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Power decentralization to manage good governance problems in Oromia National Regional State: the case of Wuchale Woreda

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Abstract

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Federalism is adopted by many countries in the world as a system of government in which power is exercised as self-rule and shared rule between tiers of government. Depending on the features of federalism, Ethiopia has also practiced the decentralization of power to local governments. The intended outcomes of power devolution to a lower level are to enable self-administration and decision-making on local affairs. Even though the purpose of power decentralization brought considerable changes in the overall social affairs, it still suffers from different challenges and limitations throughout its practical implementation. To study the aforementioned problems, a descriptive study approach was used, as the aim of the study was to collect and provide more information and get an adequate understanding of the implementation of power decentralization. Non-probability and probability sampling techniques were applied to collect data, and the total sample size for this study was 244, 114 government employees and 130 customers of the selected sectors. The basic research question of the study also revolves around power devolution and its role in managing good governance problems. According to the findings of this study, the power decentralization practice in Wuchale woreda was not accomplished and could not attain the desired objectives. The practice at the woreda level remains as a deconcentrated administrative unit rather than being a fully autonomous local government. A number of constraints challenged the practice of power decentralization in the area. The following are repeatedly mentioned factors: absence of adequate power devolution, lack of skilled and trained personnel, uncommitted political leaders, low level of community participation, and weak public service delivery were among others. Therefore, to achieve the role of power decentralization and manage good governance, the study recommends the issue of devolution of authority, empowering the capacity of local governments, exercising good governance principles in practice rather than theorizing them, and creating a conducive environment for community participation.

Key Words: decentralization, power devolution, good governance, wuchale

1. INTRODUCTION- FONT

1.1. Background of the Study

Federalism is adopted by many states in the world as a system of government accommodating diversity as in the case of Ethiopia and building common and united peoples together as in the case of the USA.¹ Specific characteristics and features need to be addressed in the implementation of federalism as a system of government structure. From obvious features of federalism, power-sharing among branches of government is the concern of this study. The federal government uses a decentralized system of power devolution to implement the principles of separation of power between the national and sub-national constituencies.² Decentralization is a system of devolving power, resources, and services from one layer of government to the other to develop access to the people.³ In the decentralized system of governance, decision-making authority, resources and functions are devolved to local governments.

After decades of an extremely centralized and unitary form of government setup, Ethiopia has been following the federal system of government and decentralization policy of regional and local governance since 1991. Mainly, the issue of decentralization was first notified in the proclamation of No 7/1992 which deals with the role and functions of local governments.⁴ Since the time that recognition has been given to local governments in the Ethiopian federal system, their crucial role has become bold as they are closer to the local people.⁵ With the experience of decentralized governments in Ethiopia, there is a consensus that decentralization of power is a key to ensuring and realizing local development. The predetermined objectives of the decentralized system were to create responsive programs and opportunities for participation for local people, and coordination of national state, and local governments on various issues.⁶

Based on the objectives stated above, the system tried to manage good governance problems in society. Though activities were done to achieve these objectives, the system could not bring desirable changes at Wuchale Woreda. So this study analyzes the practical experience of the district decentralized system at Wuchale Woreda from the perspective of implementation of power decentralization to manage good governance problems.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The main objective of decentralization is to place decision-making power in the hands of the local people and empower them to verify their development methods. It creates an opportunity to establish transparency, local responsibility, and better social service delivery at local levels with decentralized power over local matters.⁷

¹ Watts, Ronald L. (1996), *Comparing federal systems in the 1990s*, Institute of Intergovernmental relation, Queens University of Kingston, Ontario, Canada, p.2

² Daniel J. Elazar, (1995), *Federalism: An Overview*, HSRC Publishers, Pretoria, 1995, p.6

³ Derrese Degefa, (2003), *Fiscal Decentralization In Africa: A Review of Ethiopia's Experience*. In Fiscal policy and Growth in Africa, Fiscal Federalism, Decentralization and the Incidence of Taxation, Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting, Economic Commission for Africa, p.1

⁴ Article 3(5 and 6) of Ethiopian Transitional Government proclamation No 7/1992: A proclamation to provide for establishment of national/regional self-governments, Negarit Gazeta, No.2 January 1992, Addis Ababa

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kumlachew Getu Salilew (2016), *An Overview of Local Governance and Decentralization in Ethiopia*, unpublished accessed online at <http://bahirdar.academia.edu/KumlachewGetu> on December 18, 2017 at 6:00 AM

⁷ Id. P.1

Ethiopia engaged in the process of decentralization as a program along with the coming of the federal structure in the country.⁸ With the coming the effect of decentralization program, regional states also have been implementing strategies that enable them to succeed in delivering service to the local level governments. In this case, Woreda is the key autonomous self-governing unit to which power and resources are devolved. According to the 2001 constitution of Oromia, woreda has the power to prepare and decide on economic development and social service plans of their respective territorial area in addition to implementing directives from the regional state or the zone.⁹ The woreda self-government entities have functional organs such as a council, executive committee, and judicial administration.¹⁰

As one of Oromia's National Regional States Woredas, Wuchale has been in the process of implementing power decentralization to achieve social, economic, and political objectives at the local level. The decentralized power, however, did not answer and solve questions and problems of the citizens that are related to good governance issues as indicated in the reports from the woredas and citizens' conferences. Besides devolving constitutional power to woreda, it is also important to check its practical applications in social, economic, and political programs at a local level. Since the implementation of district-level decentralization in Oromia Regional State employs different strategies, the system devolves power to realize the decentralized power at the woreda level. Even if the decentralized system has brought changes, it is not as much as expected to solve the community's problems, particularly the problems of good governance remain untouched in the society. There are serious problems that are faced by the society. Some of them, among others, are unresponsiveness on the issues that need an immediate solution, bad follow-up and monitoring of projects like health posts, hospitals and schools in the woreda, lack of market interconnection, shortage of basic service provisions and lack of legal procedures that force corrupted officials to be accountable to the responsibilities that they have been provided.

The issue of good governance problems is directly related to the power decentralization system that has been practiced for the past years till now in Woreda. The outcomes of power decentralization are measured by the active involvement of the public on the issue of local matters and if it equitably benefits the community. The circumstance of the inability to use the decentralized power makes the woreda government not manage the problem of good governance. So, the power decentralization system practiced at Wuchale Woreda in the last twenty-seven years did not respond to issues of good governance like rapid responsiveness of officials, lack of transparency and accountability in carrying out local activities. Government officials also did not solve the local peoples' problems and the constraints that they faced at the local level by sketching short and long-term planning. Although the theoretical perspectives of the decentralization of power seem best, the practice of officials at the district level did not answer the questions of the society on the responsibility and accountability of officials as well as access to basic service delivery provisions. In addition to the above community's questions, the community also needs administrative as well as legal measures that should be taken on the corrupt officials instead of taking only political punishments.

8 Kumlachew Getu Salilew (2016), *An Overview of Local Governance and Decentralization in Ethiopia*, unpublished accessed online at <http://bahirdar.academia.edu/KumlachewGetu> on December 18, 2017 at 6:00 AM

9 Oromia regional state constitution (2001), Article 79(2)

10 Dickovick, J. Tyler and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher (2010), *Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Ethiopia Desk Study*, USAID, p.13

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objectives

The general objective of the study is to describe the exercise of power decentralization and its role in managing good governance problems in Wuchale Woreda by focusing on parameters of power devolution, community participation, and service delivery.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- identify the extent of power that is decentralized to Wuchale Woreda;
- state service delivery practices and community participation in selected public sectors of Wuchale Woreda;
- identify constraints and prospects that affected the practical implementation of power decentralization in managing good governance problems in Wuchale Woreda.

1.4. Research Questions

- Does the regional government of Oromia Regional State transfer adequate authorities to Wuchale Woreda to make necessary choices, take actions, and utilize resources?
- What does the basic service delivery practice look like in public service sectors and to what level is the community empowered to participate?
- What are the constraints and prospects of the implementation of power decentralization in managing good governance problems in Wuchale Woreda?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study would contribute to the understanding of the current status and implementation of decentralization in general and power decentralization to manage good governance problems in Wuchale Woreda in particular. As the study is an initial step in identifying the practical implementation of power decentralization at the woreda level, its outcomes would be important in planning developmental programs that can answer the demands of public service delivery. As the study is on power decentralization to manage good governance problems, the study also serves as a starting point for future researchers and practitioners on the decentralization subject matter.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

In addition to financial and time limitations, the study was constrained by factors such as a lack of prior study on power decentralization in the study area that is used as a benchmark, and a lack of organized documents and reports that are used as secondary sources of information. Even though the study faced the above limitations, the researcher used alternatives to overcome these limitations and change them to opportunities for the success of the research.

1.7. Scope of the Study

In assessing the implementation of the DLDP process, the study primarily focused on how power decentralization has been exercised in Wuchale Woreda and its role in managing problems in good governance problems. The study was geographically limited to Wuchale Woreda due to the researchers' deep interest in the issues of power devolution, capacity and finance, planning, community participation, and service delivery specifically in this Woreda.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition and Conceptual Framework

The term decentralization is a favourable term and idea in the study of local government implementation of social service provisions programs and strategies. It may suggest various things to scholars in the field of study. In recent times, there are numerous definitions of decentralization by different scholars. Decentralization means the transfer of power, responsibilities and all necessary processes and procedures to subordinate sections of governance and it is often used to refer not only to political devolution but also as a blanket term to cover both political devolution and the deconcentration of administrative authority.¹¹ On the other hand, authors like Tri Widodo indicated the relationship between power decentralization and good governance by stating that the expected benefit of a decentralization system is the realization of good governance at a local level. When power decentralization is carried out successfully at the local, the community gains authority, resources, and skills to manage their problems and prefer their choices, and the local officials also act on them effectively and accountably.¹² Dele Olowu and James S. Wunsch discussed the relationship of power decentralization with good governance saying that they are tools that enable to enhance participation and greater control over elected officials of the people.¹³ For this reason, successful decentralization requires competence and leadership quality at the woreda level, community participation, and building accountability and responsibility values.¹⁴

The decentralization process in Ethiopia takes place in two phases. The first phase decentralization document /1991-2001/ aimed at creating and empowering national/regional governments and this was termed mid-level decentralization.¹⁵ In the first phase of the decentralization process, national/regional governments were entrusted with legislative, executive, and judicial powers in respect of all matters within their specific areas.¹⁶ The second phase of decentralization enables a woreda to self-rule and makes the government closer to the community at the local

11 J. Litvack, J. Ahmad and R. Bird (1998), *Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries*: Sector Studies Series, The World Bank, Washington D.C, p.1

12 Tri Widodo Wahyu Utomo (2017), *Building Good Governance through Decentralization in Indonesia*, available online at: http://ir.nul.nagoya-u.ac.jp/jspui/bitstream/2237/15878/1/7_Tri_Widodo_Wahyu.pdf accessed on December 21/2017

13 Dele Olowu and James S. Wunsch (2004), *Local Governance in Africa*: The challenges of democratic decentralization, Lynne Feinner Publishers, USA, p.1

14 Taye Assefa (Ed.), (2008), *Digest of Ethiopia's National Policies, Strategies and Programs*, Forum for social studies, Addis Ababa, p. 169

15 Tegegn GebreEgziabher (1998), *The influence of decentralization on some aspects of local and regional development planning in Ethiopia*, East African social research review, vol.14, No.1, p.6

16 Yigeremew Adal (2001), *Decentralization and local governance post-Dergue Ethiopia*, in proceeding of the conference on governance and sustainable development promoting collaborative partnership, Addis Ababa, p.10

level. As Meheret indicated, by the system of decentralization, all the administrative levels in the country get a considerable degree of self-rule and administer their internal sources of revenue and development plans.¹⁷

The study conducted by the Ministry of Capacity Building/MCB (2011) indicated the serious problems faced in the process of implementing the woreda decentralization program in Ethiopia. These were lack of an integrated system of procedure of service delivery, inefficient organizational structure and absence of a locally adopted working system for planning and budgeting. Furthermore, insufficient experiences in managing federalism, and a wide gap in administrative, and institutional capacity among the regions have posed serious challenges to the success of Ethiopia's decentralization policy.¹⁸

In another case, Desalegn Rahmato remarked that the power decentralization of Ethiopia was interpreted and practiced as a means of expanding and strengthening state power into local government like woreda rather than devolving genuine power.¹⁹ Jon Abbink also further stated the same critics on the implementation of the decentralization of power in Ethiopia. He disclosed that the practice of power decentralization in Ethiopia unlike a top-down decision-making process, undemocratic practices and serious limitations to the direct involvement of citizens in the decision-making process is the base for managing good governance problems in the country.²⁰ Tegegn Gebre-Egziabher and Kassahun Berhanu also agreed on the unsuccessful practice of power decentralization in Ethiopia by referring to the studies that they conducted. They addressed the structure/system as failed because of reasons like the overriding authority of the ruling party and less visible multi-party structure in the state structure.²¹

Based on the national implementation of the decentralization program of Oromia Regional State, it transfers power to the lower levels of government structures/units like woreda to deal with self-rule and administer their local affairs. However, when we see it practically, the transferred power to the local units could not deal with issues that need authoritative solutions related to good governance problems; rather it creates dissatisfaction with the system and leads the people to take popular uprising demonstration activity in the local area.

The discussions in the above literature on the power decentralization commonly stated on the practical application of the devolution of power and they jointly agreed with the unsuccessful efforts of the power decentralization on the ground at the local level. But the gaps observed in the literature were that they did not come across the problems of good governance that emerged out of an unsuccessful application of power decentralization at the grassroots level.

17 Meheret Ayenewu, (2002), Decentralization in Ethiopia: Two Case Studies on Devolution of Power and Responsibilities in Local Government Authorities In Ethiopia: *The challenge of Democracy from Below*, In Baharu Zewude and Siegfried Pausewang (eds), FSS, p.130

18 Ministry of Capacity Building (2011), *Study on the prevalence of Good Governance Problems in Ethiopia*, Ministry Capacity Building of Ethiopia, p.29

19 Desalegn Rahmato (2008b), *The peasant and the state: studies in agrarian change in Ethiopia, 1950's – 2000's*, Addis Ababa, Custom Publishing, p.132

20 Jon Abbink (2011), Land to the foriegners: Economic, legal and socio-cultural aspects of new land acquisition schemes in Ethiopia, *Journal of contemporary African studies*, 29(4), pp.513-515

21 Tegegn GebreEgziabher (2007), A Literature Review of decentralization in Ethiopia, in Taye Assefa and Tegegn GebreEgziabher.(eds), *Decentralization in Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, Forums for Social studies, p.37

There is no major study that focuses on the practice of power decentralization specifically in Wuchale Woreda. In addition, the extent to which power decentralization had been used to implement good governance in the Woreda was not documented.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology that the researcher followed in conducting this research is an integrated method that combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection for the reason that such methodology is appropriate to deal with the problem both qualitatively and quantitatively. This in turn will help the researcher to bridge the gap with each method of research.

3.1. Research Design

Within the contents of the research methodology, a research design is categorized as a fundamental element and it is a general plan about the researcher's activities to answer the research questions and it refers to the structure of an investigation. From several types of research approaches in social science, for this study, the descriptive survey approach was used. Because the study aimed at collecting and providing more information about the problem to readers with concrete evidence on the implementation of power decentralization and the role of decentralized power in managing good governance problems at Wuchale Woreda. The problem was studied in all its dimensions and considered elements that contributed to the enrichment of the data in alignment with the selected government offices at Woreda and keeled levels. The main research tools that the researcher used to capture data were interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Because of this, the study aimed to provide and collect more information and get an understanding of the level of the power decentralization process and its significance in managing good governance problems.

As has been discussed above, the study was conducted by using both qualitative and quantitative research designs to describe and come up with solutions to the good governance problems. The data gathered through observation and interviews were analyzed using a qualitative method. On the contrary, the data from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively.

3.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in the Oromia region, North Showa Zone, Wuchale Woreda where the decentralization process in the woreda has not yet been assessed concerning its significance to managing good governance problems at the local level. In addition, the success of the decentralization of power in resolving local problems in the woreda was not investigated before. The researcher's familiarity with the study area and practical observation of good governance problems make the area conducive for the study. So, this was also taken as a justification for the selection of Wuchale Woreda as a study area.

3.3. Sample Design

The major objective of this study was to describe the current status of power decentralization to manage good governance problems by collecting necessary data from a representative sample in Wuchale Woreda. The types of sampling techniques applied in this study were non-probability and probability sampling techniques. To identify officials and experts at the

Woreda level, the researcher identified the following six public sectors based on the purposive sampling technique. These are: Trade and Market Development office, Woreda Council office, Civil Service and Human Resource Development office, Revenue Authority, Make Turin town administration, and Woreda Administration office. They were taken as a sample because of their proximity to society with their service provision, problems of good governance were constantly heard and these sectors are perceived as institutions where the implementation of power decentralization and its impact can easily be observed.

From the above purposefully selected public officials 12 sector heads and 12 experts, two from each office were selected for the interview purpose. In addition to woreda officials and experts, 5 kebele administrators were selected purposefully for the interview based on their knowledge, experience, and skill. Ten members from the community were selected for the interview in the subject under investigation. In the purposefully selected sectors, 167 employees are currently working as experts and civil servants. Out of these 167 government employees, 114 samples were drawn from the target population and 130 customers were selected based on simple random sampling as respondents of the study. The total sample size for this study was 244, 114 government employees and 130 customers of the selected sectors.

3.4. Data Types and Sources

To achieve the objective of the study, data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using the tools: interviews with selected officials and experts, observation, and questionnaires were also applied in the process of gathering primary data. Secondary data was collected from published and unpublished materials that are available as journal articles, and books.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

Primary data were collected by interviews held with experts and head offices from governmental sectors and questionnaires. These selected interview informants had the experience, knowledge, and skill on the subject under study. Open and close-ended questionnaires were employed for sample respondents to access data on the issues of power decentralization and good governance problems. The questionnaire was prepared in English and translated into the local language, Afan Oromo to gather available data with confidence. Observation of government institutions and customer service practices were also used to collect primary data in situations when respondents' responses may not deal with the issue sufficiently and also contradict the reality on the ground. Secondary data gathering tools are employed by analyzing written documents that are published and unpublished materials.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

The data obtained from interview and observation was organized, analyzed, and interpreted using qualitative data analysis procedures. The data were categorized, themes were identified and their implications were narrated. The quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed after converting the data into tables, percentages, and figures.

3.7. Research Ethics

The researcher received an official permit from the Ethiopian Civil Service University, School of Law to conduct this study on power decentralization to manage good governance problems in Wuchale Woreda. Wuchale Woreda was willing to assist the researcher in giving the needed information due to its significance for the involvement of their institutions. Quantitative respondents and qualitative survey informants were provided a detailed explanation of the overall objective of the study ahead of their involvement in responding to the items. The interview was administered after getting the free will of the interviewees. Respondents were informed that they could decline if they don't want to be interviewed. Information provided by interviewees and questionnaires would not be transferred to a third party or would not be used for any other purpose apart from this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Decentralized Powers and Functions

The success of power decentralization depends on the definition of duties and powers of each level of government usually provided by the central government to enable the decentralized units to obtain goods and services effectively and manage them independently along with their resources.²² Along with decentralization strategies, decentralization programs need to devolve the necessary powers as well as functions to lower tiers of government for the best accomplishments and successful results of the program.²² Since Ethiopia launched its decentralization program at the district level through two phases, powers and functions are also devolved and practiced at grassroots levels.

4.2. Decentralized Powers

Devolution of power is a formal transfer of authority and responsibility to legally constituted local government authorities and it is followed by functional activities. It is an important as well as a politically sensitive issue that makes local governments control various decentralized functional activities.²³ These powers of local governments are categorized into policy-making power, executive power, financial power (revenue and expenditure powers), and power over personnel.²⁴ As stated in the reviewed literature, decentralization is the transfer of legal and political authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from central government to subordinate units. Because decentralization is enhanced when there is active participation and responsiveness. The degree of decentralization is measured based on the extent of independent decision-making of various governmental levels for effectively delivering social and economic services.²⁵ The federal constitution, DLD programs and ONRS need to constitutionalize the powers that are devolved to each tier of government at the state level.

The powers and functions of the Wuchale Woreda Council are enshrined even if they hold power according to the revised 2001 constitution of ONRS. The woreda council has the power

²² Ibid

²³ Meheret Ayenewu (2007), A Rapid Assessment of Woreda Decentralization in Ethiopia: *In Decentralization in Ethiopia*, Taye Assefa and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher(eds), FSS, Addis Ababa, p.80

²⁴ World Resources Institute, Supra note 51 at 8

²⁵ World Bank(2001), *Ethiopia Woreda Study* (In Three Volumes) Volume I: Main Phase, World Bank Country Office in Ethiopia Country Department 6 Africa Region, pp.3-5

to make decisions about political, administrative, and fiscal matters in their jurisdiction within the framework of regional and federal constitutions.

The interview with the Wuchale woreda council speaker shows that the woreda council did not have the authority to make policies, rules, and regulations that govern their people. These powers are left to regional governments. But the woreda council has the power to issue and implement directives on different affairs of the woreda community. The speaker of the woreda council also added that there are major constraints in issuing and implementing directives. According to the speaker, the human capacity problem and lack of the required budget of the office made them not issue the necessary powers assigned to them. Along with the speaker's responses, the expert of the council also stated that the acute financial problem is an obstacle to issuing directives and other constitutionally devolved powers.

4.3. Decentralized Functions

The decentralized functional activities from higher to lower levels of government tiers mainly depend on the purpose and situation of decentralization. ²⁶ In the revised constitution of ONRS, the structure, power, and duties of regional, zonal, woreda, and kebele are clearly stated. But the constitution does not spell out which functions might be undertaken at each level of government. Even if the revised 2001 constitution of ONRS has not stated the decentralized functional activities of Wuchale woreda, functional activities like education, health, agriculture, revenue, and water were devolved to be carried out by woreda tiers of government.

These functional activities were assigned to Wuchale woreda public institutions to be performed at the local level. The administrator of the woreda under investigation revealed during the interview that the authority of the woreda has to carry out these functions, which have been stipulated since the 2001 woreda decentralization initiative issued by the Oromia Regional State. According to the administrator, there was significant achievement development to perform its assigned functions compared with the previous centralized government system. For instance, in the case of budget, the past trend was submitting the budget proposal to the zone for approval, but currently, no need to do that, rather the woreda council has the authority to adopt and approve its budget. The government officials that were interviewed indicated that the woreda has been attempting to function through a variety of services. Although there were developmental indicators in terms of carrying out assigned functions, gaps are observed in public sectors in providing necessary services to the users. As the officials revealed, despite some progress to devolve function to the woreda level, public institutions lack the required skilled and experienced personnel and uncommitted leadership. They also further added logistical,

²⁶ Mahat Daud (2007), *District Level Decentralization Program in the Somali Region: preliminary assessments with Particular Reference to Jig-Jiga and Babile Woredas*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Addis Ababa University, PP 44

administrative, and financial constraints, and weak planning and lack of coordination among sectors were impediments to the woreda decentralization process, policies, and programs.

4.4. Assessment of Implementation of Power Decentralization in Wuchale Woreda

4.4.1. Organization, Powers, and Functions

According to Article 79 of the Revised Oromia National Regional State/ONRS, the Wuchale woreda administration has organizational structures. These are the Woreda Council that has been established by the combination of popularly elected representatives of the kebeles organized under it; the Woreda Administrative Council has been set up by the Woreda Chief Administrative himself designated by election from among members of the council; and the first instance of Court/Judicial body/ established according to the regional constitution. The woreda administration shall have the power to prepare and decide on economic development and social services, plans, and implement policies and directives issued by the regional state and zone organs. The woreda council within the territory of its establishment is the highest body of the administration. In an attempt to show the powers of the Woreda Council, the constitution of the regional state indicated Woreda Council has the right power to exercise self-administration, develop development plans and determine its internal affairs.

According to the data from the field study, the administrative structure consists of an executive committee, an elected council, and civil servants. The executives and civil servants are permanent full-time workers, whereas the council is a semi-permanent assembly that meets every three months to deal with and discuss the social, economic, and developmental plans of the woreda. The council has also the authority to approve woreda's budgets and supervise the overall progress of different developmental projects which are carried out by sector offices and the executive committee of the woreda government. The woreda is administered by an executive committee, it is also known as the cabinet. The chairman of the executive committee is the chief administrator of the woreda and the deputy usually serves as the vice administrator and the head of the woreda agriculture and rural development office. The coordinating committee of executive cabinets of the woreda rules the day-to-day activities of executive sectors and their numbers range from 5 to 7. These members of the coordinating committee of executive cabinets are also heads of different poverty reduction sectors such as education, health, agriculture and rural development, youth and social affairs, finance, and economic cooperation. The Council allocates block grants received from the regional state, whereas the main duty of the executive committee is to implement policies and decisions made by the council.

Constitutionally woreda council has the power, such as to approve the woreda social service, economic development, and administrative plans and programs. The woreda administrative council is also empowered to implement the approved plans and programs.²⁷ However, as the response of interviewed officials and experts revealed, even though the powers and functions of the woreda administrations and woreda council are specified under the constitution, there is still regional and/or zone government interference in the functions and powers of the woreda council and woreda administration as well. According to them, there were problems related to the execution of powers and functions of the woreda council that are provided by the

constitution. The council members meet only to approve the annual plans and budget other than to carry out their defined powers and duties in the constitution.

Does the Woreda administration have decentralized authority to decide on its own?

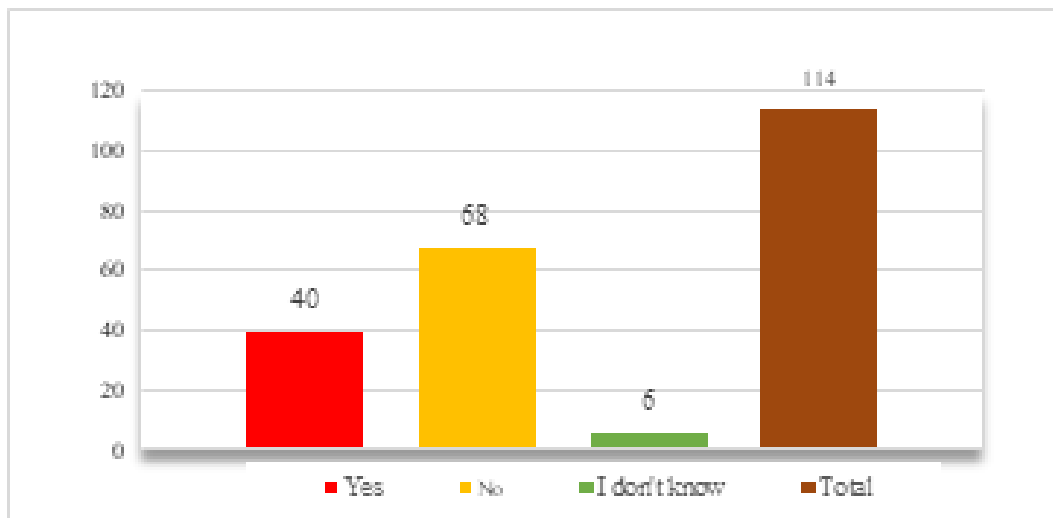


Figure 2: Government employee responses on Woreda's decentralized authority

Source: This [study \(2018\)](#)

As observed from the data in above figure 2, in the respondent's response on the decentralized authority of Wuchale woreda, 40 (35.1%) of government employees agreed on the decentralized authority to make decisions on its affairs, 68 (59.6% of the respondent's responded that they did not agree on having decentralized authority and the remaining 6 (5.3%) of participants of government employees did not know whether authority is decentralized or not. As the responses of government employees with the decentralized authority to make decisions on their own, most of the responses underlined that the woreda did not decide and take a decision on its own on local matters. According to the constitution, Woredas are formally declared to be independent and have decentralized authority, but in practice, there is a great deal of supervision and control by regional and zone governments over woreda's affairs.

