Low Achievement and Received Support
–
Students´ and Parents´ Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

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Low achievement is an acute challenge to Eritrean education. Although some research is done about Eritrean teachers´ work and student´s learning outcomes, little is known about children´s and their parents´ perceptions of low achievement. Research suggests that positive self-perception and support at home reinforces academic achievement and well-being. This research fills a gap in the study of low achievement by triangulating the parents and children´s perceptions. The data consists of children´s drawings and interviews of five fifth-graders and five parents. All interviews were analyzed using inductive content analysis. The study was conducted in collaboration with Asmara College of Education and an elementary school in Asmara.

Children´s perceptions of their own academic achievement were mainly based on reflections of peers´ achievement. Perceptions of academic achievement relied on comparisons to peers. Parents expressed more concern for achievement levels than the children. Both children and parents considered the children to be engaged in their learning and saw education as vital for positive life outcomes. Parents rely on community when unable to support their children themselves. Descriptions by parents living in communities with no people who were able to support their children were most grim. Practical implications are discussed, such as identifying the low achieving communities and utilizing the community structure to provide support more effectively.

Keywords: low achievement; parental support; self-perception; Eritrea

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Oppilaiden heikko suoriutuminen on akuutti ongelma Eritreassa. Oppilaiden suoriutumista ja eritrealaisten opettajien työskentelyä on tutkittu aiemmin, mutta lasten ja heidän vanhempiensa käsityksiä heikosti suoriutumisesta on tutkittu niukasti. Minäkäsitys ja koulunkäynnin tuki ovat positiivisesti yhteydessä oppimistuloksiin ja hyvinvointiin. Tässä tutkimuksessa on trianguloitu vanhempien ja lasten näkemyksiä heikosti suoriutumisesta ja koulunkäynnin tuesta kotona. Aineisto koostuu viiden viidesluokkalaisen ja viiden vanhemman haastatteluista sekä lasten piirrustuksista. Haastattelut on analysoitu induktiivisesti laadullisen sisällönanalyysin menetelmällä. Tutkimus suoritettiin yhteistyössä Asmara College of Educationin kanssa asmaralaisessa alakoulussa.

Lasten käsitykset omasta suoriutumisesta perustuivat pitkälti oman kyvyn arvioinnista suhteessa muihin viidesluokkalaisiin. Vanhemmat olivat huolestuneempia lastensa oppimistuloksista kuin lapset. Sekä lapset että vanhemmat pitivät viidesluokkalaisia sitoutuneina koulunkäyntiin, ja toivat esiin koulunkäynnin tärkeän merkityksen lapsen tulevaisuudennäkymien kannalta. Vanhemmat luottivat yhteisön tukeen, jos he kokivat olevansa itse kykenemättömiä tukemaan lastaan. Heikoimmaksi koulunkäynnin tukea kotona arvioivat vanhemmat, joiden yhteisöissä ei ollut ihmisiä, jotka voisivat tukea heidän lastansa. Lopuksi tuodaan esille jatkotutkimushaasteita ja käytännön sovelluksia, joihin lukeutuvat eniten tukea tarvitsevien yhteisöjen paikantaminen ja yhteisörakenteiden hyödyntäminen tuen kohdistamiseksi.

Avainsanat: heikosti suoriutuminen; koulunkäynnin tuki kotona; minäkäsitys; Eritrea

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research on the low-achieving children is largely uncharted territory in the Eritrean context. However, Yikealo et al. (2017) and Zemichael et al. (2017) have researched parental involvement in support of children´s learning in Eritrea. Previous research on parent-teacher relationships reveals that particularly the low-achieving children´s parents struggle to participate in their child´s education (Zemichael et al. 2017). Schools, classrooms, the teachers, and the pupils are often scrutinized when educational systems are evaluated. Still, there is a research gap in understanding the position of the primary stakeholders here: the parents of these children and the children themselves.

A primary focus of this study is low-achieving children's perceptions of self. According to Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976, 413), an individual´s general concept of the self is divided into academic self-concept (ASC) and non-academic self-concept. Marsh and Shavelson (1985, 120) propose that children´s conception of parent relationships could be associated with both ASC and non-academic self-concept. This could be an indication of how significantly parents affect their children´s self-perceptions in all domains of self-concept. Improving children´s self-perceptions has value in itself, but it has also been pointed out that achievement gains in learning are unlikely to be long-lasting if self-beliefs are not fostered (Marsh & Craven 2005).

Peer relationships are a major factor affecting children's self-perceptions (Marsh, Hau & Craven 2004; Schmidt et al. 2017, 21). Students reflect on their academic abilities externally in relation to standards such as normative comparisons, school grades or class ranking (Marsh & Hau 2004, 57). Strong evidence also suggests that students use achievement in one academic domain (e.g. verbal ability) as a frame of comparison for a self-concept in another domain (e.g. mathematical ability) (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 15; Marsh et al. 2018). This process is modelled by the Internal/External (I/E) frame of reference model (Marsh 1986b).

In Eritrea, the national minimum mastery level is defined as 80% of learners attaining at least 50 percent in the core subjects: Mother tongue, mathematics and

English (MoE 2013a, 25.) There is a concern for the number of low achievers on the elementary level in the country, as more than 20 percent of children do not meet the minimum requirements (Department of General Education 2018, 3). Low achievement is also implicated in the high repetition rates which stood at nine percent on primary school level in 2016, while the number on the elementary level in 2011 was 11,3 (Ministry of Education 2013a, 25). Repeated exposure to failure can induce negative emotions, such as guilt and shame, and further increase low achieving children´s beliefs of incompetence (Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005, 227). As this can disengage children from school (Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon & Craven 2010; Persehey 2011), there is a toxic reciprocal cycle that ought to be thwarted.

As a westerner conducting research in my father´s country of origin, I should briefly address my positioning as a researcher to indicate an honest pursuit of sincerity and transparency through self-reflexivity (Tracy 2010, 842). My initial interest in the topic of low achievement and self-perception rises from a personal position. Having been raised in Finland as a child of mixed Eritean and Finnish heritage, a privileged glimpse into the Eritrean society from an insider-outsider perspective has always been accompanied by a craving to attach the past to the present, the child to the parent, the boy to the man. Interacting with extended family directly affected by the effervescent past of Eritrea, my attention turned to the persistence of self-concepts, be they justified or irrational, emancipatory or harsh. It helped me to not only see that connecting the past and the present is a struggle for all but also to see how significantly the future is shaped by this process (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 2).

These experiences navigated me towards the two research questions of this study: "what are Eritrean 5th graders´ and their parents´ perceptions of low achievement" and "what are Eritrean 5th graders´ and their parents´ perceptions of parental support." In comparison to most research on low achievement, this study benefits from triangulating the parents and children´s views to provide deeper insight and cross-data validity checks (Patton 2002, 248). A qualitative approach to the experiences of these children and their parents could provide

fruitful data on what the low achievers' reality looks like and thus provide applicable approaches to influence it.

2   CHILDRENS´ SELF-PERCEPTIONS

There are numerous theoretical approaches to the concept of self and how it is divided into categories (e.g. Gana 2012, 1–6). James (1890) introduced the multi-dimensionality of self-concept divided into the "I" and "Me". The I-self, as the observer, becomes aware of the Me-self, as observed when children grow up (Harter 2012, 29). It is these observations of the self as if from another person´s perspective, that is the topic of interest when researching self-perceptions. Progress in psychological measurement, and arguably statistical modeling have promoted interest in self-concepts and implicit self-concept, which is outside of conscious awareness (Gana 2012, 2-3; Brunner et al. 2010, 967).

Bong and Skaalvik (2003, 2) argue for the importance of grasping the meaning of self in students´ minds, as children with different self-beliefs demonstrate different levels of cognitive, social, and emotional engagement in school. They argue that this school-related experience makes up a major portion of children's lives and life outcomes. Albert Bandura´s model of self-efficacy is renowned for its strong explanatory power on physiological stress reactions and resignation and despondency to failure experiences as well as the way it assesses how self-beliefs influence thought patterns, emotional arousal, and accomplishment (Bandura 1982). However, the multifaceted, hierarchical model of self-concept initially proposed by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) is referred in this study. The concepts overlap to a large extent, but they differ in how they are conceptualized and operationalized in research (Bong & Skaalvik 2003). Self-efficacy is measured by presenting individuals with tasks of varying in difficulty, complexity, stressfulness, or some other dimension, and asking them to judge how they can do in it, and their degree of certainty (Bandura 1982). Here, the focus is on the meaning-making process in relation to low achievement rather than the fifth grader´s assessments of their performance or cognitive processes, thus the model of self-concept fits the purpose.

2.1 Model of Self-Concept

Self-concept is a person's perception of himself, which is most significantly influenced by environmental reinforcements and significant others (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976, 411). The model of self-concept explains and predicts how an individual acts, meanwhile, how an individual acts is also considered to influence how one perceives herself (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976, 411). Self-concept is measured without providing a reference point to any task to a respondent, hence the respondent is asked to make evaluations of their competence without being provided explicit information about criteria (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 18). Instead, the self has to act as an observer of the self (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton 1976 415), thus the responses reveal the self-perceptions constructed by the individual.

Low-achieving children's perceptions of self are the primary focus of this study. Separation of self-concept into different domains has been found to occur already at the age of four (Marsh, Ellis & Craven 2002). Therefore, the development of an individual´s general self-concept is tightly connected with early interactions, in which parents play the most vital role for most children. Then again, as children grow older, the significance of interactions with peers outside of immediate family increases, hence diversifying the ground on which children reflect themselves (Erikson 1982). The increased importance of peers is most evident in the development of ASC, which naturally starts to develop later in life when formal education begins.

According to Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976, 413), an individual´s general concept of the self is hierarchically divided. General self-concept is divided into ASC and non-academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept into social, emotional and physical self-concept. Later, Marsh and Shavelson revised the model after concluding that verbal and mathematical aspects of ASC are nearly uncorrelated (Marsh & Shavelson 1985; Marsh, Shavelson & Byrne 1988; 366). Despite its advantages and predictive power, the model could not fit a general ASC on top of the hierarchy (Marsh, Shavelson & Byrne 1988). After the

initial proposal of the Marsh/Shavelson model in 1985, advancements in structural equation modeling facilitated the discovery of the Nested Marsh/Shavelson Model, in which a general ASC is at the top (Brunner et al. 2010, 967; Schmidt et al. 2017). For the purposes of this study, the formulation of ASC is most relevant.

2.1.1   Academic Self-Concept

Out of the different facets of the model of self-concept, especially the structure and validity of ASC are backed by a wealth of empirical research. The Nested Marsh/Shavelson Model offers a coherent theoretical framework explaining how ASC are hierarchically organized with general ASC at the apex, subject-specific and separated across the mathematics/science and verbal domains (Brunner et al. 2010, 976). ASC formation becomes apparent during the first two to three years of schooling (Schmidt et al. 2017). This formation process is likely affected by both prior achievement leading to subsequent ASC as well as prior ASC leading to subsequent achievement (see Reciprocal Effects Model in Marsh et al 2018, 6-7). There is also evidence for a negative effect of school-average achievement on ASC, which Marsh has coined as the "big-fish-little-pond effect" or BFLPE (Marsh 1986a; Marsh et al 2018, 3). This effect is explained by the highly influential I/E frame of reference model (Marsh 1986b), which is further discussed in section 2.1.2.

