#### **ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

# Influence of Socialization Experiences on the Learning of Diverse Groups of Students at the University of Gondar, Ethiopia

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### **Abstract**

The major relevance of socialization in higher education institutions relies on its contribution to students' success. Accordingly, this research was aimed at examining the influence of socialization experiences on diverse groups of undergraduate students' learning at the University of Gondar. In order to achieve the research objectives, a mixed-methods approach was used: data were collected by using questionnaires, semi-structured and key informant interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposefully selected eight full time third year undergraduate students. Similarly, key informant interviews were conducted with six purposefully selected department heads, the dean of students and teachers who work in the University of Gondar. Finally, the quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics such as one sample t-test and multiple linear regression tests whereas the qualitative data were analyzed by applying deductive thematic analysis strategies. The findings of this study showed that the socialization process has a significant effect on the students' learning process, (R2 = .34, F (9, 371) = 14.15, p < .05). In addition, the study showed that there is a statistically significant socialization problem among undergraduate students, (t=10.46, p < .05). The University of Gondar should build strong interpersonal atmosphere to encourage faculty members and administrators to create conducive environment for all students.

**Keywords:** undergraduate students, learning, socialization, tactics of socialization, mixed method approach, University of Gondar

### Introduction

The term socialization as a process of internalizing norms and values of society by learning to perform social roles was first introduced to sociological discourse by Georg Simmel (Settersten & Owens, 2002). After its introduction, the concept of socialization is widely used in the social science literature, but the conventional idea of socialization cannot be easily delineated it from other related phenomena (Gecas, 1981). Georg Simmel defined socialization as, "Something that existed wherever several individuals are engaged in reciprocal interaction," (Simmel, 1971). The other theoretical tradition related to socialization definition is structural functionalism that emphasizes the conformity and

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adaptation of individuals to the formal and informal norms of the specific groups and society to which individuals belong. In this perspective, new members are socialized so that society perpetuates by transmitting its culture from one generation to the next. According to structural functionalist conception, socialization is exclusively a process of social control, constraining and imposing significant limits upon individuals (Settersten & Owens, 2002, p. 15). The proponents of this theory emphasizes on the simple adaptation and conformity of individuals to imposing social expectations (Grusec & Hastings, 2015).

In contrast to the above view, symbolic interaction theory emphasizes on individuals to actively construct the self and social situations (Handel, 2019). This emphasizes on how aspects of individual development such as self-concept, attitudes, and dispositions are created and re-created through interaction in social settings. In contrast to Simmel's, structuralisms and symbolic interactionists understanding of socialization, postmodernist defined socialization as, "Is a process where people acquire knowledge, a one-way process in which the initiator learns how the organization works, and thus socialization is little more than a series of planned learning activities," (Tierney, 1997).

In this study, researchers tried to investigate the influence of socialization experiences on diverse groups of undergraduate students' learning in a university setting. University setting is very complex due to multiple constituencies like diverse groups of students, parental involvement, alumni trustees, state boards' members and activity managers. These constituents have socializing role in undergraduate students in supporting them to adapt to the existing rules of the university structure (Bastedo, 2007; Hurtado, 2007).

Brown, (2011) argued that varied constituents taught students to create opportunities to develop their skills, help them relate to and prepare for work in a more diverse society. To the other end, diversity is a challenge on students creating difficulties of integration across multicultural teams, learning, cohesion, prejudice or negative stereotypes. The other challenge is that communication can be misinterpreted or difficult to understand across varying languages and cultures etc. Thus, socialization is very essential to avoid challenges in higher learning institutions (Salem press, 2011). With regard to university socialization, sociologists like Weidman et al (1989) developed a more comprehensive and inclusive conceptual model of undergraduates students' socialization for future application in research, and in institutional setting. This model is different from the predominantly structural-functional foundation of the original models in that it incorporates perspectives that acknowledge human agency, the capacity of individuals to modify influences by reshaping social structures within normative contexts (Stones, 2005; Weidman & DeAngelo, 2020b). Weidman's model to the study of undergraduate students' socialization accorded individual motives, capacity and behavior as they have more central importance (Turner, 2014).