According to the data gathered, the degree of autonomy of woreda and kebele to perform its duties and functions varies from time to time. As a result, 67 (51.5%) of respondents responded that the woreda and kebele had weak autonomy to discharge their function, 41 (31.5%) of the respondents categorized the autonomy of woreda and kebele administration as fair, 18 (13.8%), 2 (1.5%) and 2 (1.5%) respondents responded the autonomy of woreda and kebele administration according to the degree of their function discharge ability as high, very high and very weak, respectively.

According to responses from interviewed government experts, though the Wuchale woreda government has been constitutionally granted powers to run the woreda's day to day activities in line with the reality of local context, zonal intervention, and directives which cannot reflect the district's situation, are challenges of district's autonomy. In addition, unconstitutional and top-down orders using unofficial means are also the main factors that are threatening the district's autonomy. Therefore, the lack of autonomy by the district is another important challenge of local governance.

4.4.2. Structure, Powers, and Functions of Kebele Administration

The kebele administration, as being the lowest administrative hierarchy of the regional state, is closer to the local community than the other administrative tiers of government. The data obtained from the field study revealed that the authorities of the kebele administration were very limited and did not enjoy their decision-making power; because their power was not devolved in the real sense. Interviewed kebele officials also pointed out that most kebeles did not have offices and archives. Kebele officials were neither permanently employed nor paid; they gave free service in their free time. There is no budget allocated to the kebeles nor do they have revenue sources. Kebeles collected land use revenues and other fees but submitted them all to woreda. As the lowest and closest unit of the administrative hierarchy, Kebeles are a place where democracy is practiced first in the process of election and community mobilization for different activities. But in Wuchale woreda, kebeles serve as a place for administrative and political purposes rather than mobilizing the community to participate in different development activities.

4.4.3. Service Delivery Practice in Wuchale Woreda

One of the objectives of decentralization is to realize improved delivery of basic service at a local level and solve good governance problems. This is because of the reason that local governments are closer to the public and they can easily identify the needs and interests of the community than other government hierarchies. Local governments are standing local forces to meet the public needs, as the local community renders services closely by the local governments, they are willing to pay taxes for the services they gain and participate in the local affairs confidentially.²⁸

The Wuchale woreda and kebele officials, as well as experts, and interviewees, agreed that the major challenges in public service delivery are related to the provision of pure water, electric power service, and road. The researcher, while being in the area, has observed the people who search for water, paid unnecessary expenditures for motor generators, and many travellers to the rural areas are transported by motorcycles paying more money without safety. In this case, the woreda has limited power and resources to deliver all kebeles pipe water and is also unable to provide grand projects at the local level because of a lack of adequate budget. Interviewed customers in selected public institutions also agreed that the quality of service providers' institutions like schools, health posts, and roads constructed at woreda also lacked appropriate evaluation and monitoring systems before their inauguration ceremony. From the observation of the researcher in the study woreda, financial and skilled human power challenges and problems of coordination have contributed to lower service delivery in the woreda. For open-ended questions, the respondents responded that the community remains for two or three

28 Beresa Abera (2015), Assessment of Local Governance under the Policy of Administrative Decentralization: The Case of Horro District, Journal for Studies in Management and Planning, Vol.1, issue 05, pp.383

weeks without having access to clean water and electric power. This, in turn, creates problems of good governance in the provision of services to the community in need.

4.4.4. Community Participation in Planning and Implementing Development Programs

Participation involves both political and economic characteristics in decentralized local governance. As discussed earlier in the theoretical parts, the advantage of having decentralized local governance is to reverse centralized decision making and top-down planning and implementing system of the government.²⁹ The importance of participation in decentralized local governance as a process of initiating, facilitating, and ultimately institutionalizing the participation of the local community is a bottom-up approach.³⁰

The interviewed officials and experts in the study woreda relate the participation of the community with development projects. Accordingly, the interviewed customers and experts revealed that the level of involvement of the community in identifying and setting priorities was too weak or almost nil. They were not willing and committed to participating in local issues. This was because the reason that they are called for a meeting only when the higher officials visit in time of developmental project inauguration ceremony, election period, or when the officials want the meeting for their reports. So, during these meeting times, the community could not address the local issues in detail with their solutions, rather the officials always discuss how to participate in the political party, the party's political agendas, and recent security and peace issues of the national government.

According to the respondents' responses to questionnaires, 75 (57.7%) of the respondents stated that they did not participate in the decision-making process. 55 (42.3%) of the respondents indicated they participated, but the time of their participation was different. 33 (60%) out of the total participants in the decision-making process meet quarterly and the remaining 22 (40%) of the respondents attend with local officials annually to discuss the local community's issues. 57(43.8%) of the respondents' responses show citizens have the right to ask about woreda officials' behaviour and actions toward their needs and priorities, and 65 (50%) of the respondents responded that they have no right to ask the officials about their needs and priorities. The remaining 8(6.2%) of the respondents did not know the issue.

As participation is the main gate to expressing the demands and needs of society, the selected public sectors of Wuchale woreda did not open their door to public views and critics starting from the planning to implementation phases. Customers of the selected public institutions also revealed during an interview that public service delivers like Muke Turi town administration did not consider the priorities and needs of the society, rather they planned and implemented development programs that did not respond to immediate questions of the community. The

²⁹Marito G, Andrew S. R (2008), Achieving Better Service Delivery through Decentralization in Ethiopia, World Bank Working Paper, No. 131

³⁰Kibre Moges (1994), The conceptual Framework for Fiscal Decentralization, In Eshetu Chole (Eds) Fiscal decentralization in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University Printing Press, Addis Ababa, p. 1

public sectors were not obliged to accept the feedback and ideas as a means of input for their further development plans. They were relying only on directives, proclamations, and other rules that directly transferred to local levels.

4.4.5. *Good Governance Problems in Wuchale Woreda*

To define it in a precise manner, local good governance is the practice of principles of good governance at the local level.³¹ Based on the definition of good governance, one can understand that the principles of good governance are implemented at the grassroots of administration. For the effective success of the implementation of good governance at the local level, there must be a need to have a system that suits preserving life and liberty as well as democratic participation of the community in their affairs.³² So to have good governance at a local level, decentralization of power is necessary. In one or another way, the ultimate goal of power decentralization to local governments is to properly handle good governance problems of the society.

Good governance promotes accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, and equity in public institutions at a local level. These principles of good governance can be realized if proper power decentralization is exercised at the local level.³³ In addition, creating awareness of decentralization and its features is needed to manage good governance problems.

Good governance problems do not come out of the space but with the dissatisfaction of the society in implementing the administration system. The governance system of government is mainly related to the actions and behaviours of officials found at different governmental hierarchies.

In implementing DLDP at a district level, accountability is the basic principle of good governance and the rationale for the effectiveness of power decentralization. In principle, Article 84 (1) of the 2001 revised ONRS constitution clearly states that the woreda administration is accountable to woreda councils which are in turn accountable to the people who elect them. But, in practice, there is a problem with downward accountability to the public; rather there is upward accountability of the woreda governments to regional and zonal level executive organs and officials. This practice of the woreda administration is also explained in the proclamation of ONRS 163/2011. Article 56 (5) of this proclamation stated that the woreda administrator shall have a duty to discuss with zonal concerned officials before appointing members of district councils as heads of offices.³⁴

As depicted in the respondents' response, 72 (55.4%) of the respondents confirmed that both woreda and kebele officials were not accountable to their elected people. 43 (33.1%) responded that they were accountable to their elected community. The remaining 15 (11.5%) replied that they don't know. Of the respondents who said woreda and kebele officials were accountable to their elected people, the degree of accountability of the woreda officials seems 26 (60.47%), 16 (37.21%), and 1 (2.332%) indicated sometimes, mostly, and always respectively. In the above

³¹Young J. (1998) , Regionalism and Democracy in Ethiopia, 19(2), Third World Quarterly, p.56

³² Mahat Daud , Supra note 28 at 63

³³ Hyden, G (2000), Governance: The Study of Politics in Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton, Governance and Politics in Africa. Boulder, Colorado; Lynne Rienner Publishers pp. 123

³⁴ Oromia Proclamation No. 163/2011, A Proclamation to provide for the Reorganization and Redefinition of the Powers and Duties of the Executive organs of the Oromia National Regional State, Megeleta Oromia, April 9, 2011

responses of customers, one can detect that there was an absence of accountability of woreda as well as kebele officials toward local people in the woreda. Related to the transparency of government official appointments, 88(77.2%) of respondents answered the appointment of woreda cabinets was not based on transparency and accountability. 37(3.5%) of the respondents agreed on transparency and accountability in the process of appointment of executive cabinets. The remaining 11 (9.6%) of respondents did not know about the issue.

Based on the responses from the open-ended questionnaire, corruption was one of the challenging factors for the prevalence of good governance problems in public institutions in Wuchale woreda. The respondents indicated a lack of a strong monitoring and follow-up system, lack of appropriate and required knowledge and skill, patronage and blood relationship of sector heads, and neglecting public interests were factors that aggravated and accelerated the level of corruption in public sectors.

Interviewed customers selected from public institutions also agreed on the prevalence of corrupt and rent-seeking activities in the service provider institutions in Wuchale woreda. As their responses show, the problem has seen more in kebele social courts than in other public institutions. This did not mean that the remaining were not free from corruption and rent-seeking activities, more of the level and severity of the problem in the other public sectors was based on systematic and complicated networks than kebele social courts. Delay of cases, unpaid social court judges, and misleading customers without considering the laws were the issues that related to the severity of good governance problems in kebele social courts. Most of the respondents agreed that those corrupt and rent-seeker government officials were not asked by the concerned body, rather when a woreda official distrusted and committed corruption, he/she can only change to the other public institutions, even be appointed to a sector that is better than the previous. So, in this case, the official gets additional lapse time for corrupt activities rather than resigning and being brought in front of the court.

Responsiveness is another important principle of good governance in which the needs and interests of the community are put into practice by the concerned officials at the local level. The ultimate goal of responsiveness of government officials at the local level, such as woreda, is to serve and respond to the interests of people at the desirable time. One advantage of the existence of local government at the local level is the geographical proximity to the governed people and access to information on local needs. In this study, the researcher tried to measure the level of responsiveness of the Wuchale woreda officials by taking indicators like decisions of government officials to reflect the demands and interests of the public, the responsiveness level of officials of the community's questions, and the decision of the woreda /kebele administration reflect the larger community's preferences and needs. Based on questionnaires, 85 (74.5%) respondents said that woreda officials were not responding to the needs and questions of the community, while 26 (22.8 %) of the respondents agreed on the responsiveness of woreda officials. The rest 3(2.6%) respondents did not know the responsiveness of woreda officials. Regarding the degree of responsiveness of government officials, 88 (67.7%) respondents said woreda and kebele administrations sometimes give immediate responses to the needs and questions of society. 33(25.4%) of customers responded that they give immediate responses to the questions and needs of society. The remaining 9(6.9%) responded that woreda and kebele administrations were not given immediate responses. So, the majority of the customers were not satisfied with the responsiveness of the woreda and kebele administrations in giving immediate responses to the needs and questions of the community.

The interviewed customers and experts seriously underlined the main problem exhibited in the demands and needs of the people in service delivery. It is related to the reluctance of the Woreda and kebele administrations to offer immediate responses to the community. In another way, according to the responses of the interviewed woreda officials, the main reason for this was related to a lack of commitment from leaders, a lack of appropriate capacity of officials, and financial and resource constraints of executives at woreda and kebele levels.

4.5. Constraints of Power Decentralization and Good Governance in Wuchale Woreda

The decentralization program has been practiced since 2001 in Wuchale woreda as a system with the view of improving public service delivery efficiently and effectively at large. Despite the improvements in using devolved authority, the decentralized power was constrained by a lack of training and awareness, financial constraints, and legal and capacity problems at the woreda level. The interviewed government officials and experts explained that the constraints of the power decentralization at Wuchale woreda were related to the implementation problem of the system at the local level. As they said, woreda officials were not fully aware of the program and well trained on power devolution, the legal frameworks on power devolution also lack clarity on decentralized functions and powers. In some public sectors, officials and personnel do not have the required skills and experience. So, these were also other challenges of the devolved power at the local level.

In the open-ended questionnaire, respondents revealed that top-down decision-making and interference of higher officials influenced power decentralization negatively. Most of the policies and strategies developed by the regional government obliged the woreda to be responsive and accountable to the higher organs rather than the elected people.

On the other hand, the regional constitution provides for the local executive to be accountable to the woreda council. But, in practice, the scope of this downward accountability has not been seen; rather the executive at Wuchale woreda was under the control, direction, and supervision of the zone and Oromia executives. Woreda Council, which is the highest political organ on behalf of the woreda people within the woreda administration, is weak in terms of the power and authority they have. The woreda executives did not know and were aware of the authority that decentralized to each public service provider sector, rather they were aware and knew the importance of the influence and interference of higher officials. These officials extended their duration in position by accepting the direction and message of the top-down alignment.

Interviewed customers also indicated the constraints of power decentralization and the management of good governance problems in Wuchale woreda. As to their response, the main constraints of the system emerged out of the low self-confidence and neglecting public interests of the sector heads in the woreda. The officials were interrelated by the patronage and familiarity networks. They were not in a position to solve the problems of the community; rather they did for the satisfaction of their personal needs and their facilitator officials. In addition, employed government experts also have low capacity and awareness of the system. Some of them lack professional ethics in delivering the necessary service to users. They participated in rent-seeking and corruption activities while discharging their responsibility in the wrong manner. So, this action of officials and experts puts a negative connotation on the implementation of the required decentralized authority to solve the good governance problems.

The significance of good governance in achieving social and economic prosperity is no doubt. For this reason, it has been widely agreed that without good governance structures, one cannot address multi-faceted social and economic problems of the community. They underlined that low performance in implementing power decentralization also had a direct impact on the practice of good governance at Wuchale woreda. Lack of capacity, low level of commitment to perform desirable functions, the patronage and blood relationship of officials, weak management in setting priorities and needs of the community, low planning capability, non-responsiveness of officials to questions and demands of the community, and upward accountability of officials were taken as the challenges of good governance in Wuchale woreda.

The interviewed customers and government experts disclosed that using the decentralized authority autonomously to resolve the socio-economic problems of the society is the expected action that needs to be done by the woreda officials. As to the regional constitution, the power to decide on local matters resides in the hands of the woreda administration and service provider's institutions in the woreda. So, using this decentralized authority in an accountable and responsible manner to respond to the needs and interests of the society in which good governance problems will be addressed is obstructed. The management mechanism of good governance problems is directly related to the way of implementing devolved authority at the local level. As discussed earlier, the majority of the good governance problems originated with the lack of an accountable and responsive way of administration. This, in turn, is related to the performance, skill, and administration ability of the officials in the woreda.

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Findings

Although powers and functions are specified in the revised constitution of ONRS, it has not made clear the responsibilities of officials and functions in the woreda. This implies the absence of clear demarcation points on the responsibilities of government organs. Lack of an integrated system of procedure in service delivery, lack of efficient organizational structure, and lack of a locally adopted working system for planning and budgeting are among the constraints that are challenging the performance of woreda decentralization in Wuchale woreda, as the discussion of the data revealed.

The study found out that even if Wuchale woreda has the power to make decisions on various issues, these powers are constrained by the absence of a clear legal framework and regional as well as zonal independence. As the responses from the open-ended questionnaires and interviews conducted by officials and experts, the appointment of executive cabinets and other sector heads was not carried out with the consultation of the community and woreda council, rather through a direct letter of zonal administration which is does not conform with the regional constitution.

Although implementing power decentralization at the local level makes local government accountable and transparent, the situation in Wuchale woreda did not reflect that. The government employees and customers' responses to open-ended questionnaires revealed that because the power decentralization system was not carried out adequately and successfully, local officials were involved in corrupt activities like rent-seeking, nepotism and bribery.

The interviewed experts agreed on the importance of power decentralization to handle good governance problems easily at a local level. But, they indicated that, because of the lack of capacity and skill of officials rather than solving and managing, the problems aggravated to a high peak. So, these problems need to be managed by the decentralized authority in Wuchale woreda.

The findings of the study indicated that the practical implementation of power decentralization is not in a position to manage good governance problems. In this regard, an absence of accountability to the public, lack of transparency in the decision-making process, low involvement of the community in local affairs, lack of dissemination of information to the public, and non-responsiveness of officials and civil servants were emerging out of the low-level implementation of power decentralization at Wuchale woreda.

5.2. Conclusion

- In Ethiopia, DLDLP is being implemented in two phases for the past years in its different forms such as administrative, political, and financial decentralization. The main objectives of the decentralization process are ensuring democratic work procedures, good governance, immediate responses to the community's needs and interests in basic services delivery and enabling the local population to participate in local affairs.
- It is not enough to generalize about the whole DLDLP process of the Oromia Regional State by taking the findings in connection to the good governance in Wuchale Woreda into account. At each tier of government, the community and the government prefer the system as a better solution to the development they wish. Although the power decentralization system needs full autonomy to be effective, the finding of the study shows woreda had limited decision-making authority.
- The success of power decentralization in managing good governance problems mainly requires a commitment of political leaders, both at the regional and woreda levels, and local officials' accountability and responsiveness to local community needs and questions.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded to have a better implementation of power decentralization and manage good governance problems at a local level.

- The practice of decentralization of power at the woreda level shows that the woreda has not used the decentralized power at the local level efficiently. To be successful, any woreda should use the constitutionally devolved authority sufficiently in decision-making power and adequately respond to good governance problems.
- To ensure successful power decentralization and manage good governance problems, there should be strong political commitment and allocation of necessary human, material, and financial resources to local governments.
- Public service providing institutions should implement their devolved power to avoid bureaucratic delays, unresponsiveness, and many processes that create dissatisfaction of customers.
- To have accountability, transparency, and responsive local government officials, there

should be strong legal and administrative punishment mechanisms for wrongdoers and corrupt officials.

- The community also needs to have a possibility to assess the performance of their leaders. Along with this, the community should be involved in identifying priorities and needs, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating local developmental activities.
- To address good governance problems through decentralized power at the woreda level, public institutions need to be open for public review and evaluation.
- Finally, the researcher recommends that, in addition to this study, more studies be conducted to assess the general implementation of DLDP and its role in managing good governance problems at the regional level and provide more conclusive findings on the process of the system.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No conflict of interest was reported.

7. FUNDING INFORMATION

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Attributes of first year university students to success or failure in their reading performance: selected campuses of Hawassa University technology village: Main Campus, Awada and Wondo Genet in focus

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to find out the attributes that first year university student's associate with their reading success or failure. Towards that end, a total population of three-hundred and fifteen (315) students was randomly selected from Hawassa University main campus, Awada and Wondogenet; purposive and random sampling techniques were employed to determine the setting and the subjects of the study. Then, data gathering tools like reading proficiency Test, reading attribute survey questionnaire and interview were employed. The study subjects were randomly selected from the three campuses of Hawassa University by drawing lots. After the data were gathered, the quantitative data were analyzed by comparing means, and correlating the relationships while the qualitative data were analyzed by thematically categorizing. The findings showed that the students' reading proficiency is far below the level expected of them and their reading success attributed with their personal/internal effort, while their reading failure is attributed with external factors; the result obtained through all the instruments of data gathering confirmed that reality. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that students' internal and external attributive behaviours of reading success/failure need to be given due attention in reading classes to improve the apparently low reading proficiency level of first year university students.

Keywords: attributes of reading, reading failure, reading proficiency, reading success

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Events over the past many years have placed greater demands on the people of the world to become literate in English. English has become the language of wider communication and information; the language is spoken by a large number of people and taught all over the world under many different circumstances. Much of the world's literature and science is originally written and readily available in English (Grabe, 2009; Harmer, 2004; Hinkel, 2011). Thus, acquiring a good command of the English language seems to have become a better access to a vast body of knowledge and thought. Proficient use of the language has become crucial for intellectual, social and emotional developments of people throughout the world. Reading is one of the four crucial language skills that bring about these developments in the students.

Students at higher institutions of learning are expected to do many things based on the information they obtain through reading (Hailemichael, 1983; Gebremedhin, 1993). They are required to read and understand various materials in English, to widely read, analyze and synthesize certain sources of information. Thus, reading helps students of higher institution a lot to apply the knowledge they get from the real world in their learning or living situations. Most of the activities students perform at tertiary level are one way or another related to the reading skill. Such activities as reading and understanding instructions and concepts, reading for doing assignments and examinations, and reading text books of different disciplines, are common in higher institutions of learning (Abiy, 2005; Gessesse, 1999; Solomon, 1999).

Tertiary level students' knowledge of reading skills is very essential for their success in academic and professional life, and even for their personal development, as English is the source of all the professional, technical and scientific literature now a days. Probably that is why the students' ability to read and understand materials written in English is often sought from students by their subject departments that want to assess the performance of the students from their reading comprehension. In a situation where English is used as a medium of instruction and written language for academic texts and materials at secondary and tertiary level, reading is by far the most important skill for students' success. Examinations designed to assess the students' performance in different subject area also require mainly the students' reading ability more than any other skill (Alderson and Urquhart 1984).

Besides the academic importance, reading proficiency is indispensable for the students' success in certain reading practical activities outside school in real life situations. Thus, reading is a life skill which is related to the immediate as well as lifelong success of tertiary level students. It is very essential for students' proper functioning in different walks of life. It can serve as a source of information, enjoyment and recreation (Ghirett, 2007; Andargachew, 2004; Williams, 1984; Patel, 2005).

In spite of its tremendous importance for the academic and life success for students, reading has been a challenging skill for most of the students at tertiary level. Students at university level are often observed in failing to read and understand at ease the texts they read. So, trying to identify the mystery behind the attributes to students' reading success/ failure appears to be timely issue.

The causes of the problem could be of different factors among which the students' attributive behaviours of their reading could be one of the most serious ones. By attributes of reading success or failure we mean, the internal and external features of reading that students associate in due process of their reading practice (Alderson & [Arquhart, 1984](#)). Tertiary level students in our context are often times observed in associating their reading success or failure with the materials of their reading, methods of teaching reading, qualities of reading teachers and the like external factors; usually, the students' internal attributes of reading like effective use of their own strategies, attitudes and self-efficacy belief to manage their own reading independently, are not seriously considered by the learners. (Susbielle, 1987). Hence, in this study, an attempt was made to find out the actual existing level of their reading proficiency, and the external and internal attributive factors associated with first year university students' reading success or failure.

Research related with reading problems is needed at higher education first year level, because it is reading that is used as one of the most important means of getting information; thus, students' success and/ or failure in higher institutions usually depends on their reading proficiency. The more they progress in their higher education, the more reading ability they are expected to develop.

This study attempted to point out the reading proficiency level and the attributes the learners associate with their reading success or failure. Specifically, the study tried to explore the internal and external attributive factors of reading as an alternative solution for the prevalent problem the learners attribute to their low reading proficiency, lack of positive attitude and lack of high self-efficacy belief to assess their reading success or failure ([Martinez, 2008](#); [Rossiter, 2003](#)).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

University students' success/failure in their academic life is highly dependent on their reading proficiency. This is so because reading is the main source of information that students need to work on exams, term papers and senior essays. Most of the information for every activity they carry out comes from reading; students in higher institutions are expected to read large and complex texts. To that effect, they are offered a reading course/some skills of reading course through the common courses like communicative English skills, to enable them to be proficient, independent and strategic readers. The learners are expected to carry out the reading activities independently and with reasonable understanding of the texts they read; however, the students at first year university level appear to be unable to easily identify, locate, understand, and retrieve information from various genres of reading texts they read. They seem to have a serious limitation of effectively understanding, storing and using the information they get by reading. They lack the desired proficiency, strategy, interest and self-confidence to assess their success and failure in reading ([Stevens, 1982](#); [Pajares, 1997](#); [Macaro, 2001](#)).

Various local and international studies confirm the reality of little success of most students in EFL contexts ([Graesser, 2004](#); [Taye, 1999](#); [Hellekjar, 2009](#); [Molla, 1987](#); [Hilemichael, 1983](#); [Lanski, 2008](#)).

Observing the seriousness of the problem, this study was intended to find out the prevalent reading proficiency problem of tertiary level students in relation to the reading attributes of first year university students of different fields in different campuses of Hawassa University. It

was assumed that the problem might have different natures of attribution for different fields of students due to the associations they could make in the complex process of reading.

The learners appear to lack conscious plan of their own, interest and self-initiative to assess their reading success or failure probably due to lack of awareness about differentiating the role of internal and external attributes of reading; So, this research attempts to find out the internal and external attributes the learners associate to their reading success or failure. That is, the study tries to assess what the students say about themselves when they have read and understood something successfully or when they have read and could not understand something successfully. The study attempted to point out the reading proficiency level and the attributes the learners associate with their reading success or failure.

The students' background shows that majority of the students who usually join first year program of the University are less-proficient, disinterested and have low self-efficacy beliefs about reading strategy use. Hence, the researcher feels that this problem could somehow be related to the reading attributive behaviour of the students. Unless we are aware of what the students want to read, how they want to read, and how they react to their reading success or failure, it is quite challenging to carry out a meaningful reading lesson with most of those less-proficient readers (defined as readers who could not easily identify, locate, understand, and retrieve the text information they read with self-initiated reading and reasonable understanding spontaneously).

The learners seem to have been the victims of circumstances of the reproductive and imitative views of reading in which they are expected to learn what they are told or what is explicitly stated in the text. As a result of these, most of the students seem to push aside their reading problems to outside factors. But when they could read and understand better, they link it with their own personal efforts, while the reading failure is often pushed aside to external factors like poor quality of teachers, materials and methods. However, how far that is true was investigated in the present study; as is known in our language teaching-learning system, the implicit focus of the reading lesson has been on analyzing and reproducing the language structures; this is also the approach which mainly promotes the students to associate their common reading problem with the external factors of the reading process, for very few of the things are relevant with effective reading skills development (Gessese,1999; Kanore,1994; [Stoughton, 2008](#); [Geremew, 1999](#)).

The conventional reading practice promotes the students to attribute their reading successes or failures with the external factors. This has been predominant in our teaching reading practice for a long time; that may be true due to such factors as curriculum constraints, the established teaching-learning beliefs and styles of teachers' and students', and lack of knowledge and skill for using effective strategies. Hence, the existing practices of teaching-learning reading appear not to promote the students to associate their reading success and failure with their internal learner factors of developing positive attitude, self-confidence and a conscious plan for action of themselves.

Local and international researches that have been done so far in the area have made invaluable contributions for approaching alternatively the reading behaviour of students at higher institutions. However, because of the complex nature of the reading process, it is still necessary and timely to deal with some gaps, controversies and disparities of what has been done so far

and the existing felt need of students' reading proficiency and the attributes of the reading success and failure of students at higher institutions of learning.