Particularly intriguing about the model of ASC and its formulation in an individual is its apparent universal nature. In possibly the strongest cross-cultural study of ASC, Marsh and Hau (2004) analyzed data from 26 participatory countries in the PISA studies making a strong case for the generalizability of the I/E frame of reference model in different cultures. This evidence was reinforced by the findings of Brunner et al. (2009) when researching the same sample as Marsh and Hau. They also add that while the comparison processes affecting the formation of ASC appears to be a cross-cultural phenomenon, the strength of the processes varies across cultures (Brunner et al. 2009, 389). It should be reasonable

to estimate this formulation of ASC in an individual to be applicable in the Eritrean context.

Academic self-concept predicts student´s cognitive, social, and emotional engagement in school, and shapes children´s school-related experience (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 2). Particularly relevant findings in relation to the Eritrean context, where low-achievement and drop-out rates vary greatly between regions, are how disengagement from school and lesser perceptions of self appear to accumulate in challenging neighborhoods. For example, Persehey´s (2011) research on African American 4th and 6th graders in an academically challenged school district suggests that students who do not perceive themselves as able, who lack confidence, or who have diminished school satisfaction may be at risk for school disengagement. In the Australian context, there is evidence that while belonging to a disadvantaged minority correlated significantly with disengagement from school, this effect was negated by strong academic self-concept (Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon & Craven 2010). Regional differences drop out and low achievement in the Eritrean context are further discussed in section 2.2.

Reflected appraisals from significant others e.g. parents, parents´ beliefs and behavior, teacher evaluations, reinforcements, and attributions of own behavior also play a role in the development of ASC (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 15; Pesu, Viljaranta & Aunola 2016, 24). Although this study focuses on children and their parents, the significant role of teacher´s beliefs in the development of children´s academic self-concept at the beginning of formal schooling has to be noted (Pesu, Viljaranta & Aunola 2016). Marsh and Craven emphasize the significance of these self-perceptions, stating that if students´ self-concepts are not fostered alongside improvements in academic achievement, the achievement gains are unlikely to be long-lasting (2005). To summarize, there is ample evidence that focusing on constructive reinforcement of positive self-concepts supports children psychologically as well as academically.

Breadth of evidence suggests that children´s self-perceptions affect academic achievement, task-orientation, anxiety, satisfaction, self-esteem and posi-

tive emotion (for example Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 28; Persehey 2011), thus emphasizing the significance of researching children´s and their parents´ perceptions of low achievement. For example, Bouffard, Roy and Vezeau suggest that by adopting too ambitious academic standards to please their parents, children are likely to fail to reach them (2005, 227). Whatever the achievement classification of children, their perception of parental support has a unique contribution to their self-perceptions and socioemotional adjustment (Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005). Based on previous research, it is reasonable to hypothesize that in this study, the children´s perceptions of low achievement relate to those of their parents, as well as the children´s views on the support they receive at home.

2.1.2   Internal/External Frame of Reference Model

There is strong research-based evidence to support three claims that are likely to be relevant also in the Eritrean context. First, academic self-concepts are more complex than a mere subjective reflection of normatively defined academic achievements, and academic self-concepts are affected by processes different from those affecting the corresponding achievements (Marsh, Shavelson & Byrne 1988, 379). Second, while desirable as such, positive academic self-concepts promote student engagement, self-esteem and even academic achievement (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 28). Finally, children´s self-perceptions may substantially be influenced both at home and at school.

As said earlier, self-concept is measured without providing any reference point to evaluate one´s competence (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 18). Children utilize internal and external reference points to assess themselves, a process that is described by the I/E frame of reference model (Marsh 1986b). This I/E frame of reference model attempts to explain the paradoxical relationship between academic self-concepts and academic achievements. If the construction process of ASC is universal as seems to be the case (Marsh & Hau 2004; Brunner et al. 2009), the I/E frame of reference model should help explain paradoxical relationships

between self-perceptions and academic achievements in this study. It is worthwhile to first consider these processes separately to understand their function, although the bilateral process of referencing occurs simultaneously, as implied by the models´ name.

The I/E frame of reference model was constructed by Marsh to account for paradoxical findings in an otherwise more or less satisfying model of academic self-concept (1986b). Marsh (1986b) proposed that students use an internal comparison process, whereby academic achievement in one domain (e.g., verbal) provides a frame of reference for forming ASC in a different domain (e.g., math) (As referred to in Marsh et al. 2018, 264). This idea is based on the observation that while verbal and mathematical achievement correlates substantially, verbal and mathematics self-concept correlate almost insignificantly. Substantial evidence has suggested that students use verbal achievement as a basis of comparison, a frame, in the formation of mathematical self-concept, or vice versa (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 15; Marsh 1986b; Marsh et al. 2018, 264). The internal comparison process has later been verified to be similar for self-concept between separate languages, the language´s being French and German in the context of Luxembourg (Brunner et al. 2010). While most research on the model has been conducted on secondary school students, there is evidence to support the claim that the comparison process is similar also in elementary school children (See for example Schmidt et al. 2017; Möller et al. 2009). After a meta-analysis of 69 data sets, Möller et al. claim that the I/E frame of reference model is valid for different age groups, sexes, and countries (Möller et al. 2009).

The external comparison process represents an extension to traditional social comparison theory (Marsh & Hau 2004, 57). This social comparison, in which students compare their performances in a particular school subject with the performances of other students in that subject at the school, is the external frame of reference (Marsh et al. 2018, 64; Marsh, Shavelson & Byrne 1988). Students also reflect on their abilities externally in relation to standards such as normative comparisons, school grades or class ranking (Marsh & Hau 2004, 57). This is why external comparison appears to balance out the effects of internal comparison,

leaving the correlation between verbal and math self-concept near zero (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 15). For instance, as verbal and math achievement correlate substantially, the negative effects of the internal comparisons in relation to an individual´s strongest subject are canceled out by the positive external comparisons towards peer's achievement in that subject. Conversely, a low achieving student may assess herself externally as being poor in her weakest school subject, but the internal comparison to her best subject may better the self-concept in that school subject even if the actual achievement level is not as high.

The ability of peers at a school, or school-average ability, negatively affects academic self-concept, possibly even a quarter of it (Marsh 1986a, 28; Marsh, Hau & Craven 2004). Marsh coined this the "big-fish-little-pond effect" (BFLPE) (1986a). After critical scrutiny Marsh, Hau and Craven (2004) conclude that there is extremely strong support for internal validity, external validity, and cross-cultural generalizability BFLPE, although they admit that the size of BFLPE may be influenced by cultural factors. This study is conducted at Highland Elementary School in a socio-economically challenging neighborhood (see Eritrean Context 5.1), thus it can be expected that children´s self-perceptions in this study appear more positive than their achievement levels intuitively would warrant.

2.2   Children´s Low Achievement in Eritrea

In Eritrea, low achievement is defined on performance criteria; the national minimum mastery level is defined as 80% of learners attaining at least 50 percent in the core subjects: mother tongue, mathematics and English (MOE 2013a, 25). More than one in five children fail to achieve these minimum mastery requirements and performance is markedly lower in Grade 5 than in grade 3 (MoE 2013a, 25). This is alarming as relatively lasting academic self-perceptions are formed during the early years of primary education (Schimidt et al. 2017). In addition, Promotion to sixth grade signals a transition before which certain basic learning skills need to be retained, as the medium of instruction changes to English in all core subjects (Education Sector Plan 2018, 40).

Even though there is awareness of the scarcity of material- and human resources in education, not much data is available on the sociocultural environment surrounding low achieving children in Eritrea. However, there are generations of parents who have been deprived of appropriate basic education (MoE 2009b, 5-6). In light of these circumstances, some obstacles for learning are inherited in the family. Yikealo et al (2017) suggest that literacy acquisition is significantly mediated by parents´ educational attainment level in Eritrea. Elsewhere, children whose families are characterized by low income and low parent education are at high risk for failure in literacy domains (Dearing et al. 2004; Dearing et al. 2006). Parents of low achieving children in Eritrea struggle to participate in their children´s education even though evidence from elsewhere suggests that educational involvement in low income, low education families may even lead to achievement levels similar to those of children from more educated families (Zemichael et al. 2017; Dearing et al. 2006).

More than 11 percent of children repeat a grade in primary school (Ministry of Education 2013a, 25). Repeated exposure to failure further increases low achieving children´s beliefs of incompetence (Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005, 227), which can disengage children from school (Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon & Craven 2010; Persehey 2011). This is implicated in the increased risk of drop-out for repeating children in Eritrea MoE 2016, 98). Children missing out on schooling is still a persistent challenge in Eritrea, as 19 percent of primary-school-age children were out of school year 2013, although in the central region this number was significantly lower, at 5 percent (MoE 2016, 46). While learning achievements vary between regions with the central region faring better than the more rural areas, low achievement is still a legitimate issue also in the central region of Asmara MoE. (2013a, 25).

3 PARENTAL SUPPORT TO EDUCATION

Socialization strategies foster the kinds of beliefs about learning that encourage persistence, diligence, and the ability to delay gratification (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012, 316). These attributes are likely to be inherited subtly through example and repeated experiences at home (Bempechat & Shernoff 316). The profile of low achievement in Eritrea implies that the children most in need of parental support may miss out on the advantages of appropriate parental support creating a reciprocal cycle of inherited low achievement.

Parental support may be considered through constructs like nurturing, attachment, acceptance, cohesion, and love (Jacob & Leonard 1994). Parental support can also be viewed through parental behaviors such as metacognitive talk, active participation, shifts in responsibility, emotional responsiveness and contingent instructional scaffolds (Pino-Pasternak & Whitebread 2010). While the focus of this study is on the support to formal education Eritrean fifth-graders receive at home, support to education is subject to parental support in general. Here, the focus is on parental support from the perspective of children´s formal education. Parents as children´s primary guides through their schooling experiences serve to greatly buffer or compound risk factors for disengagement and low achievement (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012, 316).

Parental support to education has been defined in various ways ranging from general definitions, that relate to the time and other resources a parent spends on the child´s education, to specific types of involvement which somehow operationalize the support given (Wilder 2014, 378). Two major studies with relatively large datasets on parental involvement have been conducted in Eritrea (Yikealo et al. 2017 and Zemichael et al. 2017). These studies suggest that the education system acknowledges parents as the primary stakeholders in the education of their children and that most parents do support their children in multiple ways (Yikealo et al. 2017 123-128; Zemichael et al. 2017, 133). Further research on approaches to involve the parents more efficiently is warranted, as particularly the low achieving children´s parents struggle to get involved in their children´s

education (Zemichael et al. 2017). More specifically, Yikealo et al (2017) claim that literacy acquisition is significantly mediated by parents´ educational attainment level. Evidence from elsewhere supports the consideration that academic achievement or socioeconomic status of parents mediate the support they give to their children and the achievement levels of their offspring (Lee & Bowen 2006; Yamamoto & Holloway 2010).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) argue that to get involved in their children´s education, parents need to have a sense of efficacy and believe that through their involvement they can exert a positive influence on their children´s educational outcomes. Research on parents' efficacy offers considerable support for its influence as a motivator for parental involvement, a finding which appears across groups of varying socio-economic circumstances (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, 108-110). However, even when student learning tasks surpass parents' knowledge, parents' interest in a child's schooling, encouragement, reinforcement for learning, and modeling continue to support student learning and school success (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, 120).