According to Weidman & DeAngelo, (2020: 14) undergraduate students socialization can be conceived as "a series of processes whereby the students enter college as fresh with certain values, career aspirations and other personal goals. These students are exposed to various socializing agents such as faculty and peers in the major department, parental support and achievement pressure while they are attending their colleges. Conversely students also assess the salience of the college environment as the source of both knowledge and orientations which are perceived to be appropriate for attaining career goals and changes or maintaining those values and aspirations that were held at college entrance based on parental influence, normative pressure and subjective assessments of the institutional experience.

Regarding socialization of undergraduate students in universities, students from diverse groups, parental supports, alumni trustees, board members, deans, directors and heads have roles in socializing students, and in presenting their demands for organizational adaptation to their needs. Faculties have both implicit and explicit roles in establishing different norms (Mudhovozi, 2012; Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Bastedo, 2007; Peterson, 2007; Hurtado, 2007). These norms include the establishment of good practices, teaching, research, community service, shaping the curriculum as well as the instruction of the university (Gonondo, 2016), (Holley & Taylor, 2009). Faculties are also responsible for mastering subject matter expertise in their disciplines, and in supporting the students to exercise independence, and to demonstrate learning the ropes (Horenstein et al., 2016; Popov et al., 2012), and (Cerrone, 2017). As a result, when students join higher education institutions, they need to become socialized effectively so that they can learn and master the subject matter which is related to their fields of study and create a strong social bond with their peers in the learning environment (Weidman & Stein, 2003b; Hagen, 2015; Mayer, 1971; Mudhovozi, 2012).

Proper socialization requires relevant tactics (Baker, 2007). Tactics are useful for reducing uncertainty that new students experience at each stage of the socialization process; tactics shape the type of information they receive as well as the ease of having access to information that influence outcomes such as commitment and learning (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Trowler, 1999). Bogler and Somech, (2002) also categorized tactics of socialization as exploration, giving up the previous role and adjusting self to new roles. Similarly, Chao et al., (1994) argues that the tactics tend to socialize individual students effectively, and make them more competitive/cooperative in complex higher education institutions. In the same way, Wayt, (2012) argues that socialization tactics are basis for enhancing students' knowledge acquisitions, well-being, social bond and goal achievement.

In Ethiopia, thousands of undergraduate students are enrolled in universities from different intersectional identity like ethnicity, area of origin, political orientation, religious experiences, gender, family occupations, beliefs etc. These students at the higher education institutions need proper and effective socialization to learn, and to master the subject matters in their fields of study and create a strong social bond (Adil et al., 2021; Sollova, 2019).

However, lack of meaningful socialization in the universities expose diverse groups of students to feelings of isolation, low cohesion, low engagement, alienation from different activities and loneliness in university campuses. Such feelings may affect students' ability to engage in academic and social activities (Li & Collins, 2018; White, 2010). Upon arrival in universities, students seek to understand the norms, values and rules of their higher education institutions (Robertson, 2015); Harden, 1993), but there is little effort to acquaint students to specific socialization practices for undergraduate students since faculties, students' affairs and administrative staff have narrow and traditional views on the importance of socialization in higher education institutions (Weidman & Stein, 2003).

Like many other universities in Ethiopia, University of Gondar accepts diverse groups of undergraduate students each year. After students joined the university, there is a rush for "day one class one" motto that buffers initial socialization. Students' affairs authorities, faculties, students' representatives and administrative staff are preoccupied with tasks like providing material needs; facilitating some selected service and ensuring the students are kept safe from physical injury and from instability rather than properly socializing the students to the university environment. Rules and regulations concerning socialization,

and clear socialization tactics are not given due emphasis in the university by offices of the staff and faculties. The university authorities do not prepare students adequately to tackle problems they may face in the new university environment. The path of teaching that is inculcating and disposing the rules and regulation, and the service delivery are not transparent for students. Students often struggle to build relationships with one another, participate in extracurricular activities, form strong social bonds, and learn in and out of the classrooms.