Thus, this study was carried out with the intention of exploring the relationship between the students' reading proficiency and the attributes of their reading success and failure, for it appears that the wrong kind of external reading attribute they make is negatively influencing their reading success and acting as a means of their reading failure.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The main objective of this study was to find out the reading proficiency level and the reading success/failure attributes of first year students.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- assess the reading proficiency level of students under the study;
- find out the major attributes students make with their reading success/failure
- examine the relationship between their reading proficiency level and the attributes of their reading success/failure;

1.4. Research Questions

This research had the following three major research questions as a guide to the overall direction of the study:

- What is the reading proficiency level of the subjects involved in this study?
- What are the key factors contributing to the reading success or failure of these subjects?
- Is there a relationship between reading behaviors and the success or failure in reading among the subjects in this study?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study was aimed at finding out the reading proficiency level and the attributive behaviours of first year students. Thus, it tries to point out the extent to which the attributes the students associate could be related with the reading success and failure of the students of Hawassa University different campus first year students; from the students' point of view, it is hoped that the study could give them some insight about their reading proficiency level and the attributes they associate with their reading success or failure. The study is hoped to pave a theoretical and empirical ground for better reading class room instruction in the future. The findings of the study could also facilitate for the students' independent and integrated reading instruction through a conscious control of their own reading practices instead of pushing aside things to the external factors. The findings of this study could also help teachers to define clear guidelines of reading instruction and, gain a better understanding of student's internal needs, attitudes and beliefs before they go about dealing with any reading lesson. Curriculum designers may

also gain some insights about underlying factors which hinder or facilitate students' reading proficiency and effective teaching-learning of reading instruction in EFL class room in terms of designing materials. So, material designers could get useful information about the contents and procedures of designing reading materials considering the reading proficiency level and attributive behaviours of students for their reading success and failure; finally, the findings of this study might shed some light for further study in the area of strategic reading instructional approach.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Description of the Study Area/s

This study was conducted in three campuses of Hawassa University industry Village in Southern Nations and Nationalities Regional State. From the Six Universities existing in the region, Hawassa University was selected purposively; then, first year students were also selected purposively in line with the research objectives and the felt need of the research problem under this study.

2.2. Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study were first year students who joined Hawassa university in 2019/2020 academic year, having successfully passed the entrance examination of the year; out of the students who joined Hawassa University in 2019/2020 academic year, the students of the three colleges (N. Science, Accounting & Finance and Forestry), were randomly selected by drawing lots. Thereafter, the departments of Biology, Accounting and Natural Resources management, were purposively selected to assess the reading proficiency level and its attributes to students of different selected fields for the study; to that end, three sections from each department were selected randomly by drawing lots; thus, a total of nine sections with nearly thirty-five students in each section from the three campuses (three-hundred and fifteen students), were used as the subjects of this study; besides five instructors, who were selected purposively , were used for interview.

2.3. Design of the Study

This co- relational study was designed to pursue the mixed approach as per the nature of the topic and the objectives set to be achieved at the end of the study. The study adhered to the co-relation type of research design and mixed approach to data collection in which the qualitative as well as the quantitative data were used to triangulate the validity of the data to find out what practically works in the real context of the students for the given research topic and for the expected objectives. Thus, the data for the study were gathered employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. To that effect, five percent of the target populations (nearly six thousand students) of the study, about three-hundred-fifteen (315) were selected employing random sampling technique

2.4. Methods of the Study

In this study, such methods of data gathering, as reading proficiency test, questionnaire and an interview were employed. For the reading proficiency, a reading proficiency test adapted from the reading section of 'test of English for speakers of others languages (TOEFL) was

employed; the difficulty, relevance and familiarity of the test items was carefully checked before administering the test; the texts had the readability level of grade eleven, as they were checked by using readability index; reading texts that had about twenty-five items were administered to determine the reading proficiency level of the students; the attribute exploratory questionnaire that was adapted from Macaro, (2001) was employed to find out the external and internal reading attributive behaviour of students towards their reading success and/or failure, besides; the interview that triangulates the data obtained through the two instruments of quantitative data gathering, was designed by the researcher in line with the frame work of setting interview questions; The interview was conducted with selected teachers and students; thus, these research tools enabled the researcher to gather the relevant data about the major variables and objectives of the study. In general, all the pertinent tools were adapted/adopted from reliable sources and they were used accordingly with the subjects of this study.

2.5. Data Management and Analysis

Before collecting all the data, concerned bodies of the respective colleges and departments were communicated to get official permission to start the study; thereafter, the respective instructors of English in each department were contacted to plan for administering the reading test and filling the questionnaire at the same time, so that the data gathered through the two instruments could be triangulated; finally, from the three sections about six students who were able to express their views clearly about their overall reading proficiency and their reading attributive behaviours, were picked up for interview.

The researcher attempted to secure the reliability and validity of the data by designing and/ adapting sufficient and relevant data and then by piloting the data before using them in the main study. Some items of the reading test and the questionnaire were pilot tested on students of some other fields to check the potential problems of the items; thus, some items that caused some confusion were discarded and modified based on the pilot information; after reliable and valid data were gathered, they were analyzed by employing pertinent techniques of data analysis for the reading proficiency test and questionnaire data like frequency count of attributive factors, comparison of means and some other measures of central tendency; then, the interview qualitative data were thematically analyzed and triangulated with the quantitative data result of the reading proficiency test and questionnaire by using the measures of central tendency and its correlation with the attributive factors.

3. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1. Results

3.1.1. The Result of Reading Proficiency Test

Table 1: Reading Proficiency Test Result Mean comparison of the subjects from the Three Campuses

Department	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BSRPTS	99	12.00	76.00	42.7071	13.52039
ACSRPTS	99	24.00	72.00	46.0101	7.65519
FSRPTS	99	12.00	58.00	39.0808	10.95601

The table above presents the summary of the reading proficiency level of the students of the three departments of Biology, Accounting and Forestry; as it could be observed from the table, the reading proficiency level of the students is by far below the expected level of reading ability at this level, and most of the students could predominantly be categorized under the unsuccessful readers category; as a standard, students at this level are expected to identify, locate, understand and retrieve the reading texts they read at least with a fifty percent comprehension as a minimum requirement; but most of the subjects under this study are below the minimum requirement (Biology, $X=42$, $SD=13.5$; Accounting, $X=46$, $SD=7.65$ and Forestry, $X=39$, $SD=-$). The research tool of the reading proficiency test reveals that there are some important insights learners and teachers need to reconsider in the teaching-learning process of the reading skill/sub-skills.

As was stated in the problem statement and literature review of the study, the reading proficiency level of the students was found to be very low. More than 95% of the students in the three groups were found to have a non-proficient/un successful/ level of reading proficiency as could be seen in light of the criterion suggested for levels of reading proficiency by reading test of English for speakers of other languages; the test sets such standards as (>73% high proficiency/successful reading; 57%-72% medium proficiency/medium reading success; 46%-56% low proficiency/low reading success and below 46% non-proficiency/reading failure). That was what could be observed from the reading proficiency test result of most of the three groups of this study subjects.

As could be observed from their performance in the reading proficiency test through their average score, and the standard deviations, their performance is below what they were expected to score (see Tables 1 above, for further information). The variation in their score distribution is not normal which shows that there may be a wide gap of individual differences in their performance, in which most of their scores could not be engrossed between (+/-2 SD) which is normal S.D; but in this study, the standard Deviation that shows the variation of each score from the mean is extremely high (+/- 13, +/-7 and +/-10). For instance, if we take the first mean of Biology and see the standard variation by +/-13 from the mean ($X= 42$, the range becomes as wide as 29-55, which is totally unacceptable gap of variation; that of Accounting and forestry also ranges from (39-53 for Accounting, and 29-49 for Forestry students). From the three groups of this study, that of the Accounting Result distribution seems to be somehow fairly distributed, though it is still far from the normal standard deviation of +/-2 from the total mean.

The overall reading proficiency range variation in this study deviates significantly from the standard (+/-2 SD). The SD of the present study might indicate the presence of many low results and some very few outlier result cases as could be observed from the frequency distribution of the overall result for all the three groups of the study. The frequency distribution of the overall result shows that more than seventy-five percent of the results in all the three campuses of the study site tend to concentrate from thirty-two to fifty-six; various factors might have influenced the reading proficiency of the students in the three groups of this study in which the presence of some exceptionally outperforming students might be the one. This could be observed from the abnormally dispersed score of the students from the mean and through the inflated value of the standard deviation; besides, the individual differences, the attributes they associate with their reading ability might have negatively influenced them to the extent that the majority of them are categorized as unsuccessful or poor readers in their level of reading proficiency.

3.1.2. The Reading Attributes Result through Questionnaire Data

The result obtained through this tool is geared towards answering the research question of the relationship between the reading proficiency level and reading attributive behaviour of students in relation to their reading success or failure.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics about Reading Attributive Behaviours

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S t d . Deviation
MCBSQR	99	2.23	4.26	3.0357	.38144
AWACSQR	99	2.56	4.44	3.3502	.50010
WOFQR	99	2.46	4.84	3.6155	.56226

Table two above provides the summary of the reading attributive behaviour of the students in terms of five Likert scale results. In this table, the overall reading attributive behaviour of students could be categorized as high when it is (3.5-5.0), medium when it is (2.5-3.4), and low attribution (1.0-2.4); this is done by summing up the overall rates of the attributive questionnaire result and dividing it by the number of the questions, that is the thirty items of the questionnaire in five likert scales, are multiplied by five and divided by thirty; that gives us the expected behavioural attributes out of five to be high, medium or low/insignificant attributive behaviour to reading success or failure; when we see the overall reading success or failure attributive behaviour of the subjects of this study in light of the above standard, Biology and Accounting students tend to have medium attributive behaviour to their reading failure, while the Forestry students have high attributive behaviour; what can be inferred from this is that students reading success or failure is closely associated with some kind of ability they have, effort they make, materials they read and the like. Reading success or failure cannot exist in a vacuum in the absence of some sort of association; the students clearly stated this reality when they were asked to express their views about the conceptions they have in certain reading activities to become either successful or unsuccessful; many of the students who participated in the study stated that their reading success or failure cannot exist out of the external or internal explanation they give to the various reading activities they come in their daily life reading practices; thus, the correlation between the reading proficiency level and their reading attributive behaviour level could be observed from the table below:

Table3: correlations of Test Result with questionnaire Result of Reading Attributive Behaviours of the Students

Department	correlation	MCBSTR	AWACSTR	WOFSTR
MCBSQR	Pearson Correlation	1	.088	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.428	.007
	N	84	84	84
AWACSQR	Pearson Correlation	.088	1	.388**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428		.000
	N	84	84	84
WOFSTR	Pearson Correlation	.292**	.388**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	
	N	84	84	84

The correlation between the students' reading proficiency level (that is realized as failure level for most of the students under this study) and their reading attributive behaviour towards their reading proficiency (which is from medium to high level) is not perfectly negative. The medium attribution to some extent positively correlates with medium reading proficiency level of some students and some outlier results of few students in the study; thus, the correlation between the reading proficiency level and their reading attributive behaviour level could be observed from the graphic depiction below in an elaborated manner:

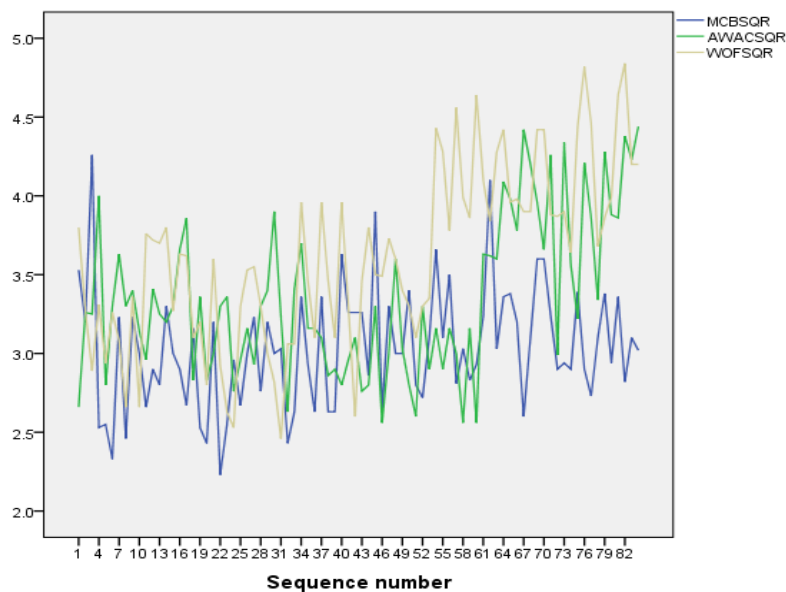


Figure 1: Graphic depiction of reading proficiency and Reading attribution correlation

3.2. The Results of Interview Data

3.2.1. The Result of Interview Data from Instructors

In this study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with five instructors who were purposively selected from the three campuses of the study; the issues of the interview focused on the major thematic issues; towards this end, the instructors were inspired to elicit their views on the reading proficiency level of the students, the conception of the students about

the importance of reading, and the students' attributive behaviour of their reading success or failure; thus, the core ideas of the five instructors' interview data are presented as follows:

When the first interview question was presented to the instructors to express their views in relation to the students' reading success or failure level, they unanimously expressed, 'most of the students are at alarmingly low level of reading.' As to their view, the students' failure in reading could be explained in terms of their lack of reading habit, inappropriate methods of teaching-learning reading employed so far, irrelevant materials used for teaching-learning reading in schools, and the like. Indeed the instructors capitalized on such issues as, 'most of the students are not usually ready to accept their reading failure; rather they try to explain it in terms of lack of time, material, good teachers and the like.' Not only the students, even some instructors address the students' reading failure in terms of what they or the students do or not do externally, so everyone seems to push the problem aside/externalize/ to various external factors like, overall language problem, poor reading habit/background, poor teaching methods, bad teachers and the like., the instructors expressed their concern that many students are not able to enjoy various merits of reading, as a result of these problems ; hence they forward the importance of reading as, "It is an essential skill for their academic life in campus and for life outside the campus, as they cannot do any academic activity at poor/failure level of reading; however, most of the interviewed instructors feel that the students as well as the instructors are not doing their level best to get the most out of this receptive skill; thus, they suggest, " the students need to get initiated by themselves from within to make use of all the conscious plans of actions that enable them to improve the existing alarmingly low/poor level of reading while the reading instructors too, get committed to providing all the opportunities of creating conducive atmosphere for better reading performance in terms of making use of effective teaching strategies, methods, materials and assessing causes of reading failure for most of the students.

3.2.2. The Result of Interview Data from Students

In line with the purpose of the study, interview questions of similar nature with that of the instructors, were presented to six students that were purposively picked up from the three campuses (two from each campus). In due process of the interview with the student, a meticulous attempt was made by the researcher to elicit pertinent information about their reading proficiency level, their reading attributive behaviours and their overall reading habits/practices. To that end, the core responses offered by the six student interviewees are presented as follows:

For the question that was presented to the students in relation to their conception of their overall reading proficiency level, most of them (four out of the six) expressed that they see themselves as 'struggling readers who are trying to read and understand , but so far not yet successful readers. 'And they associate this struggling reading practice with such factors as, poor reading habit/background, lack of interest and lack of materials and good teachers. As to them, a successful/proficient reader is someone who can locate, identify, understand and retrieve the most important ideas and supporting details easily and well within a given short period of time, while the unsuccessful reader is someone who cannot do that; so in light of that, most of the interviewed students, except the two who consider themselves as average readers, others consider themselves as unsuccessful/poor readers who struggle to locate, identify, understand and retrieve the essential information as quickly as possible.

In terms of the explanations the students gave for their reading success or failure, they stated as, 'our reading success or failure is attributed to the nature of teachers, our reading habit and interest, and relevance, importance and availability of reading materials.' All the interviewee students expressed that reading is an essential part of their lives; however, as to most of them, to benefit from this important skill, the methods of teaching reading are not effective; at higher levels of education, like our university, self-initiated and self-regulated ways of reading are more fruitful than the traditional ways of teaching reading for checking comprehension. In this way, the learners expect everything from the instructors like the case in elementary schools. As to their self evaluation, most of them are unsuccessful readers mainly because of the practices they have been exposed to since elementary school up until university level. So, in order to improve this situation, they feel that the role of instructors is of paramount importance, besides the strategies, the habit and interest the learners try to develop; In general, what the students suggested for improving the existing prevalent poor reading level of students at first year university level is that first the instructors should take the initiative and encourage the students by offering relevant and useful materials of reading by even adapting some of the text book reading materials; thereafter, they need to follow up the students' progress of reading in terms of their interest, readiness, self-regulation and self-initiation.

4. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Discussion

Reading is one of the most important skills for students' academic or life success at university level; however, the reading performance of students at first year university level in our context is affected by a number of cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and social variables; this is what local and international researches in the area of reading confirm (Oxford, 1990; Macaro, 2001; Taye, 1999; Gessesse, 1999). As a result of the very complex nature of the reading process, EFL readers like ours, are oftentimes challenged by the apparently inevitable threats of the skill that usually make them be under the category of unsuccessful/poor readers. This is what the findings of many studies like the ones afore-cited and others approve; most of the students at first year university level under the study areas, are not able to locate, identify, understand and retrieve the information they read easily and well for immediate use, as could be witnessed by the findings of this study and earlier literature (Ghirett, 2007; Andargachew, 2004; Williams, 1984; Patel, 2005).

The result of the reading test in this study has confirmed the commonly held belief that most of the students at first year university level are not able to easily locate, identify, understand and use the information they get through reading; as to the test result, most of them are found by far below the expected level of reading proficiency at first year university level (in average, they are found at a very poor/frustration level of reading, though there are very few good readers (See table 1 for details).

As could be seen from the results of many researches done on reading in our country at different levels right from the elementary level (like EGRA and others), the reading performance of our students is at a very low and alarming level; the researchers have been trying to address the problem from different prospective; in this study also an attempt was made to see the existence and prevalence of the problem in light of the affective variable of the reading problem, particularly in terms of the explanations that the students give for their reading success/failure; the failure seems to have been taken for granted by the students, as it is recurring in different

studies; what is probably bewildering the researchers, including the present one is, what could be the root cause of the problem? What could be closely associated as an explanation with their reading failure?

As the result in this study indicated, the students have a high rate of association with various external factors of teachers, materials, methods and the like, as has always been the case for their reading failure; so the present researcher believes that, in so far as the students are not ready to take their own self-regulated and self-initiated strategies and habits of reading, they could never be successful readers. This is what the result of the interview data with teachers and students also depicted. It has clearly been indicated in the interview and questionnaire data result that the apparent reading failure of the students is commonly addressed from the point of view of external factors, like lack of good teachers, materials, methods and the like which are good, but they are not sufficient conditions to bring about success in complex language learning skills, like reading; the students must learn to attribute their reading success/failure with conscious plans of actions that enable them to regulate their reading success and failure (Grabe W.,1991).

4.2. Conclusions

The reading proficiency problem of our students is becoming the problem of overall language proficiency in our situation for first year students, because the secret behind successful language mastery is the information they gather through the receptive skill of reading; thus, the seemingly taken granted nature of the reading problem should be addressed from various internal and external angles for mitigating the degree of reading failure of most of the students at this level. The research conducted in the area of reading problem needs to target the multi-faceted nature of the complex process of the reading skill. As the results obtained in this study through the reading test, questionnaire and interview showed, most of the students at this level are extremely poor readers who cannot easily understand the text they read; they substantiated the test result with the view they expressed in the interview, in which they said that most of them are struggling readers. In the explanation they gave in the questionnaire about their self conceptions of their reading attributive behaviour, they directly associated their reading failure with various external factors of reading variables; although the external variables have their own roles, pushing aside the whole problem to the external factors only may not enable them to significantly overcome their reading problem; hence, the complex nature of the reading skills needs an integrated approach and effort in teaching-learning and research.

Recommendations: Based on the results and conclusion arrived, the following recommendations are made:

- Instructors should take into account the reading attributive nature of students and act accordingly in reading classes;
- Students should be encouraged by instructors to take self-initiated attributes for their reading success;
- A reading research that addresses cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and social attributes of reading problems, needs to be systematically carried out;

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No conflict of interest was reported.

6. FUNDING INFORMATION

No fund was received

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Prevalence of intimate partner violence and psychological wellbeing of women: the case of Wondo Genet Woreda, Sidama Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study aims to assess women's roles in conflict resolution and peace-making among the Sidama people of Wondo Genet Woreda, Southern Ethiopia. The study employed a qualitative approach and purposive sampling was used to select informants from the total women population. To collect necessary and relevant information, various instruments were used. These include an in-depth interview, group discussions, and structured observation. Concerning data sources, both primary and secondary data sources were employed. In Ethiopia, as in other developing countries, Men's and women's respective positions and roles have been presented in such dichotomous categories as public/domestic, nature/culture, and production/reproduction. These categories depict the men-women relations that constitute a relation of domination and subordination. To further discuss theoretical orientations, symbolic anthropology, feminist perspectives, and structural-functionalist views were examined. As the findings of this study depict, among others, one of the many major reasons for the low participation of Sidama women in indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms relates to low social status and discriminatory attitudes towards women. Women are the primary victims of conflict. The inclusion of women in conflict resolution mechanisms can be beneficial to ensure sustainable peace in society. To enhance women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building, patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory value systems should be eradicated. Women must be involved in conflict resolution at all levels. When they are not active participants, the views, needs, and interests of half of the population are not represented, and, therefore, interventions will not be as appropriate or enduring.

Keywords: conflict, conflict resolution, peace, Sidama, women

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual against a woman or man within a relationship which either results in a high likelihood of injury, psychological harm and death (WHO, 2013). Physical and sexual violence is considered “universal” type of violence affecting women and is more prevalent than any other type of violence globally (Samuels et al., 2017). IPV and domestic violence is a term often used interchangeably; however, IPV is a form of domestic violence that occurs between two people engaged in a close personal, emotional or sexual relationship (Smith et al., 2017). It is generally understood as a pattern of abusive behavior by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation (Garcia-Moreno, 2006).

IPV is a serious public health concern throughout the world with serious consequences for the health and wellbeing of the victims (Bacchus et al., 2018). Moreover, it poses a greater risk for physical, sexual and mental health problems and affects all the spheres of women’s lives such as self-esteem, productivity, autonomy, capacity to care for themselves and their children, ability to participate in social activities and even death (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). IPV occurs in all countries, irrespective of social, economic, religious or cultural group (WHO, 2012). According to World Health Organization, the global life-time rate of female physical or sexual IPV was estimated to 30% (WHO, 2013). However, the estimate of IPV varied globally. For instance, the prevalence of psychological, physical and/or sexual IPV ranged from 34.4% - 46.0% in South Asia (Afghanistan), from 30% - 33.3% in Latin America (Colombia) and from 13.3%-19% in Central Asia (Tajikistan) (Coll et al., 2019). Although there have been few reports of violence against women in Africa, available data showed 36.6% of women in Africa experienced lifetime physical and/or sexual IPV among ever partnered women (WHO, 2013). For instance, about 34% in Zimbabwe, 61% in Gambia and 55.5% in South Africa experienced physical/sexual IPV (Shamu et al., 2011).

In Ethiopia, women account for half of the Ethiopian population and are more vulnerable to this violence than men due to many economic and social factors that work against them (Mulatu, 2016). Even though, nowadays, though there is a progress in giving attention to women participation, studies on intimate partner violence against women’s (IPVAWs) in Ethiopia are few irrespective of different lifestyles, customs and culture of the people (NRPBP, 2004). According to some of available population-based studies from the northern and southern part of the country (Meskele et al., 2019; Chernet and Cherie, 2020), the prevalence of IPVAW varies from 50% to 71% during lifetime and 24% to 30% for the past 12 months.

Recent studies (Yitbarek et al., 2019; Adhena et al., 2020; Gebrewahd et al., 2020; Tiruye et al., 2020) have shown the occurrence of IPV in Ethiopia so far; more than one third of women who experienced any violence from their intimate partners had severe acts that could threaten them in their lifetime. This needs an urgent attention at all levels of societal hierarchy including policymakers, stakeholders and professionals to alleviate the situation. Thus, this research aimed to assess the prevalence of IPVAW and their psychosocial wellbeing in a sample of women aged 15-49 years living in Wondo Genet Woreda, Sidama Region, Southern Ethiopia.

1.2. Problem Statement

While women are valuable asset of the world, contrarily, they are also the most threatened ones. IPVAW is the most pervasive yet under estimated social and health problem that occur throughout the world (Isabel et al., 2007). In Ethiopia, violence against women is realized to be great concern, not just from a human rights perspective, but also from an economic and health viewpoint (Chernet and Cherie, 2020).

Protecting women against violence acts has different implications not only to the women herself but also the society as a whole. To ensure the sustainable development of a country, improved use of half of the world's population will enable to reduce poverty, attain fast economic growth, improve societal well-being and so on(OECD, 2008). However in the developing countries, women are not given special attention as resource. Owing to this, they remain more consistently late than men in formal labour force participation, credit access, income levels, and ownership and inheritance rights (Eneyew and Mengistu, 2013). In general, neglecting women's participation slows down poverty reduction and economic growth. If the situation continues in the same way, countries will pay more to bring development in all directions.

In Ethiopia, intimate partner violence and other forms of VAW have existed as acceptable social norms and considered as the way of shaping behaviours for centuries; they continue to be condoned and even accepted as positive practice in many societies. So far, studies (Abeya et al., 2011; Deribe et al., 2012; Semahegn and Mengistie, 2015) have indicated that more than half of women experience violence from their intimate partners at least once in their life time. However, those studies conducted in the country so far are limited to some specific form of IPV. For instance, from western and northern part of Ethiopia, the study focused on the prevalence, patterns and associated factors of IPV against women in East Wollega Zone (Abey et al.,2011) , among pregnant women in Tigray (Adhena et al.,2020) and from southern part of Ethiopia particularly from Sidama Region. The study was done on the prevalence and risk factor of IPV (Regassa, 2011); in Wolaita Zone. The study focused on the prevalence and associated factors of IPV among women living with and without HIV (Meskele et al.,2019) and in Gedeo Zone and an attempt was made to study the disclosure of IPV and associated factors among victim women (Liyew et al.,2020). To the best of our knowledge, there is no previous study reported on IPV and psychological wellbeing of women in Sidama Region particularly in Wondo Genet Woreda. Therefore, there is a need to conduct an intensive research to fill these gaps and provide baseline data with regard to intimate partner violence and psychological wellbeing of married/cohabite women. Hence, the aim of this study was to assess intimate partner violence (physical and sexual) and psychological wellbeing against women in Wondo-Genet Woreda, Sidama region.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is hoped to contribute to the general knowledge by presenting representative figures on the prevalence of IPV and psychological wellbeing of women from their partner in Wondo Genet woreda of Sidama Region. There is a need for protective efforts to break the norms that sustain women vulnerability in the society. Particularly married women and those girls who have intimate partner will be beneficiaries as it can increase their awareness on the problem of IPV. Moreover, the output of this study may help children by protecting from psychological and social problems. Furthermore, education will be targeted to shape children during their early age. It also gives insight for the community about the severity of such problem. The

higher institutions in the continent of Africa, especially in developing countries, particularly in Ethiopia, may establish prevention and intervention programs that would address the needs of victims as well as the protection mechanisms from future attacks. In addition, more than three quarter of women who experienced any physical violence had severe acts that could threaten them in their lifetime. This needs an urgent attention at all levels of societal hierarchy including policymakers, stakeholders and professionals to alleviate the pernicious situation.