Assisting parents who lack confidence in their ability to support their children may promote parental involvement, particularly in families where low achievement is inherited (Dearing et al. 2006). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler suggest that even well-designed school programs inviting involvement will see limited success if they do not address issues of parental role construction and parental sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997). These findings are likely to be relevant also in the Eritrean context, where war and poverty have deprived many individuals of education for decades (MoE 2009b 5-6).

Nokali, Bachman, and Voturuba-Drzal (2004) point out that some studies have found no significant association between parent involvement and academic achievement. However, positive associations between parental involvement and academic achievement are demonstrated repeatedly in the literature (Dearing et al. 2006; Jeynes 2005; Fan & Chen 1999), although certain types of involvement may have the opposite effect, such as father´s academic pressure (Rogers et al.

2009). Perhaps most relevant in this context, Jeynes (2005) identified a significant relationship between parental involvement overall and academic achievement in urban elementary school children in a meta-analysis of 41 studies. Meta-analyses of Fan and Chen (1999) and Wilder (2014) reaffirm the connection between parental involvement and academic achievement. There is a compelling case for interventions directed to low-income and low educated families as they may even lead to achievement levels similar to those of children from more educated families (Dearing et al. 2004; Dearing et al. 2006).

As parental expectations correlate with academic achievement more than helping with homework, managing children´s time or educational discussions with the child (Lee and Bowen 2006, 203), these expectations are relevant in evaluating parental support to education. Parental expectations are based on evaluations of a child´s academic capability, and resources available to support the child (Yamamoto & Holloway 2010, 191). It should be considered that the effects of parental support in education differ depending on parents´ individual characteristics and the socio-cultural context of the family (Yamamoto & Holloway 2010), although little research has been conducted in Eritrea.

Parental support can be assessed from the perspectives of how parents assist their children with schoolwork, how parents participate in school events, how parents collaborate with the school and the teacher, and how parents facilitate learning opportunities and materials at home (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012). Parental involvement and how parents position themselves depends to a large extent on their child and how they perceive their child´s academic ability (Yamamoto & Holloway 2010, 191). Then again, the way children perceive parental support contributes to their self-perceptions and socioemotional adjustment (Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005). Perceived parental involvement has been found to positively influence children´s self-perceptions and engagement at school (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012; Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005). Bouffard's and colleagues´ study on underachieving children´s perceptions of parental support reaffirms observations of several researchers: how children who perceive high parental support report more positive self-perceptions (2005, 230).

4   AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Within the existing research literature (Marsh & Hau 2004; Yamamoto & Holloway 2010), there is a gap in understanding Eritrean children´s and their parents´ perceptions of low achievement and parental support, although parental involvement and parent-teacher partnership have been researched (Yikealo et al. 2018; Zemichael et al. 2018). The purposes of this study are to gather information on low-achieving children in Eritrea and how parental support is provided to them. This study is, to my knowledge, the first that triangulates the experience of low achievement from the primary stakeholder´s perspectives: the children and the parents. Furthermore, this study adds to the earlier work on parental support in Eritrea (Yikealo et al. 2018, Zemichael et al. 2018), thus expanding the understanding of the circumstances affecting low achieving 5th graders and their families. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are Eritrean 5th graders' and their parents' perceptions of low achievement?

2. What are Eritrean 5th graders' and their parents' perceptions of the support received at home?

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

As this study seeks to examine and bring forth the experience of marginalized children, children´s right to be heard and express their views in any proceedings affecting the children (as outlined in articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) influenced the choice of a qualitative approach for the study (Auerswald et al 2017, 2; UN 1989). The purpose of this choice was to ensure that the participants genuinely get to participate in shaping the outcomes of the study. This ideal also informed the decisions for data analysis.

5.1 Eritrean Context

The Eritrean educational context is characterized by numerous hindrances to development. Earlier presence and the effects of colonial powers and their apartheid-like rule, a 30-year independence war against Ethiopia — later a frozen conflict for 18 years, poverty, sanctions, and desertification are among the main challenges Eritrea is encountering (Department of Environment 2012; Education Sector Plan 2018, 25; World Bank 2018). These macro-level concerns naturally shape Eritrea as a research context also in the field of education. The rapidly growing capital Asmara is the only urban setting in Eritrea estimated to accommodate around 930 000 people by 2019 (Department of Environment 2012, 8; UN 2018). Although certain contextual factors overlap, it is worthwhile to acknowledge regional differences between the rural regions and Asmara.

Up to date databases or documents about Eritrea and Eritrean education are often unavailable but applicable estimations can be made from government, World Bank, and UN documents dated in the 2010s. The rapid growth of Asmara, together with the government´s commitment to provide "education for all," has lead to rising enrollment rates, thus straining the resources of the education system (MoE 2009b, 6). Teacher to pupil ratio is relatively high with 39 primary school teachers for one pupil in Asmara (see Zoba Maekel: Education Sector Plan

2018, 63). A shortage of competent teachers in mother tongue in some communities is a concern (Education Sector Plan 2018, 40). Children missing out on schooling is presumably still a persistent challenge in Eritrea, as 19 percent of primary-school-age children were out of school year 2013, although in the central region this number was significantly lower at 5 percent (MoE 2016, 46).

This research centers on the exploration of Eritrean 5th graders and their parents´ perceptions of low achievement and parental support. The rationale for targeting fifth graders was grounded on previous research on self-perceptions and systemic factors. First, due to the ministry of education´s initiative called "normal progression", these pupils do not face the risk of repetition before entering the final years of elementary school (MoE 2013b as referred to in Belay et al. 2017, 101), making this period the first time pupils may encounter more structural consequences of low-achievement. Second, previous research in other contexts indicates that relatively lasting academic self-perceptions are formed during early years of primary education (Schmidt et al. 2017). This suggests that more fruitful findings could be discovered researching children in elementary school, bearing in mind the connection between self-perception and academic achievement. Finally, the fifth school year is the last one in elementary for Eritrean children before they transfer to middle school (Education Sector Plan 2018, 40), further underpinning fifth-graders reflective position before a significant transition in their educational path.

The children (N=5) participating in this study are Froini, Habtom, Maryam, Yonas, and Yodit which come from Asmara. Parents (N=5) in this study are referred to as FroMom, HabMom, MarMom, YonDad and YodMom respectively. The school is named here as "Highland Elementary School". Highland Elementary School is situated in a socioeconomically challenging neighborhood in Asmara. It was chosen as the research school as it was estimated to contain descriptive examples of low-achievers and thus ensure purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth 2018, 148). An in-depth analysis into the experiences of a relatively small number of participants requires the identification of information-rich cases which manifest the phenomenon clearly (Patton 2002, 242).

5.2   Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world (2011, 3). Hence the 5th graders and their parents´ experiences are examined from their perspective. According to Patton, qualitative data tells a story capturing and communicating someone else´s experience of the world in his or her own words (2002, 47). The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis and inductive reasoning (Patton 2002, 55-56). Qualitative content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton 2002, 453).

This study aims to triangulate parents´ perspectives of support with those of the children. For this purpose, three sets of data were gathered. Five semi-structured interviews of Eritrean 5th graders and their parents, as well as drawings of the 5th graders, formed the means of data collection. The reasoning behind the use of both semi-structured interviews and drawings served two purposes from a methodological point of view; the drawings were to stimulate the children´s reflections on their learning and directing the interview conversations towards relevant data (Patton 2002, 375). The drawing led interviews also facilitated the emergence of certain contextual factors that assisted in understanding the pupil´s life situation unintrusively, adding depth to the data and thus supporting the interpretation process (Gill & Liamputtong 2014, 5; Matthews 2014, 5). The drawing method enrichened and enhanced the validity of the interview data as suggested by Guillemin (2004, 277; Gill & Liamputtong 2014, 5).

Methods requiring reading or writing from the participants were dismissed as impractical early on. The value in using several methods of data collection here lied in the possibility to compensate inherent weaknesses in approaching the experience of participants through only drawing or semi-structured interviews by combining the two (Denscombe 2010, 141). It has been suggested that while the use of drawings as research methodology offers a potentially valuable resource for social researchers, drawing works best as an adjunct to other research methods for reasons of validity (Guillemin 2004; Gill & Liamputtong 2014, 14). While

interpreting drawings credibly in research can be challenging, drawings and the participants' description of the creation process add a dimension to the data (see Gill & Liamputtong 2014; Guillemin 2004; Matthews 2014). The drawings guided the participants in making sense of their experience, thus providing another angle to the relatively unexplored experience of the Eritrean fifth graders (Matthews 2014, 5).

The justification of the research is based on the assumption that the Eritrean fifth graders and their parents sampled into the study can share privileged, and directly unobservable, information on their perceptions of low achievement and parental support unlike any other individual or institution (Denscombe 2010, 174; Patton 2002, 340). In previous research, low achievers have been identified in multiple and often mixed strategies, such as mathematics, reading or writing test scores falling under a certain percentile, different analyses of mathematics results, analysis of IQ test scores, expert diagnosis or mixed adaptations of these strategies (Chapman 1988; Fletcher et al. 1994; Gabriele 2007; Gathercole & Pickering 2010; Geary et al 2012; Valås 2001). The prevalence of low achievement, high repetition rate, and lack of diagnostic testing in this research context made teacher assessment of repetition risk, or repetition already occurred due to low achievement, a suitable approach to identify possible participants.

The participants for this study were sampled purposefully to represent information-rich cases that manifest the lived experience of Eritrean 5th graders and their parents (Creswell & Poth 2018, 148; Patton 2002, 242). Purposeful sampling was selected as a result of three practical choices. First, the school identified for conducting the research is situated in a socio-economically challenging area. Second, the school director assisted in identifying a willing teacher, who had taught mathematics for class of fifth grader´s for many years. Thus, she had a profound understanding of her pupil´s academic ability. Later, a drawing activity was conducted in the teacher´s class consisting of 54 pupils. Finally, the teacher identified the drawings of ten pupils who had either previously repeated a school year or the pupils she considered to have been, or still being, at a risk of repeating. Out

of the target group of ten pupils identified by their teacher, seven potential participants were identified based on those pupils´ drawings. Three pupils were excluded from the study because their drawings had very little content, the drawings did not follow instruction, the drawings did not feature connections to the research questions at face value, or many of the above.