It can be argued that inadequate socialization of undergraduate students to the higher education institution could lead students into a learning failure, they may sense that they do not belong to member of the university, induce weak social cohesion in the campus that can affect their learning (Ongiti, 2012). Because of poor socialization, students may leave the university prior to graduation causing the loss of institutional reputation (Rader, 2012). Phillips et al., (2010) also explained that students' motivation and teachers' belief, teachers experience at the university, teachers' subject matter knowledge and experience, teaching facilities are some variables that strongly influence students learning. Morison, (2006) explained that inadequate socialization is "a silent epidemic for students' learning, social cohesions and dropout". If students are unable to experience adequate socialization in higher education situation, they cannot acquire knowledge. A study which was conducted by Hurst et al. (2013) on the effects of social interaction on college students' learning found that socialization increases understanding, boosts comfort and confidence, helps students get ready for life after graduation, teaches students how to collaborate, motivates them to attend class, fosters the development of communication skills and increases students' ownership sense to the institution. By examining the extent to which institutional climate influences persistence behavior on students' learning and development, Oseguera & Rhee, (2009) found that aggregated faculty measures including faculty reported humanistic orientation, faculty morale and orientation had significant positive effects on students' persistence on their learning process.

Thus, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is no sufficient research which is conducted on the influence of socialization experience on learning among diverse groups of undergraduate students in Ethiopia. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of socialization experiences on learning among diverse groups of undergraduate students at the University of Gondar. Finally, the researchers addressed the following two specific objectives: (1) The prevalence of problems of undergraduate students' socialization, and (2) The influence of socialization experience on undergraduate students learning process.

### **Methods and Procedures**

The researchers used a mixed research approach with an embedded design that augments additional information that is not provided by the primary data i.e. quantitative(Creswell, 2012a). Similarly, the qualitative and quantitative data types were analyzed (Rosenberg, 2008; Kumar, 2011) by applying different analysis techniques which are originated from pragmatism research.

# **Study Site**

The research site of the current study is university of Gondar with a history of over 69 years of teaching and health service delivery experience. It is located in the historic town of Gondar city, Ethiopia. University of Gondar has a diverse student population who

come from over ten regional states and city administrations of Ethiopia. The University of Gondar has forty-five thousand students. During the year 2022, the University of Gondar had 6814 third year students (https://www.uog.edu.et) from whom the sample of the study was selected.

### Sampling Design and Procedures

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques particularly a multilevel mixed sampling design procedures were used (Gliner et al., 2017; Kothari, 2004). Using the finite population formula, the selected sample size for this study was 389. These participants were selected using systematic random sampling techniques from all campuses. The researchers took the lists of all third-year fulltime students from the main registrar of the University of Gondar, and they wrote down their identification number in their ascending order to determine the interval. Finally, each participant was selected in the 18th interval resulting to 389 sample students (Creswell, 2012b). On the contrary, to gather the qualitative data, key informants and semi-structured interview participants of the study were selected purposefully. Therefore, the participants in the semi-structured interviewees for this study were four female and four male students from the third year undergraduate students. In the similar way, six key informant interview participants were purposively selected from different positions such as deans of students, department heads, lecturers or teachers and directors who had a direct relationship with the undergraduate students' socialization up to the data get relatively saturated.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Questionnaire, key informant interviews, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. To collect quantitative data, the researchers used a Likert-scale standardized inventory. This standardized questionnaire was also supported by reading literature to make the instrument fit with this research issue, and with the context under study (Creswell, 2012a).

