

Ethnic Identity Status Among University Students in Ethiopia

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Abstract

Ethnic identity is conceptualized as that part of a person's self-knowledge defined by membership in, and emotional connection to an ethnic group, together with beliefs and emotions related to membership. The development of a strong ethnic identity has also been proven as a basis for positive attitudes toward other groups (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Hence, the aim of this study was to examine the status ethnic identity among university students in Ethiopia in light of Phinney's ethnic identity model. To attain the purpose of the study cross sectional survey research design was employed. A total of 771 participants (484 males and 287 females) were sampled from four government universities in Ethiopia. The adapted measuring scale was the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). The combinations of multistage cluster sampling, stratified simple random sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures were employed to select the sample participants. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical measures (mean, SD, quartile & percentile scores), frequency percentage and chi-square. The findings of the study uncovered that the target group university students in Ethiopia were labelled at ethnic identity search or exploration status. In the ethnic identity search or exploration stage, people begin to learn more about their culture of origin by actively participating in cultural activities and talking to family or friends about issues related to ethnicity (Phinney, 1993). Hence, peers, parents, counseling psychologists, elders, university staffs and management and other concerned bodies should encourage and help to construct their ethnic identity to the achieved status.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Identity, Ethnic Identity, University Students

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Introduction

Ethnicity comprises a culture that includes religion, language, nationality, and political identification, while descent refers to the hereditary aspect of ethnic groups (Cokely, 2007). Moreover, Westin (2010) articulated ethnicity as collective identity. It is emotionally and cognitively significant to the individual, and ascribed by self and others. It is about the sense of belonging, in many (though not all) cases a people with common language, traditions and in some cases also territory. This understanding of ethnicity implies that majority populations are ascribed ethnicity. Awareness of one's own ethnicity is context-dependent (Westin, 2010).

Furthermore, based on the definitions and explanations provided by many scholars Habtamu (1998) identifies the following criteria (elements) to define ethnicity:

- *A group of people (a social category);*
- *People of (claim of) similar (same) racial origin or heritage;*
- *Speaking the same language, though not always;*
- *Similar culture as reflected in child upbringing, values, customs, marriage, religion etc...*
- *Some overt and covert cultural behavioural patterns and social ties.*

Then considering the above criteria Habtamu (1998) defines ethnic group/ethnicity as a human collectivity within a larger society, having real or supposed common ancestry, mostly speaking the same language, with similar culture as reflected by social values and child rearing practices, and with the association to specific territory.

While ethnic identity is reviewed by Buckingham (2008) as an affiliate construct, meaning that an individual is viewed by others and themselves as belonging to a particular group. Cokley's (2007) definition stated that ethnic identity is the extent to which one identifies with one's ethnic group (which includes cultural norms and traditions and is absent of internalized messages concerning race). Ethnic identity also defined by Tajfel (1981) as the ethnic component of social identity, "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 255).

Theories of Ethnic Identity Formation

Two theoretical approaches: ethnic identity formation theory and social identity theory (Phinney, 1990) has been in use to explain one's ethnic identity. Several theoretical models of ethnic identity formation have been proposed in the literature on ethnic and racial identity formation (Louis & Liem, 2005; Phinney, 1992; Helms, 1990; Sue &

Sue, 1990; Cross, 1978). These theories include ethnic identity formation theory (Phinney's three-stage model of ethnic identity formation), Sue and Sue's racial or ethnic identity development theory, Cross's Nigrescence theory and social identity theory. Even though these stage-like theories are elucidated in different wording and postulated for different ethnic groups and cultures, they are almost similar in describing progressions through stages. Further, most Developmental and Social Psychologists have long been interested in studying ethnic identity and have conceptualized it within the framework of Phinney's stage-like ethnic identity developmental theory and social identity theory which posits that belonging to individual and group contribution to maintaining a positive self-concept. Thus, Phinney's stage-like ethnic identity and social identity theories are considered as relevant theoretical framework for this study.