When researching intricate matters in depth, such as Eritrean 5th graders and their parents´ perceptions of low-achievement and parental support, interviewing is a suitable method of data collection (Denscombe 2010, 173-174). To gain insight into the children's and their parents' experiences, the interview questions were designed to reflect the underlying sub-questions that explore the two research questions ("What are Eritrean 5th graders´ and their parents´perceptions of low achievement?" and "What are 5th graders´ and their parents´ perceptions of the support received at home?"), and phrased in a way that the interviewees can understand them (Creswell & Poth 2018, 164; Appendix 3).

Seidman (2006, 14) considers interviewing as a powerful method to gain insight on social issues by helping to understand the experience of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues. This approach suits the purpose of this study as the focus is on the individuals´ reality from their perspective. A semi-structured interview is a form of interview that is suitable when examining uncharted territory as it facilitates open-ended answers with an emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest (Adams 2015, 494; Denscombe 2010, 175). Structure was provided by a set of key questions, such as "could you describe your child´s strengths to me", which were elaborated by probes on opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences (Denscombe 2010, 174), thus combining elements from the interview guide and the standardized open-ended interview approach (Patton 2002, 347; Appendix 3). It was foreseeable that the dialogue would delve into unforeseen issues. Hence the order of the interview questions presented was flexible (Adams 2015, 493). The participants also contributed to the topics of the interview, thus allowing the informants' priorities to be presented on the topic (Denscombe 2010, 192).

Two different data sources (the fifth graders and their parents) are utilized to explore perceptions of low-achievement and parental support in the Eritrean context (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018) Triangulation refers to using several kinds of methods or data, which strengthens a study by providing cross-data validity checks. (Patton 2002, 247-248). Here, the pupil´s reflections on their experience of low-achievement and parental support naturally intertwine, thus approaching low-achievement and parental support multidimensionally. The purpose of triangulation here is not necessary to demonstrate that the different sources yield essentially the same result (Patton 2002, 248). Whether contrasting, inconsistent, or corroborative, these relations between the pupil´s and their parents´ perceptions of low-achievement and parental support provide more in-depth insight into the nuances in the real-world experience of the research participants (Patton 2002, 248).

A critical requirement for the trustworthiness of cross-language qualitative research is the translation methodology. Here, the interviewees' language is Tigrigna, as the researcher used English. The transcription and translation procedure are contrasted with the methodological recommendations for cross-language qualitative research proposed by Squires and endorsed by the likes of Nes et al. (see Squires 2009; Nes et al. 2010, 316). Translation methodology and its effects are further discussed under data collection (5.3) as well as reliability and limitations (7.2).

5.3   Data

Translated interviews of five Eritrean fifth graders (two boys and three girls) and five of their parents (one father and four mothers) act as the sample texts for this qualitative content analysis (Denscombe 2010, 281). The data collection method was two-fold as the first phase centered on a drawing activity, while semi-structured interviews formed the second phase of data collection. A postgraduate student from Asmara College of Education assisted in dealing with the local administration to identify an appropriate school for research and in communication

with the school staff, as well as conducting three of the interviews and instructing the children to inform their parents on the research and interview times. After initial engagement with the school director, an elementary mathematics teacher was identified as a contact person. One of her classes consisting of 54 pupils was identified as the target group for the drawing activity. The teacher was chosen because she both embraced the activity and had extensive knowledge of the student´s academic past. Complimentary documentary data sources were accessed from the Ministry of Education and the National Statistics Office.

I considered that at least four interviews with pupils and four interviews with parents should be conducted to adequately address the initial research questions considering the resources at my disposal. This implied that those low achieving children that were genuinely willing to participate needed to be identified for interviewing while also acknowledging the need for the parents´ informed consent for both their child and themselves (Creswell & Poth 2018, 152). Access to the parents of the low-achieving children posed a challenge. Data from Eritrea suggests that the main communication channel between home and school are the pupils, and that particularly low-achieving students´ parents are most likely to not come to the school when requested (Zemichael et al. 2017). For these purposes, the data collection method was designed with the intention for it to be non-stigmatizing, engaging, and practical without compromising academic credibility.

Two other local researchers from Asmara College of Education (ACE) assisted me during different stages of the data collection process. One of them, a bachelor of developmental psychology, also transcribed the interviews in Tigrigna and translated the transcriptions into English. The other is a postgraduate student in language education. These researchers were fitting interpreters because of their expertise in education and research as well as in English and Tigrigna. This expertise alleviated challenges in reaching a common understanding of the concepts I used, and what precisely I wanted to ask, which is integral when interpreters are used in research (Patton 2002, 393).

In an interview, the researcher is in direct interaction with the interviewee, which makes interviewing a flexible form of data collection (Tuomi & Sarajärvi). However, in this setting of asymmetrical language proficiency, an element of control had to be passed from the researcher to the interpreter. As it is essential for the integrity of the interview data, both the research- and interview questions were rehearsed with all the three interpreters. They then acted as a well-informed translators during the interviews, which played an integral role in my familiarization process in this unfamiliar context (Sargeant & Harcourt 2012, 79).

The interviews were conducted on three separate occasions during a four-week period between 26th of December 2018 and 23rd of January 2019. The children´s interviews amassed 1 hour 53 minutes and 45 seconds of interview material with the shortest interview lasting a little over fifteen minutes while the longest interview´s duration was 27 minutes and 29 seconds. Parents´ interviews lasted for 1 hour, 23 minutes, and four seconds, while the individual interviews ranged between 12 minutes and 37 seconds and 23 minutes and 37 seconds. The interviews were first transcribed in Tigrigna by a bachelor of developmental psychology who had previous experience in transcribing interviews. He first transcribed the interviews in Tigrigna one interview at a time on separate word files and identified the participant, the interpreter, and the researcher. Later, he translated the transcripts from Tigrigna into English to promote the credibility of the translation process before putting all the ten interviews and their translations in one file back to back. Also, the interviews were anonymized at this stage. Together, transcription and translation transformed into 125 pages with font size 11 and line spacing at 1.15 respectively.

5.3.1 Drawings

Pupils participated in the drawing activity over the course of two adjacent lessons with the objective of completing two separate drawings on the following topics: "me learning at school" and "me learning at home". The instructions were kept brief to facilitate engagement and allow for freedom of expression. Thus, the pupils were only instructed with supporting questions "who else is there?",

"what are they doing?", "how are they feeling?" and "what is around you?" The pupils were encouraged to focus on the content instead of "perfectionist" quality while they were informed on the purpose of the activity (See Appendix 1).

All pupils from one classroom participated in the drawing process. Later, the teacher identified the drawings of ten pupils, whom she either considered to have been at risk of repeating, or indeed had already done so. After considering the relevance of the ten low-achievers´ drawings, the number of potential participants for interviewing narrowed down to seven. The three pupils were excluded because their drawings had very little content, the drawings did not follow instruction, the drawings did not feature connections to the research questions at face value, or a combination of the criteria mentioned above.

It was foreseeable that contacting the parents of fifth graders would be challenging, particularly those of low-achieving pupils (see Zemichael et al. 2017). Thus, seven children and their parents were asked to come to the school for an interview, as it was unlikely that all parents would participate and consent for their children. A local researcher from ACE told the children in Tigrigna about my interest in interviewing them and their parents about learning based partially on their drawings. Consent forms both in English and Tigrigna were distributed to the seven pupils, and the interviews were scheduled (see appendix 2). These pupils were advised to discuss with their parents the purpose of the research and the rationale for inviting them for interviews. We emphasized that an initial agreement is not a final decision and that any arising questions regarding the research will be answered (Sargeant & Harcourt 2012, 73). Five pupils with written consent were interviewed. The two children whose parents´ consent could not be verified were not interviewed, and their drawings were not included in the analysis.

5.3.2   Interviews

Children

Five pupils were interviewed for this research. All the interviews followed a similar structure. The interviews began with a reintroduction of the research topic to

the pupils and an explanation of the pupil´s right to withdraw from the research. Self-concepts were first approached with probing questions about the pupil´s drawing, such as "What made you draw these people here?" or "What are they feeling in this picture?" followed by discussing the pupils learning at school according to the interview guide (see appendix 3). Parental involvement was probed for first by asking questions about the pupil´s drawing on learning at home, before asking the children to describe an event where they have discussed their learning with their parent (appendix 3).

Many projects designed by adults do not offer the children the participating children a choice of communication tools (Sargeant & Harcourt 2012, 26-27). Curtis, Murphy, and Shields (2014) discuss the difference in conducting research for children as opposed to conducting research on children. They suggest this can be achieved in numerous ways, including involving the children in data collection through activities such as drawing. Utilizing the children´s drawings as prompts for the interviews engaged the pupils on the interview topics. The children were able to clarify their responses on their terms while allowing for exploration of unanticipated areas of interest without compromising the collection of systemic information from the sample (Patton 2002, 347). This was emphasized in this study considering the lack of representation and absence of literature on Eritrean pupils in general, as the children have a right to be heard instead of being spoken for (UN 1989).

The children seemed excited about the interviews, which manifested in how the children courted the researcher on school visits and kept asking about the purpose of the drawings. Some researchers have suggested that this implies a successful, child-friendly approach (Powell & Smith 2009, 131). This excitement was also expressed by other children at the school who were not interviewed for this study. Combined with space constraints of the school, identifying a distraction-free place at the school parameters for conducting the interviews imposed a challenge (Creswell & Poth 2018, 165). The teacher of the participating children was helpful in identifying interview times for moments when either a classroom

or a type of tea-room was unoccupied, and when some of the children were leaving school. There were moments in some of the interviews during which other children knocked on the door, presumably out of interest on the exotic happenstance going on, thus interrupting the conversation.

Conducting interviews with an interpreter puts an emphasis on the effective use of the interview time. Disturbance, confusion, and boredom will diminish the children´s will to continue (Sargeant & Harcourt 2012, 32). Opening the interviews by allowing the pupils to explain their first drawing engaged and excited the pupils as expected. The drawings were not considered very expressive as such, but discussing the drawings did enhance the quality of answers by directing the conversation towards preferred data (Patton 2001, 375-377). The pupil´s interviews were relatively long for children as apart from one interview they all lasted for more than twenty minutes. Signaling the change of interview theme from learning at school to learning at home by turning the focus to drawings about home mid-interview helped in sustaining the pupil´s attention (see appendix 3).

Parents

Five parents were interviewed. The interviews started with a description of the overall research and its purpose, participants rights, and both the parents´ and their children´s role in the study. Consent for participation was formally asked for both the parent and their child in Tigrigna and English (Appendix 2).

Some of the parents expressed how their child had explained the drawing activity to them at home, and how they were either asked by their child to participate or became interested in receiving support for their child by showing up. Two parents were curious why they were called up to the school and asserted that their children had no difficulties at school, although they would discuss their children´s matters if it is helpful for the research. Their right to withdraw at any stage of the research was further emphasized to these parents. Fortuitously, as the local researchers had informed me of a lack of awareness of research in the

region, I could anticipate suspicions and prepare with additional care for a sensitive description of the research. It should be noted that one of these parents did express how she hoped participating will help others in a similar situation, while the other one thanked the interpreter and me for "asking good questions" and an appropriate discussion, hence leaving a sense of approval of the methods and a good mood for both parties.