The questionnaire was translated into Amharic (the national working language) to make it easy for participants so that they can communicate. A back translation was also made (Haueter et al., 2003). Before starting to fill out the questionnaires, individual participants signed the consent form which shows their consent to participate in the study. Similarly, the qualitative participants were asked about their willingness to respond to the semi-structured and key informant interview protocols. They were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. After assuring this, the researchers conducted all the interview sessions in their office or their respective workplace or office to avoid interruption, and to enhance the quality of the data. During the data collection, the researchers took notes and voice recordings with the consent of the interviewee (Mertens, 2009).

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data collected using a questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentage, mean and inferential statistics such as a one-sample t-test and multiple linear regression tests. One sample t-test was used to analyze the prevalence of problems with students' effective socialization in the University of Gondar (Stockemer, 2019). Besides, multiple linear regression analysis techniques were used to examine

the influence of socialization experiences on students' learning processes. On the other hand, qualitative data from semi-structured and key informant interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis strategies (Dawson, 2009). Thus, the researchers analyzed both datasets separately, integrated the results from the analysis of both datasets and made an interpretation to support each other (Creswell, 2012a) in order to reach a more logical conclusion.

### Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to check the internal consistency of items in the questionnaire. Accordingly, 32 participants from Bahir-Dar University who have similar characteristics to the University of Gondar were randomly selected, and their responses were used to analyze the reliability, and to construct the validity of the quantitative data measures. The reliability of the scales was determined by assigning a Cronbach alpha value greater than 0.07.

Table 1: Cronbach alpha coefficients of the instruments

#	Constructs	No. of items	Original Alpha	Pilot Alpha	Main study Alpha
1	Socialization experience	35	0.83	0.92	0.92
2	Learning process	26	0.80	0.95	0.89

Table-1 above shows the original, pilot study and the main study reliability coefficients of the pilot test result for the quantitative data instruments. The original, the pilot and the main studies' Cronbach alpha value indicated acceptable coefficients. On the other hand, to enhance the reliability and validity of the qualitative data, the researcher used reliability-enhancing strategies like applying rich, thick description data and creating an open and honest narrative of information that convinces the readers (Nagy & Hesse-Biber, 2010).

# Ethical Issues of the study

The researchers applied for ethical clearance to conduct the study from the IRB (institutional review board) of the University of Gondar to get permission. To this end, approval was obtained from the IRB of the University of Gondar. After receiving permission from the University of Gondar IRB, participants were asked about their willingness to participate in the study. The lead researcher explained the nature of the research, and he introduced the purpose of the study. Finally, the lead researcher asked the participants to take part in the study without coercion (Yeager, 2001). The participants were told about the confidentiality, and any quotations from the interviews will be given a code name. Written informed consent was obtained from participants before the commencement of data collection. Finally, the lead researcher collected data from those consented.

**Result: Demographic Information of Participants** 

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent	
Sex	Male	257	67.5	
	Female	124	32.5	
	Other gender	· -	-	
	Total	381	100.0	
Etnicity	Ethiopia	77	20.2	
	Amhara	143	37.5	
	Oromo	51	13.4	
	Tigre	3	0.8	
	Somali	3	0.8	
	Sidama	22	5.8	
	Guragie	9	2.4	
	Wolaita	5	1.3	
	Hadiya	5	1.3	
	Others	63	16.5	
Religion	Orthodox	251	65.9	
	Muslim	27	7.1	
	protestant	98	25.7	
	Catholic	2	.5	
	No response	3	.8	
	Total	381	100	
Family origion	Rural	124	32.5	
, ,	Urban	257	67.5	
	Total	381	98.7	
Father level of education	Did not attain school	61	16.0	
	Grade1-8th	126	32.5	
	Grade 9-12th	68	17.8	
	Diploma and above	126	33.1	
	Total	381	99.0	
Mother level of education	Did not attain school	96	25.2	
	Grade1-8th	134	35.2	
	Grade 9-12th	63	16.6	
	Diploma and above	88	23.1	
	Total	381	100	
STEM and campus visit	Yes	99	26	
before joining university	No	282	74	
	Total	381	96.3	
Family occupations	Private Business	110	28.9	
	Agriculture	137	36	
	Government employee	124	32.5	
	Unemployed	1	0.30	
	Daily laborer	2	0.50	
	Others	7	1.8	
<b>ource</b> : from the surv		381	100	