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The major objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence and psychological wellbeing of women in Wondo Genet Woreda of Sidama Regional State.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- to examine the prevalence of intimate partner's violence among married/cohabited women.
- to examine the impact of women's socio-demographic characters on prevalence of intimate partner's violence among married/cohabited women.
- to explore the possible connections between IPV (physical and sexual) and psychosocial wellbeing.

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2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Description of the Study Area

Wondo Genet is one of the Woredas located in the Sidama Regional State located in the great rift valley of Ethiopia that extends between 6° 59'N- 7° 06' N and 38° 37' - 38° 43' E, 1720-2620 m a.s.l., about 272 km south of the capital city, Addis Ababa, and about 24 km east of Hawassa Town (WGWA, 2009). Wondo Genet Woreda borders Malga Woreda to the south, Hawassa Zuria Woreda to the west and Oromia Regional State to the north and east. The woreda has 14 kebeles (the lowest administrative unit in the government structure of Ethiopia). The total population was 154,372 with 75,642 males and 78,730 females. The total number of women in reproductive age in the Woreda was 15,588 (SRHO, 2013).

2.2. Study Subject

The source population for this study was all married/cohabited women aged 15-49 years from the population of Wondo Genet Woreda. The study was conducted in five kebeles among randomly selected women who were currently married or cohabited. Those women who were seriously sick or unable to give information to the data collectors and those who were not permanent residents (lived in the kebele for less than 6 months) was excluded from the study. The aforementioned group was selected as it is at the highest risk of intimate partner violence (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006).

2.3. Study Design

A cross-sectional population based household survey was used to conduct the study from September 2020 to November, 2020.

2.4. Sample size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size estimation used in this study was adopted from Cochran (as cited in Mamo et al., 2019) the formula of the equation is given as follows:

$$n = \frac{\frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left[\frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2} - 1 \right]}$$

Where n = sample size, z is the upper points of standard normal distribution with $\alpha=0.05$ significance level, which is $z= 1.96$, d is the degree of precisions (0.05), p is the proportion of women facing violence which is taken from the other previous studies as 0.612 or 61.2% of the prevalence of intimate partners' violence in Sidama Region Regassa, (2011) was considered for the calculation of sample size and 10% was added to compensate for possible non-response which gave a total of 393 ever-married/cohabited women.

A two-stage cluster sampling technique was used to select the households. First, the woreda administrative kebele had to be taken as clusters. Among those cluster sampling, 5 clusters were randomly selected using the lottery method as the primary sampling units. Then, in the second stage of sampling, the sample size was allocated to each selected kebeles proportionally based on their expected number of women in reproductive age in each kebeles. The study participants were selected by using systematic random sampling technique with an interval ($K = \text{total population of the selected kebele/desired sample size determined}$) was used to select the household. Thus, every (19 and 16) household was interviewed from Abaye and Edo kebeles respectively while every (11), (7) and (1) households were interviewed from Wondo Genet Kela town, Babo Chororo and Gike Gina kebeles respectively. Ultimately, systematic random sampling was employed to identify respondents from the selected households as a study unit. In a situation when the household has two or more eligible subjects, only one was selected by lottery method to control the potential intra-household correlation (Binson et al., 2000). In case, the woman was not present at her home during data collection, an attempt was made to get her two times after the first visit and if she was still absent, a woman in the next order on the list was included and then subsequent household was included according to the already predetermined order. A woman who refuses to participate in the interview was considered as non-respondent.

2.5. Study Methodology

2.5.1. Data collection tools and procedures

The instrument was an interviewer-administered questionnaire. It included the following scales.

Physical and sexual violence scale was adapted from the modified version of Conflict Tactics Scale, CTS; Straus (1979). This was assessed with a list of 10 items, measuring the frequency

with which women were exposed for different violent acts (Pushed, grabbed, or shoved, beat, choked, etc.) in the previous 5 years using two response alternatives (“yes” or “no”). The yes response was accepted as occurrence of physical and sexual violence.

The psychological wellbeing of the respondents was assessed based on Ryff’s scales of Psychological Wellbeing (Ryff, 1995) to measure six theoretically motivated constructs of psychological wellbeing (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance) including 42 items (response alternatives from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). Internal consistency of the scale is good for sample ($\alpha = 0.77$). Cronbach alpha for the total scale is good.

The structured questionnaire was prepared first in English and then translated to the local language (Amharic and Sidamu Affo). Maximum care was taken in wording the questionnaire to make ideas clear and unambiguous. In order to maintain consistency in the translation with the English version, the questionnaire was translated back into English by another language expert. The contents of the questionnaire included socio-demographic variables, physical and sexual violence, and psychological wellbeing.

A three-day training was given to data collectors in order to make them familiar with the objectives, the techniques, and the methodology of the research. The training aimed at standardizing their interviewing skills and ensures that the interviews were done in a consistent manner.

Data were collected through door to door interviewer-administered questionnaire in either the Sidamu Affo or Amharic language with women of reproductive age (15–49 years). Verbal informed consent was taken from all the respondents before the interview so as to ensure that all information that each respondent provided would be kept confidential based on the recommendation of WHO (2002) so as to maintain the safety and ethical considerations during the collection of data on violence. For instance, an attempt was made to conduct the interviewing of the women in a private setting in the absence of husbands or intimate partner. Questionnaire was administered to only one woman per household. Data collectors were elementary school teachers who knew the local language and who had experience in data collection on similar survey. The interview was conducted individually with the trained interviewers at a suitable location for the respondents, usually outside their home but in the same compound.

Prior to the actual data collection, a pre-test was conducted on 5% of the total sample size in a similar setting but outside the study area. Findings were discussed among data collectors and the investigators in order to ensure a better understanding about the data collection process. Based on the pre-test, questions were revised and edited, and those found to be unclear or confusing were modified. In order to maintain the internal consistency of the tool and to determine the reliability of the test, Cronbach’s Alphas reliability measurement model was applied. If the alpha was greater than (0.80), the item is considered to be reliable and the test is internally consistent. If the items in the test had a low correlation, rejecting the item that is inconsistent with the rest and retaining the item with the highest average inter-correlation was done via item analysis as cited by Meskele et al. (2019). The principal investigator closely supervised the completeness of the questionnaire and performance of the data collectors. Completion of the questionnaire required about 15–20 minutes.

2.5.2. Inclusion Exclusion Criteria

Only ever-married women in reproductive age who reported their experience of IPV were considered. Thus single/unmarried women and women who did not report their IPV experience were excluded.

2.6. Data Management and Analysis

Data were entered in to Excel and exported to SPSS version 20 and cleaned for inconsistencies, missing values and analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations were used to describe the prevalence of IPVAW. The possible connections between IPV (physical, sexual violence) and psychological wellbeing was analysed using Pearson's correlation. To examine how IPV (physical and sexual) impaired the socio-demographic variables of married/cohabited women, the researchers used binary logistic regression for the variables that fulfil the assumptions for chi-square and all explanatory variables that have association with the outcome variable at p-value of less than 0.05 was selected as candidates for multivariable analysis. Hosmer-Lemeshow and Omnibus tests were conducted to test appropriateness of the model. The multivariable analysis was performed in the binary logistic regression up on controlling for the possible confounding factors. Odds ratios with 95% CI were reported to show the strength and direction of the associations. Finally, variables with a p-value of less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) in the logistic regression were considered as statistically significant.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

Psychological theories strive to investigate the causes and reasons behind the act of intimate partner violence, but no single theory would fully explain intimate partner violence against women since it is multi-factorial. For instance, the psychodynamic perspective is largely based on the groundbreaking idea of Sigmund Freud. It is sufficient to note that Freud thought that human behaviour, including violent behaviour, was the product of "unconscious" forces operating within a person's mind. Freud also felt that early childhood experiences had a profound impact on adolescent and adult behaviour (Bartol, 2002). On the other hand, behavioural theory perspective maintains that all behaviour including violent behaviour is learned through interaction with the social environment. Behaviourists argue that people are not born with a violent disposition; rather they learn to think and act violently as a result of their day-day experiences (Bandura, 1977).

3. RESULTS

3.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

Out of 393 expected study participants, 384 of them attended the interview sessions and a questionnaire was administered to them making a response rate of 97.7%. Most of the respondents (68.5%) were in the age range of 25-34 years. The majority of the study participants lived in rural areas (80.2%), but had a relatively low level of education only 14.3% of them attended higher education while the remaining 85.7% of them attended secondary and below; however, majority of the respondents' partners'/husbands' education level 288(88.9%) attended higher education while the remaining attended secondary education. With regard to the religion of the respondents, the maximum participants 256(79%) were Protestant religion followers. Regarding their occupation, half of 200 (52.4%) the respondents were housewives, 94 (24.5%)

were daily labourers and the remaining 90(23.4%) of them were governmental employees. Conversely, majority of the respondents' husbands'/partners' occupation, 300(92.6%) were governmental employees while the remaining 13(4%), 5 (1.5%) and 4(1.2%) were non-governmental organization employees, farmers and daily labourers respectively (See Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of married/cohabited women aged 15-49 years and their husbands/partners in Wondo Genet Woreda, Sidama Region, Ethiopia 2020(n= 384).

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	15-24	43	13.3
	25-34	222	68.5
	35-49	59	18.2
Residence	Rural	308	80.2
	Urban	76	19.8
Education level	No education	14	3.6
	Primary	77	20.1
	Secondary	238	62
	Higher	55	14.3
Religion	Orthodox	23	7.1
	Muslim	14	4.3
	Protestant	256	79
	Catholic	31	9.6
Monthly income	500-1500	18	5.6
	1500-3000	38	11.7
	>3000	268	82.7
Partner's/Husband's education level	Secondary	36	11.1
	Higher	288	88.9
Respondent's occupation	Housewives	200	52.1
	Daily labourer	94	24.5
	Governmental employee	90	23.4
Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Husband's/partner's occupation	Governmental employee	300	92.6
	Non-governmental	13	4.0
	Daily labourer	4	1.2
	Farmer	5	1.5

Prevalence of Physical and Sexual Violence in the Previous Five Years among Married / Cohabited Women in Wondo Genet Woreda

Different features of physical and sexual violence were identified among married/cohabited women in Wondo Genet woreda. Among the features of physical and sexual violence, the majority of the study participants (282(73.4%) of the women) were threatened with hit with their fist or anything else that could hurt them and 278(72%) of the women were pushed, grabbed or shoved in a way that could hurt them. Moreover, some features of physical and sexual violence like slapping (259 (67.4%)), beating(230(59.9)), kicking her with his fist (94(24.5%)) and forcing her into any unwanted sexual activity by threatening, holding down or hurting her in some way (142 (37.0%)). As summarized in Table 2, the overall prevalence of physical and sexual violence in the targeted area is 59.9%.

Table 2: Prevalence of physical and sexual violence among women aged 15-49 years in Wondo Genet Woreda, Sidama region, Ethiopia 2020(n= 384).

Variables	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Threatened to hit you with his fist or anything else that could have hurt you	282.0	73.4	102.0	26.6
Thrown anything at you that could have hurt you	34.0	8.9	350.0	91.1
Pushed, grabbed or shoved you in a way that could have hurt you	278.0	72.4	106.0	27.6
Slapped you	259.0	67.4	125.0	32.6
Kicked, bit or hit you with his fist	94.0	24.5	290.0	75.5
Hit you with something that could have hurt you	20.0	5.2	364.0	94.8
Beat you	230.0	59.9	154.0	40.1
Choked you	100.0	26.0	284.0	74.0
Used or threatened to use a gun or knife on you	14.0	3.6	370.0	96.4
Forced you into any unwanted sexual activity, by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way	142.0	37.0	242.0	63.0
Summary	1453.0	37.8	2387.0	62.2

Prevalence of Psychological Wellbeing of Women in Wondo Genet Woreda

In the present study, the six Likert scale was categorized into three categories(Roslan et al. (2017): low (1.40-2.82), moderate (2.83-4.25) and high (4.26-5.67). Concerning the overall level of psychological well-being, the mean level was moderate ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.54$), as shown in Table 4. Descriptive analysis was used to determine the level and pattern of women's psychological wellbeing on six of its dimensions (self-acceptance, positive relations with other, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth). The findings indicated high score on the dimension of autonomy ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.45$), followed by purpose in life ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.52$), environmental mastery ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.49$), self- acceptance ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.63$), positive relations with others ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.64$) and personal growth ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.48$).

Table 3: Overall level of women's psychological wellbeing by subscale

Dimensions	Mean	SD
Autonomy	4.37	0.45
Environmental mastery	4.01	0.49
Personal growth	3.54	0.48
Positive relationship	3.77	0.64
Purpose in life	4.34	0.52
Self-acceptance	3.93	0.63
Over all of psychological wellbeing	4.00	0.54

The Possible Connections between IPV and Psychological Wellbeing of Married/Cohabited Women in Wondo Genet Woreda

As depicted in Table 5, the estimated Pearson correlation coefficient between psychological wellbeing and physical and sexual violence was significant ($r = -.256$; $p < 0.005$). The result implied that psychological wellbeing has an indirect effect on women's physical and sexual violence.

Table 4: Relationship between psychological wellbeing, and physical and sexual violence

Correlation		Psychological wellbeing	Physical and sexual violence
Psychological wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1	-.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	384	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Logistic Regression Results for Socio-demographic Characteristic on Physical and Sexual Violence of Married/Cohabited Women in Wondo Genet Woreda, Ethiopia 2020($n = 384$)

The study employed ten questions to assess the socio-demographic factors that affect the physical and sexual violence of married/cohabited women. Participants were provided with ten questions that could be answered by saying either 'Yes' or 'No'. One point was given for each occurrence of the event IPV, zero point was deduced for each where an event does not occur. The range of the IPV score was 0 to 1 and was categorized as $< 0.5 =$ No IPV, and $\geq 0.5 =$ IPV occurred.

A multiple logistic regression model of the form was employed to determine the effect of the independent variables on physical and sexual violence of married/cohabited women. In this model, β_0 was constant, while $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \dots, \beta_8$ were regression coefficients and $X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_8$ were age, residence, marital status, religion, educational level, training and farm experience. The Omnibus tests of models coefficient ($\chi^2_8 = 155.507, p < 0.001$) which was highly significant beyond 0.001 levels indicating that the predictor variables presented in Table 3 have a joint significant importance in predicting IPV status. The model chi-square value was 353.584a on 8 degrees of freedom and was highly significant beyond 0.005 levels indicating that the inclusion of the explanatory variables contributed to the improvement in fit of the full model as compared to the constant only model. The Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke pseudo R-square values of the model were .333 and .453, respectively. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test result reported chi-square value of 3.66 with p-value of .886 on 8 degrees of freedom. However, this p-value is greater than the 0.10 and 0.05 levels showing that there is no difference between the observed and the model predicted values and hence estimates of the model fit the data at an acceptable level. The coefficients of the estimated model are shown in table 5 below. The sensitivity and specificity indicate that 78.1% of IPV were correctly predicted in their respective categories.

Table 5: Result of logistic Regression model

Dependent variable: IPV Independent Variables	Category	95% CI COR	AOR	95% C.I. for EXP(B)		P-value
				Lower	Upper	
Age	15-24 reference					
	25-34	1.446	4.244	1.443	12.485	0.009
	35-49	-0.429	0.651	0.262	1.617	0.355
Residence	Urban Ref					
	Rural	1.848	6.349	3.163	12.745	0.000
Marital status	Divorce Refe					
	Married	0.093	0.911	0.743	92.081	0.086
Religion	Orthodox					
	Muslim	-0.040	0.961	.201	4.594	.960
	Protestant	.289	1.335	0.468	3.309	0.589
	Catholic	.571	1.771	.479	6.549	0.392
Monthly income	500-1500birr					
	1500-3000birr	3.564	35.294	6.140	202.870	0.000
	3000birr and above	.277	1.319	0.431	4.037	.628
Respondent's occupation	Governmental employee					
	Daily labourer	.950	2.587	1.130	5.922	0.025
	House wife	.254	1.289	0.634	2.623	.483
Partner's occupation	Governmental employee					
	NGO	.347	1.415	.443	4.522	0.558
	Daily labourer	.897	2.452	.213	28.201	0.472
	Farmer	-0.69	.934	.210	4.149	0.928
Education level	No education					
	Primary Level	8.269		0.743	92.081	0.329
	Secondary	9.302		0.87	99.43	0.086
	Above secondary	8.9		0.778	101.798	0.065
Partner's education	Secondary					
	Above secondary	.078	1.081	0.355	3.288	0.891

According to Table 3, the odds of IPV (yes =1) was positively related to respondents age categories, especially related to the age category 25-34 years, whose log odds is 1.446. The estimated odds ratio (OR = 4.244, CI=1.443-12.485) indicates that within 25-34 age categories the odds of women IPV increase by a factor of 4.244. The confidence interval indicates that the odds could be as little as 1.443 times as much as 12.485 times as large with 95% confidence holding all other independent variables constant while there is no significant difference between women aged 35-49 and 15-24 years old. Concerning to residence of respondents, the odds of women IPV (IPV =1) was positively related to their residence, whose log odds is 1.848. The estimated odds ratio (OR=6.349, CI=3.163-12.745) indicates that women living in the rural area are 6.349 times more likely vulnerable to IPV than those living in urban area. The confidence interval indicates that the odds could be as little as 3.163 times as much as 12.745 times as large with 95% confidence. Women living in a household earning annual income 1500 – 3000birr were 35.294times more likely to experience IPV than women living in a household earning less than 500 – 1500birr (OR = 35.294, 95%CI = 6.14, 202.87).Regarding respondents' occupation, the odds of women was positively related to their occupation, whose log odds

is 0.950. The estimated odds ratio (OR= 2.587, CI= 2.130-5.922) indicates that women with daily labourer occupation 2.587 times more likely exposed to IPV than those governmental employee. As depicted in the table, respondents' marital status ($p>0.05$), educational status ($p>0.05$), religion ($p>0.05$) and parental occupation failed to be significant.

4. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to assess the prevalence of IPV and psychological wellbeing against ever-married/cohabited women in Wondo Genet Wereda, Sidama Region, Ethiopia. Accordingly, the overall prevalence of IPV (physical and sexual violence) in this study was 37.8%, which indicates that a significant number of women in the woreda are still suffering from it. The prevalence of IPV against women in this study is comparable with the result of other similar studies in Congo D. R., which is 36.7% (Coll et al., 2019), India (35%) (Silverman et al., 2008), Ethiopia (34.1%) (Tiruye et al., 2020) and in Zimbabwe (34%) (Shamu et al., 2011). However, the result in this study is lower than the report from western Ethiopia (72.5-76.5%) (Abeya et al., 2011), from south west Ethiopia (64.7%) (Deribe et al., 2012) and from northern Ethiopia (50.8%) (Yigzaw et al., 2004). A possible explanation for the discrepancy of the results may be cultural differences among northern and southern part of the Ethiopia and also differences in the study setting.

The finding of this study revealed the occurrence of IPV in southern Ethiopia, but currently the event decreases from that of previously reported by Regassa (2011), which is 14.7 - 61.2% from Sidama Zone, by Meskele et al. (2019) (59.7%) from Wolaita Zone, by Liyew et al. (2020) (51%) from Dilla town, Gedeo Zone. This difference may be due to the improvement made on IPV in the area. The results correspond with previous studies in the southern region of Jordan in which negative association between IPV and psychological-wellbeing (Hamdan-Mansour et al., 2011).

This study found that 25–34 years old women are more likely to experience IPV than 15–19 and 35-49 years' old ones. A possible explanation for the age may be because women at this age are more active to involve in different societal activities than the women at other age. This finding is nearly consistent with other studies in Ethiopia (Chernet and Cherie, 2020) and other research in eight southern African countries (Andersson et al., 2007). Regarding the place of residences of women living in the rural area is 6.349 times more likely vulnerable to IPV than those living in urban area. This higher prevalence rate of IPV on rural women may be due to the fact that it has been an accepted a normal cultural practice, lack of consciousness of both women and men concerning the negative effect of violence and consideration of the violent acts as ways of shaping wife's behaviour. This finding is consistent with the others conducted in Ethiopia (Chernet and Cherie, 2020) and USA (Peek-Asa et al., 2011).

This study found out that the women living in household with a middle monthly income were more likely to experience IPV than those with lower income. This finding is in line with the finding of Semahegn et al. (2015) and it contradicts with the finding in Australia; within low-income families, both partners experience higher levels of IPV (Ahmadabadi et al., 2017).

This study also found out that moderate level of overall psychological wellbeing of women with this perception was reflected positively on their lives. Nevertheless, the dimension with the moderate mean score was environmental mastery, self-acceptance and positive relations with others.

This study, in addition, found out that moderate level of overall psychological wellbeing of women experienced IPV. This finding is in line with the finding of Hamdan-Mansour et al. (2011). According to Ryff (1989), psychological wellbeing is active engagement in a number of existential challenges. Accordingly, women with higher perception of environmental mastery and self-acceptance were subject to lower rates of abuse. Nevertheless, the results showed that environmental mastery and self-acceptance of the women were at moderate level. This indicates that those women who have moderate sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment were vulnerable to lower rates of all forms of IPV.

4.1. Conclusion

The prevalence of IPV was found high in the study area and this high IPV prevalence was accountable not only to individual factors but also to relationship and community-level characteristics which have implications in women's psychological wellbeing. The findings also suggest that interventions against IPV require multi-sartorial collaborations. It also needs the involvement of different stakeholders from communities as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations to end the intergenerational cyclic effect of IPV. There is a need of empowering women that is most probably related to lower rates of IPV and also need of giving special attention for women living in rural area, women's monthly income and 25–34 years old women to decrease the burden of IPV.

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No conflict of interest was reported.

6. FUNDING INFORMATION

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Nigerian online English: An analysis of its nominal group structure

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Abstract

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Scholars in the field of Information Communications Technology (ICT) discourse generally consider Online/Internet English as a language use features which mark the sub-emerging variety of the English language. NB: Scientific writing gives priority to active voice sentences unless the context forces the researcher. Hence, starting the abstract with an active voice sentence is what most scholars adore (Crystal, 2005, 2011; Posteguillo, 2002).. is generally considered by scholars in the field of Information Communications Technology (ICT) discourse research to exhibit usage features which mark it as an emergent sub-variety of the English language (Crystal, 2005, 2011; Posteguillo, 2002). Furthermore, Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) observed that the language used on the internet possesses its own grammar, lexicon, graphology and usage conditions. In fact, there have been proposals advanced for ICT discourse research to treat Internet language as a 'new medium' and to investigate it as a discipline on its own terms (Crystal, 2003). This study is aimed at analysing the Nominal Group (NG) structure of English used by Nigerians on the Internet. The NG data analyzed in this study were obtained from four social media platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter. They were obtained by screenshots of Nigerian netizens' discussion threads in the various media group chats, posts and comments found on the platforms studied. The screenshots were taken after due permission from the authors and Admins. Using insights from the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), the isolated NG structures were analysed and found to be mainly syntactic chunks of clauses with expanded structures 'padded' with experiential elements which should normally be elements of clause structure. A further syntactic feature of NG constructions which was observed to occur in the social media English studied is the tendency to be left-dislocated. It could be concluded that the choice by netizens of (structurally loaded) nominal groups resulting in the structural variations observed in the grammar of Internet English is chiefly informed by constraints of the medium (for instance, character limitation), cost of internet data, the speed to beat real-time conversations, the creative nature of language, and the creative discernment of users of the Internet. More research into the grammar of Internet English covering other group and clause types is recommended.

Keywords: Social media, CMC (Computer mediated communication), nominal group, systemic functional grammar, Internet language

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of Information Communications Technology (ICT) has promoted interactions between humans and the computer (Berkhout and Hertin, 2001), resulting in a phenomenon that has come to be described in ICT discourse as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). CMC is 'a system of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in particular contexts...' (December, 1996 cited in Udo 2020, p. 16). CMC is as well a technological medium by which social relations among members of the virtual community are initiated, structured and kept running as the breeding ground for social relations to occur. Yu's (2011, p. 78) view of CMC is that of 'any communicative transaction' involving 'the use of two or more networked computers'. Human participation in CMC necessarily brought in its wake the use of a linguistic code since humans normally use some language features in communicating with one another one with another.

CMC may then be said to encompass three dimensions of the communication process: the networked computers, netizens/language users (LUs), and a language system. The computer is an artificial environment possessing its peculiar features, for instance, what Ko (1996, cited in Udo, p. 25) refers to as 'electronic' elements like smileys, emoticons...and so on, and its mode of operation. The second dimension of CMC is constituted of the netizens or language users (LUs), who are usually sentient beings with linguistic abilities and agency capable of making relevant linguistic choices for the purpose of achieving the desired communicative goals (Golato and Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006). The third dimension of CMC is language, a linguistic system, with its organising principles by which sounds are organized into morphemes morphs, morphemes into words, words into phrases and phrases into clauses and sentences. These three dimensions of CMC conduce to the emergence of internet language.

Given the sociolinguistic composition of the virtual community, any natural language can be an internet language. According to Baron (2003), the question of internet language relates to linguistic 'issues that arise in constructing natural language to be used carried across the internet' (p. 3). In light of the foregoing, internet language is any natural language employed by virtual community members for interacting on the internet. It is a code of communication with distinctive usage features acquired by reason of contact with an artificial environment – the computer – but which still possesses shared features with the 'mother' code. About ten languages are said to be used on the internet – Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Malay, Russian, French and German – but the English language ranks first is ranked first in terms of being as it is the most frequently used (Internet World Statistics, 2016). The status of English is further enhanced by the fact that internet has an English-speaking origin (Mbarachi 2015, p. 23). The English language is therefore accorded the status of the lingua franca of the internet (Posteguillo, 2002). The focus of the present study is the English language.

As the language of the internet, English has undergone modifications in its structure, usage and meaning since the development of the internet. Researchers in the field of online language research (Baron, 1998; Posteguillo, 2002; Crystal, 2004, 2005; Awonusi, 2004; Chilwa, 2007; Mbarachi, 2015; and several others) hold a convergent view on the effect which the computer has had on (the English) language, its use and structure. For instance, Peyton (1996), cited in Udoh (2020), observes that CMC reshapes the forms and functions of the language used in communicating through computers. There are also the issues of character limitation, cost and speed. These characteristics of the language has constituted constraints on other languages which have such features as letter-number combinations, vowel free-words, initialisms, etc of

the medium on language and have resulted in such features as letter-number combinations, vowel free-words, initialisms, etc. Thus, the entire structure of the English language used on the internet has 'shrunk' – morpheme, word and syntactic structure. It is on the strength of this development that Crystal (2001) describes CMC of which the Internet English is levelled as part as 'the third language medium', since as is apparent, it is a hybrid of the spoken and written mediums. Scholars who conducted research on in the internet language use note how the English language used on the internet has acquired what may be described as "fused" features due largely to the computer mediation and has therefore tended to become more like speech even though it is written, because it combines combining both spoken and written forms of the language use. Consequently, traditional writing conventions are not maintained as evident in the use of various fonts, colours and sizes as well as emojis on the computer screen. In a similar vein, Shortis (2007) states that internet language has a mixed mode; for instance, moods, laughter, anger, excitement..., and so on, are expressed using emoticons, smileys, buzz, etc.