I. Phinney (1993): Three-Stage Model of Ethnic Identity Formation

On the basis of Marcia's (1980) conceptualization of Erikson's (1968) theory of identity development, Phinney (1989) forwarded a three-stage model of ethnic identity formation which works for other ethnic groups follow a stage-like developmental pathway in the realization of their ethnic identities. Phinney's conceptualization of ethnic identity integrates the exploration and commitment dimensions from Marcia's (1966) identity status model with the affirmation dimension from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Her model and its accompanying measures, including the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), focus almost entirely on the processes underlying ethnic identity development. Individuals are assumed to proceed from a state of being unconcerned with or unaware of ethnicity (diffusion), to a positive attachment to one's ethnic group and to others who belong to that group.

To elaborate more, the first stage of the theory is identified as unexamined ethnic identity, which is characterized by an absence of exploration of one's identity. Individuals who are in the unexamined stage of their ethnic identity development show no interest in actively searching for the meaning and importance of their ethnicity in their day-to-day functioning. They often adopt the values and attitudes of the others culture, including many of the negative stereotypes of their own group that are held by the dominant society (Sneed, Schwartz & Cross, 2006; Phinney, 1993). Adolescents who have not examined issues related to ethnic identity are characterized as either diffuse (i.e., unconcerned with one's own ethnic identity) or foreclosed (i.e., accepting the values and attitudes of the dominant culture toward one's ethnic group).

The second stage of ethnic identity development, referred to as ethnic identity search or moratorium, involves the active search for an ethnic identity. The push force for beginning to search for their ethnic identity is a personal experience with prejudice. People in this stage are more interested in discussions with adults, ethnic literatures and participate in cultural ceremonies. During this stage, some individuals may develop identity. They may purposely reject customs, traditions and cultures of the dominant groups (Franzoi, 2000).

The third stage and culmination of ethnic identity formation is known as ethnic identity achievement. Individuals who are in this latter stage have actively explored the meaning of their ethnicity and have developed a clear, confident sense of their own ethnicity. They identify and incorporate some acceptable values of the dominant culture and stand against the oppressive ones. In essence, ethnic identity achievement corresponds to an acceptance and internalization of one's ethnicity (Phinney, 1993). Franzoi (2000) also asserted that the positive ethnic identity development functions not only to protect members of disparage groups from continuing intolerance, but it also allows them to use this positive social identity to peruse mainstream goals and participate in mainstream life.

II. Sue and Sue: Racial and Ethnic Identity Development (R/EID) Model

Like other racial and ethnic identity development models, the R/EID model is a stage model, closely paralleling the progression originally developed by Marcia, which was developed for Asian Americans but may apply to other ethnic groups as well. The R/EID model depicts individuals as progressing from a state of unexplored and unachieved racial identity to a state of explored and achieved racial identity which goes through the stages of conformity to integrative awareness.

According to the model, an individual in the *conformity stage* (Stage 1) assumes that the values, norms, lifestyles, and traditions of the dominant culture are superior to his or her own. As a result, these individuals will tend to feel negatively toward themselves and will attempt to identify with the dominant cultural group (e.g., White Americans). Those in the *dissonance stage* (Stage 2) have begun to question the complete rejection of their culture of origin and the acceptance of the dominant cultural group. Transition to this stage is often facilitated by racial incidents or encounters that cause one to begin questioning the inferiority of their racial group. During this stage, Asian Americans begin to recognize that racism does exist, and they begin to identify racist media images and messages. *The resistance and immersion stage* (Stage 3) is characterized by the complete acceptance of Asian American culture and a rejection of mainstream European American culture. Individuals in this stage see those belonging to the dominant group as being racist, as proliferating racist messages and ideals, and as reinforcing racism in society at large. As such, members of the dominant group are generally mistrusted and disliked. Transition into *the introspection stage* (Stage 4) occurs when the individual begins to realize that not all dominant

group members are bad or explicitly racist and that too much energy has been exerted in maintaining this presumably unhealthful position. Individuals in this stage begin to struggle with how to endorse various aspects of dominant culture without being unfaithful to their heritage and culture. Finally, *the integrative awareness stage* (Stage 5) includes those who have successfully passed through the previous four stages, have contemplated and struggled with what it means to be Asian American in American society, and have come to be secure in their unique ethnic identity. Individuals in this stage appreciate the pros and cons of all ethnic groups and have actively integrated these different aspects into their ethnic identity, which now reflects a healthy acceptance of both dominant and minority cultural group components (Sneed, Schwartz & Cross, 2006).