**Source**: from the survey, 2022

Despite the fact that the calculated sample size was 389, the researchers received 381 properly completed questionnaires and 8 people did not respond. Thus, the analysis was made using 381 sample undergraduate students. In this chapter, the researchers present the findings of the study from the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview and a key informant interview. There were (258) 67.5 percent males and (123) 32.5 percent females among the 381 undergraduate students. Similarly, the researchers asked the participants about their ethnic belongingness, and they replied that 77 (20.2%), 143(37.5%), 51(13.4%) as Ethiopian, Amhara, and Oromo respectively.

# Prevalence of Distal Socialization among Diverse Groups of Undergraduate Students

One of the specific objectives planned to address using a mixed methods was the prevalence of problems of socialization among undergraduate students in the University of Gondar. To investigate the prevalence of problems of socialization among undergraduate students, the researchers conducted one sample t-test by comparing the calculated mean (population mean) and sample mean.

Table 3: One sample t-test analysis, 2022 (n=381)

Variables	t	M	SD	df	S i g . (2-tailed)	MD	95% Interval Lower	Confidence Upper	Test value
Socialization experience	10.46	116.8	21.97	380	.001	11.8	9.55	13.98	105

As shown in Table 3 above, the one-sample statistics table reveals significantly high prevalence of problems of students' socialization (t=10.46, p<.05) with a mean score of 116.8 and a standard deviation of 21.97.

# Influence of Socialization Experience on Students' Learning

In this study, the researchers identified the influence of socialization on learning process among undergraduate students in the University of Gondar. Accordingly, multiple linear regressions were conducted to determine the best linear combination of gender, university visiting experience, students' socialization process, family occupation, family origin, and religion, mother's level of education and father's level of education for predicting students' learning processes in the University. Thus, as shown in table 4 below, suggests that undergraduate students' socialization experiences, family occupation and sex have statistically significant influence on students learning process, p, 0.001, 0.028 & .036 < 0.05 respectively, while mother's level of education; family origin and father's education also contributed little to zero to this prediction. The predictor variables all together significantly predicted the students' learning process, (R2 = .34, F (9, 371) = 14.15, p< .05). This indicates that 34% of the variance in students' learning process is explained by the model.

Table 4. Summary of simultaneous multiple regression analysis for predicting students' learning

Students learning	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval	Sig
Socialization experience	.314	.025	12.47	0	.264	.363	***
sex	2.621	1.19	2.20	.028	.28	4.961	**
Religion	.753	.621	1.21	.226	467	1.974	
Family origin	.307	1.373	0.22	.823	-2.393	3.007	
Father education	.662	.758	0.87	.383	829	2.154	
Mothers Education	818	.727	-1.13	.261	-2.248	.611	
STEM	408	1.251	-0.33	.745	-2.867	2.051	
Family occupation	-1.235	.587	-2.11	.036	-2.389	082	**
Constant	19.726	4.817	4.10	0	10.254	29.198	
Mean dependent var	60.297	SD depend	lent var	12.885			
R-squared	0.341	Number of	fobs	381			
F-test	21.334	Prob > F		0.000			
Akaike crit. (AIC)	2889.034	Bayesian o	crit. (BIC)	2928.462			

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> p<.01, \*\* p<.05, \* p<.1

In this study, the finding of the quantitative is augmented by the findings of qualitative data. Accordingly, semi-structured and key informant interviewees data showed the influence of socialization process on undergraduate students' life in the university. In relation to this, several respondents who participated in the semi-structured interviews replied that the university environment is a dynamic setting for acquiring knowledge and skills. In fact, socialization helps constant learning process, a never-ending and, a renewing process of reflections and actions where knowledge is being created through the exchange of experience.