Crystal (2005, 2011) observes that certain features of language characterise the language used on the internet. This results from the trend as reported by Posteguillo (2003 cited in Mbarachi 2015, p. 25) that these features are more prevalent at the levels of morpheme, word and word groups. This development, as the source pointed out, arises from the fact that the Internet English is most active at these three levels of the grammatical rank scale. Furthermore, Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) are of the view that the English language used on the internet possesses its own grammar, lexicon, graphology and usage conditions. These two positions motivated the present researchers to investigate the this investigation of an aspect of the syntax of English used by Nigerians on the internet – the structure of the nominal group in Nigerian Online English (NigOE).

As stated earlier, the virtual community is comprised of netizens from different linguistic backgrounds: it is socio-linguistically diverse. The same is true with Nigerians. Nigerians make up a part of this community. Most Nigerians are bilinguals in English and their L1 for two reasons: One, English serves as an official, educational and general communication medium roles; and, two, it is now firmly established that there is a Nigerian variety of English, a sub-variety of World English (cf. Jowitt, 1991; Bamgbose 1995, Udofot 1997; and Eka 2000).

As a sub-variety of World English, Nigerian English may be distinguished from other varieties by certain features it has acquired as it came in contact with indigenous Nigerian languages – a phenomenon Bamgbose (1995) and Adegija (2004) describe it as 'nativisation' or 'domestication'. Bamgbose (1995) posits a tripartite level of nativisation for English in Nigeria: linguistic, pragmatic and creative, but he concedes that linguistic nativisation has gained more prominence in language contact discourse in Nigeria. Linguistic nativisation shows up itself in many ways, for instance, in sound substitution, replacement of stress by tone, pluralisation of some English mass/non-count nouns and the use of culture-specific vocabulary items like akara ('bean balls'), egusi ('melon') as well as some L1-induced syntactic structures such as 'am coming'...and so on.

On the pragmatic level, transfer features related to cultural practices are attested in Nigerian English, such non-English expressions of greetings as are 'well done', 'sorry', 'go well', etc. and creatively nativised expressions coined by Nigerian users of English which capture the Nigerian world view, for example, 'take in' (meaning to get pregnant), 'put to bed' (meaning to be delivered of a baby). These are features of usage which characterise the English language

uses usage by Nigerians and are manifested in many if not in all communicative or interactive situations of use including the internet. , for as As Jowitt (2007) has observed, 'it is difficult to specify the distinction of the language uses in different varieties of the Nigerians' English language.usage distinction of the varieties of Nigerian English because Nigerianisms Nigerians are exposed to all sub-varieties of the Nigerians' English the Nigerians are found in all the sub-varieties of Nigerian English though not in uniform regularity' (p.31).

Scholars have indeed studied the internet language from sociolinguistic and stylistic perspectives. None has investigated the nominal groups as instantiated on the social media to determine how the structure carries communicative burdens of netizens. This may be because the internet language is a relatively very new area of linguistic research. This research therefore analyses the various instances of nominal group structures in social media English of Nigerian netizens using four social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Analysis is based on the Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a suitable framework for studying the syntactic choices made by Nigerians from the linguistic resources of the English language being the language used by members of the virtual community.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data for this research were collected from four social media platforms selected for the study. The platforms included Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter and covered only the Nigerian netizens. The choice of these social media platforms was determined informed by the due to the fact that they show peculiarities in language uses. share peculiarities of language use. The data were obtained from through screenshots of discussion threads in the held among various social media groups, chats, posts and comments found on the platforms studied, with expressed permission from the virtual correspondents whose threads were screenshot. For WhatsApp, screenshots of some groups' messages were taken with prior permission from the respective Admins who, before the screenshots, alerted other members of the groups. Permission was also granted to access and screenshot individual WhatsApp chats for the purposes of the study. Facebook data were obtained using the Facebook Messenger to access and screenshot individual chats of those who consented to having their chats used for the present research. Individual Facebook posts as well as posts on various Facebook groups and pages, especially those which generated a lot of comments, were also screenshot with permission also taken from their various authors/Admins. The same was done on Instagram and Twitter handles. The researchers ensured that the posts and chats whose permission access was not granted by their respective authors and Admins were not invaded nor presented here, for ethical reasons. Nominal groups were isolated from the screenshots for analysis. They are presented in tables particularly those which appear as syntactic chunks on social media, while others which often do not appear as chunks are presented as either monologic or dialogic texts.

3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION

This research is hinged on the theoretical provisions of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). This is mainly because since SFG merges grammar with context to reveal functional applicability in any choice of grammatical structures and In addition, since internet language displays a contextual use of language, it is only sounds logical to borrow the tools of SFG in analysing the internet language. SFG is a two-pronged approach – systemic grammar and functional grammar – and both approaches are interdependent in construing meaning (Ufot, 2009). Whereas the former generally caters for grammatical structures and

what informs a speaker's choice of words, the latter tends to position these structures in their contexts, based on what function they fill in the 'here-&-now' of a speech event. 'Here-&-now', a term frequently used in this paper, is Halliday's term for the location (here) and time (now) relative to the speaker's location and time of speaking in a particular speech event (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, p. 381). For instance, tense and deictic elements (e.g., the determiner this) can only make sense or be interpretable if the speaker's time and location are respectively considered or contextualised. For the purposes of this research, the nominal group structure is examined in some detail.

3.1. The Hallidayan Nominal Group

The nominal group is a unit of the clause within Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). As an account of language, SFG focuses mainly on meaning and meaning construction in the 'textual processes of social life' or 'the socio-semantics of texts' (Eggins, 2004, p. 2). Elements of the English nominal groups enter into two kinds of structure, multivariate and univariate structures. A multivariate structure is one whose elements stand in different kinds of relationship one to another, each having a specific and distinct function that it performs in a whole structure (Berry, 1975, p. 98; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 390). The nominal group in its potentiality of construing meaning consists of the elements m,h,q. A univariate structure, as opposed to multivariate, is an iteration of a uniform relationship between the elements of a structure. In this respect, group complexes and, in fact, all unit complexes but not basic units are based on, and built in, univariate structures, thus recursive, as the following structures illustrate the visitor, the only doctor in the house.

3.1.1. Multivariate Experiential Structure of a Nominal Group

As Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) observe, the analysis of group constituents in SFG chiefly but not necessarily rests on the ideational metafunction which construes—and is split into—the experiential structure of language (i.e., language as representation). In this regard, the nominal group in its instantiation in objectively testable experiential structure represents a construal of meaning (an entity) and interpersonally functions as the subject of information and verbal exchange. Its logical structure demonstrates a multivariate structure of the Modifier (m), Head(h) and Qualifier (q) (i.e., where the m premodifies and the q postmodifies the h). Apart from the postposition of the q, which is realised by varying structures relative to the position of the h, the pre-position of the m relative to the position of the h is logically organised into and construed by four, plus the head, five experiential functions—Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, Classifiers and Thing (which is the Head).

The Deictic typifies the specificity of the subset of the Head (Thing) as to whether such a subset is specific or non-specific, and, if either, which? Thus Deictics are in a system of determination and are primarily distinguished into specific (e.g., the, this, my, etc.) and non-specific (e.g., a(n), some, each, every, etc.). These divides are realised by a class of determiners and are called Deictic1. There are also those other Deictics that occur just after the just discussed Deictics and which help to fully identify the subset by way of specifying its fame, familiarity, similarity, dissimilarity or its position in the text, for instance same in the same cruel man arrived again. These ones are realised by adjectives and are called post-Deictics or Deitics2.

Also They are also realised by adjectives like as in the post-Deictics that are the Epithets but these ones specify the subset in the form of its quality. If such qualities are interpersonal

(subjective), they are Epithet1 (e.g., splendid, beautiful) or if experiential (objective), Epithet2 (e.g., black, big). The difference is that interpersonal or attitudinal epithets rest on the speaker's judgement or perception relative to the here-&-now of the speech event (the speech event is also referred to by Halliday as the speaker-now matrix) while the experiential epithets rest on relatively objectified testable realities independent of the speaker. Realised by numerals, the Numerative quantifies or orders the subset of the Thing (e.g., two, many, too, several, first).

As the name implies, the Classifier seeks to classify a thing under a particular subclass. It is realised by either adjectives or nouns. The Classifier is summarised in 'a kind/ type of', 'a subset of' or 'belonging to' (e.g., plastic in the plastic bag). Classifiers are so broad as to include such semantic descriptions as scope, material, status, rank, origin, purpose and function, etc. (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 371-396). Lastly, the Thing, on the other hand, usually serves as the Head of the nominal group but sometimes does not as some of the other experiential elements can function as the Head (e.g., those are mine, here a Deictic determinative is the Head). The Thing is usually a noun and is the thing described. The meaning of its use here, in contrast with its use elsewhere, is not localised but includes both sentient and non-sentient beings.

The logical organisation and sequential ordering of these experientially functional elements are given in Table 1, showing their examples and the classes of word that most typically realise them.

Table 1: Logical Structure of the Experiential Elements of Nominal Group

Deictic	post-Deictic	Numerative	Epithet1	Epithet2	Classifier	Thing
Determiners	Adjectives	Numerals	Adjectives		Nouns/adjectives	Nouns
The	miserable	three	best	young	Nigerian	artists
m						h

These experiential functions of nominal group are logically ordered on the basis of their relative characteristic permanence in potentially identifying the head relative to the speaker-here-&-now. In other words, Halliday observes that the more permanent an attribute is, the less likely it is to identify a thing in the speaker-now; and vice versa.

Table 2: The Order of Nominal Group Elements in Identifying the Head

Deictic	post-Deictic	Numerative	Epithet1	Epithet2	Classifier	Thing
(a)	More permanent and hence less increasingly identifying potential					
(b)	Less permanent and hence more increasingly identifying potential					

The most permanent attribute as the arrow (a) in Table 2 shows is the Thing (and thus least likely in identifying as it yet requires other identifying potential), and, as arrow (b) shows, the least permanent attribute is the Deictic (and thus most likely in identifying as it barely requires any other identifying potential) relative to the here-&-now. Therefore, the more inherent, and thus general attribute, is placed as closely as possible to the Head while the more temporary, and thus specific, as distant as possible to the Head so that the latter can lead to an easy identification (cf. the example in Table 1). This is why we normally say the new black shoes, not the black new shoes, because the newness of the shoes being more extrinsic is likely to fade sooner than the blackness of the shoes; thus the more permanent attribute being placed nearer

the head than the temporary. Some of the experiential elements can themselves be premodified (e.g., the very much new black shoes).

The Qualifier element can be realised by an embedded or downranked clause, group or phrase or by a word. It can also manifest to its nominal group a logico-semantic relationship of expansion, that is, it can elaborate, extend or enhance the Thing (e.g., the war within the heart has an enhancement). It can also correspond to a Participant or Circumstance in the transitivity structure of a congruent clause made metaphorical in an incongruent nominal group (e.g., the creation of states.). All these constituents of the nominal group can also be replaced by appropriate pronouns

3.1.2. Logical Univariate Structure of the Nominal Group

As stated earlier, a univariate structure, unlike the multivariate one, is the iteration of a uniform functional relationship between elements of a structure. It is the logical propensity of the ideational metaquality that configures a series of nominal group into recursive patterns of the same kind of relationship (univariate structure). This relationship could be that of parataxis or hypotaxis, both being the two terms in the system of taxis (interdependence of structure) (see [Berry, 1975](#); Halliday and [Matthiessen, 2014](#)).

Hypotaxis on the one hand is an unequal relationship holding between two structures where one is dependent on the other. The relationship is one of subordination the subordinations and is non-symmetrical and non-transitive (e.g. I sleep when I read does not imply I read when I sleep). Parataxis on the other hand is an equal relationship holding between two structures where one is independent of the other. Paratactic univariate structure can be either coordination or apposition. If it is the former, the different but equal structures are organised by an appropriate coordinator, and if the latter the paratactic structures are juxtaposed and are generally co-referential. Paratactic structures are both symmetrical and transitive except for logico-semantic modifications (e.g., school and church does imply church and school) ([Berry, 1975](#); [Egbe, 2014](#); Halliday and [Matthiessen, 2014](#); Quirk and [Greenbaum, 1973](#)). Nominal groups, in principle, form univariate structures logically through the domain of nominal group complexes where they are iterated in a series. On the social media, paratactic and hypotactic univariate structures, especially the former, are used for nicks, group and page names, titles, posts on timelines and handles (Facebook and Twitter respectively), hashtags, and so on. The list of some of these as they occur on the social media are made available in Table 4.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

In the presentation of data on the tables, the Hallidayan conventional symbols are used to represent various syntactic elements in analysing the texts: the alpha (α) for a head element and beta (β) as well as other letters of the Greek alphabet are used for modifiers relative in position to the head. A pair of slashes represent represents a group while a pair of square brackets represent a group embedding....what???. Each emboldened horizontal bar closes each text. Other keys are explained beneath the table as they variously appear in each of the tables.

4.1. Corpus and Analysis of Multivariate Nominal Groups of the Social Media Language

Table 3 is a presentation of some multivariate nominal groups, among a plethora of others, found on the social media studied.

Table 3: Table Showing Multivariate Nominal Groups on the Platforms Studied

1.	Generational swagz
	β Clas. α Thing
2.	Late post
	β Epi2 α Thing
3.	No p
	β Deic α Thing
4.	Final year results
	$\beta\beta$ Mod $\beta\alpha$ Clas. α Thing
5.	Friend request
	β Clas. α Thing
6.	Just one-third [of it]
	β Mod α Num qPP (Thing)
7.	That moment [[when one's face steals into someone else's mata]]
	β Deic α Thing qClausal
8.	Dc prison world?
	γ Deic β Clas. α Thing
9.	Your example [of seriousness]
	β Deic α Thing qPP
10.	Nxt week
	β Num α Thing
11.	Too many a setback
	$\beta\gamma$ Mod $\gamma\alpha$ Num β Deic α Thing
12.	No light [4 nw]
	β Deic α Thing qPP
13.	What tym?
	β Deic α Thing
14.	Just a subtle way [of inviting me]
	$\beta\gamma$ Mod $\gamma\alpha$ Deic β Epi1 α Thing qPP(Clausal)
15.	Breaking news
	β Epi2 α Thing

Key: Mod = Modifier; PP = Prepositional Phrase; Clas. = Classifier; Deic = Deictic; Epi = Epithet; Num = Numerative; Clausal = realised as a clause. Nominal groups appear as minor clauses in chat rooms and apart from being spontaneous chats, they are rarely monologic but dialogic.

Quite a number of the experiential functions observed in Table 3 are designated by mostly experiential entities (Classifiers, Epithets, Things) while others are realised by interpersonal elements of the here-&-now such as deixis (Deictics) occurring frequently by virtue of its deictic (specifying) functions. The Classifier generational in Text 1 can also be analysed as an Epithet (i.e., swags being construed as having a quality of being generational) as some netizens do interpret it. However, this interpretation seems to be unrealistic and seems to lack adequate explanation because first, one of the dividing lines between Classifiers and Epithets is that the former unlike the latter cannot conceivably be intensified. For example, since very in standard English is an intensifier of gradable adjectives and adverbs, we cannot possibly have *very

generational. Second, the experiential construal of generational is that of periodisation (not quality) hence more permanent to be a Classifier than an Epithet (swagz which is a subclass is defined around a generation).

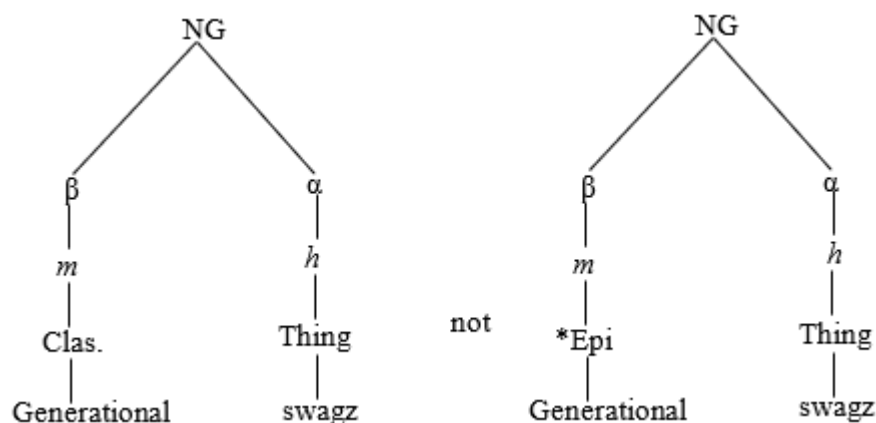


Fig 1: A representation of the experiential function, generational

The item Late in Text 2 is a circumstantial attendant of enhancement (temporality) to the Thing, post. This makes it more experiential (i.e., the temporal experience of post in relation to the external world of the text which is independent of the speaker here-&-now), hence Epithet2. From the table, the Epithets are characterised mainly by interpersonal loading revealing the interactant mode and modality of chatspeak. Text 3 is commonly seen on social media as a fragmented version of there is no problem where it implicitly occupies the S-element of an existential clause (cf. there), that is, the grammatical Subject on which the statement is predicated and on which rests the truth of the argument, and where it has a predicated theme and functions as the existent (that which is being said to exist) (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, for these concepts). In this case, the Process is comparative to that of a relational clause (that which construes change as being). However, the said nominal group no p does not serve as a Subject in the interpersonal metaquality. The existential there, though having no representational function in the transitivity structure of the clause but merely signals existence, stands in this case as the interpersonal Subject to assess Mood in conversational exchanges.

Deictics, which are certain to occur for specificity purposes, are realised chiefly by the determinatives that, the, and you (cf. Texts 7, 8 and 9 respectively) and differently by other determiners: the specific interrogative what (Text 13), the non-specific total unmarked negative no (Texts 3 and 12) and the non-specific, partial non-selective singular a (Texts 11 and 14). The Numeratives feature the definite ordinatives one-third and next (Texts 6 and 10 respectively) and the indefinite quantitative many (Text 11).

In Text 4, Final year is jointly embodied in the function of the Classifier to exteriorise the subclass of the result in question. Although Classifiers are neither intensified (*very final year result) nor do they lend themselves to degrees of comparison (*more final year result), the classifier final year comprises a Head (year) and its premodifying element (final), both jointly functioning as Classifier. In some cases, to show their joint effort, they are compounded through hyphenation (final-year result).

As stated earlier in this section, most of the experiential functions of the nominal group can be premodified. This is exemplified by, though not very common in the table, Texts 6, 11 and 14. While the former and the latter consist of the Modifier just, premodifying the Numerative and indefinite article respectively, Text 11 consists of the Modifier too premodifying the quantitative Numerative many.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 379), the nominal, realising Epithets and Classifiers, can sometimes be expressed by the class of verb in two forms:

Present (active) participle, V-ing, e.g., losing, as in a losing battle;

Past (passive, or intransitive) participle, V-en, e.g., lost as in a lost cause.

These forms usually have the sense of finite tense when functioning as Epithets: the present participle in (i) means which is (will/will be) . . . ing and the past participle in (ii) means which has (had/will have) been . . . ed. But as Classifier, these forms characteristically designate the sense of a simple present active or passive: the active present in (i) means which . . . s while the passive past in (ii) means which is . . . ed. Thus in Text 15, breaking news with the verbal form presented in (i) above would as an Epithet mean news which is breaking, probably on the spur of the moment. (cf. which is . . . ing) as it occurs on social media. As a Classifier, it would mean news which breaks, probably as a question of usuality (cf. which . . . s) the meaning of which identifies it as a permanent attribute to the Thing (news), thus a classifier. These two interpretations of breaking news—as an Epithet and as a Classifier—appear to be a syntactic feature of social media discourse. But most often, that of the Epithet is realised since most posts on social media are spontaneous and instantaneous, and current events are often prefaced on social media by the tag Breaking News!!!

As seen in Table 3, a few nominal groups come with qualifiers which are in turn construed through typically and predominantly minor clauses (rank-shifted prepositional phrases) and through, very minimally, a rank-shifted clause. Texts 6, 9 and 12 have true rank-shifted prepositional phrases in which the prepositional phrase of Text 12 (. . . 4 nw) expands the Head logico-semantically by means of temporal enhancement. Halliday's theorising on the distinction between a group and a phrase restricts the term phrase to a prepositional phrase. This, according to him, is because groups have multivariate structures (i.e., a string of words with a head and modifiers); phrases are like clauses whose structures are not multivariate. Functionally, prepositions behave like verbs in transferring some form of process to their complements. Thus, prepositions are like transitive verbs, and prepositional phrases are in this respect regarded as contracted, shrunken or minor clauses, for prepositions are themselves minor verbs (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 423-426). However, of-headed phrases within a nominal group are exceptions, for they are only structural markers of nominal groups, and are not regarded as minor clauses except in the cases of Circumstances of Matter and Cause (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, for detail). Hence, these texts except Text 12 and also Text 14 (whose prepositional phrase structure consists of a rank-shifted non-finite clause inviting) all contain of-prepositional phrases and as such, non-clausal.

The occurrence of of-prepositional phrases as Qualifiers of the nominal group in the texts being analysed construes those special cases where the Head and the Thing are not conflated but each dissociated from the other. As shown earlier, the Head is not always the Thing; there

could be variations. For instance, the Head may be realised by a Deictic (Those are mine, an Epithet (The rich), and so on. Consider the texts below:

Example:

Text 6: just one-third of it [Head < Thing]

Text 9: your example of seriousness [Head > Thing]

Text 14: just a subtle way of inviting me

The nominal groups in Texts 6 and 9 respectively have a Numerative and noun (one-third and example) as Heads. The Numerative is known as extended Numeratives (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014, p. 394). The elements, which realise Thing, are it (Text 6) and seriousness (Text 9) embedded within and postponed to the prepositional phrases, thus discontinuous. Here, the Heads are respectively words of measure (quantity) and type (quality). Whereas the measure item of Text 6 (one-third) is that of partitive, a portion of the Thing where Head is less than Thing, the quality type of Text 9 is that of Variety where Head is greater than Thing. In this dissociation of Head and Thing, their point of difference here is that while the Thing actually remains the entity serving as Participant in the transitivity structure of the clause, the Head on the other hand (1) limits the entity to a matrix of two variables: first, measure/type and, second, the set relationship of Head to Thing as collective (Head > Thing), partitive (Head < Thing) or quantitative (Head = Thing) and (2) remains the logical Head of grammaticalisation (i.e., to mark person, number and concord) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). The prepositional phrase of Text 14 rather circumstantially postmodifies the Head by way of Means.

Text 7 has a clausal modifier (when one's face . . . mata) expanding the Head logico-semantically by means of elaboration, redefining it in some way. This is further illustrated in Fig. 2: The rank shifted finite clause contains the sequence ASPA, with varying structural types realising each of the elements of the clause structure.

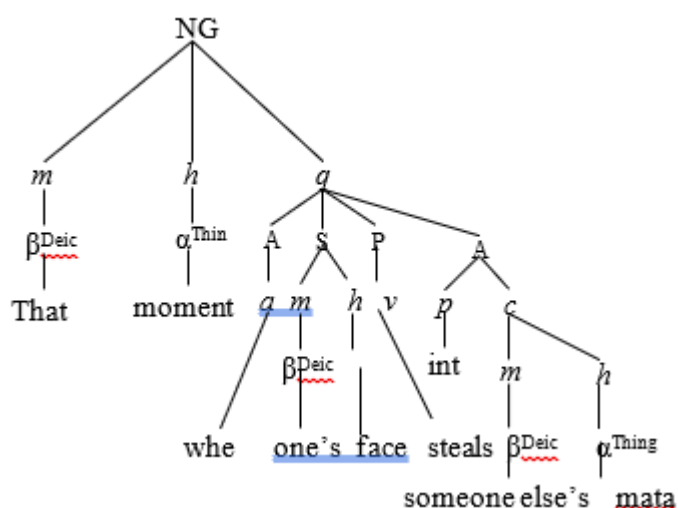


Fig. 2: Tree Structure of the nominal group: that moment when one's face steals into someone else's mata

4.2. Univariate Nominal Groups of Social Media Language

Table 4 lists some data of univariate nominal groups present on the social media platforms studied selected for this study? . In accordance with the Hallidayan conventional symbols, the symbols () and (+) in the table show apposition and coordination respectively, and the numbers attached to them show the number of paratactic elements apposed or coordinated to the right as marked by the arrow. The symbol (^) indicates modification within a constituent multivariate group in the larger univariate nominal group complex, and the symbols (=, x) designate logico-semantics.

Table 4: Table Showing Univariate Nominal Groups

S/N	Nominal Group Complex	Type of Taxis
1.	@ Bassey and Sarah 1Thing +2Thing	Coordinate paratactic univariate structure
2.	My FBFBs, well-wishers and families β Deic ^1 α Thing +2Thing +3Thing	Coordinate paratactic univariate structure
3.	Me, myself and I 1Pro +2Pro +3Pro	Coordinate paratactic univariate structure
4.	No work, no school 1 β Deic^1 α Thing +2 β Deic ^+2 α Thing	Coordinate paratactic univariate structure
5.	Department of English, University of Uyo α $\times\beta$	Hypotactic univariate structure
6.	Class of 0'12 ENG UNIUYO α = β $\times\gamma$	Hypotactic univariate structure
7.	King the Poet 1 +2	Appositional paratactic univariate structure
8.	Shuga Demson 1 +2	Appositional paratactic univariate structure
9.	Goodluck Jonathan 2015 Online Group α = β	Hypotactic univariate structure
10.	Radio Biafra London β Clas. $\alpha\alpha$ Thing $\times\beta$	Hypotactic univariate structure

Key: Pro = Pronoun; Deic = Deictic; Clas. = Classifier. The arrows indicate symmetrical and transitive paratactic univariate structures. The round-dotted strokes indicate paratactic group boundaries.

From Table 3, some of the nominal groups themselves contain modifications and postmodifications (e.g., Texts 2, 4, 5, etc.). Text 2 is basically an (unnecessary) iteration of pronouns (Me, myself and I) probably for emphasis. This iteration can also be seen as a dislocated nominal group (discussed in detail below). Its logical tree diagram is presented in Fig. 3.

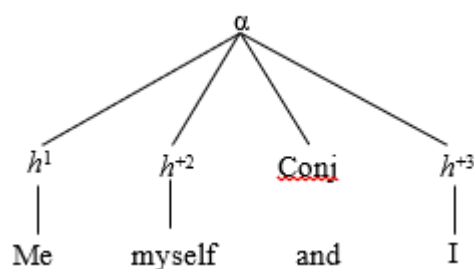


Fig. 3: Tree Structure of Me, myself and I

Each of the elements in Fig 3 is symmetrically and transitively proportional to the other: Me, myself and I does imply myself, me and I; I, myself and me; Myself, I and me; me, I and myself; I, me and myself; hence, a coordinate paratactic univariate structure, coordinate as exemplified by and.

Some of the nominal groups also exist in a logico-semantic relationship of expansion one to another, where one elaborates, extends or enhances the other in the tactic relation. For instance, in Text 4, the continuing nominal group no school is an extension of (reinforces or is an addition to the information provided by) the initiating nominal group no work. The sequence is therefore $1\beta^1\alpha^1 + 2\beta^2\alpha^2$. The same thing is true of Text 1 ($1^1 + 2$), Text 2 ($\beta^1\alpha^1 + 2^1 + 3$) and Text 3 ($1^1 + 2^1 + 3$), each of which is a coordinate paratactic univariate structure. Sometimes, coordination can have an elliptical coordinator which is rather supplied implicitly and this is called an asyndetic coordination, otherwise a syndetic coordination (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, p. 253). The asyndetic type is exemplified by Text 4 (no work, no school) where and is elliptically supplied at the group nexus (as in no work and no school). The ordering of these independencies comes with a negative polarity as indicated by the Deictic no, and the continuing nominal group has the newer information structure while the initiating one is thematic within the nominal group complex.