III. Cross: Nigrescence Theory

The other theory is Cross's (1971) model of Nigrescence is a five stage model for African Americans moving from self-hatred to self-love. (i) *Pre-encounter*: individuals in this stage believe that race/ethnicity does not matter and never give their racial/ethnic group membership much thought. Their group-esteem could be positive or negative, but their exploration is very low. (ii) *Encounter stage* was originally conceived of as the occurrence of a traumatic, ethnically prejudiced event that shakes a person from their original view so that they are more receptive to new interpretations of their racial identity. (iii) *Immersion-emersion*: here the person decides to be his/her ethnic group, explores what it means to be its ethnic group and fully immerse her/himself into everything to his/her ethnic group. (iv) *Internalization*: upon emerging from the immersion-emersion stage, individuals enter the internalization in which they are confident and self-centered of their ethnic identity and have positive group self-esteem. (v) *Internalization-commitment*: individuals in the internalization commitment stage take their confidence in and commitment to their ethnic group one step further and work toward elevating the status of minority groups and eliminating racism and ethnic stereotyping in the society (Cross, 1995). It is possible for individuals to stagnate at the immersion-emersion stage and not move on or to recycle back through the stages at later points in life after experiencing a new encounter (Parham, 1995).

In summary, the above theories has been conceptualized in varying ways, and has many similarities in that they are ways of conceptualizing people's experiences of themselves in relation to the dominant group. They are also linear because they are described as progressions through stages. They each begin with experiences of internalized discrimination, a working-through phase to an integration of identity that balances both ethnic identity values and the values of the dominant culture. From these perspectives it is possible to articulate that ethnic identity formation is more a developmental process. Psychologists have also taken a different approach to understanding identity development. Tajfel and Turner (1986) focused their work upon understanding people's feelings of belonging or attachment to their social groups as elucidated in social identity theory.

IV. Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory illustrates individual's self-concept as derivative of their group relations and group memberships-groups such as ethnic groups, neighborhoods, religious groups, and so on (Tajfel, 1978). This self-identification with the group is the social identity, which Tajfel (1978) defined as that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his/her knowledge of his/her membership of a social group together with the value and emotional attachment to that membership. In general in social identity theory group identity is an important part of the self-concept; people generally attribute value to the group they belong to and accomplish better self-esteem from their sense of belonging to that group. Ethnic identity is one type of group identity that is central to the self-concept of members of ethnic minority groups. On the basis of social identity theory, it would be expected that ethnic identity would include ethnic attitudes and a sense of group belonging (Tajfel, 1978).

Furthermore, the social identity theory hypothesized that people aim to positively differentiate their ethnic group from other groups in order to maintain, protect, or enhance a positive social identity for group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Thus, the more strongly individuals identify with their groups, the more bias they demonstrate in favor of these groups at the expense of out-groups or heighten ethnocentrism, intergroup competition and conflict (Hogg & Ridgeway, 2003).

The very notion of the social identity theory, with its groundings in the social self, intergroup relations, and group processes (Hogg & Ridgeway, 2003), is a guiding point in much social psychological research for the explanation of in-group bias as well as intra-group homogeneity and stereotyping, and inter-group attitude change through contact (Brown, 2000). Through these conceptualizations, the social identity theory ties itself to ethnocentrism-the tendency for in-group members to view themselves superior to out-group members in the context of cultural or ethnic groups and result in interethnic conflict.

In general, the above theories has been conceptualized in varying ways, and has many similarities in that the ways they are conceptualizing people's experiences of themselves in relation to their ethnic identity. The theories are developed in Western white dominant and minority perspectives. In light of these, this study would deal with Phinney's stage-like ethnic identity as theoretical framework which considered as appropriate to the study and working for members of all ethnic groups in every society.

Furthermore, theoretically this study is believed to bridge the theoretical and research gap in the area of ethnic identity and related issues among university students in the context of Ethiopia and multiethnic African nations considering Phinney's three-stage of ethnic identity. To the best knowledge of the investigator, none of the researchers conducted studies ethnic identity status in Ethiopia had used the aforementioned theories as theoretical framework. Moreover, the theories are formulated in western contexts and lay emphasis on comparing the dominant (white) and subordinate (non-white) groups. Therefore, this study was aimed at to determine the ethnic identity *status* of university students in Ethiopia.

