expressed that they believed in the importance of interpersonal relationships

in their everyday life. Only few, i.e., four students, which stand for 1.4% of the students, expressed that they don't believe in the importance of interpersonal relationship in campus.

In responding to open-ended questions, students also express how interpersonal relationship is important. According to students' statement, interpersonal relationships help them to share happiness and sorrow. It is also important for mental and physical health. Moreover, having good interpersonal relationship offers students an opportunity to be cooperative and successful in their academic study. In classroom observation during the teaching learning process, students whose interpersonal relationship is excellent are more successful in their academic as well as extracurricular activities compared to students whose interpersonal relationship is poor. During interview, participants also asserted that good interpersonal communication benefits students in their academic and personal life.

Table 1
Students' Value for Interpersonal Communication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very High	126	40.0	40.0	40.0
	High	150	47.6	47.6	87.6
	Medium	38	12.1	12.1	99.7
	Low	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	315	100.0	100.0	

In table one, above; students' value of interpersonal communication is presented. One hundred twenty six students, which represent 40% of the respondents, gave very high value to interpersonal communication in life. Also, One

hundred fifty students, which were 47% of the responds, gave high value to the communication they have with others. Among the respondents 12.1% gave medium value for interpersonal communication. Only, one student's (0.3%) valuation of interpersonal communication was very low. The data from the questionnaire reveals that majority of the students gave significant value for the interpersonal communications they had.

Table 2
Students' Current Interpersonal Communication Situation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	137	43.5	43.6	43.6
	Good	155	49.2	49.4	93.0
	Not Much	15	4.8	4.8	97.8
	Problematic	7	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	314	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.3		

As the figures in table two illustrated, one hundred thirty seven students' or 43.5% of the respondents' interpersonal communication is excellent. In addition, one hundred fifty five students' (49.2%) interpersonal communication is good, and fifteen students interpersonal relationship is not that much. On the contrary, seven students', which represent 2.2 % of the respondents, interpersonal relationship is found problematic. From the statistical data above, students interpersonal communication is good. Only few students' interpersonal communication is poor. Students' attitude towards interpersonal communication is good and they give significant value for their interpersonal communication.

In the above discussion the value and general situation of students' interpersonal communication was presented in brief. Below, the effect of interpersonal relationship over students' academic life is discussed.

From the data collected through questionnaire ninety students, which stood for 28.6% of the respondents, replied that their interpersonal communication had an impact over their academic life. On the other hand, two hundred twenty students, which represented 70.5 % of the respondents, explained that their interpersonal relationship had no effect on their academic life. However, it was discovered during observation that students' interpersonal communication had major effect on students' academic success. During the interview session, students explained that they benefited a lot from their good interpersonal communication. Students claim that the good relationship they had made them cooperative. It also helped them to get different information easily. As a result, they stated that it assisted them to score better marks and grades. According to different scholars, interpersonal communication has impact over students' academic life. According to many scholars cited in (Martin A. J., 2014) interpersonal relationship has relationships with students' academic and nonacademic performances. According to scholars adolescents whose positive interaction is high show greater engagement and demonstrate higher academic performance. Moreover, Martin and Dowson (2009) and Martin (2014) also concluded that interpersonal relationships play significant role in students' academic success, engagement and motivation at school (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Martin A. J., 2014). Furthermore, it is described that effects of interpersonal communication influence, in a real and positive way, teaching effectiveness, improved learning outcomes and have a relatively huge value in addition to good teaching media (Munawaroh, 2015).

Students' response about the impact of interpersonal communication on their academic life is summarized below.

Table 3

Impact of students' Interpersonal Relationships over their academic life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	90	28.6	28.8	28.8
	No	222	70.5	71.2	100.0
	Total	312	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.0		
	Total	315	100.0		

Challenges of Students' Interpersonal Communication

Momentary Challenges

In the first weeks, most of the students faced various challenges. From the respondents two hundred twenty three, which was 70.8%, stated that they faced challenges which became obstacles for interpersonal communication. On the other hand ninety one students, which represented 28.9% of the respondents, explained that they did not face challenges in the first week.

These challenges resulted from many reasons. First of all, students were misinformed about university life. Because many students were allocated in a single dormitory, competing and conflicting students' interest also became challenges for students' interpersonal relationships. In addition to this, students became suspicious in the middle of strange environment and strange people. Students'

response to the open-ended questions also supported this. The following is one student's description of the situation:-

I spent some nights without sleeping in the first weeks. I was very suspicious. I even thought that students would beat and kill me if I slept. Hence, I stood up the entire nights in those days.

Linguistic, cultural and religious differences were also major setbacks for students' interpersonal communication in the first weeks. Beyond this, some students inclined to have relationships only with students whose ethnic group was similar and with students who came from the same home town. Students, at the time of interview and in their responses to open-ended questions, explained that the factors mentioned above had influenced their interpersonal relationships.