They were also added that proper socialization process in the university environment enabled students to understand the mission, vision and goals of their department. Socialization makes students become aware of the norms and roles which are necessary to function, understand the presence of diversity, code of conducts, new mode of course delivery etc. Similarly, socialization process helps students to be more comfortable and better fit in the university environment and adapt in both professional and social relationships. That success will have a positive effect on learning motivation, academic achievement and the reduction of uncertainty in their stay at the university.

The semi-structured interview participants replied that socialization process positively or negatively influences students' learning process. In positive sense, socialization allows an individual to live in harmony with students in his or her major department. Strong socialization is crucial for students' educational effectiveness, academic achievement and learning process; it creates opportunities for students to learn from their teacher, peers and senior students about academic issues that are designed by their university and the courses taught by their department. They can discuss and study courses which they have learned, and they also discuss their future career development, their fate and their thinking which allow them to discuss their lives, and to foster a competitive spirit together. Socialization can boost their results, and it can facilitate learning process because learning process is the result of effective socialization among students, teacher and students. Effective socialization experience (process) makes students cooperate, enables them to do difficult tests and to do homework in groups etc. Undergraduate students' socialization within the university environment could make their results and

learning process much better than those of students who are not properly socialized to the university environment.

Semi-structured interviewees also replied that socialization is beneficial for students' learning process, and for their academics success. Socialization has an influence not only in the learning process, but also for careers. It gives them deeper knowledge and understanding of the application of their field of study. Socialization is used to discuss various issues like finances, academics, cultural exchange things such as language, doing charity, helping people in need, etc. among the university community. The positive side of the socialization process is greater than its negative side in the University of Gondar. It is important for students to achieve their common objectives in the university environment. With this regard, for example, a semi-structured interviewee replied as:

".... the first step is always hard in every situation as university life is very hard during the first year. Everyone is new and it was difficult to get along with students. Thus, socialization experience has a greater positive impact on students learning process. Sometimes the nature of university life forces us to socialize, and to work together. For example, I am from the theater arts department, and then when we do a theater production, we need a supporter. As a result, socialization is especially important to work collaboratively"

Specifically with regard to the influence of socialization on perceived learning process of undergraduate students, a key informant interviewee also explained as:

"...proper socialization experience/process enables students to cooperate in order to tackle difficult tests and exercise in groups, and so on. Because of this, their results and learning process is much better. Therefore, socialization is beneficial for students' learning and academic achievement by boosting their results; socialization improves their behavior. Students talk about studying, career development, and future thinking which give them an opportunity to discuss their future lives and to create a competitive spirit. Therefore, I believe that socialization processes positively affect students' learning process"

On the other hand, key informant interviewees replied that socialization does not always have a positive impact on students' perceived learning because it will negatively affect students in the university environment. Although socialization has often positive impact on students' campus life, too much socialization can cause students to lose their learning objectives. In addition, students come from different backgrounds with different mindsets, attitudes, and ways of life. In this regard, there might be some private life that needs distal socialization and sometimes people may require privacy and need to live alone. When these students are socialized and interacted, the boundary of privacy is breached. Therefore, maintaining a private life can be difficult at times where there is over socialization. As participants stated, as a result of over socialization among groups or individuals, to rationally think and decide becomes difficult. If students are over socialized, they do not think independently. In other words, strong socialization promotes dependency as they will be forced to carry out others believes and lead them to irrational decision. Sometimes a person's inviolable identities have been violated leading to weak socialization among students of diverse groups. Such strong socialization can have such a negative impact on

students.