In Text 5 there is a nested group occasioned by the dependent element (University of Uyo). The group nesting fits the entire groups into a hypotactic univariate structure while the dependent element (University of Uyo) locates the dominant element (Department of English) circumstantially in space by way of enhancing it. Shown in Fig 4, Text 5 has the sequence $\alpha^1 \times \beta$. Each of the of-headed prepositional phrases is a possessive binder to the Head, meaning that the Head belongs to the experiential element provided in the prepositional phrase (e.g., University belongs to Uyo).

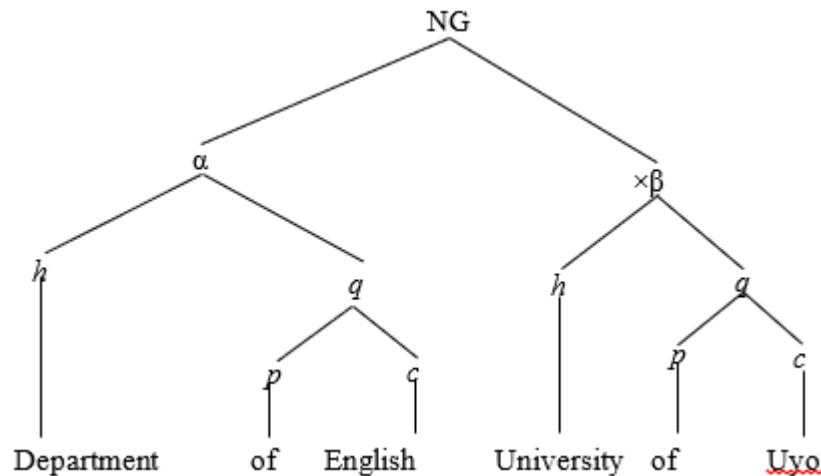


Fig. 4: A hypotactic univariate structure of Department of English, University of Uyo

The grammatical decomposition of the group Class of 0'12, which is a component of Text 6, reveals that there are the aHead (Class) and an of-headed prepositional phrase (of 0'12) merely functioning both as a qualifier and as a structural marker. Because of this, the prepositional phrase is not an equative equity of a minor clause but merely participates within its nominal group structure as a Variety type (quality) containing the Thing and with the formula Head> Thing. This thus dissociates the conflation of the Head (class) and Thing (0'12). In sequencing, the whole group (Class of 0'12) comprises attendant hypotactic groups ENG and UNIUYO elaborating respectively by way of reinforcing the dominant element and enhancing by way of locating the dominant element circumstantially in space, hence a hypotactic univariate structure. These dependencies are further illustrated in Fig. 5 with the sequence $\alpha^{\wedge}=\beta^{\wedge}\times\gamma$. In cases of hypotactic ordering such as this, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), there are usually two possible interpretations:

Example:

|Class of 0'12 ENG UNIUYO|

α $=\beta$ $\times\gamma$

$\alpha\alpha$ $\alpha=\beta$ $\times\beta$

In (i) the sequence shows postpositive modifications in turns: UNIUYO modifying ENG which is in turn modifying class of 0'12 (i.e., UNIUYO is dependent on ENG which is yet dependent on Class of 0'12). The interpretation is that a class of 0'12 students is of the Department of English, a department which is in turn located in the University of Uyo. On the other hand, in (ii) the sequence shows a group nesting (ENG nested to Class of 0'12) in which case both ENG and UNIUYO are direct, separate modifiers of Class of 0'12. The interpretation is that a class of 0'12 is located in the University of Uyo and this class is again students of the Department of English, a department which may not necessarily be found in the same school but elsewhere. But it is usually the first interpretation that is the motive of the said group. In Fig. 5 while (i) shows the first interpretation, (ii) shows the second.

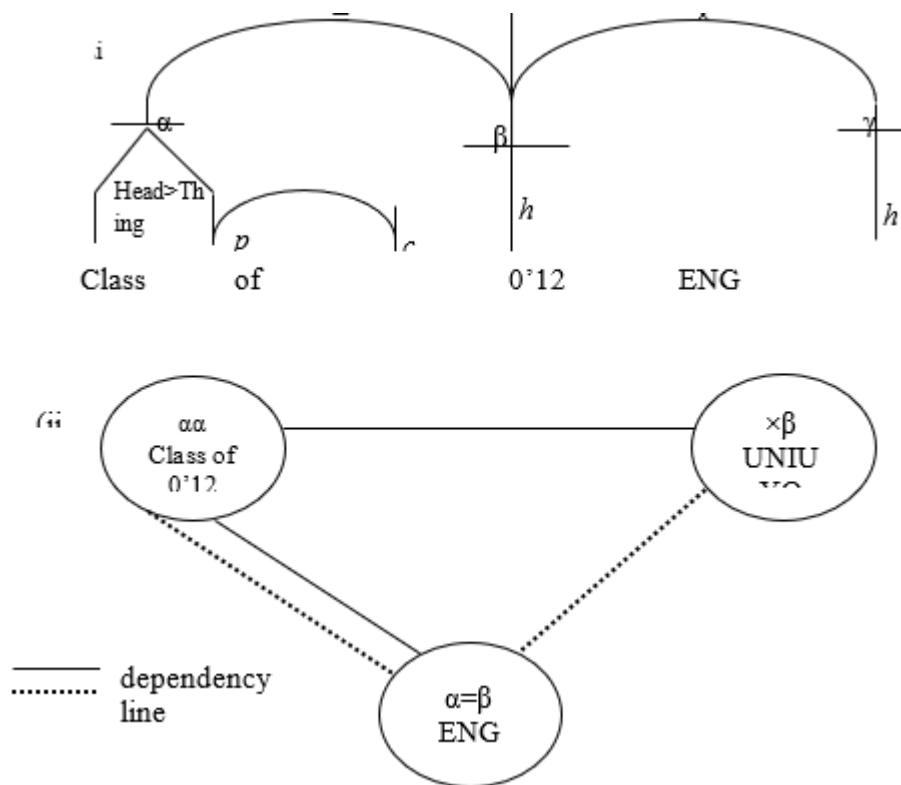


Fig. 5: Dependency diagrams the different interpretations of Class of 0'12 ENG UNIUYO

Texts 7 and 8 are appositional paratactic univariate structures in that their second appositional units are juxtapositional (and co-referential) to their first appositional units: the poet is the same as King and Demson is the same as Shuga (sugar) as shown in Fig. 6.

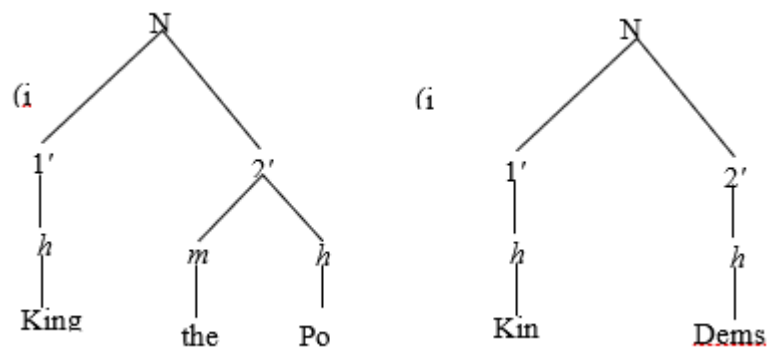


Fig. 6: Structural Tree of KingthePoetand ShugaDemson

Text 9 presents Goodluck Jonathan as superordinate to 2015 Online Group so that the latter elaborates the former logico-semantically in the form of specifying that it is an online group. Goodluck Jonathan as shown in Fig. 7 is itself an iteration of appositional proper nouns while 2015 Online Group recursively contains Classifiers and a thing Thing. This means that the Classifier 2015 premodifies an the existing synthetic compound Online Group whose formal head semantically has yet another premodifying compound member Online serving again as a Classifier. This is the beauty of creativity on the Internet.

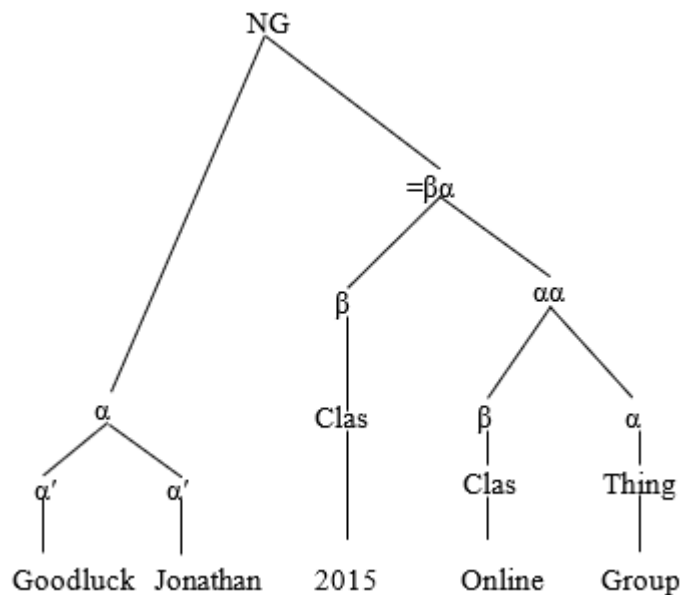


Fig.7: A Structural tree of Goodluck Jonathan 2015 Online Group

Finally, Text 10 subordinates the nominal group London to RadioBiafra which consists of a Classifier and a Thing serving as the Head, hence hypotactic. As shown in Fig. 3.8, the second nominal group London is a hypotactic enhancement to its dominant group locating it in space.

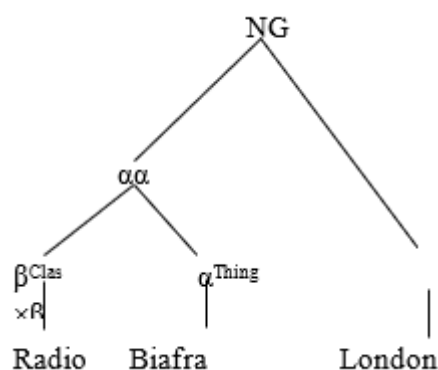


Fig. 8 A Structural tree of Radio Biafra London

4.3. Left-Dislocated Nominal Groups

A left-dislocated nominal group usually refers to a nominal group which, by virtue of its left position in the clause, possibly could have functioned as the syntactic head to a verb or as object of a verb within the clause. Instead, it is followed by another nominal group (usually but not limited to a pro-form) which fulfils such a function, leaving it stranded (cf. Botha, 2012). When such a replacement of function possibly by a pro-form occurs, the replaced nominal group is said to be dislocated. For instance, the sentence Most current Nigerian politicians we have in the different political groups they are certainly not assessed through what they say leaves dislocated or stranded the nominal group (Most politicians . . .) which is naturally the subject of the clause, but the pro-form (here, a pronoun they) performs the function instead. This pronoun in this function is usually called a copy pronoun.

According to Botha (2012), left-dislocation is occasioned by several pragmatic factors such as the signalling of topic change, contrast and list functions, referent tracking, substrating language influence. As this research might add, it can also occur because of the temporal and textual distance between the syntactic head and its verb, a speaker being possibly lost from the memory of the already introduced subject and thus wanting to restate the subject or introduce a different one to maintain, somehow proximally, the subject-verb relationship in the conversational exchange. Thus left-dislocation, considered very informal, non-standard and even ungrammatical, is more often found in spoken than written language. It perhaps also serves, for netizens, as emphasis. The copy pronoun (or pro-form) enters into anaphoric reference to the left-dislocated nominal group, hence a pro-form.

Notably, chatrooms are synchronous (almost the same with face-to-face conversation and irretrievable for editing) and as Baron (2010) observed, netizens [in chat rooms] break their utterances into chunks (transmission units). Left-dislocated nominal groups are by these routes somewhat frequent on social media with very few done deliberately. Traces of the syntactic breaks reveal such nominal groups as those presented in 4.3.1 text below. The ones bold face show dislocation and the ones underlined show the copy pronouns (pro-forms).

4.3.1. Text Samples of Dislocated Nominal Groups (Some Monologic, Others Dialogic)

1. A: This is wonderful
A: I didn't do the mmm, not because it's very lucrative, but the capital with which one needs to start.
B: Wonderful . . . MeI will make my money small small
. . .
B: So enjoy
2. Me, Myself and I . . .
3. All my facebook friends that have been posting rubbish on my wall, you are warned . . .
4. Please whoeverthat knows where I can sell it should pls contact me
5. Some % awaiting for whoever that will bring D market.
6. Positiveconfession, claim it with undiluted faith by typing AMEN.
7. Fiesta of Flavour 2016, it's all about food, fun and flavours.
8. Yesterday I took my shoes to the shoe repairer, today I met him wearing them, which they would have been returned today. I asked him why and he told me they were on road test.
9. What u no today, tomorrow it will be something S . . . [S = else]
10. Many that will type AMEN your story will change.

In the above samples, Text 1, which is a dialogic piece and also often occurs in speech, the stranded me is introduced by speaker 'B' probably mainly for emphasis or to draw attention to himself as a form of Vocative. The scenario in Text 2 as well as in Text 1 is an example of unnecessary iteration of pronouns of different cases within the same nominal group for emphatic purposes. If such a case appears at the S-element of clause structure, the acusative case (as well as the reflexive) is left dislocated (e.g., Me, and myself in Texts 1 and 2), and if at the C-element (the object in traditional terms), the nominative case I is left-dislocated.

The unnecessary introduction of the copy pronoun *you* in Text 3 leaves dislocated in the discourse the initial nominal group with an embedded clause *All my facebook friends that . . . wall*. The nominal group alone would have meant no harm as the syntactic head. Texts 4 and 5 have a similar case. When a nominal group exists as interrogative Deictics (a *wh*-element) such as *where*, *whichever*, *whoever*, *who*, *what*, *whatever* and *however*, the interrogative Deictic automatically serves as the nominal Head without any help of a relative clause (cf. further Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973, pp. 319-320). A relative clause may postmodify it as a rank-shifted clause especially in interrogative contexts (e.g. *Who that intends to learn is here?*; see Ufot, 2009) but, as is apparent, it definitely does not usurp its position as the Head. These Deictics either express universal meaning (indefiniteness) or definite meaning as seen when they are paraphrased: *whoever knows . . .* (= any person that knows . . ., universal); *what really matters . . .* (= the thing that really matters . . ., definite). Thus the universal *whoever* in both Texts would not be dislocated and thus grammatical if the *pro*-form *that* were not introduced. But this is just one of the linguistic anomalies online.

In Text 6, the nominal group *Positive confession* functions neither as a Vocative nor as an Expletive (see Section 3.2.5) but perhaps as a thematised element though with no adequate explanatory power for its syntactic connection to the rest of the elements in the clause; hence, it is dislocated. From a cohesive orientation, this same nominal group undoubtedly serves as an antecedent to the copy pronoun *it* that is predicated and which leaves it stranded. It would not be left-dislocated if it were recast either as the Object of the verb *claim* interpersonally assessed through explicit subjective modality and with an interpersonal speaker-role pronoun added in an active construction as in Ex. 3.4 (i), or as the Subject of the verb in a passive construction with the same modal assessment and the verbal element in the *by*-phrase being made a gerund as there is no known Actor (Metcalf and Astle, n.d.), as in Ex. 3.4 (ii).

Ex.3.4

- i. *Positive confession you should claim with undiluted faith by typing AMEN.*
- ii. *Positive confession should be claimed with undiluted faith by the typing of AMEN.*

In Text 7 *Fiesta of Flavour 2016* is dislocated by *it* and in Text 8 *them* is dislocated by *they* from its right of being an antecedent Subject to the following relative clause. The nominal relative clause *What u no today* in Text 9 serving as the S-element is dislocated by the copy pronoun *it*. It should have been:

Ex. 3.5 *What u no today will be something S tomorrow.*

Text 10 introduces another nominal group *your story* which shifts in person-reference from third person *many* to second person, thereby dislocating *many*. This is, as pointed out earlier, a case of trying to introduce a new Subject. The dislocation, or, better, the entire clause, will be made a little more appropriate as seen in Ex.3.6 with a causative/volitional verb *have* in a passive construction corresponding to an infinitive clause of the verb (see Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973) and the conjunction changed to a correlative.

Ex.3.6 *As many as will type AMEN will have their stories changed.*

4.3. Vocatives and Expletives

The Vocative and Expletive in SFG are yet other elements which characterise the clause as exchange and lie outside the boundary of the Mood and Residue. The one signals the attention of the addressee in a dialogic text and, again, more frequently in 'demanding' clauses (clauses which seek information or goods-&-services as response, e.g., interrogatives and imperatives, see Section 3.4.10), therefore enacting the participation of the addressee in the exchange; the other allows the speaker to enact his own attitude or state of mind towards the current discourse (Halliday and [Matthiessen, 2014](#), p. 159).

Vocatives and Expletives are rather mobile within the clause structure: They can occur at the boundary between Theme and Rheme, clause finally or thematically initially to reinforce the 'you-&-me' dimension of meaning especially in casual conversation (see further Halliday and Matthiessen, pp. 159-160). While the bold lexical item in (i) demonstrates the Vocative, those in (ii) demonstrate the Expletive.

Example: (i) **Lens**, you are not Ok, are you?

(ii) Oh **God**, this is terrible!

Vocatives and Expletives are fairly certain to occur in such casual-conversational mode as social media which involves a lot of interpersonal exchanges. Many of such words are realized by nominal groups (e.g., pronouns, common nouns and commonly proper nouns) as Text 3.2 shows (indicated by the bold items). The Vocatives draw attention of the addressee or specify in a group chat whom a particular post is being referred to and often come with an @sign. The Expletives reveal some form of paralinguistic reactions from the users, thus enacting their current attitude or state of mind towards a post or on-going discourse. Both can serve in minor speech functions as minor clauses correspondingly realising calls, greetings, exclamatives, valedictions, well-wishing and alarms (Halliday and [Matthiessen, 2014](#)).

4.3.1. Samples of Vocatives and Expletives (Mainly Dialogic)

1. A: Seriously... Uniuyo people have suffered
B: Oh my God! May their souls rest in peace.
2. Beauty, u don carry your wahala com resurrect dead topic, bah?
3. Glory: How do u knw. Stop saying wat u ain't sure of. It af do o
Beauty: Prince, can you remind this group
Glory: Ur opinion. **WRONG!!!!!!**
Jane: Glory you ain't responsible for what he understands ...
Clenzy: Prince, its ok.
Glory: Don't mind him ... Prince I challenge you. Lets meet in the law court. [Conversation in a group chat, WhatsApp]
4. My brother ... if u were in d hospital hmmm u see pains, tears
5. Could you kindly restate your problem? @PrincessLady P..., Lady P!
6. Good morning, everyone
7. Richard: Elizabeth just likes reading old newspapers, probably especially when she's in the toilet
Elizabeth: **Jesus!!!** Sorry I didn't check the date. Lol.

In Text 1 Oh my God! is an Expletive (realised by a nominal group with an mh-structure preposed by an interjected Oh) enacting B's attitude to the creepy information heard from A. The same thing is true of Jesus!!! in Text 7.

Beauty in Text 2 and Prince and Glory in Text 3 are all Vocatives (realised by proper nouns) used to direct attention to the specific bearers of these names in the dialogue. The mh-structured My brother in Text 4 is a defined common noun functioning as a Vocative, and @Princess, LadyP... LadyP as anExpletive (realised by an appositive univariate structure) is a Vocative with the @ sign. Text 6 combines the Vocative everyone (a pronoun) and the Expletive of greeting Good morning realised by a nominal group (Epithet1+ Thing).

5. SOME OBSERVED PECULIARITIES OF THE NOMINAL GROUPS IN NIGERIAN SOCIAL MEDIA

5.1. English

Although there are some level levels of consistency between social media English and the spoken variety of English as used in the Nigerian environment, there are, however, some unique features which nominal nominal groups on the social media studied exhibit. As seen in the data analysed above, some of these observed varietal features are highlighted below.

As opposed to other forms of written English, the nominal groups in all four social media platforms, as [Botha \(2010\)](#) observes, about the Internet language, occurs chiefly as syntactic chunks of clauses, hence occurring as elliptical clauses. Each chunk tends to carry the communicative weight of a normal full clause. The nominal group chunks D prison world? and No light 4 nw in Table 3, among other analysed examples, are contextually understood as full alpha clauses: Are they in the prison world? and There is no light for now. This elision into transmission units of nominal groups may well be due to the speed required to beat online real-time conversations just so that a fellow discourse participant would not be kept waiting on the ongoing chats and also for want of mobile Internet data. It is faster, shorter and easier to send nominal groups (aided again by reductions in spellings) than to send full clauses. The choice of a nominal group above all other syntactic group choices is perhaps informed by the fact that the nominal groups are the most substantial elements capable of embodying messages or propositions.

Netizens tend to encode and compress their communicative intentions into chunks of nominal groups rather than clauses, some nominal groups comprising a number of embeddings/rank-shifted elements. This possibly explains why they choose to load their nominal group modifiers with mostly experiential and interpersonal elements. This is so because, as Halliday pointed out, experiential elements construe mostly experiences, ideas, messages, and world's realities. Thus, in their conversational exchanges to beat time and space and also to avoid boring long chats, nominal groups are consequently stretched – expanded – to include a number of Epithets, Deictics, Classifiers, etc., which expand the nominal groups logico-semantically in terms of enhancement, extension, or elaboration. In a normal speech or written piece, the ideas loaded in these experiential functions would have been distributed, possibly evenly, to the various elements of the full clause structure.

It has also been observed that the meanings of some modifying elements in nominal groups on the social media platforms studied have been extended, from one experiential function to

the other, to force and forge a new meaning. Particularly, the word generational in the data generational swagz, for instance, which normally functions as a Classifier (i.e., swags defined around a generation), is now made to function and understood online as an Epithet (i.e., a swag having the inherent quality called generation). 'Generation' is now a quality instead of periodisation. It therefore means that as an Epithet, the word generational can now take an intensifier such as very (i.e., very generational) since Epithets, unlike Classifiers, are capable of undergoing premodification. However, all these expressions are ill-formed expressions in standard English but represent the Nigerian environment from which they were formed.

Pronouns are frequently iterated to form a univariate structure in the nominal group, for instance, Me, myself and I. Netizens seem to do this for the purposes of foregrounding and emphasis.

Nominal groups, especially on Facebook and WhatsApp, are generously used to form names of groups and pages. Sometimes, because of misguided formations, these names tend to create meaning ambiguity. For instance, as shown in detail above, the nominal group Class of 0'12 ENG UNIUYO used as a group's name, having a great many postpositive modifications, suggests double meaning. However, one unique thing about this formation is that members of the group share the very interpretation intended.

Also, a good many noun phrases are left-dislocated. The dislocation possibly occurs because since there is a temporal and textual distance between the syntactic head and its verb, a netizen being possibly lost from the memory of the already introduced subject that needs might want to restate the subject or introduce a different one to maintain, somehow proximally, the subject-verb relationship in the conversational exchange.

Lastly, nominal groups are frequently employed as V vocatives and Expletives to call attention to particular discourse or discourse participants or to exclaim them. Some of the nominal groups occurring this way are hashtagged, particularly the Vocatives.

5.2. Conclusion

In this study, the different instantiations of nominal groups in social media language, specifically as used by the Nigerian citizens, have been shown and analysed. The study drew data from four social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp – which currently seem to be arguably the most preferred social media platforms. The analysis drew insights from Halliday's SFG. The paper has observed that although there is some level of consistency between social media language and mostly the spoken variation of English as used in the Nigerian environment, there are, however, some unique instances of deviation especially within the nominal group to cater for communicative burdens that are peculiar to social media language. The nominal groups frequently used are the multivariate and univariate nominal groups as well as those used for vocative and expletive intentions. Therefore, the research concluded that the social media having created the platforms for Nigerians to enact their thoughts using short versions of sentences substantiated by nominal groups, the choice of particularly (structurally loaded) nominal groups resulting in structural variations in the grammar of the Internet English derives mainly from social media constraints (character limitation, for example), cost of internet data, the speed to beat real-time conversational events, language creativity and the creative nature of internet language users.

Comment: Some of the references are in italic form. The reason is not clear whether it is for unpublished sources or books.

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No conflict of interest was reported.

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Environmental conservation under indigenous knowledge perspectives: the case of Abbo-Wonsho indigenous forest: Sidama Regional State in focus

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Abstract

The concept of sacred forest has long been interlinked with nature. Various cultural aspects such as religion, faith, and traditional belief bring people closer to nature and the natural environment. In this regard, the Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forest (AWSF) in Sidama Regional State was investigated. The Sacred plants are protected communally with religious enthusiasm and connotations. These forest areas have been protected since 831 -2021 (almost for 1190 years) by indigenous communities using socio-cultural and religious practices. Trees in the Sacred area are prohibited from axe axed except when the wood is needed for the religious purposes. The purpose of this study, thus, was to explore the relevance of indigenous beliefs, cultural practices and traditional rules (Seera) in promoting environmental conservation. The study further addressed the cultural interconnection between plants and people. With regard to methodology, the study employed broadly a qualitative approach with an anthropological/ keeping human harmony and cultural and social diversity in a balanced design. To collect the required data, the researchers used key informant interviews, FGD, participant observation and descriptive ecological inventory. A total of 10 individuals were interviewed. Fifteen FGD members, a group of elders, adult and young dwellers, aging 50 years and above, 35-50, and 25-35 respectively who are currently living in Abbo-Wonsho and around were involved. They exchanged ideas, information, points of view and experiences with the researchers. Most of the discussions were conducted in Sidama language, called 'Sidamu Afoo'. Thematic analysis was carried out for qualitative information using NVivo 10. Findings related to the community connection to the forest demonstrate that indigenous knowledge and forest conservation were seen as one entity. Customary elders use a variety of practices and strategies to share indigenous ecological knowledge with community members. Some of the strategies include age group meetings, spiritual worships and traditional celebrations. Traditional law enforcement and land use plans were also mentioned as important means of protecting the forest. Findings related to the institutional management of the forest further revealed that several local and indigenous institutions that support community efforts in forest management.

Keywords: Abbo-Wonsho; Environmental Conservation; Indigenous Knowledge; Sacred forest; Sidama Regional State; Traditional beliefs.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Of The Study

In today's world, people are so careful for the goods and services they get through business transactions and , marketing. They give due attention to materials which they obtain in paying monetary values. However, most of us, we Ethiopians, pay less attention to goods we are given freely from the nature. In this regard, literature entails us that there is inconsistent treatment of human-made capital and natural capital. Capital goods like machinery, tools and equipment are valued as productive capital and are written off against the value of production as they depreciate through time. However, no account is made for the depletion or degradation of natural resources. They are viewed as a 'free gift of nature'. In addition, no account is made for growth in natural capital (e.g. through tree planting and natural regeneration) (Zewude and Demissie, 2001).

The value of knowledge-practice-belief are complex practices of the indigenous people, in relation to relating to forest conservation, is rarely recognized in research. In the African context, according to Pilgrim et al., (2009) indigenous knowledge has long been overshadowed and thus ignored by western conservation knowledge. Consequently, much of this knowledge is fast disappearing in application to wildlife diversity conservation (Elias, 2018).