These momentary interpersonal relationship challenges passed soon enough. When students got to know each other through time, their relationships improved. Students' response to open ended questions and in-depth interview confirmed this. Students' response to the question how their relationships had changed through time is summarized below.

Table 4

Students' response on the improving situations of their interpersonal relationship

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
very Good	161	51.1	51.4	51.4
Good	140	44.4	44.7	96.2
Not Much	12	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	313	99.4	100.0	

Missing	System	2	.6
	Total	315	100.0

One hundred sixty one students, which constituted 51.1 % of the respondents, expressed that their interpersonal relationship was very good and improved through time. One hundred forty four students, which represented 44.4% of the respondents, stated that their relationship was good and improving. However, twelve students, which were 3.8% of the respondents, described that their interpersonal relationship did not improve much.

Gradual improvement of students' interpersonal relationship was visible. In the first months students preferred to hang up with students who came from the same area and students who were from the same culture, religion and ethnic group even in classroom seats. Gradually, students shift their relationships and set new relationships with students who came from other areas and with other students whose religion, ethnic group and culture were different.

In some cases, students would not like to be with some students for various reasons. As a result, some students might have faced discrimination from their dorm and classmates. These students were discriminated for the reason which they did not know. The information gathered via open-ended questions illustrated that students did not like to have relationships with students who were extremely self-centered, extremely religious, and extremely ethno-centric. Moreover, students did not desire to hang-up with students who are pompous and addicted. Students also did not like to be with students whose interest and inclinations were different. In the interview, students stated that they don't like to have relationships with students who are self-centered and addicted.

Major Challenges for Students' Interpersonal Communication

Students faced many challenges in their interpersonal relationships at higher education institutions. Students' ethnic consciousness resulting from the political establishment was found to be high. Students believed that the ethnic based federal system increased ethno-national sentiment and differences among different ethnic groups (Adamu, 2014). As a result, students favor the same ethnic groups, the same culture, and religion to have relationships. Therefore, when students focus on the semblance for interpersonal relationships; they increase the degree of attracting and pushing. This, in turn, made the difference among cultures, ethnic groups, and religions major challenges for students' interpersonal relationships.

Students' response to the questionnaire depicts that their personal relationships have improved though time. In the table above, more than half of the respondents expressed that their interpersonal relationships is being improved over time. To the contrary, almost all of the interviewees stressed ethnic consciousness (ethno-nationalism), cultural difference and religious fanaticism became serious challenges for their interpersonal relationships during the interview.

The data from in-depth interview revealed that students set relationship based on the same ethnic group, culture and religion. These relationship formations have two aspects. For some students having such type of relationship is crucial in order to make life easy. It would have been challenging for some students unless they have had close attachments with students whose attributes are the same, especially language and religion. Some students cannot understand language other than their mother tongue. In such conditions establishing relationships with students whose attribute is the same becomes a necessity. On the contrary, some students deliberately set such type of relationship in order to promote their cause, either

political or social. In this case, forming relationships with student whose attribute is different becomes a serious challenge.

Ethnic alertness and religious sensitivity starts when students enter the university compound. Welcoming programs are organized for students separately for students from different ethnic groups. Seniors students in the student union organize these programs. These welcoming parties convey concealed messages for students as to who are going to be their friends in their stay. It makes them ethnocentric.

Moreover, religious extremism, culture difference, and student's behavior are also identified as challenges for students' interpersonal relationships. The data from the questionnaire revealed that most of the students were religious. One hundred fifty seven students which represented 49% of the respondents followed their religions' doctrines strictly. One hundred forty students which were 44 % of the respondents follow their religion's doctrine as much as they can. On the contrary fourteen students which represented 4.4 % of the respondents did not follow the doctrines of their religions at all. In table four below, students' response to the question how far students respected religious doctrines is summarized.

Table 5

Students' response to how far they keep religious doctrines

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strictly follow	157	49.8	50.5	50.5
	Follow	140	44.4	45.0	95.5
	Not Much	14	4.4	4.5	100.0
	Total	311	98.7	100.0	

Missing	System	4	1.3
Total		315	100.0

Majority of the students respect and follow religions properly. Nevertheless, the influence of religious doctrines over students' interpersonal communication is not very high according to the data from the survey. From the participants only twenty eight students which stood for 8.8% of the respondents expressed that their religious taught influences their interpersonal communication. On the other hand, the data from in-depth interview revealed that religion was one of the serious challenges for students' interpersonal relationships at higher education institutions.

On the contrary, one hundred ninety three students which represented 61.3 % of the respondents expressed that religious teachings and doctrines did not influence over the interpersonal relationships and communication they had. The remaining ninety one students which represented 28.9 % of the respondents explained that their religious teachings and doctrines influenced the relationship they set. In table five students' response to the influence of religious taught over their interpersonal communication was summarized.