Key informant interviewees also added that in recent times, the university socialization process has become superstitious. The society considers it shame like the way they greet, eat, celebrate holidays and use public spaces on university campuses due to over socialization. Because of this, some students are dependent on alcohol, khat chewing, smoking cigarettes and other narcotics. Students' interpersonal ties and strong socialization could also influence their academic performance. Therefore, socializing may influence undergraduate students in a negative way. Nevertheless, socialization should be strengthened among diverse groups of students and with other people in the university with strong control and follow-up.

For example, regarding the influence of socialization experience on learning process among diverse groups of undergraduate students, a key informant interviewee responded as:

"...I can say that the students' socialization process has both positive and negative contributions to students' learning process among diverse groups of undergraduate students. Regarding the impact of socialization on the learning process of diverse groups of undergraduate students, for example, if there is a strong link and socialization between misbehaving students and well behaving students, the later will becomes a misbehaving student. For example, if newcomer students interact with students who are addicted to alcohol, cigarettes, or khat, he or she will become one of them. Therefore, the process of newcomers' socialization needs follow-up. Orientation is needed as to who should be modeled to them"

## **Discussion**

The initial intent of the study was to investigate the influence of the socialization process on the learning process among diverse groups of undergraduate students in the University of Gondar. Accordingly, this study revealed that there is a significant difference between the calculated mean and sample mean of third-year undergraduate students' socialization in the University of Gondar. As the finding in Table 3 above shows, the sample mean is greater than the calculated mean of the population of the study, p< 0.05. This indicated that there were the problems of socialization among undergraduate students. To the other end, the descriptive statistics of the study shows that nearly half of the sample of 187 (49.1%) of the study participants said that they were poorly socialized. The qualitative findings of this study also revealed that there was poor socialization of undergraduate students as a result of lack of proper orientation and mentorship, language differences, religious differences and extremism, political affiliation or the absence of autonomy of the university, the political system and the current status of the country, campus size, the natural behavior of students, and previous experience. Because of these causes, the socialization experiences of diverse groups of undergraduate students, the learning process was influenced.

In line with the current study, Mikulyuk, (2014) also noted that there was poor socialization among undergraduate students in higher education institutions due to many external and internal factors such as limited funding to support college-sponsored activities, a lack of a cohesive peer environment between faculty members and student affairs practitioners, or even a lack of organization from the bottom to the top of the administration and management levels. His findings indicate that following traditional academic methods of content delivery in the form of facility tours and lectures presented by professionals may provide useful information, but they do not encourage students' engagement and interaction in a way that integrates social and professional components into academic learning.

Another study similar to the present research finding, (Cerrone, 2017) claimed that there is poor socialization of undergraduate students from diverse groups in higher education institutions. These were because of limited investment in student development and socialization programs on the university campus. Some students come with pre-existing dispositions toward making the experience social. On the other hand, (Mikulyuk, 2014a) other students may not be inclined to engage socially with the group despite preparatory efforts. However, there may be many students who do not know what to expect or anticipate concerning the social aspect of the field experience. Therefore, setting up students with the expectation of having a positive social experience going into university may help get them interacting sooner and more often in conjunction with the learning process.

Tierney, (2018) and Rookstool, (2018) task mastery (learning a new role, gaining self-confidence, attaining a favorable level of achievements, and being persistent in university), knowledge and acceptance of the organization's culture, personal learning and role clarity are all explained indicators of effective socialization in organizations. New students upon entry seem to focus most of their attention on what has been found critical to their adjustment and continued membership in higher learning institutions. Rookstool, (2018) also adds some of the pointers of effective socialization such as functioning within the working groups, knowledge and acceptance of the organization's culture, personal learning and role clarity.