There is no doubt that education is an essential component of development and one of its preconditions. In the developed countries, environmental educations have been given a high importance and are placed in educational reform and innovation due to the influence of the natural environment in everyday life and culture. The people of Asia, for example, share common scriptures and folklore, which are replete with examples that show how their ancestors were environmentally conscious and advocated concepts of sustained usage of resources through many social customs, myths, taboos, traditions and religious beliefs (Steffen et al., 2004).



Figure 1: Sacred forest around Abbo-Wonsho, Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia.

In the same way, in Sidama Regional State, in Wonsho woreda, there are sacred places which have been managed by religious leaders. For example, as can be seen in the above picture, there is a man standing between the two seated researchers. He is one of the associate leaders in the sacred community and leads the overall religious forests. Totally, four people from different

religion groups reside in the compound. The compound is the place where every citizen around and wherever in the country get service of justice and free community verdict when things are going unjust and immoral.

If the environment, however, is “everything that surrounds us”, then its collapse should be a reason for serious alarm among all members of our society. As it is often said in sustainability circles, when the environment collapses, everything collapses because we all live in the same planet (earth) and are ultimately dependent on the natural fruits of the earth for life-support. Everyone has a stake in how elements of nature and natural systems are used and managed. When a specific natural resource or environmental issue or problem arises, individuals and groups often disagree to on the appropriate course of action to resolve the problem (Zewude & Demissie, 2001).

This attitude inquires the question why? Moreover, a more important question: “What can be done to shift this complacent mindset to the one which force forces people to develop a friendly approach to their environment, which is the source of their life and protect it from any sort of degradation?” The truth is that many of the activities on which our future health and prosperity depend are in an awful jeopardy: climate stability, the resilience and productivity of natural systems, the beauty of the natural world and biological diversity (ibid.).

Studies that have been conducted regarding environmental destruction agree that humans who can be, at same time, the main actor in the efforts to prevent the problems are the main actors in creating these problems (Kurn, 2012; Pilgrim et al., 2009; Townsend, P.K. 2013). Among theoretical considerations, environmental ethics is getting more attention to find a proper solution for extensive environmental degradation. Since environmental ethics is essentially based on intrinsic value and beliefs, religions have been getting more recognition to define the proper environmental ethics. When environmental ethics becomes a religious duty, it is inevitable that human will start to protect the environment as a response to a religious order. In this regard, Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General said, “Protecting our environment is an urgent moral imperative and a sacred duty for all people of faith and people of conscience. “This shows that the religion could be served as a solution for the apparent environmental crisis (Brush, S.B. 1992).

Scholars in the humanities, social, physical and biological sciences have emphasized that environmental issues and problems are fundamentally interrelated with ethical issues and problems. Consequently, we hear more voices that alarm people to develop and follow an appropriate moral basis for dealing with the environment in order to solve environmental issues and problems. In all areas of our lives, the substance of our inner faith determines the living out or practice of our faith Brogger, J. (1986).

Indigenous knowledge comprises culturally mediated knowledge of the environment including types of plants and their medicinal uses, and established livelihood making strategies passed from generation through folklore, stories, music and other performances. In this aspect, this project is going to be carried out on indigenous knowledge and , its sustainability and explores the importance of indigenous its values and spirituality in providing guidance for sustainable living. Such principles and values encourage a spirit of harmony between people, their natural environments and their spiritual identities (Brush, S.B. 1992).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In this study, it is hard to argue against the seriousness of the environmental crisis such as soil erosion, land degradation, pollution, water depletion, deforestation and other recurrent elements that endanger human beings and other living organisms that reside in the eco system. that our world has been facing. These situations have made the environmental challenge an absolute crisis to the level that threat to live.

Forests are vital to our Earth. Trees purify our air, filter our water, prevent erosion and act as a buffer against climate change. They offer a home to plants and animal species while also providing natural They are also important resources for human beings in providing them with food, medicine, fuel and timber. , food resources such as medicine, food, timber and fuel. However, long-term conservation of biodiversity of individual patches and evolutionary potential of species may be threatened by isolation, small sizes of tree species populations and disturbance, especially when considering climate change. Forest management interventions are essential and should be supported by environmental education and other forms of public engagement (UNEP, 2016).

Indigenous knowledge and culture, to mitigate the above problems, can significantly play a vital roles in controlling climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem change, pollution, deforestation, desertification and unsustainable land and water use, and other urgent issues identified in a shared vision by all nations in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Ibid.).

Though Ethiopia, as a developing county, has been endowed with abundant indigenous plant resources and arable land . as a developing country, has been facing faced many environmental problems, ; on the other hand, In addition, the expansion of agricultural activities carried out non-scientifically have indiscriminately resulted in Increased agricultural activities have led to indiscriminate deforestation, soil compaction and erosion. Prior to these developmental efforts, the traditional Ethiopian communities had ways of utilizing natural resources without abusing the environment to an appreciable extent. This crisis highlights the interdependent or “ecological” character of our existence and, hence, the vital need for a radical transformation within the natural world. A more aware, caring and responsible attitude toward nature would now seem mandatory to safeguard our own survival in the near to medium term and more for the welfare of future generations (Teshome, D.S. (2009).

Considering the above facts, we, the researchers, focused focus on cultural and spiritual affiliations as a potential determinant of attitudes to climate change and climate change policy. This study, therefore, assessed the roles that traditional religion-based knowledge can play in the conservation and management of natural resources, especially forest resources in Sidama Regional State in southern Ethiopia. Some traditional religious practices in Sidama community like methods of devotion, initiation rites and invocation of the sacred powers of the supreme beings, how these spirits communicate their will to humans through the chief priests and how the spirits are agreed if provoking were examined (“Yilma, 2013).

The stronghold of Wonsho sacred forest rests wholly on the acknowledgment of psychic powers to any part of the natural and social environments. The conservation of the traditional forests from entrance, utilization and exploitation overtly or covertly encourages conservation and management of natural resources. Strictly forbidden areas associated with worship contribute to forest conservation and management in the research site. These indigenous knowledge

based traditional religious strategies for natural resource conservation and management have somehow been eroded by acculturation and enculturation of the Ethiopian communities in general and Sidama community in particular through the introduction of “civilization and modernization (ibid).

Local inhabitants in the region suggest that more urbanization, encroachment and modernization were the main causes for the loss of biodiversity. If they are not reforested, they inevitably end up with wastelands which are directly prone to soil erosion and desertification. Furthermore, the indigenous communities in the region have evolved ways of living in harmony with their environment through the traditional understanding of nature and natural phenomena. In Wonsho district, Sidama Region, especially among the research sites’ community (Abbo-Wonsho), cultural values are safeguarded through the use of traditional taboo practices (laws) and sanctions. These practices are used to preserve sacred groves for the ultimate aim of better management and conservation of the natural resources (Zerihun, 2014).

The practice of dedicating trees and forests to divinity is an antique ritual in the new research arena, Abbo-Wonsho for generations. Various cultural aspects such as religion, faith, traditional belief bring people closer to nature and the natural environment. In this regard, the floristic diversity of the Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest in Sidama Regional State of Southern Ethiopia is under investigation.

However, most of the researches did not assess aspects of deforestation and efforts of forest conservation in changing the peoples attitude in using the spiritual and cultural approaches using indigenous knowledge perspectives as per the investigators knowledge is concerned. Therefore, this study aims to fill the research gap of the above researchers, by identifying and assessing how the indigenous knowledge perspectives prepare generations to take care and protect the environmental crisis to pay due attention to avoid deforestation on the livelihoods of rural households in Abbo-Wonsho research setting.

This project, thus, aims to explore the inter-linkage between indigenous belief, culture and the environment, highlighting examples and insights, and providing diverse communities, spiritual or secular outlook with a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities towards a shared vision of human destiny.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to explore indigenous knowledge perspectives and practices towards environmental conservations and thereby to encourage local people to revitalize the local experience.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives were to:

- identify the type of indigenous knowledge that the people in research site are experiencing in conserving the natural and social environment;
- investigate the attitude of the dwellers in the research site towards using indigenous

knowledge towards environmental conservations;

- examine the knowledge gaps that could be filled to increase forest handling, if any
- To provide baseline data for further study on indigenous forest.

1.3.3. Significance of the Study

The research is significant in that it contributes its share to the debate on the emerging issue of bio-cultural diversity conservation and the role sacred natural sites such as sacred forests under the traditional managements regimes play in conserving both biological and cultural diversity. The findings might be of interest to academics, policy makers and the public in general in the areas of community forestry, culture protected forest management, medicinal plants and their knowledge.

Like other societies, the Sidama community has its own native knowledge which has been passing from old generations to the new generation that should never be ignored but must be taken in to consideration in at all community level. The study also tried to inform academicians to give due attention to these areas and invite to hold conduct better and intensive investigations on of these indigenous knowledge and share this crucial experiences with other local or international communities. in academic studies and purposes.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. The Study Area and Communities

The Sidama are Cushitic language speaking people of southwest Ethiopia in the horn of Africa ([Braukämper, 1978](#); [Hamer, 2002](#)) and the most populous region of Ethiopia, with estimated population size between 3 and 4.5 million ([CSA, 2013](#)). The ethnic group is also one among the various ethnic groups inhabiting in southern part of the country. The newly formed tenth region in the country, Sidama Regional State, has distinct socio-cultural life styles that are mediated by indigenous knowledge systems built up through generations.

The defining attributes of Sidama Regional State cultural identity and indigenous institutions were partly lost following the incorporation of the locality into the empire during the expansion of the Ethiopian State in the 19th and 20th centuries ([Braukämper, 1978](#)). The location of Sidama Regional State is between Lake Hawassa in the north, Dilla town in the South, Lake Abbaya in the south west, the River Bilate in the west and various Zones of Oromia Region in the east and south east.

The Sidama land, referred to as the Sidama Regional State, is located some 275 km southwest of Addis Ababa, the national capital. The region has a total land area of 7200 km², characterized by varieties of topographic, climatic and agro-ecological features. The Great East African Rift Valley divides the land into two parts, the western lowlands and eastern highlands. The livelihood of the local people mainly depends on subsistent farming, in which livestock husbandry and crop productions play a major role. The climate of the study site is characterized by wet seasons that mostly occur from July to September (long rainy season), locally known as kiremt, and February to May (short rainy season), locally known as belg. There is a long dry period from the end of September to February, and a short dry spell in June ([Zerihun, 2014](#)).

The altitude ranges from 500 masl in the west to 3,500 masl in the eastern highlands with mean annual temperature and rainfall of 10 - 27°C and 800 - 1,600 ml respectively (Yilma, 2013). The land is home to many SNS, where various tree species and other biodiversity are conserved. Further, a traditional agro-forestry supports an extractive form of conservation of otherwise endangered native tree species and diverse flora (Zebene, 2003). Sacred groves are important components of the Sidama Regional State topographic, bicultural and livelihood landscape, enabling Conservation of trees and ancestral institutions. The social-cultural institutions and practices supporting maintenance of sacred sites have existed for centuries, defying the onslaughts of various militating factors.



Figure 2: Location of Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia Source (Moges, Dagnachew, &Yimer, 2013).

2.2. Methodology

This research article is a collation and synthesis of thematic issues drawn from a set of previous studies on Sidama community. As the main research goal was to document and describe cultural and ethno historical phenomena, the study extraordinarily included: collaborative ethnography, documentary analysis; visual documentation; natural and cultural heritages; and fieldwork involving observations, key informant interviews, group discussions and genealogical studies.

2.3. Research Design

For this study, a mixed-method design was employed to gather and analyze primary and secondary data. Questionnaires were administered to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were also extracted from people in the research site in general and knowledgeable community leaders as the key informants through FGD in particular.

2.4. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents with expertise in the area that could best meet the purpose of the study. This helped the researcher to examine how much the local people in the communities give emphasis to the Conservation of the environment in light of the existing indigenous knowledge principles. Accordingly, five persons from each

of the three age groups, male and female elders, and youth, totally 15 participants who are thought to have great knowledge on the indigenous knowledge as well as familiar with the existing reality of their respective cultural beliefs participated.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data were managed and analyzed using NVivo 10 and SPSS 25; the former was employed for the qualitative data. Data recorded on digital voice recorders were first transcribed using a simple transcription utility known as Express SCRIBE, available as a freeware. The transcribed data were edited and cleaned for consistency and completeness and then entered into NVivo 10. The data were organized into individual interviews, focus groups, observation and field notes, inventory and surveys, secondary and picture sources.

NVivo analysis of qualitative data involved thematic analysis through coding. The data were coded using the NVivo tool of Nodes to gather all data evidences evidence under coding categories. The categories were structured within the framework of core research objectives. Core categories grow from emerging themes, and these further developed into data chapters through memo writing unifying integrative themes evolved from careful scrutiny, amalgamation and synthesis of the thematic categories.

Equally important was that adopting the analytical approach of looking for dominant patterns, classification-worthy typologies, comparison of cases, the interplay of factors and more subtle explanation for challenging existing views (Richards, 2009). This helped to find out, for instance, emically and ethically-based typologies of sacred landscapes; dominant views and assumptions with regards to, for example, ancestral belief and ritual practices, sacred forests or the impact of modern religions and how these stand the test of facts buried within a complex interplay of factors.

Salient coding categories were emerged from meta-analysis of NVivo 'Nodes' centring around three major themes, constituting eight sub themes: (a) biophysical characteristics of sacred forest sites and ethno-botanical traditions (geographic profile, ethno-historical and anthropological foundations), (b) consequences of maintenance of sacred forests for local biodiversity, culture, livelihood, wellbeing and environment and (c) conservation state, threats and governance framework.

2.6. Ethical Consideration

In this study, appropriate steps were taken to meet ethical requirements. First, to obtain permission to conduct the study, an official letter of cooperation collaboration letter was written taken from the Dean Office of College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Hawassa University concerned administrative bodies of HU Social Science faculty head. Second, consent form was prepared and distributed to enable the participants of this study to express their willingness to participate in the study. This was expected to be practicable because the subjects of the study were briefed about the purpose of the study, assured that all the inquiries and responses were kept confidential. These could not affect their status and informed that they could stop anywhere in the study processes when they feel discomfort.

3. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

3.1. Distribution and Types of Sacred Natural Site in Sidama Wonsho

A typology of Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Site (AWSS) in the study community may be a useful tool to conceptualize and analyze the nature, current status and geographical distributions of sacred sites. The sacred research site, which is located in at Sidama Regional State, is a cultural landscape rather than virgin wilderness. It is the result of conscious human (i.e. the custodian communities) actions of validating, defining, managing and protecting forests. Some of the larger sacred forests such as Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forest, as shown in fig.3 below, a 320 hectare forest well known throughout the Sidama land and in the region as a whole, were initially not planted or cultivated in any conscious planning (Negash, L. 2010; Yilma, 2013; Zerihun, 2014). The local community in the region, according to the study made, believe that such sacred forests just emerged by an action of divine working and founding ancestors died and were buried. Such local beliefs are anthropologically relevant, though not empirically, as they form the basis for traditional governance and “spirit-policing” of sacred forests.



Figure 3: A view of AWSF from an edge of Bokaso Town, observation, August 2012 (Source: ZerihunDoda,2014).

3.1.1. Religious Membership and Preservation of Trees for Non-profit Purposes

Supporters of the SAR were more likely to own and maintain a sacred site. Respondents were asked whether they preserved a grove for non-economic purposes and adherents of ancestral religion were found, quite expectedly, more likely to engage in non-social driven maintenance of trees. Practice of ancestral rituals and attitudes towards such are also closely related to religious adherence. As a matter of principle and observation, ancestral religion essentially coheres in such rituals. Attitudes and practices of respondents reveal that differences between

various religious groups might be indistinct. Reported behavioural and attitudinal positions and actual practices might also differ.

Table 1: Religious membership & Preservation of trees for non-profit purposes among surveyed households, Wonsho

No	Religious Affiliation	Preservation of Trees for Non-profit Purpose			
		Yes		No	
		Count	% within Religious Affiliation	Count	% within Religious Affiliation
1	Ethiopian Orthodox	21	44.23%	40	44.94%
2	Protestant	16	30.76%	35	39.32%
3	Ancestral Religion	10	19.23%	8	8.98%
4	Muslim	3	5.76%	6	6.74%
Total		52	100%	89	100%

The data in the above table show the religion of the households of the target population and their effort in preserving trees for non-profit and for profit purposes at the research site (Wonsho). The focus is to secure information about the extent to which the religions around the research site, namely: Protestant, Sidama Ancestral Religion, Ethiopian Orthodox, and Muslim have affiliation with the responsibility of preserving the forest. As can be observed from the data, the Ethiopian Orthodox religion followers 21 (44.23%), agreed that they participate in preservation of trees for profit Purpose, and 40 (44.94%) confirmed that they did not give attention to the profit of the forest. When we see the participation of the protestant religion followers, 16(30.76%) of them had active participation in preserving the forest as it has a vital role in their daily activities. Contrary to the above fact, 35 (39.32%) of the respondents did not give emphasis to the conservation.

Regarding item 3, the followers of the ancestral religion who participated in the Preservation of trees for non-profit Purpose were 10 (19.23%) and used the sacred forest for profit making and lively-hood. The other 8 (8.98%), however, did not participate in the protection process. In further analysis, we see that religions in the research site have a milestone contribution in to preserving the sacred forests. The main reason might be their spiritual belief that accepts that trees are one of the respected creatures which have been created by God and should never be destroyed without his will. In support of the preceding argument, literature entails that amidst the resilience of sacred forests and ancestral traditions, there exist threats. These threats affect both biodiversity and cultural diversity. They emanate from both internal and external processes and are both natural and anthropogenic. Discussion with local people and reviews of local archives show eroding factors, especially external ones, have been intensifying since the 1890s, but momentum has increased over the past 50–60 years, with salient drivers being the introduction of cash economy, modern religions, modern education, misguided state policies, rapid population growth, and resultant socio-economic pressures(Juhé-Beaulaton,2005).

Since the appearance of new religions from the second half of the 19th century, traditional religions have been progressively abandoned; it has impacts on sacred groves. As explained by Juhé-Beaulaton (ibid: 3): With the decreasing interest for the new Protestantism religion, the ancestral rules are less and less respected. People are not afraid anymore to enter the sacred forests and to cut trees, which entails a lower protection of sacred forests. Moreover, the sacred religion followers and sacred chiefs are getting older; in many villages the guardian is deceased, provoking anarchic penetrations in the sacred groves. The majority of the younger generations do not have the same vision and do not believe in polytheist religion. As literature entails, the

death of a divinity priest can lead to the neglecting of the sacred forest by the population and the clearing wood (Agbo & Sokpon, 1998; Tchoukpeni, 1995).

Item 4, among religious affiliation the study made up on were Muslim religion followers. As it is indicated above table 2, 3 (5.76%) counted as preserved sacred trees for non-profit Purpose. However, 6 (6.74%) followers were counted as using sacred grove trees for profit Purpose.

Changes in the society's structure and composition as well as economic status and religious values, in this regard, pose another challenge. Across the country, Ethiopia, ancestral religion and culture has have been replaced by Christianity. This is also true in at Sidama Regional State (SRS) as the informant expressed the present situations in the research site. In present SRS, increasing urbanization has caused strength of religious and cultural values, often leading to violation of sacred trees. In addition, Human population increase and cultural dynamics have all been labelled culprits in the deterioration of sacred groves (Desissa, 2009; Desissa and Grandson, 2008; Zerihun, 2014).

The same community who had been documented to deliberately conserve the Abbo-Wonsho Sacred forest now showed indifference towards their sustainable use (ibid.). According to the research conducted in the same issues, attitudes and practices of the respondents reveal that differences between various religious groups, Ethiopian Orthodox, Protestant, Ancestral Religion, and Muslim might be blurred. Reported behavioural and attitudinal positions and actual practices might also differ (Hoteso, 1990; Hameso, 1998; Hamer, 2002; Tekle et al., 2012; Hameso, 2014).

3.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Fifteen (15 FGD members), a group of elders, adult and young aged dwellers in Abbo-Wonsho and around who are aged 50 years and above, 35-50, and 25-35 respectively were the ones who involved in providing their opinions on their indigenous knowledge to the researchers. They exchanged ideas, information, points of view and experiences with the researchers. The dialogue was conducted among the elders themselves and with the researchers, as well. This facilitated the sharing of knowledge and experiences between FGD discussants and researchers.

Related to the idea of 'trees as life' is the notion that considers sacred groves and trees as wealth. "Haqujirote'e!" is used to signify this, a model of natural and social capital that coheres in trees. In During our conversations on natural resources and wealth, the respect and values the community provides to the forest forests are were at the forefront. In this regard, a number of sayings came out from FGD on how the dwellers in the research area value sacred sites and woody trees. Trees, notably native ones, are regarded as 'endurance for life' itself: "Haquheshote'e!"

One of the Ganas (supreme persons) who has knowledge on Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest narrated that the Abbo-Wonsho forest had already been there present when people settled around it with their fetishes. The sacredness of the forest can be associated with the settlement of a new community in the area, notably, during the tribal mistreatment of the sacred; many community members were died and many of them generated many migrations. Those who treated the goddess and gods as well as the sacred groves found a refuge in forests for the community and the divinity. The forest became sacred, as the dwellers around believe, due to their conservation for the forest and the gods. Finally, some forests became sacred after

the appearance of a divinity. Appearance is meant the accomplishment of a miracle or the appearance of a spirit. In this case, the forest had already been there when the divinity was discovered in the forest or in the surroundings. Sacred forest constitutes a storehouse of a refugee for wildlife; they form a kind of botanical garden where the traditional healers can find rare medicinal plants, often essential for their pharmacopoeia.

The discussants on the raised issue, the roles of sacred forest in their environment, forwarded that Abbo-Wonsho Ritual Forests (AWRF) provide medicinal value for people around the community. Sacred groves constitute a repository of wildlife; they form a kind of botanical garden where the traditional healers can find rare medicinal plants, often essential for their traditional healing. The FGD discussants extended their ideas saying, AWRF plays a role in soil and water conservation by reducing erosion and salinity, and by providing rich humus. They are often linked with reservoirs, ponds, springs or streams; they can be a micro watershed. Indeed, peasants believe, with justifications, that forests bring rain. AWRF can be equipped with tourism tracks and provides some revenues for the local communities.

Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forest plays an important role for the management of natural resources and the biodiversity conservation. The site attracts more and more attention of scientists and to nature conservationists. We can identify two level of Conservation of sacred forests. The rules and laws made by humans and imposed by them, and the perceived direct Conservation and punishment by the spirits. First, divinities, spirits or gods, inhabit forests. Due to this fact, forests are protected to preserve the habitat of the spirits and therefore keep the protective gods nearby the community. In some cases, the forest also houses the spirits of the ancestors. Secondly, the spirits themselves can protect the forests and punish people that do not respect the rules.

Local residents narrated that, "People should not enter Abbo-Wonsho forest without special permission from the appropriate traditional religious leader. AWSF is said to be protected by a 'big goddess'. People who enter the forest without permission or cut trees may be cursed by the spirit and then might die, get lost, or become insane." The cutting or the gathering of wood, food crops and medicinal plants is strictly regulated. Farming in or near a sacred forest is forbidden. If people infringe this rule, it is said to result in illness for their family.

One of the oldest people among the elders narrated the legend of Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest, "One day, migrants needed to hide themselves in the forest. They found refugees in a forest where they found a pile of sand, which was moving and making mystic noises, as if there was something inside. They immediately knew that it was the Abbo, later named Abbo-Wonsho (king of the forest). The visitors decided to bring Abbo home."

Other informants thought that Abbo and people could not live together explain why people moved to the other riverside leaving Abbo alone in the forest. The forest is now sacred and belongs to the descendants (17 generations) of the first migrants of the Abbo community. Danchuma Abbo-Wonsho, which means the divine strength, is the power that can make good and evil. Then, by abuse of language, the name became Abbo-Wonsho, means something full of heavy or valuable.

As presented above, sacred forests are part of the history of traditional Sidama communities. People believe that sacred forests have magical powers and protect the nearby communities. Consequently, Abbo-Wonsho sacred forests are respected and sometimes people fear them. The historical and spiritual values attached to sacred forests entail the high level of indigenous knowledge of the local community in conserving their natural resources. their conservation by local communities.

However, the sacred forest is under influence of the ‘modern civilization’ and environmental dynamisms. Discussants particularly highlighted population growth around the study site was considered as one of the factors that decrease the forest size. In our observations across the sacred forest, there was evidence of locals engaging in encroachment activities ([Hoteso, 1990](#); [Hameso, 1998](#); [Tekile et al., 2012](#)).



Figure 3: Community members in different age groups discussing in the sacred forest, 27 May, 2020.

Cultivation near sacred sites was also common experience as the discussant expressed and our observation proved the same. as our observations was concerned. There was a general understanding among the community that, for example, the original size of the Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forest site was very large compared to the current size. Population growth was a key driver leading to shrinking of the land size of the sacred places. Agricultural activities and other socio-economic and developmental needs have completely transformed many of the previous sacred forest areas in the studied communities.

3.3. Sacred Forests Management

The first research question aimed at searching for answers to as to how the local communities’ participate in managing the sacred forests. The sacred forests are not completely closed and forbidden for community members. Similarly, the local population graze their animals whenever there are enough grasses for their cattle in and around the Abbo-Wonsho Forest with due recognition of the chief of the sacred forest. To understand how local communities manage sacred forests, this section presents the structure of sacred forests, the forests managers, the traditional rules and the sanctions if they are infringed.

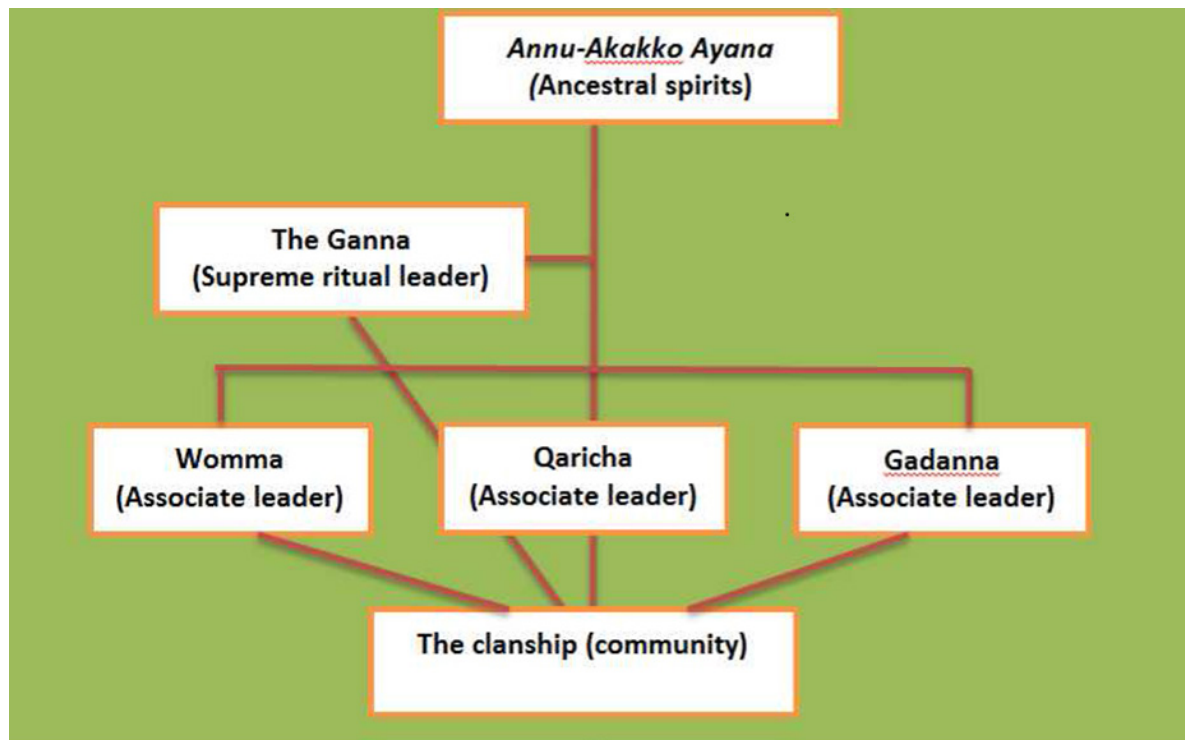


Fig. 5: Structure of ritual governance of sacred forests, Wonsho, Ethiopia (Source: Zerihun, 2014).