The parents´ interviews focused on the parents' perception of their children and the support that is available for their children at home with open-ended questions such as "Could you describe your child´s strengths to me?" and "How he/she can receive support for studying?" (Appendix 3). It seemed like interviewing with the recorder on made the parents nervous, as they appeared more cautious in their expressions after the recorder was turned on. After some initial probing, their responses became more extensive.

5.4   Analysis

Here, the analysis is conducted from a realist position, and semantic meanings are considered across the whole dataset, thus clustering together approaches that tend to support each other (Braun & Clarke 2006, 86). Here, findings emerge out of the data as the analyst figures out possible categories, patterns, and themes while "being open to the data" (Patton 2002, 453-454). The data is analyzed using qualitative analysis and inductive reasoning, in which the analysis begins with specific observations and builds towards general patterns (Patton 2002, 55-56). There are also elements of a theory-driven content analysis as the analysis is data-driven, but in some instances, the categories are derived from the theoretical model of self-concept (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018).

There were some theoretical propositions directing the initial examination of the data, most importantly the I/E frame of reference model (see 2.1.3),. There is evidence on the formulation of pupil´s self-concepts elsewhere, which indicates that it could happen similarly in different cultural contexts (see Marsh & Hau 2004; Brunner et al. 2009). In this regard, there are elements of analytic induction

in the analysis of low achievement. Analytic induction involves an initial examination of theory-derived sensitizing concepts before a fresh look at the data for undiscovered patterns and emergent understandings, which then again are traits of an inductive analysis (Patton 2002, 454).

Inductive content analysis requires the organization of data, open coding, categorizing and abstraction (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 109). This process began by grouping together the fifth-graders´ interviews on one document and the parents´ interviews into another. Then, the five fifth-graders´ contributions were divided under the five main interview questions for children, and the five parents´ interviews were divided under the five main interview questions for the parents (Appendix 3). This was done to structure the process of unitizing the data and to make it easier to compare different participants' contributions on the same topic, as I considered it likely to be fruitful later in the analysis.

I familiarized myself with the interview data by reading through them one interview at a time to get a sense of the whole and the quality of information collected (Patton 2002, 440). Scanning the text first to build a sense of the data as a whole and written memos assisted in identifying meaning units from different parts of the interview text (Creswell & Poth 2018, 188). This was particularly helpful when, for example, a parent had been asked about her role in her child´s learning, but the answer related to perception of low achievement. The meaning units were identified from within the whole interviews in this manner.

It has been purported that whole interviews are the most suitable unit of analysis as they are large enough to be considered a whole and, when defined appropriately I suggest, small enough to keep in mind as a context for the meaning unit (Elo & Kynägs 2008, 109; Graneheim & Lundman 2004, 106). There are arguments both for considering the meaning unit as narrow, for example, a word or sentence, and viewing it more broadly as sentences, paragraphs, or even pages. However, a meaning unit contains aspects related to each other through their content and context (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 109; Graneheim & Lundman 2004, 106.)

Table 1. Example of the coding process from a student interview.

Meaning Unit	Condensed Meaning Unit	Code
Yodit: They (the parents) say we will always help you, ´do not lose hope because you get poor grades´	Parents encourage and express their support	Encourage-ment
I: Is there anything you want after performing a good job? Yonas: To give me anything that I asked. Buy me books. My sister told me she will buy me a tablet if I rank between 1st and 3rd place. And baba has told me he will buy me a bicycle.	Has been promised a tablet and a bicycle for ranking top 3	Reward

Meaning units were direct extractions of the interview dialogue, which revealed perceptions of low achievement or support at home. These extractions were summarized into condensed meaning units and then coded accordingly, similarly to Graneheim and Lundman´s content analysis (2004, 107). Intrinsically, the analyst´s thinking evolves throughout the coding process, so I wrote memos of emerging ideas while coding to document the process, hence facilitating readjustment and reduction of codes to later form a valid and comprehensible narrative (Creswell & Poth 2018, 189-190).

Graneheim and Lundman propose that a characteristic of content analysis is that it deals with the manifest as well as the latent content of the data (2004, 111). Then again, Braun and Clarke argue that analysis primarily focuses on one level (2006, 84), while Bengtsson argues that a researcher chooses whether to analyze the manifest or the latent content, which then has an implication to the depth of the analysis (2016, 12). Therefore, forming a comprehensible narrative of the manifest content of the whole dataset is prioritized here for two reasons. First, while some depth and complexity here is necessarily lost, a rich overall description is maintained. Braun and Clarke suggest this might be a particularly useful method when investigating an under-researched area or working with participants whose views on the topic are not known (2006, 83.) Second, manifest analysis refers back to the original text, thus staying closer to original meanings and contexts. For that matter, as a westerner presenting data from the under-

researched topic in the Eritrean context, it is particularly important to minimize likely misinterpretations. This is further discussed under ethical considerations (see 5.5 Ethical considerations).

The data is analyzed with a semantic approach where the data is organized, analyzed, and interpreted to present the manifest content of the data, thus moving from description to interpretation (Braun & Clarke 2006, 84). Here, codes were compared for similarities and differences and then abstracted into sub-categories and categories (see Elo et al. 2008, 111), which constitute the manifest content of the data in relation to the two research questions (Graneheim & Lundman 2004, 108-109). Examples of the abstraction process form codes to sub-categories and categories are presented in tables two, four, six, and eight. These categorizations form the backbone of the results section and the interpretations (see the tables in Results 6.1-6.4).

5.5   Ethical Considerations

So far, not much research has been conducted on low achieving children and their parents in Eritrea, which in part puts the responsibility to a researcher presenting his findings. I as a researcher should especially be aware and explicit of my intimate positioning in the research context, which is addressed in the introduction. Curtis, Murphy, and Shields have mentioned that a lack of self-awareness of the normative assumptions, biases and background knowledge that the researcher brings with him can have negative impacts on the validity and veracity of the research findings (2014, 178-179). I have pursued to reach an understanding of the meanings expressed by the participants in collaboration with the three local experts who assisted me in the study, to mitigate the effects of normative assumptions, biases and background knowledge in my interpretations (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 179).

All researchers should ask themselves how they represent other people (Temple & Young 2004, 174). Thus, a strategy to promote the active role of the participants, particularly the children, was considered early on in research design. This

strategy manifests in the use of drawings and open-ended questions (see appendices 1 and 3). The participants represent a globally marginalized segment of people, as poverty and its effects incorporate into their everyday lives. This vulnerability is underlined by the lack of research on the topic and the people in general. Involving the marginalized young people in the research process is essential (Russell 2013, 47), so allowing the children´s drawings on learning to direct the interviews was intended to give this previously unheard group of people a possibility to engage in the research in accordance with their age, communication and skill levels (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 199). I do still acknowledge that, as I am making the primary choices in presenting the findings, I am speaking for a group of people I cannot accurately represent. Still, I decided to pursue the study after contrasting the risk of misrepresentation with the significance and objectives of the study as well as the available measures to mitigate misrepresentation.

Especially when researching sensitive topics with children, it should be considered whether the research is doing more good than harm (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 191). As low-achievement can be stigmatizing and interviewing children on the topic can both bring up traumatic memories and uncertainty over the future, it is essential to consider these matters in the implementation of the study (see Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 191; Powell & Smith 2009, 128-129; Russell 2013, 47). Following UNICEF Office of Research guidelines, stigma was minimized here by a common drawing activity (Aureswald et al. 2017, 14). The potential research participants were identified in a non-stigmatizing manner, as other children at the school considered the participants to be chosen based on their drawings. Their teacher informed children of the purpose of the research before they were asked to deliver a consent form to their parents. Their consent was asked for again verbally before starting the interview. No child was interviewed before written consent was received from their parent. The consent form written in both English and Tigrigna can be viewed in appendix 2.

Also, practical and ethical considerations had to be made regarding translation, as conducting the research required working across three languages (Finnish, Tigrigna, and English). To both promote reliability and ensure ethical practice, matters of accuracy, power, and representation were scrutinized.

Despite the effort to ensure a common understanding between me as a Finnish English -speaking researcher, an Eritrean English, and Tigrigna -speaking translator and Eritrean Tigrigna speaking participants, a more symmetrical language proficiency would have enhanced understanding. It is in this context that I have acknowledged how people using different languages may construct different ways of seeing social life (Temple & Young 2004, 164). The way researchers represent people who speak other languages is influenced by the way they see their social world (Temple & Young 2004, 167). Especially when contrasting the dominant position of English as a language in research against that of Tigrigna, matters of language were not only practical but also ethical issues.

The power imbalance between English and Tigrigna highlights the existing power relations throughout this research process. First, as an adult with external and local authorization to study the lives of the children, I am already in a position of power (Sargeant & Harcourt 2012, 31). Second, I do represent a Western perspective with its deeply entrenched hierarchical structures and power positions being present also in this research context (Parsons & Harding 2011, 5), despite my half Eritrean heritage. Still, UNICEF Office of Research has outlined, that the marginalized and the vulnerable adolescents do benefit from research that assesses their experiences, although both the community and the quality of the research would benefit from including these young people in the process (Aureswald et al. 2017, 2). Likewise, these challenges pertain to a large degree with the parents who participated in the study.

It was challenging to clarify to the children what their, the interpreters, or the researchers' role is in the interview and the research process, as well as how the data will be used (Alasuutari 2015). The children had never been interviewed or seen a tape recorder before, which in some children may have appeared in

rigid responses in comparison to the researcher´s chatter before or after the interview. The interpreters prompted these children more for answers.

During the multiple visits to the school to conduct the interviews and discuss the research, the researcher participated in the school children´s play to demonstrate the role of a trustworthy adult distinct from the elements of control associated with adults, especially in school surroundings (Alasuutari 2015). To ease the children, they were asked to describe concrete happenstances and their drawings to create a space for the children to express their perceptions on their own terms (Alasuutari 2015; Appendix 3).

While this research does consider the family as a single unit, it should be noted that there are two groups of people represented in this study: the children and their parents. Analogously to Barron´s observations in researching disabled women, there is a risk of the children participating in this research striving to answer the questions "correctly", either according to what they think the researcher, or their parents, would prefer (1999, 44). This could be the case despite the conscious choice of interviewing the children and the parents separately. It is possible that interviewing both the children and their parents put the children in an awkward position in relation to the research question on parental support. However, the children´s focus was more on the children´s experience of a supporting encounter, and the meaning the children gave to that encounter, instead of evaluating their parents per se (Appendix 3).

Research by nature attempts to contribute to existing knowledge and, especially when researching marginalized individuals, benefit the participants (Auerswald et al. 2017; Curtis, Murphy & Shields. 2014, 14). A "trap of good will", Barron argues, lies in these good intentions, and an absence of reflection of the researcher's own position (1999, 42-44). She claims that this increases the risks of poor interpretations and not considering the informant as a knowledgeable equal. Undoubtedly, I would not have chosen the research topic nor the research context if I did not have a personal interest in Eritrea and the interest of the people at heart.