The second objective of this study was identifying the influence of socialization experience on students learning process. In this regard, students learning process was operationalized as students productive classroom discussion, teachers feedback that helped the students to move in their academic learning, opportunities for students to learning, strategies that encouraged students to take ownership of their own learning, students' participation in leadership and extracurricular activities, students' group work, and their sense of connection, attraction and the extent to which they are making academic decisions. This study finding revealed that socialization experience, family occupation and sex are significantly predictors of the learning process among diverse groups of undergraduate students which is indicated by the R2 is 0.34, F (9, 371) = 20.67, (p < .05). This means that 34 % of the variance in undergraduate students learning process can be predicted from family occupation, gender, visiting experience, socialization experience, family origin, and religion, mother level of education and father level of education. Socialization experience significantly predicted learning process of undergraduate students, but the other independent variables add a little to the prediction of students learning process.

As shown in the qualitative findings too, university campus socialization experience has influence on undergraduate students' learning and living experience. The qualitative finding showed that improving undergraduate students' socialization experience and proper entry of undergraduate students into the University of Gondar help achieve their goals. This

allows students to further produce a meaningful contribution on knowledge acquisition and learning. Subsequently, this research confirms the fact that undergraduate students' socialization experience or process plays a salient role on students' learning process.

In congruent with the current study, Evelyn (2011) explained that students' interactions with their University environment is positively associated with persistence. As suggested earlier in the literature, Astin (1996) observed that the college campus environment is considered as the most important factor when cultivating students' intellectual growth and learning. Thus, this study substantiates Astin's claim of the college environment interaction which exhibits a powerful influence on university students' learning and living experience. In support of the current findings, Gaff and Wilson (1993) also observed that those students who were most involved in the pursuit of social and intellectual activities at college reported the most progress in learning abstractions, comprehending ideas, and applying principles. Without intellectual and social involvement, students' learning and living experience can be affected, ultimately leading to more unsatisfied learning.

The other finding similar to the current study was (Teferra & Altbach, 2016) which witnessed that higher education institutions are generally able to create an atmosphere of intellectual excitement that consists of many institutional factors such as an outstanding college environment, adequate support and institutional self-governance. To create greater atmosphere of greater learning environment, faculty members, corresponding administrators and college students all should play a prominent role on the process of delivering the highest quality of instruction and student life on campus. Teferra & Altbach, (2016) suggest that for a university to create an intellectually powerful environment and experience that satisfy students' need, senior officials and student affairs practitioners must consider about having efficient facilities, proper orientation and advising, teaching, participation in co-curricular activities and creating strong relationships among students and faculties. Mikulyuk, (2014b) suggested that socialization provides opportunities for students to directly engage in learning experiences which is related to academic content. When learning opportunities require positive interaction among students and faculty leaders, learning experiences are reported to offer a more comprehensive and well-rounded learning experience that is more likely to contribute to the development of a sense of group comfort. Kuh et al., (2006) suggested that more interactions between university students and their teachers would influence college students' learning process and living experience.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of socialization experiences on the students' learning process among diverse groups of undergraduate students in the University of Gondar in 2022. Accordingly, from the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that nearly half of the participants who joined the University of Gondar were not properly socialized or acclimated to the university environment. This indicated that the University of Gondar needs to work on the proper socialization of undergraduate students to reduce the poor socialization that resulted from lack of continuous orientation, ethnic and religious extremism, language difference etc.

The other issue the researchers inferred from this finding was socialization experience plays a significant role on the academic learning process of diverse groups of undergraduate

students. This means that there was a problem with the socialization process to acquire knowledge, and to adjust to a new environment, work in groups, and the culture of the organization in order to participate and navigate successfully as an organizational member in the university. Because of the poor nature of socialization in the university environment, outcomes of socialization such as the academic learning process in the University of Gondar can be affected. The other issue that can be deduced from this research was providing a high-quality university socialization process or proper orientation to the university environment would allow for easy formation of supportive and beneficial institutional climates for all students.

### **Declarations**

**Ethics approval and consent to participate:** Ethical approval was granted by Institutional review board (IRB) Committee of University of Gondar. In addition, written consents were obtained from all participants.

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**Competing interest:** the authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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