Materials and Methods

To determine the ethnic identity status of University students cross sectional research design was employed. Data was collected from four Universities namely Addis Ababa University, Adama Science and Technology University, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University and Mada Walabu University. The universities were purposefully selected from various generations and sizes of universities. Four universities from different categories instead of one is primarily preferred in this study for the reason that including more than one case gives more power to the analysis and findings in terms of getting comprehensive and rich data.

Population, sampling procedures and sample

The target population of this study has been university students of regular program of both sexes from different ethnic backgrounds of sampled universities. The combinations of multistage cluster sampling, stratified simple random sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures were employed to select respondents. The total population of the study during the study period was 47, 150. The survey has used the single population proportion formula to determine the sample size.

In order to address non-responses, the sample size had increased by a non-response insurance factor. Thus, allowances of 10% non-response rate make a total sample of 421. Furthermore, the single population proportion formula is valid only for simple random or systematic random sampling method; but the sampling technique that is used for this study is multistage cluster sampling technique. Therefore, the calculated sample size has to be multiplied by D which is the design effect resulting with $N = Dn$ where N is the sample size for cluster sample, n is the sample size obtained from the calculation and D is the design effect. The design effect (D) provides a correction for the loss of sampling efficiency resulting from the use of multi stage cluster sampling instead of simple random sampling. Hence, by considering the design effect of 2 the number had been multiplied by 2 and the total number of students taken for the study was 842.

Instruments for the study

In order to collect the pertinent data, the researchers used the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), a 12-item scale which assesses ethnic identity development among adolescents and adults. It provides a means of examining young people's degree of identification with their ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). This is useful with samples that are ethnically diverse background. The measure also permits comparison that correlates ethnic identity across different samples such as the relationship of ethnic identity to any number of psychological variables. It also allows exploration of commonalities across groups as well as the differences among groups in the development of ethnic identity (Fisher & Corcoran, 2007).

The scale comprises two factors: ethnic identity search (item numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, and 10) and affirmation, belonging, and commitment (item numbers 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 12). The first has been considered to be a developmental and cognitive component and the second factor is an affective component. MEIM is also better suited as a single factor measure. The original scale formulated and used by Phinney has arranged ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Reliability of the scales was found to be somewhat higher. In previous studies, alpha coefficients for the MEIM scale range from .69 to .90 (Phinney, 1992). Similarly, the scale was adapted and used by Habtamu, Hallahmi & Abbink (2001) in Ethiopia and has been reported as reliable and appropriate to the Ethiopian culture and young adult respondents. Low scores on ethnic identity scale represent unexamined ethnic identity and high scores represent a high or achieved ethnic identity.

During the pilot study, the 12 MEIM items completed by the respondents were entered to SPSS version 21. During encoding of scores no one item has been reversed, so that all items have been positively stated. Participants were asked to indicate on the 5-point scale the extent to which they agree with each item from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The internal reliability for the scale during pilot study was $\alpha=.796$ and on the main study ($\alpha=.919$) was very high. The pilot study was conducted in Mada Walabu University on 50 Male and Female regular undergraduate students which were not included in the main study.

In data collection, eight data collectors (two from each university) who have previous experience in data collection were recruited. Training was given on the questionnaire and data collection techniques. Data collectors had distributed the questionnaire to the students, remained in the classroom during administration and transported the completed questionnaire from the universities.

Both the Amharic and English versions of the same questionnaire were given to the respondents and invited to fill out the one they prefer. The average response rate for this study was 92.

Methods of data analyses

After the responses on the questionnaires have been collected, SPSS version 21.0 was used to enter, clean, and analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics (the mean, SD, variance, quartile and percentile scores), frequency percentages, Chi-square (χ^2) and pairwise chi-square comparisons were computed. Confidence intervals of 95% were used to see the precision of the study.

Results and Discussions

Status of Ethnic Identity

In order to determine the ethnic identity status of university students in Ethiopia, in reference to Phinney's ethnic identity formation stages i.e. unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search/exploration or achieved ethnic identity, it is pragmatic to exercise simple descriptive statistics such as the mean, SD, variance and percentile scores on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measures (MEIM). A high score on the MEIM ($5 \times 12 = 60$) represents a highest ethnic identity achievement, the average ($3 \times 12 = 36$) would stand for ethnic identity search or exploration and while the lower score ($1 \times 12 = 12$) stands for lower ethnic identity attainment or unexamined ethnic identity.