In administration, Asmara belongs to the urban central region (Zoba Maekel). As the research data was collected at one public elementary school in the city of Asmara, the permit to conduct this study was acquired from the city administration. The fifth graders are referred to with pseudonyms in both the data and this paper (Kuula 2006; 215), whereas the parents are referred to as mother or father of their child. All references to locations and people have been excluded to ensure anonymity further. The two boys in this study are referred to as Habtom and Yonas, while the three girls are referred to as Froini, Maryam, and Yodit.

6 RESULTS

Five fifth-graders, two boys and three girls, were interviewed for this study partially based on two drawings of these fifth graders. One father and four mothers of these children were also interviewed. The findings section reflects the findings from the drawings and the interviews. The children are referred to with the following pseudonyms: Habtom, Yonas, Froini, Maryam, and Yodit. This is to enhance readability and make it easier to follow the narrative of the family. Extracts from the dataset include the name of the speaker at the beginning of the remark. The parents are referred to in relation to their child´s pseudonym (e.g., FroMom or YonDad), whereas the other speakers are the interpreter and the researcher identified as "I" and "R" respectively.

The Eritrean flag appeared in all of the school-related drawings. Later, I learned that the flag is raised daily at school "to remember the martyrs who sacrificed their lives," thus explaining the prevalence. Only Maryam chose to draw herself in the classroom, and she too was leaving school in the drawing. The drawings contain stick figures in various degrees of descriptiveness, although the children were open to elaborate the relationships between the characters in the interviews, thus providing depth into understanding their relationships with their peers and teachers. The most descriptive drawings are presented at the beginning of the chapters entailing the children´s interviews (6.1 & 6.3).

6.1 Fifth Graders´ Perceptions of Low Achievement

Drawing 1. Froini has mixed Tigrigna and English on the blackboard
(black is black, the teacher is elack), thus making a rhyme which roughly
translates to: "black is black, the teacher is chocolate candy"
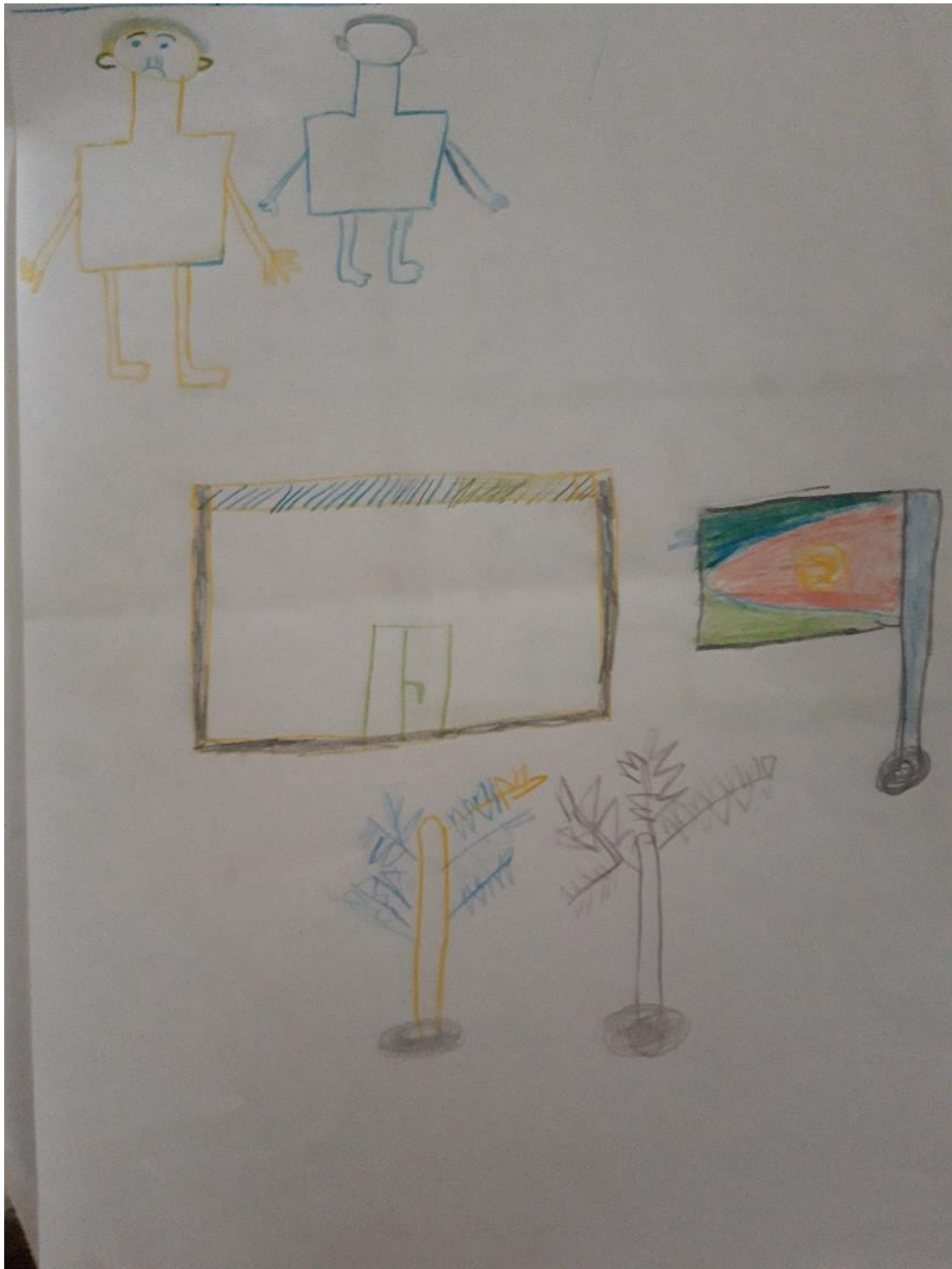
Drawing 2. Habtom in an argument with his friend over an incident when playing football

Froini has written a rhyme on the blackboard indicating that her teacher is sweet. When asked about why she wrote the rhyme in the drawing she was firm in her

response: "Because I like my teachers." In line with Froini´s thinking, all the children expressed engagement and interest in their education. For example, when asked whether he would have anything to add or comment by the end of the interview, Yonas was quick to reach out for support from the people interviewing him:

> Yonas: I want you to help me with my education".
>
> I: "Anything else?"
>
> Yonas: To help me in things I do not understand."

However, Habtom was honest in describing his detachment from school when reflecting on second grade, where he spent time with people he considers bad company. Here, he offers an insight into what he thinks has affected some of his difficulties in learning in the past:

> I: And at school, please remember a time when learning was difficult. If there was, what did you feel then? Was there a time when you said 'learning is difficult, what kind of subject is this, I hate learning.'
>
> Habtom: In 2nd grade.
>
> I: In 2nd grade…
>
> Habtom: There were undisciplined guys (hooligans), and because I was going with them. (…)
>
> Habtom: When I was going with them, I felt like leaving school.

While Habtom does consider difficulties to be behind him and aspires to become a doctor, he also describes an element of carelessness that persists. There are also moments of success, which in turn motivate him. This provides a descriptive example of how detachment and commitment from and to his education are present simultaneously:

> I: So how do you feel when it's too difficult to work? Do you get stressed? Are you like 'oh…what am I going to do with this one now'?
>
> Habtom: Yeah, sometimes.

I: What if you fail to pass to the next grade? Do you care?

Habtom: No, I don't.

I: Why not?

Habtom: Once you fail that's it. You don't have to regret it. (…)

I: So, you know…you don't regret what happened in the past. How about when you get good results, what do you feel?

Habtom: I feel like I should study more. I should repeat the lessons I don't understand.

While too definitive interpretations should be abstained from when analyzing a simplified drawing, Habtom´s drawing of himself at school does complement a conception of a somewhat misunderstood individual, who ends up in challenging situations. The drawing itself is not too descriptive, but in the interview, Habtom explained how the drawing shows an incident where he fought his friend after he had accidentally tripped him in football. Although his friend does not have any facial features, Habtom attributed this to him forgetting to draw the features rather than it expressing anger or some other emotion.

The children seemed to emphasize external references to internal references when discussing their ability. In fact, reflections on internal comparisons required some prompting:

I: So Yodit, how are you at school?

Yodit: I am okay. Only English is hard for me.

I: What are you good at especially?

Yodit: I am okay. Tigrigna. (…)

I: Do you remember a time when you scored badly in English?

Yodit: Yes, I remember. In the fourth grade.

I: How much did you get?

Yodit: I got 20 out of 40.

I: What did you say to yourself then?

Yodit: I was very angry. I used to just talk to myself. I didn't tell my parents, I just talked to myself.

I: What were you saying?

Yodit: I was saying to myself 'why am I bad? Why don't I get good results?'

I: Do you remember a time when learning was difficult?

Maryam: What, when learning was difficult?

I: Yes, when it was hard for you.

Maryam: I don't have.

I: Try to remember. For example, mathematics was hard for me, is there anything hard for you?

Maryam: Do you mean to work?

I: To work, to understand.

Maryam: Mathematics.

I: Mathematics? How about others?

Maryam: Nothing else is difficult.

External references where the fifth graders perceived their ability in relation to their peers at the school could be found in every child´s interview. These references naturally occurred when the children expressed how they were evaluated by their peers at moments of success or difficulty. They were also very much aware of their ranking among their peers, which they often referred to without prompting from the interpreter or the researcher. This is best exemplified by Froini and Habtom:

I: Do you remember a time when you were successful at school?

Froini: [silence]

I: You don't remember a time when you were successful?

Froini: You mean first or second?

I: You were happy and everything. What did your teacher say then?

Habtom: She said ´you have to study. ´

I: ´You did good, if you work like this…´

Habtom: ´Study, continue like this. ´

I: And what did your classmates say?

Habtom: Even they are like me. They are average

In the first example, it seems that at first Froini does not understand the question, or rather how "successful" is defined in the question, after which her first suggestion is that success means scoring first or second. Habtom, on the other hand, considers his peers to be "just like me," although the question is actually about peer feedback. These comparisons seem to be constantly on the children´s minds. Apparently, in an Eritrean classroom, the pupils in a classroom are ranked from first to last based on test scores. It seems that these pupils have internalized the public ranking system in their thinking, which could emphasize children´s tendency to evaluate themselves in comparison to their peers instead of the internal reference points or objective performance criteria.