The associate leaders, Ganna, can also directly communicate with ancestors, just like any faithful, ritually able-aged member of the clan although not with equal intensity or frequency (Hamer, 1976). The Ganna is the supreme person responsible for managing the sacred site ritual affairs and the forest itself. In so doing, it receives guidance from the ancestors, particularly from Abbo and support from his associates and the community at large. There are divergent views as to whether the structure is really hierarchical or the four positions are equal in authority. According to this governance and leadership arrangement, the Ganna is considered the highest in rank of the qaddo (the four ritual leaders) whose roles are more or less the same but with some particularity to each one (Hameso, 1998; Tekle et al., 2012).

According to the interview made and personal field observations, it is possible to draw a general structure of sacred forest. In most cases, there is only one path to enter. The small path is amid the forest with dead leaves and branches from left and right sides. The main way that leads to the inside of the forest may also be identified by two types of signs. The first path leads to the centre of the forest where the sacred community meet and make ceremonies. The central place is more or less a large area depending on the sacred groves, but it is always cleared and constitutes the spiritual power centre. For all sacred forests, people say that the forest spirits clean and sweep themselves in the area. Even nobody planted trees in place of old dead trees. The central zone, which is not necessarily the middle of the forest, contains representations or fetishes of the main chief locally called (Ganna) inhabiting the forest (Zerihun, 2014; Tekle et al., 2012; Hameso, 2014).

3.4. Sacred Forest Administrators

According to the people participants interviewed, the sacred chief has a say in decisions concerning the sacred groves and has to approve informal decisions such as cutting trees or gathering wood for special purpose. The local 'king' gives the authorization after consultation

of the mayor. The local king (Ganna) is also considered as a formal authority that can take decisions concerning the sacred groves.

In any cases, the sacred forest managers are the fetish chief and the followers, the family or community chiefs, the elders and all the members of the community. They take decisions together by organizing community meetings; women also attend the meetings, except for night meetings. The sacred groves often have a guard who protects the forest and prevents people from cutting trees. In some cases, he can fine the offenders and guides people that want to visit the sacred forest. One of the forest managers gives the authorization for the collection of medicinal plants, wood and food.

“Sacred forests have a participatory management, even if there is always a main responsible; this person cannot make decisions alone; the guard always has to discuss with assistants to know how to manage and protect the forest. As well, the sanctions are decided jointly”, as the local king (Ganna) said. In summary, sacred forests are essentially managed informally by local communities. The local formal authorities have little to say about sacred forests management. The people responsible for managing the forest activities are selected after Ganna consultation. The religious chiefs and the family chiefs then take the decisions concerning sacred forests. The community at large participates in the decision-making for important choices.

On the other hand, prohibition of planting new trees at sacred forests is another core principle. An implicit belief in “sacred forests take care of themselves through natural and spiritual processes” seems to be taken for granted. It is believed that the ancestors preside over the affairs of the additions of new trees, growth patterns and protection of the trees. This may be interpreted as an allusion to the inherent nature of sacred groves as dynamic systems. Any human planting of trees in sacred forests has been unacceptable and is tantamount to desecrating the ancestors. Management in the sense of digging the soil, weeding, and pruning, removing aged and diseased trees and planting new ones have been traditionally tabooed and generally reserved for other contexts (Yirdaw, 2001).

3.5. Conservation of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Plants (both wild and cultivated) are essential to alleviate human health problems and food insecurity especially in the developing world. In the same situation, a variety of medicinal plants are found in Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forests, as research team members visited the research site at Abbo-Wonsho. Each medicinal plant, as field visits witnessed, has traditional properties that need to be scientifically proven, too; nevertheless, Zerihun (2014) in his PhD. dissertation listed some of medicinal plants of Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest and tested their virtues.

Understanding the current herbal medicinal awareness and its uses among herbalists, young persons, and the community at large might help to witness indicate the state of herbal medicine. While our Our informants were drawn from the environment, the surrounding of the forest with particular attention to the young and the herbalists who young persons and herbalists were important sources of information during the fieldwork/visit.



Fig.6: The research team visiting the medicinal plant sites

Maintenance of sacred forest sites is, therefore, an important factor in this in-situ learning, sharing and transmission of herbal medicinal knowledge in Wonsho. Living in a botanically rich rural environment, especially with better opportunities to learn of tradition-imbued native trees and having sacred forest site as all-rounded epicentre of community life deserves credit for such relatively strong knowledge.

Broadly speaking, the community of Abbo-Wonsho sees its sacred forests as important havens for hundreds of plants, from the humblest hayso (common grass or herb) to the graceful dagucho (*P. falcatus*). In view of this, it is perhaps understandable that Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forests are repositories for the preservation of medicinal plants (ibid.).

Forty-two medicinal trees and shrub species were used to treat 34 human diseases and 15 livestock diseases, according to the field observations, and farm inventories. The most frequently used part was leaves. The most widely used method of remedy preparation is crushing. The common route of administration is oral which is applied through drinking.

The Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forest (AWSF) is believed to be a treasure house of medicinal and aromatic plants. Though most of the indigenous people are residing near the groves, they have carefully nurtured their traditional customs, rituals, ceremonies and a way of forest life through folk beliefs with great vigour (Hamer, 2002). In this regard, there is a need for Conservation

Table 2. “Disappearing” or “lost” medicinal trees found at sacred forests, interviews and focus group discussions, Sidama, Ethiopia, 2012

Local name	Scientific name	Reason for decline
<i>Dongicho</i>	<i>Prunus africana</i>	The most over-utilized medicinally through de-barking for dealing with “hammessa”, a commonly perceived infantile ailment
<i>Gidincho</i>	<i>Ehretia cymosa</i>	A native woody tree overutilized as a popular medicinal source and other livelihood pressures
<i>Bulancho</i>	<i>Withania somnifera</i>	A major medicinal plant, reported as over utilized
<i>Godicho</i>	<i>Fagaropsis angolensis</i>	Livelihood overutilization
<i>Gatame</i>	<i>Commiphora schimperi</i>	Livelihood overutilization
<i>Duwancho</i>	<i>Syzygium guineense</i>	Livelihood overutilization (esp. charcoal, construction material needs, etc.)
<i>Ejersa</i>	<i>Olea europae</i>	Medicinal, firewood, and construction use
<i>Daguchio</i>	<i>Podocarpus falcatus</i>	Declining outside of sacred sites due to overutilization
<i>Nolle</i>	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i>	Medicinal and livelihood overutilization

Regional
es. Thus,
with the

Source: Zerihun D. Doffana, 2012-2013, Bokaso, Ethiopia.

Plants at such places may be considered as great natural resources which are conserved intentionally by some households. conscious or intentional conservation by some households. Some scattered cases of conserving medicinal plants at household level were documented during fieldwork; a number of local informants, whose back- and front-yards were surveyed for plant/tree species, reported that they had explicitly planted some species for medicinal purposes (ibid.).

The case of some trees that were locally reported as “fast disappearing” or “already lost” at other places being conserved at sacred forests is significant. It is generally the view of the community that represented through interviews and household surveys, those sacred forests serve as havens for such trees. Through overutilization for medicinal and other livelihood needs, some woody native trees such as dongicho (*P. africana*) were reported as now found only in AWSF. Some other native species of medicinal importance were also believed to be found only at such places. In the household survey, randomly selected 21 household heads (76%) reported that sacred forests were sole havens for many medicinal plants.

In general, informants in at Wonsho, Bokasa, know only one or two medicinal plants and they used to gather these specific plants in case of needs. Parents transmit the knowledge about medicinal plants to their children. Traditional healers know more medicinal plants, but some of the plants are secret and their virtues are only passed down from healers to healers.

3.6. Herbal Medicine in Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Forest

Understanding the role of sacred forest sites in conserving medicinal plants and their associated botanical knowledge requires a brief description of the context and state of herbal medicine. The traditional medicinal healers (herbalists), at the time of the fieldwork, exist in some localities catering for some health and para-medical needs of the community, especially those aspects that are perceived as not effectively handled by modern medicine. According to focus group discussants, certain factors encourage recourse to herbal medicine such as those lacked access to modern facilities due to geographical barriers, lack of money or other socio-cultural barriers in the community.

Informants and FGD discussants explained unanimously that all plants have medicinal values though Shimadamurro is extraordinarily the most important medical plant of all others. Shimadamurro include herbs, climbers, shrubs, grass and other small plants. These were invariably touted by informants as highly medicinal.

Of about 86 plant species, that were identified during the first round transect walk at Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest with three herbalists, more than half were such plants and most were understood as medicinal. The most widely noted use of this category of plants was medicinal, followed by their importance as firewood, animal fodder and occasionally wild food sources. Practicing herbalists noted that the most commonly used source of decoctions in their pharmacopeia come from the leaves, seeds and roots of these plants. The widely known and used medicinal plants were generally regarded as important for health problems that did not require specialist skills and complex processing procedures according to Zerihun, D., (2014).

There were a number of species that were known only by practicing herbalists. The medicinal identity and efficacy of such plants were often claimed as revealed to the practitioners through dreams, which also coincide with what they claim as the origin of their skill. The revelations would include specific names of plants, their efficacy in treating specific human and veterinary health problems, where they would be harvested from, parts of the trees to be sourced, and decoction and administration procedures, etc.

The supernatural, curative, or medicinal properties of many local trees and other plants,—particularly climber, grassy and shrub groups, from the expert herbalist's point of view, are recognized only by them and not by the common people. The identification and procuring of these, especially those from wild, obscure sources, requires specialist knowledge and hard work. The medicinal identity and efficacy of such trees were often claimed as revealed to the practitioners through dreams, which also coincide with what they claim as the origin of their skill. From the experts' point of view, some tree species whose medicinal properties were unknown by the general community were the most widely used sources of herbal decoctions (Moges, Dagnachew, & Yimer, 2013). Classifying medicinal plants based on the types of health and paramedical problems they are employed to cure is also important. Some plants are suited for generic and common health problems.

Informants remarked that such plant categories are being employed for Dingentenga. Dingentenga, a generic term for a group of illnesses that may occur both in humans and animals and characterized by a set of symptoms including diarrhoea, vomiting, tummy pain, head ache, fever, etc. These plants are generally readily available and accessible in the backyards without the need for specialist trekking to the wild forests and are used with minimal specialist herbal knowledge. For example, cikicho (*B. antidysentrica*), binjile (*C. abyssinica* Jaub.), dongicho (*Prunusafricana*) and wajobardaffe (*Eucalyptusglobulus*) and many other herbs belong to this category.

Local name	Scientific name	Description	Commonly treated health problem
Gikicho	<i>Justicia schimperiana</i>	Herb, native	Decoction from leaves drank for treating dingeteñu (sudden and emergency health problem causing diarrhea and vomiting; stomach ache)
Binjile	<i>Clusia abyssinica</i>	Herb, native	Decoction from leaves drank for treating woranjo, a cow disease and rare, liver disease
Dongicho	<i>Prunus africana</i>	Tree, native	Decoction from bark for treating hamnessa, a commonly perceived infant tummy problem; considered as a necessary “vaccination” for infants.
Dadako	<i>Hagenia abyssinica</i>	Tree, native	Decoction from berry and leaves for treating worm infestation <i>hamashe</i> (‘tapeworm’)
Godicho	<i>Fagaropsis angolensis</i>	Tree, native	Berry eaten for treating dingeteñu
Haranjicho	<i>Phytolacca dodecandra</i>	Shrub, native	Leaves used as a detergent; decoction for leaves for treating dingeteñu
He'echo	<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>	Tree, native	Decoction from leaves drank for stomach aches
Gobacho	<i>Maesa lanceolata</i>	Tree, native	Decoction drank for stomach ache; decoction rubbed for treating foot sores, wounds, etc.
Garbicho	<i>Ekebergia capensis</i>	Tree, native	Cattle disease; dingeteñu
wajo bardaffe	<i>Eucalyptus globules</i>	Tree, exotic	Decoction from leaves drank for stomach aches; leaves smoked for fumigating home

Source: Zerihun (2014)

3.7. Challenge and Threats

The FGD participants’ responses to the discussion questions were carefully recorded and coded by the researcher later. The key words and phrases were categorized into certain groups. The aim of the coding was for two reasons, (1) central theme and (2) general sentiment (positive, negative, neutral, & suggestion).

Besides, some potential problems which could hamper traditional religions, four main categories have been described below: a) the erosion of traditional religions, (b) the age of young generation (c) population explosion (d) the economic returns due to livelihoods. These barriers are listed in order of the relative frequency in which they were mentioned in the group discussion.

The erosion of traditional religions and the arrival of new ones, Protestantism, and extremist orthodox religion followers, and others were part of potential problems raised during the FGD.

In addition, age is another factor that can threaten sacred forests. There is an erosion of traditional religious knowledge and interest among the young generation. Moreover, the generation of persons responsible of the forests are getting old and progressively passing away. For example, the Abbo-Wonsho supreme leader, whom we interviewed in FGD in this study, was passed away due to chronic blood pressure in November, 2020.

Due to population explosion and various developmental activities, especially, forests are destroyed due to livelihood. Climate variability, the transformation of livelihoods and lifestyles, ‘modernization’, cultural dynamism and disappearing systems of knowledge, as well as pressure to provide for basic needs, are also the expected dangers on the study community.

More than ever, planting indigenous trees which used to cultivate for cultural identity have been changed due to different vital reasons. Especially the economic returns from woody tree

like chat and Eucalyptus (Bahirzaf trees) are taken as a main factor for the land use change from diversified and ecologically complex system to mono-cropping system in the society.

Several major threats of sacred forest could be inventoried based on the literature. What happened and used as a base to compare with what actually occurred in Abbo-Wonsho was one of the most mentioned reasons for sacred forest degradations. Age, in addition, is another factor that can threaten sacred forests. There is an erosion of traditional religious knowledge and interest among the young generation. Young people are not afraid of the traditional taboos and degrade sacred forests (Wadley and Colfer, 2004; Byers et al., 2001).

Moreover, the generation of persons the responsible individuals, who could have provided us with relevant and sufficient information on the forest under investigation are getting old and others passed away. for the conversation of the forests is getting old and progressively passing away. For example, the Abbo-Wonsho supreme leader, who was in FGD in this study passed away due to chronic blood pressure in November, 2020. Had he been treated early, he would not have been died. If young people do not take an interest in traditional management, sacred forests will probably disappear. They may have much less links with the sacred forests and do not necessarily respect the traditions.

As already explained, population growth can have important consequences on natural resources. In short, due to population explosion and various developmental activities, according to the previous studies manifested, forests are destroyed due to livelihood (Kumo, 2009a; Kumo, 2009b). The demographic pressure generates a modification of the land use.

3.8. Planting Indigenous Tree

Planting indigenous trees may help to reverse the accelerated loss of natural forests Berisso, T. (1995). The indigenous (local) trees have several important biological attributes over exotic trees which are imported from abroad. The presence of indigenous tree in natural stands in a given area, they can give a clue to undertake possible plantation activities (Evans, 1992). These species are adapted to the environment and are already integral part of an ecological niche (Negash, 2010). In addition, they are less susceptible to serious damage from diseases and pests and they are ecologically more valuable than exotics for the conservation of native flora and fauna as well as for the conservation of water (Evans, 1992). However, the situation in research site in particular are being changed planting exotic, eucalyptus trees for several reasons.

3.8.1. Eucalyptus (Bahirzaf) Plantation

Eucalyptus is an ever green flowering tree and a shrub which belongs to the family Myrtaceae. Mesay Hailu Gangisso (2018) in their study mentioned that eucalyptus is native to Australia and widely planted for various uses in the different parts of Ethiopia integrating it with various farming systems. Planting this tree has resulted in high economic profitability. People in Ethiopia have accumulated important local knowledge of eucalyptus management and expansion because of its greatly increased benefits such as fuel wood, construction and financial benefits.

The majority of farmers, as Getahun, K. et al. (2013) note urban dwellers and experts of the district agricultural office, about half of government extension agents and some researchers preferred planting Eucalyptus tree species on agricultural landscape. This finding also indicated major factors for the preference of planting Eucalyptus where there is increasing demand for

wood products in the market due to its ease of cultivation, wider adaptability and high rate of biomass production of the tree (ibid.).

These situations have started eroding the culture of paying due attention to the respected indigenous knowledge which gives important room to giving care to cultural and social environments. Though commercial forestry is underdeveloped in the area, Sidama Regional State is well known for its traditional agro-forestry system, which saved the land from erosion and desertification for centuries. Every household in Sidama practices agro-forestry. It also absorbs water and leaves the land dry. Most farmers are aware of the problem. However, the economic benefits of the eucalyptus tree outweigh the cost of losing small crops near it for individual farmers. However, it is generally recognized at present that this trend is dangerous for the overall environmental sustainability of the Sidama land (Negash, 2010).

4. SAMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Summary

The Sidama Regional State's sacred forest around Abbo-Wonsho, which is a tangible cultural heritage, has been discovered by researchers recently. The research findings recently. The spiritual forest on the Sidama land, known as Abbo-Wonsho, represents a traditional form of community-based conservation. The forest that covers 320 hectares of land is about 17 generations according to the interview to associate leader of Abbo-Wonsho, (Ganna). They are known to be confined to sacred forests which are remnants of climax vegetation, yet these sites typically have no legal conservation though they are managed and protected by local residents.

The practice of dedicating trees and forests to divinity is an antique ritual in the new research arena, Abbo-Wonsho for generations. Various cultural aspects such as religion, faith and traditional belief bring people closer to nature and the natural environment. In this regard, the floristic diversity of the Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest in Sidama Regional State (SRS) is under investigation.

The essential strategy used to conserve Abbo-Wonsho natural resources is the spiritual belief of people in supernatural force which could create connections between groups of people. These social taboos exist habitually in their cultures, and represent a class of informal institutions, where traditional, religiously- governed norms or taboo system define the human behaviour. These taboos remain the prime factor guiding their conduct towards the exploitation of the natural resources (Woldemariam, T. & Fetene, and M. 2010).

While many forests in Sidama Regional State underwent degradation, Abbo-Wonsho sacred forest remained to be the best-conserved forest owing to its sacredness and significance to the Wonsho Sidama community. The implication was that the Sidama people, as a community, had a high regard for the forest ecological system due to the sacred value attached to it. For this reason, it was largely unaffected by destructive anthropogenic activities.

Multitude Medicinal plants were identified at Wonsho sacred forests and other botanical environments, 77 (51.3%) were reported as directly medicinal. This was the most important use of plants identified, followed by other livelihood uses. Of these plants and trees, except for some exotic species which by virtue of taboos were excluded and few native trees that do not

adapt easily to be studied sacred forest micro-climate, all of the native species were harboured in sacred forests ([Zerihun, 2014](#)).

4.2. Conclusions

The general objective of the study was to explore the indigenous forest conservation mechanisms of the Abbo-Wonsho sacred area community, Sidama Regional State, and to propose ways for maintaining this useful knowledge for sustainable environmental management. The study also tried to answer the following three research questions:

- What indigenous knowledge experiences have been practiced on the safety, safety and conservation of natural and social environment?
- What are the attitudes of the local people towards using indigenous knowledge and practice towards for environmental Conservations?
- What are the knowledge gaps that could be filled to increase forest recovery?

Traditional religion-based knowledge plays a significant role in protecting the environments and critical ecosystems.

The study found out wide use of customary rules and regulations, customs and rituals, taboos and totems, and metaphors and proverbs applied in forest and wildlife resource conservation. These forms of indigenous knowledge constitute the social and religious values of the Sidama Regional State (SRS) community in general and the dwellers around Abbo-Wonsho forest in particular in conserving the human-environment system.

As understood from the study, the potential faith of the community living around the forest could give attention to conservation of Abbo-Wonsho forest. Sacred forests across the SRS are conserved primarily for spiritual reasons. Harming the forest in Abbo-Wonsho is forbidden by tradition and it is typically believed that any alteration of the forest such as cutting wood for construction or firewood, hunting animals or other forms of resource extraction will result in negative consequences against the person who has involved in such practices. Sacred forests also contain a high diversity of medicinally important plants.

Nonetheless, what is overwhelming is that sacred forests are facing significant social, political and economic threats. Land grabbing, encroachment, fragmentation, human population increase and cultural dynamics, according to Messay [Hailu \(2018\)](#), have all been labelled culprits in the deterioration of sacred groves. Other than being sacred, these sites are also often ecological systems containing resources, endemic trees, medicinal herbs and complete ecological diversity. These all can make Sidama Regional State to be compensated at national and international levels due to safety, and conservation of natural and social environment in supporting livelihoods.

Furthermore, research findings manifest that decreasing economic power coupled with population growth have exerted pressure on all natural resources, including the communally-owned AWSS. At the same time, the indigenous institutions responsible for controlling access to the forest resources have been weakened by the impacts of ‘modernization’, Islam, Christianity and seeking ‘change’.

As noted previously, traditional natural resources' management is shaped around local rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are most often preserved in religious or cultural beliefs and superstitions and enforced by prohibitions. These have no legal backing, but the beliefs have been strong enough in the past to make people obey the regulations. In the context of natural resources management, they enhance biodiversity conservation and minimize the continuous use of natural resources.

From the very onset, the paper aims at looking into the roles the traditional religion and socio-cultural practices in Abbo-Wonsho community. Findings indicate that traditional religion and cultural practices have contributed in to the conservation of resources through the acknowledgment of psychic powers to stream/pond, tree, forest land, etc.; these attributions of the supreme powers and the belief and respect for the gods of the land holds the string to reverence and respect for these natural resources. This belief in the existence of a supreme is responsible for the conservation of natural resources in Abbo-Wonsho community. The people have also enabled to voluntarily take management of natural resources very seriously.

The traditional beliefs and taboos helped people enforce rules and regulations for environmental preservation because people refrained from using resources carelessly, especially as it is related to sacred places. In particular, the important role of these practices in the conservation of biodiversity through sacred groves has been highlighted. However, an assessment that would provide valuable insights into the changing values of local people in relation to the Conservation of forests and other natural resources is highly recommended.

The present study, therefore, was intended to propose additional management and conservation skills management and conservation as an alternative strategy towards the sustainability of the forests around human settlements. It was also an attempt to explore the role of sacred forest conservation and management of different ecosystem services.

The finding also indicated that planting eucalyptus trees in the forest area to satisfy the wood demand of people in the market was one of the major factors in decreasing the size of the forest. for the preference of planting eucalyptus were the increasing demand for wood products in the market, Additionally, ease of cultivation, wider adaptability and high rate of biomass production of the trees were the challenges that are currently threatening the sustainability of the forest with its full natural resources. . These situations have started eroding the culture of paying due attention to respecting indigenous knowledge in taking care of cultural and social environments in planting indigenous trees to protect the natural and social environment. Though commercial forestry is underdeveloped in the area, the Sidama Regional State is well known for its traditional agro-forestry system, which saved the land from erosion and desertification for centuries. Every household in Sidama practices agro-forestry. Even if these practices brought some benefits for the farmers, these tendencies have also brought a negative impact in recent times.

Farmers began to practice planting Eucalyptus trees alongside other crops. Because the plant has a poisonous effect, it destroys other crops planted under it. It also absorbs water and leaves the land dry. Most farmers are aware of the problem. However, the economic benefits of the eucalyptus tree outweigh the cost of losing small crops near it for individual farmers. It is generally recognized at present that this trend is dangerous for the overall environmental sustainability of the Sidama land. This knowledge gap has to be narrowed to be consistent with planting indigenous trees to sustain the cultural values of the community.

4.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the study.

- The (tree) biodiversity supporting values and governance principles inherent in the maintenance of sacred forest sites may further be tested for and application in wider contexts by concerned conservationists and policy makers in the region and the country at large. The model of sacred forests and ancestral principles of their management may usefully inform the current and future biodiversity conservation work
- A growing shift from biodiversity-supporting to materialist consumer values is one of challenging phenomena at Abbo-Wonsho. Moreover, an increasing generation gap in the realm of ascribing to biodiversity-supporting ancestral values and ethno-botanical traditions should be abridged. Rituals and their enactment are less frequently held among the younger generation, despite some success at countering the rampant idea that sacred forest sites are places where idol worship is practiced in recent years that such practice is backward, unhygienic and uneconomical.
- The Abbo-Wonsho Sacred Site leaders should be motivated and appreciated at country level in general and in Sidama regional level in particular. Especially, Hawassa University should offer honorarium doctoral degree to one of Associate leaders who lead the ancestral forest from generation to generation for about 1190 years.

4.4. Further studies have to be made on:

- The Contribution of Modern Religious Organizations to the on Environmental Conservation and Their status in the present conservation.
- The attitude of the young generations towards enhancing indigenous Knowledge in environmental Conservation.

4.5. Suggestions for Conservation

The finding of this research add to a large body of study which puts forward that sacred forests can contribute considerably to the protection of biodiversity. While in many cases, ecological conservation is not the primary intended function of these forests, they nevertheless play an important role in the conservation of ecological systems. It is therefore important that natural resource managers consider the interactions between social and ecological systems when developing strategies for forest conservation in Abbo-Wonsho, Sidama, Ethiopia.

Previous academic researchers have both indicated that changes to religious systems resulting from westernization and the introduction of proselytizing/the action of attempting to convert someone from one religion, belief, or opinion to another religions present a significant threat to forest ecosystems, (ZerihunDoda, 2014; Campbell, 2005; Kokou et al. 2005,). Considering this, the role of local religious systems should not be discounted by those interested in encouraging the preservation of remnant forest patches in Abbo-Wonsho. Recognition by scientists and natural resource managers of the social and cultural factors contributing to forest conservation, and respect for indigenous knowledge systems by the scientific community are a prerequisite for effective forest conservation.

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Author Guideline

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2. The submission file is in OpenOffice, Microsoft Word, or RTF document file format.
3. Where available, URLs for the references have been provided.
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5. The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the Author Guidelines.

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- Figures
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The discussion section should explore the significance of your results but not repeat them. You may combine your results and discussion sections into one section, if appropriate. We recommend that you avoid the use of extensive citations and discussion of published literature in the discussion section.

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The conclusion section should present the main conclusions of your study. You may have a stand-alone conclusions section or include your conclusions in a subsection of your discussion or results and discussion section.

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Reference to software:

Coon, E., Berndt, M., Jan, A., Svyatsky, D., Atchley, A., Kikinzon, E., Harp, D., Manzini, G., Shelef, E., Lipnikov, K., Garimella, R., Xu, C., Moulton, D., Karra, S., Painter, S., Jafarov, E., & Molins, S. (2020). Advanced Terrestrial Simulator (ATS) (Version 0.88) [Computer software]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3727209>.

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