In another way, to sort the participants of the study into higher, medium and lower level of ethnic identity percentile scores were utilized to determine the cut-off scores for the different categories. The mean scores on normal curve below 25th percentile score stand for low status, while the mean scores above 75th percentile scores signify the highest status. The mean scores between the 25th and 75th percentile scores denotes medium level of ethnic identity.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistical Values on Ethnic Identity Scores

Variable	N of items	Mean	Variance	SD	Max	Min	Percentile Scores		
							25 th	50 th	75 th
Ethnic Identity	12	39.49	148.45	12.18	60.00	30.00	31.00	41.00	49.00

The descriptive summary of the observed mean ethnic identity score ($M=39.49$) portrays in Table 1, is not far from the expected average (36) and 50th percentile score (41). As it can be observed from the Table 1 the lowest 25th percentile score (31.00) is lower than the expected average (36), while 75th (49) percentile scores are bigger than the expected average and the mean. Thus, the ethnic identity status of the participants' of this study has tended to be to ethnic identity search or exploration.

Furthermore to authenticate the above information, based on the total rating scores on Multigroup Ethnic Identity measure it is possible to label the ethnic identity status of participants of the study into higher, middle and lower level by using the total scores exhibited. And subsequently it is possible to assign the participants to one of the three aforementioned orientations. Relying on the rating scores of respondents (who said strongly disagree and disagree) on ethnic identity scale the lower score (12-24) on individual scale stand for lower level of ethnic identity status of university students. Similarly, the expected middle score (scores between disagree and agree) on ethnic identity (25-47) signify for middle level of ethnic identity status. Whilst the higher (who said agree and strongly agree) expected score (48-60) on ethnic identity scale suggests for the higher level of ethnic identity status among students.

Table 2: Descriptive Frequency, Chi-square and Pairwise Chi-square Comparisons on Ethnic Identity, Intercultural Sensitivity, Ethnocentrism and Interethnic Conflict Handling Ability Scores across Different Levels

Variable	Levels	Freq.	Percent	df	χ^2	χ^2 (Pairwise Comparisons)			
						(I) Level	(J) Level	df	χ^2
Ethnic identity	Lower (12-24)	106	13.7	2	253.70*	Lower	Middle	1	218.83*
	Middle (25-47)	457	59.3			Middle	Higher	1	93.23*
	Higher (48-60)	208	27.0			Higher	Lower	1	33.13*
	Total	771	100.0						

Note: * $P < 0.05$

Considering the above descriptions, as shown in Table 2, on ethnic identity construct, significant number of the respondents ($\chi^2 = 253.704$, $p < 0.05$), more than half (59.3 %) were categorized under the middle level of ethnic identity (ethnic identity search or exploration). Moreover as indicated in Table 2, pairwise comparisons were conducted among the frequencies on different levels of ethnic identity. The pairwise ad hoc analyses for all comparisons revealed significant differences among the three levels of the variables.

Thus, all the above descriptions may show that the ethnic identity status of the participants' of this study has tended to be to ethnic identity search or exploration. Individuals who are in this midst stage are usually motivated

to explore their ethnicity due to a growing awareness that not all values of the dominant group are beneficial to other ethnic group members.