Table 6
Students response to the influence of religion on their interpersonal relationships

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Influenced	28	8.9	9.0	9.0
	To Some Extent	91	28.9	29.2	38.1
	Not at all	193	61.3	61.9	100.0
	Total	312	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.0		
Total		315	100.0		

Politics was assumed as one of the factors affecting students' interpersonal communication at higher education institutions. However, almost all of the respondents did not want to respond this particular question on the questionnaire. In contrast, students expressed that difference in political ideology was the other factor which challenged students' interpersonal communication. Students who have active political engagement were awarded the terms *cadre* and *the politician*; besides, they were discriminated and mocked. Students did not feel well to hang out with these students and they were severely criticized for their political engagements.

Family Influence over students' interpersonal relationship

Students did not have significant family influence over their interpersonal relationships in higher education institutions according to their response to the questionnaire. According to the data from the questionnaire, two hundred fifty students which represented 79.4% of the respondents explained that they did not have family influence over the relationship they set with students at higher education institutions. During interview, students also stressed that they don't accept what has been told by their parents and family about the type of relationships they have to form. Nevertheless, some of the students were influenced by their family's advice about the interpersonal relationships they should form. Sixty two students which represented 19.7% of the respondents stated that they had family influence over their interpersonal relationships.

Students' Management of Interpersonal Communication Challenges

Even though challenges existed in interpersonal communication, students always made efforts in order to make their interpersonal communication smooth so as to make life easy and comfortable. Howard Giles elaborates in Communication Accommodation Theory that people shift to fit with the situation. According to Howard Giles, people shift their dialect or language to address others, which is called convergence (Giles, 2009). This helps them to adjust themselves with the situation. Students always broaden opportunities to know more about each other and made efforts to understand their dorm and classmates better. They made conversations and discussions about the places they came from, the culture, the society and the life situation they grew up in and came from. Moreover, some students learned their classmates and dorm mates' languages in order to enhance their communication and interpersonal relationships.

According to Communication Accommodation Theory, people usually shift their language towards the high prestigious sound speaker (Ibid). Since students came from different parts of the country, their mother tongue was different and this difference was one of the barriers for students' interpersonal communication. In such case, multilingual students did not face problem and others learned Amharic and another language dominantly spoken in their dormitory through time.

Moreover, students considered what their dorm mates and classmates do positively. This was very important for student in order to make their interpersonal relationships good. Time was also another factor for students to understand each other. Through time, students were able to understand each other and improve their

interpersonal relationships. When students understood each other, they became open and cooperative in their academic as well as nonacademic lives.

CONCLUSIONS

Students set relationships at higher education institutions based on different criteria. Above all, most of the students prefer to set relationship with students whose attitude is positive. In addition, having similar ethnic group, culture, political affiliation and being in the same department altogether are major determinants for students' interpersonal communication at higher education institutions. Moreover, religion is also among the decisive factors in setting interpersonal relationships among students.

Students understand the importance and relevance of interpersonal communication in their lives and they give high value to it. They also understand the impact of interpersonal communication over their academic life. Thus, students always maintain their communication positively.

Religious fanaticism, high ethnic consciousness, difference of culture and political ideology are identified as a major challenge for students' interpersonal communication. Language is also another major setback. What is more, family orientation and advice about university life affect students' interpersonal communication at university.

Though students' interpersonal communication is tied up by many things, students always keep their interpersonal relationships positive. The first thing students do in order to make their relationships excellent with their dorm and class mates is maximizing acquaintance opportunities as *Social Penetration Theory*

states. According to the theory, personal relationship passes different stages of development, i.e., origination when relationships are established; explanatory stages when interactants start to reveal each other; and affective stage when people start to talk private and personal matters and people share personal things and relationship reaches a stable stage (Giri, 2009).

What students do help them to understand their dorm and classmates better. The more students understand each other the more their interpersonal communication becomes better. As *Penetration Theory* remarks self-disclosure is very important to establish and strengthen relationships (Ibid). Students also learn their dorm mates' language to keep their relationship at ease. Through time students' interpersonal communication improves.

Higher education institutions should organize extracurricular activities and clubs in order to create opportunities for students to acquaint themselves with each other. This offers students the opportunity to get to know each other well and to maintain positive relationships.

In addition to this, university administration needs to establish guidance and counseling offices that can assist students in their lives and interpersonal communication skills at university.

Suspicious family orientation about life at university should be normalized. Students also need to have awareness about university life before they come to the university.

Moreover, multilingualism enhances understanding among students. Thus, a means has to be planned to teach students additional languages other than their

mother tongue. It is also very important to develop a national language policy that encourages having common languages in order to enhance communication among students and the society at large.

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