Results of the content analysis of fifth-graders perceptions on low achievement are presented in table 3. Some descriptive examples of the analysis process are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Examples from the analysis matrix.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Sub-Category	Category
Froini: I felt angry. I: Why did you get angry? Froini : Because I did not understand it. But when I went home and tried it, then I understood it.	Anger at not being to understand chapter 2, but understood later at home	Anger of inability	Expressions of Ability	Expressions of ability
Yodit: Bad…very bad. I was feeling very sad saying 'why am I not good in this?'.	Feels bad and sadness because of difficulties in English	Upset of inability		
I: Do you remember a time when you were successful at school? Froini: [Silence] I: You don't remember a time when you were successful? Froini: Is it first or second?	Struggles to define successful so suggests success as finishing first or second best in a test	Rank as measure of success	External reference	Academic Self-Concept
T: So Yodit, how are you at school? Y: I am okay. Only English is hard for me. T: What are you good at specially? Y: I am okay. Tigrigna.	Okay in Tigrigna, only English is hard	Okay in Tigrigna, only English is hard	Internal reference	
I: How about when you get good results what do you feel? Habtom: I feel like I should study more. I should repeat the lessons I don't understand.	Feels the need to rehearse the difficult parts when results are good	Commitment through success	Commitment	Engagement
Habtom: There were undisciplined guys (hooligans), and because I was going with them. (…) Habtom: When I was going with them (hooligans), I felt like leaving school.	Going out with undisciplined hooligans on second grade made him feel like leaving school	Bad company	Detachment	

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Table 3. Fifth Graders´ Perceptions of Low Achievement

Category	Expressions of ability	Academic self-concept		Engagement	
Sub-Category	Expressions of ability	Internal reference	External reference	Detachment	Commitment
Code	Upset of inability Anger of inability Anxiety of inability Okay but not good ability	Okay Tigrigna, Difficult English Good scores in the past Weak scores in the past Challenging subject Good in Citizenship, modest in other subjects	Rank as a measure of success Similar level peers Note peers' mistakes Positive peer evaluation Negative peer evaluation Good previous rank	Bad company Carelessness	Commitment through success School as Positive Reaching out

The children´s reflections on how they react to their achievements were about inability, however, they tended to ignore or downplay their struggles, or consider them a thing of the past when disclosing their academic self-concept. Habtom described how bad company made him careless in the past, but otherwise, all the children expressed commitment to their studies.

6.2 Parents' Perceptions of Low Achievement

The parents were open to discuss their child´s strengths, which often related to their work ethic or character. For example, Habtom´s mother described her son´s strengths in the following manner: "He is sharp in his focus. He is a little low in his education. He is not good. But he doesn't have any other problem. He is like focused." Yodit´s mother shared a similar view by saying: "What makes me happy about her is just her focus. She stresses on her education. It makes me happy when she says, ´I have homework, I have to study with my classmates. ´ It makes me happy when she says like that."

Some of the interviews, however, demonstrated how the reality of low achievement, and how it is perceived, is multidimensional, as the assessments of their children´s situation evolved throughout the interview. Alternatively, sociocultural factors, fear of stigma, or factors related to the interview situation could cause inconsistencies in the parents´ accounts of their children´s ability. In any case, discrepancies in the parents´ perceptions of their children reveal how the parents try to make sense of their children´s reality. In the following extracts, Froini´s mother reveals the complexity of the meaning-making process in considering her daughter´s learning. The two extract from the early and the latter part of the interview with Yonas` father demonstrate an acknowledgment of his son´s challenges with certain concessions:

I: How would you describe the ability of your child?

FroMom: How do you mean?

I: I mean the ability of your daughter in education?

FroMom: My daughter's ability in education is limited. And I describe it as good. (…)

I: Was there a time when you were proud of your daughter, or the results of your daughter made you happy?

FroMom: There was not much. But in 3rd grade, very good. (…)

I: Were there times when you were sad about your daughter's results in her education?

FroMom: Do you mean in her grades? There wasn't any. She gets good grades.

I: How would you describe your child's educational ability?

YonDad: He's okay until now. We are looking after him, and he is following his education. I would say he's doing good. (…)

YonDad: First of all, he tells me about his Math problem; he is a little weak. So I press him to be better in Maths. We are helping him at home, so we are expecting that he would develop like that.

I: In what special skills, despite Maths?

YonDad: He is only good in English, but in the rest, he is a little weak. So, I and my wife are helping so that he would be successful. But we are not actually witnessing the result for our efforts.

The parents seemed to consider their children´s abilities as weaker than the children themselves did. However, their prospects for their children´s future were predominantly hopeful, although they also expressed some worry. Here, Froini´s mother expresses her anger of her daughter´s handwriting, which she had earlier described as "not good":

I: You said you want her to improve in her handwriting, how do you feel about this?

FroMom: I get angry! Very angry. She is in grade 5 now, and she will be in grade 6 next year, so I get very angry because of the fear she will enter grade 6 without improving her handwriting. I get angry when telling her to improve her handwriting.

Moving from fifth grade to the sixth requires transferring from elementary school to junior high school, where all the lessons are conducted in English, among other changes, thus explaining her worry about her daughter´s basic skills. However, parents´ perceptions are not only related to such formative evaluations. Similarly to their children, the parents´ reactions, hopes, and implicit fears comprise of comparisons between their children and their peers. For instance, here Froini´s mother describes her expectations towards her child: "My expectation is that she would be above her peers, and that she would help herself by finishing in a good

way, and that she would broaden her mind." Parents' emotional reactions were also related to their children´s status among their peers:

> I: Were there times when you were upset by the results of your child?
>
> YonDad: Yes, exactly. He was attending at [name of school], but he failed in 5th grade there. The teacher said he spent much time playing. So I was somehow…so I did not want him to be demoralized. I transferred him to this school, and he is doing good now.
>
> I: What did you feel at that time?
>
> YonDad: I felt very bad; you feel it when he is below his peers.
>
> I: So are there times when you were sad or upset by the results of the child? In some areas?
>
> MarMom: Yes like I said, the kid is very diligent. So, when she gets a bad result she cries, and we get sad. Because she is very sharp, because she asks people to help her, she is diligent in her education. When she gets a bad result, when her peers dominate her, she gets upset and cries.
>
> I: And you get sad?
>
> MarMom: And we just get sad.

Despite her daughter´s challenges in relation to her peers, Maryam´s mother expresses her beliefs to Maryam as how she could find a way to a better life through education: "'Study, it is for your future. Our life is this one, that is just it. But try making yours better than ours, it is for you, education is for you. Believe that an educated person will always be successful.' I say like that." The mother describes this aspiration for a better life pragmatically: "I wish that she would reach a high level, where she would not be pressurized by her husband, having her own salary, managing herself and leading her life."

While the parents initially appeared defensive about their children´s challenges in learning, they used more holistic assessments of their children´s weaknesses, such as "she is a bit weak in her studies", "No, you cannot (say is weak in everything). I cannot either say he is good." In contrast, the children´s perceptions of themselves were more domain-specific, which could be explained by the

I/E frame of reference model. Despite these holistic perceptions of their children´s challenges being prevalent, the parents were hopeful of their children´s future prospects.

Results of the content analysis of parents´perceptions on low achievement are presented in table 5. Some descriptive examples of the analysis process are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Examples from the analysis matrix.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Sub-category	Category
I: What did you say then? YonDad: I asked what happened, and when we asked the teacher, she said he was a bit weak, he played much. He is not actually poor in school, but because he plays and chats a lot he failed by very few points.	Not poor but rather plays and chats too much, hence he failed	Reasoning	Reactions to low achievement	Reactions to low achievement
I: How would you describe your child's educational ability? YonDad: He's okay until now. We are looking after him, and he is following his education. I would say he's doing good	Son is doing good in education	Doing good	Strength	Perceptions of Child
I: He is only good in English, but in the rest, he is a little weak. So, I and my wife are helping so that he would be successful. But we are not actually witnessing the result of our efforts.	Only good in English	Scarce positives	Weakness	
HabMom: I want him to get out of the life that I am in, and to live well. To live his life educated, I want him to be an educated person.	Wishes his son to find a way to better life through education	Better life	Hopes	Prospects
FroMom: I: I get angry! Very angry. She is in grade 5 now and she will be in grade 6 next year, so I get very angry because of the fear she will enter grade 6 without improving her handwriting. I get angry when telling her to improve her handwriting.	Fears daughters handwriting is not good enough for transition to junior high school	Rising standards	Fears	

Table 5. Parents´ perceptions of low achievement

Category	Reactions to low achievement	Perceptions of child			Prospects	
Sub-category	Reactions to low achievement	Strength	Inconsistency	Weakness	Hopes	Fears
Code	Anger Sadness Encouragement Comparing to peers Reasoning	Good grades Doing good Fine results Work ethic	<-> <-> <->	Limited ability Scarce positives Weak in most subjects	Aspiration Improvement Late bloomer Above peers Retain a skill Better life	Rising standards Future in labor

Initially, parents described their children as someone as someone who "gets good grades", "is doing good", "receives fine results," or "works hard for academic results" However, the same parent would later describe their child to have limited ability, be weak in most subjects, and the positives to be scarce. This implies that the meaning-making process in low achievement is complex. The parents' hopes and fears for the future related to both the near future in middle school and later adult life. The parents fear for rising standards in middle school, but some also were hopeful that their child would improve, be a late bloomer and reach a level above their peers. Long-term, the parents wished for high-status employment and the child to retain a useful skill to lead a "better life" than the parents currently have. A future in hard labor represents a concrete fear for the parents.

6.3   Fifth Graders´ Perceptions of Support at Home

Four of the fifth-graders' drawings about their learning at home reflected the space in which they study. Maryam and Froini drew themselves studying alone, although this was not always possible. When asked about what the characters in her drawing are feeling, Froini pointed out that Froini also appears on the way outside: "They are feeling happy. I and my sister studied, and I am going out to play. And mama and baba are having coffee." Habtom as the exception, drew himself happy with the same friend he argued with in the school-related picture. When asked about why he is happy, he said: "Because we reconciled and we were playing." Neighbors and other community members were also drawn in the pictures.

Drawing 3. Yonas´ recognizes his sister´s role in his educational path. Inside the school are his sisters, who used to take him to school. Outside Yonas has the privilege to raise the Eritrean flag in the morning. The "geft" at the bottom left corner is a gift from Yonas to his sister abroad.
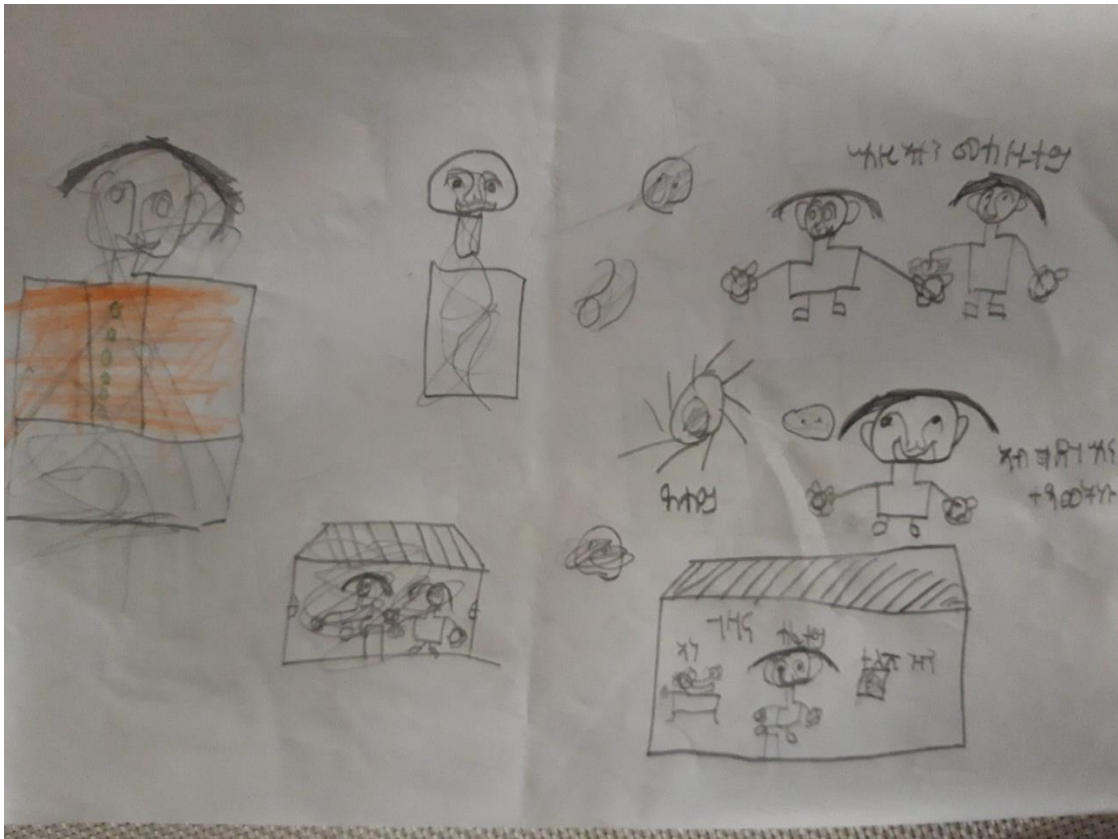
Drawing, 4. Yodit sleeping inside the house, as well as playing outside with her neighbors who "always" help her. Inside she is angry because her little brother has been disturbing her studying.