Generously, Phinney (1993; 1989) proposes a model of ethnic identity development working for members of all ethnic groups in every society wherein individuals go through three stages: (a) *unexamined ethnic identity* - individuals would have unexamined positive or negative views of their ethnic group. Individuals who are in the unexamined stage of their ethnic identity development show no interest in actively searching for the meaning and importance of their ethnicity in their day-to-day functioning. They often adopt the values and attitudes of the others or the dominant culture. (b) *ethnic identity search or exploration* - this is the second stage of ethnic identity development which is referred to as an ethnic identity search or moratorium, in which individuals involve in an active search for their ethnic identity. The push factor for developing to search for their ethnic identity is from their personal experience filled with prejudices. People in this stage are more interested in discussions with adults, ethnic literatures and participate in cultural ceremonies. During this stage, some individuals would likely develop ethnic identity. They may purposely reject customs, traditions and cultures of the dominant groups and are likely involve in interethnic conflicts. (c) *achieved ethnic identity* - individuals in this stage tend to explore their ethnic group membership and are clear as to the meaning and significance of ethnicity on their life. This stage is also characterized by showing an appreciation for one's own ethnicity and exhibiting a tendency to resolve conflicts that occur with the dominant groups. As individuals actively learn about their ethnicity, they come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of their ethnicity through a resolution of two issues - cultural difference between their own ethnic group and the dominant groups and the low status of that ethnic group in relative to other groups in the entire society (Phinney, 1990). In such cases, people would have a clear and confident relationship with their ethnicity, though they may not be highly involved in activities related to their own ethnic group. Thus, having a positive sense of ethnic group membership is often expected from individuals who have an achieved ethnic identity and is highly correlated with improved intercultural sensitivity and multiculturalism, and lower ethnocentrism and interethnic conflict during inter-group interactions (Phinney, 1992).

Cognizant of the above Phinney's ethnic identity developmental stages, based on the scores, the participants of the study are labelled at the second stage of ethnic identity development which is referred to as an ethnic identity search or exploration. Individuals who are in this middle stage are usually motivated to explore their ethnicity due to a growing awareness for not all values of the dominant group are beneficial to other ethnic group members. The growing awareness is referred as the cumulative effect which becomes the basis for initiating a search or exploration of ethnicity thereby developing a personal sense of ethnic identification.

In the ethnic identity search stage, people begin to learn more about their culture of origin by actively involving in cultural activities and talking to family or friends about issues related to ethnicity. Furthermore, they think more of the implications of their own culture, ethnicity and the minority status for their present and future life (Phinney, 1993). It is evident that these days people especially youths in Ethiopia are actively engage to learn more about their culture and origin by participating in cultural activities (rituals). For instance, the Oromo's celebrate "Erecha" (to thank God (Waaqaa) for the blessings and mercies they have received throughout the year), Sidama's ethnic group celebrate "Chambalala" (marks of a new year incoming) and other religious holidays such as by Orthodox followers "Timket" (epiphany), "Meskel" (the finding of the True Cross) and others are colorfully celebrated than past times.

Concerning the status of ethnic identity up to the knowledge of the investigator there is no local empirical researches that specifically identify the ethnic identity status of university students in Ethiopia. In general, from the above exercises the ethnic identity status of university students in Ethiopia can be labelled to *ethnic identity search or exploration*. Lack of resolving an identity issue during adolescence and emerging adulthood does not mean that identity quest is suppressed once and for all in one's remaining life. Many individuals who have developed positive identities follow what is called "MAMA" cycle; that is to mean, their identity status changes from *moratorium* to *achievement* to *moratorium* to *achievement* (Marcia, 1994).

Conclusion

These days in Ethiopia the issue of ethnic identity and related matters are becoming popularized and overemphasized, ethnic associations are currently spread enough, ethnic politics as well due to ethnic federalism. Many politicians and writers thought that this brought about a deliberate plan of fragmentation and relationship dissolution among differential ethnic backgrounds in their encounter. Similarly, these days' individuals and groups highly motivated to learn and practice more about their culture of origin by actively involving in cultural activities, reading, talking to elders, politicians, family and friends about issues related to ethnicity. Accordingly, this study has attempted to determine the status of ethnic identity among university students in Ethiopia referring Phinney's stage-like ethnic identity theory as theoretical framework.

Based on the findings of the study, the ethnic identity developmental status of the target group university students is likely at ethnic identity search or exploration. In the ethnic identity search or exploration stage, people begin to learn more about their culture of origin by actively participating in cultural activities and talking to family

or friends about issues related to ethnicity. Furthermore, they think more about the implications of their own ethnicity and status for their present and future life (Phinney, 1993). In other words those individuals who are in this midst stage have usually motivated to explore their ethnicity due to a growing awareness that not all values of the dominant group are useful to other ethnic group members.

Implication

In this study the emerging young adult and young adult university students' ethnic identity development is searching or exploring ethnic identity. Consequently it has to be improved from searching ethnic identity development to achieved ethnic identity. Hence peers, parents, counseling psychologists, elders, university staffs and management and other concerned bodies should encourage and help to construct their ethnic identity to the achieved status.

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