Yonas´s and Yodit´s drawings about their learning at school contain people or events that connect to the support the fifth graders receive at home. The children´s differing accounts on their siblings´ role in the pictures provide an insight into the different roles family and community play in the children´s education. Reflecting first on the positive impact of family, Yonas discusses drawing his sister at his school, although one lives abroad and the other one goes to another school.

> I: Why did you want to draw them at school?
>
> Yonas: They used to walk me to school.
>
> I: They were taking him to school earlier.
>
> R: Aha. Does that happen often, do they often take you to school?

I: Did they always walk you?

Yonas: Yes, and then they asked the teacher for me. How I am doing, something.

I: When did your sister go abroad?

Yonas: It probably has been five years.

I: Do you miss your sister, what do you remember then?

Yonas: They helped me in my education; I asked them what I didn't understand, and they answered me. And they followed how I was doing by coming to school.

Yonas remembers his big sister not only helping in his learning but also providing a link for home-school –communication. Others also considered siblings and extended family mainly to be supportive, as they try to minimize disturbance at home and assist in learning and facilitate learning materials.

Then again, the few complaints towards support at home in the whole dataset referred to siblings and limited study space or privacy. The first extract here is the first exchange of the interview, in which Yodit is rather blunt about why she is angry at school. Anger at her brother is a topic that resurfaced later when discussing her drawing (drawing 3.) about learning at home.

I: How are you here? Are you happy, or sad…?

Yodit: Angry.

I: You are angry? Why are you angry?

Yodit: I like drawing when I face a certain trouble.

I: Oh! You like drawing. What kind of trouble did you face here?

Yodit: When I face any kind of trouble, I even draw at home.

I: So, what was happening when you were drawing this at school? What troubles you?

Yodit: I drew this when I was angry. I was angry when coming from home.

I: Why were you angry at home?

Yodit: I couldn't write and study here because my brothers ripped my exercise book. (…)

Yodit: And this is at home when I was angry and sleeping.

I: Why were you angry?

Yodit: They disturb me at home while I am studying.

I: Who disturbs you?

Yodit: The youngest always disturbs me.

Families are often big, and space is therefore limited, so courtesy of the core family is integral for learning at home. The children do not represent a homogenous group in this sense, as Yonas and Froini were happy with the way their family can accommodate privacy for learning. No outright complaints were expressed by any of the children, although Maryam described how her wishes and reality do not always meet. When explaining her drawing on learning at home, she says "When I am studying I have to be alone." When asked whether it is always possible she clarifies that "I cannot be alone daily, but sometimes I study alone." Later, she shares an insight into the meaning-making of a study space from a fifth graders perspective.

I: How do you feel when you study being alone?

Maryam: Good, I understand it even better when I study alone. I can retain it in my mind. Because if I am here on this side and my sisters are on the other side (points at bed), they cannot really study because I am studying. If I am making conversations, for instance, reading aloud, and if they are doing like that they will be disturbed. And I also get disturbed by them, so I prefer studying alone.

While the children discussed the role of family and the neighborhood, the parents were still the primary supporters. According to the girls, reaching out to other community members who might be more able to support the children academically than their own parents was a functioning supporting strategy. Parents were also considered available at difficult moments and able to teach school topics. Yonas describes how his father helped: "I didn't understand the topic, so when I asked baba to help me, he did because he understood it." Froini "always" turns to her mother when English is troubling her, although there is back up for her too; "I say 'mom interpret this for me', and if mom can't do it, my brother helps me or I go to my neighbors."

The most prevalent support was instruction and encouragement. The support the children receive is predominantly shown in a positive light. A prime example of this is in the following exchange, in which Yodit comments on the feedback or support she desires from her parents similarly to how she comments on the support she actually receives:

> I: So what would you have wanted your parents to say so that you could improve in your education?
>
> Yodit: They say we will always help you, don´t lose hope because you get poor grades.
>
> I: What do you want them to say to you?
>
> Yodit: What I want them to say to me is that we will help you study always, don´t get weaker.

Maryam and Froini mentioned receiving clothes as a reward for good scores in tests, whereas Yonas recalls his father giving him a bicycle in second grade after scoring 39 out of 40 in English and 38 out of 40 in mathematics. His father has also promised him a new bicycle for ranking in the top three, whereas his sister has promised him a tablet for the same feat. Organizing family celebrations with the extended family was a reoccurring way to recognize the children´s achievements. The traditional coffee ceremony with family appears to be a prestigious form of encouragement or reinforcement. These are Maryam´s, Yonas´and Yodit´s reflections on a moment they felt successful at school:

> I: How about other things, they just become happy, you scored forty out of forty; they must have said something?
>
> Maryam: Rewards? They bought me clothes.
>
> I: Really? They bought you clothes?
>
> Maryam: Yes, really.
>
> I: Okay what about your mom, what did she say?
>
> Maryam: Mom praised me and she made a coffee celebration, they bought a cake…
>
> I: Like what? What did you do then?
>
> Yonas: Baba was happy, and he came and gave me a reward. And when I went home, mama made me a coffee ceremony

Yodit: I shared my happiness with my family.

I: What did your family do then?

Yodit: They encouraged me since then. They told me to continue in such a way.

I: Now, remember the time then. How was it? What did you do?

Yodit: Good. They made coffee and everything.

I: What about other things?

Yodit: Everything.

I: Like what?

Yodit: My grandfather and grandmother came. They always come home when we finish our tests. They celebrated it with us. Then, they celebrated it with us. We always celebrate it together, whether the test is good or bad.

As said earlier, the parents' support is shown in a predominantly positive light. When asked about what kind of feedback or support they desire from their parents, the responses were similar to how they expressed the support they actually receive.

I: So, what would you have wanted your parents to say, so that you could improve in your education?

Yodit: They say we will always help you, don´t lose hope because you get poor grades.

I: What do you want them to say to you?

Yodit: What I want them to say to me is that we will help you study always, don´t get weaker'.

The children were explicit about the support they receive at home but found little to criticize or develop. While the children expressed various degrees of happiness over the support they receive at home, none of them considered it as inadequate or as a cause for concern. In fact, Yodit is the only one who is explicit about her occasional arguments with her siblings, but her overall perception of the support is also positive. Considering that the children´s perceptions of self indicate little worry about their own learning, it is rational that they indicate little concern about the support they receive at home.

Results of the content analysis of 5th graders´perceptions on support received at home are presented in table 7. Some descriptive examples of the analysis process are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Examples from the analysis matrix.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Sub-category	Category
Froini: If they talk to me angrily, I also get angry. If they talk to me happily, I also become happy. I: Okay. So, how would you have liked it to be? Froini: If they talk bad things you get angry. If they talk like good things you feel good.	Parents talking angrily evokes anger, while parents talking happily evokes happiness	Reflecting parents´ emotion	Expressions of support	Expressions of support
Yodit: She (mother) always teaches us English, she translates it for us, but I don't understand it.	Mother translates and teaches English	Teaching	Academic support	Parental Support
(After scoring bad in English) Yodit: They said 'don't get mad, you will be better'. And my sister helps me all the time.	Parents encouraged and told not to get mad	Encouragement	Psychosocial support	
I: What do they say? Habtom: They tell me to study more for instance, if I have to study Tigrigna, I have to give it some time, like an hour, then I should study another subject, then another…	Instructions to study more	Instruction to study more	Behavioral support	
I: How is it when you study? Do you study alone? Yonas: Yes, alone. I: How about other people? Yonas: Nobody comes. And if they come, father and others tell them to go because I am studying.	Father (and other family?) tell people to leave if he is studying	Minimize disturbance	Practical support	
Yodit: I like them very much, and she always help me in	Drew her helpful and	Sibling support	Family support	

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Sub-category	Category
studying at home. And he always rip's my papers. So I drew them so that they could understand me.	hindering siblings so they could understand her	Sibling hindrance		Community support
I: Do you talk when you are getting good results? Froini: They become happy if I get a good result and get upset if I get bad results. And they help me, they call the teacher in the neighbourhood.	Parents feel happy of good results and get upset of bad results, and call the teacher in the neighborhood to help	Call neighborhood teacher	Nearby teacher	

Table 7. Fifth graders´ perceptions of support at home

Category	Expressions of support	Parental Support				Community Support	
Sub-category	Expressions of support	Academic	Psychosocial	Behavioral	Practical	Family	Neigh-borhood
Code	Parents happy or upset depending on results Reflecting parents´ emotions Good parenting Good/bad study space Wishes for parents	Reaching out Availability Teaching	Recognition Praise Encouragement	Reward Instruction	Facilitate materials Minimize disturbance	Facilitate materials Minimize disturbance Recognition Supportive siblings Hindering siblings	Nearby teacher Peer support Trust in network

The fifth-graders considered themselves to be reactive to their parents´ emotional reactions to good or bad test results. All children were positive about the support they receive from their parents. Parents were considered to be helpful with homework or at least be able to outsource the support to a sibling or somebody in the community. Psychosocial and behavioral support were important. Especially gifts and recognition by organizing social events to celebrate accomplishments were motivating to the fifth graders. Parents, family and the community assist in providing materials for studying, to minimize disturbance and assist academically, although some siblings may disturb studying. The children trust their parents and their network when looking for support.

6.4   Parents´ Perceptions of Support at Home

The parents´ reflections coincided to a great extent, thus a look into some examples provides a thorough overlook of the parents´ perceptions across the data. It should be noted that while the parents´ reflections were often directed at the child who also participated in the study, the parents´ also considered the support they provide to every one of their children. This is expressed multiple times by different parents, for instance: "I naturally do not pressurize them a lot (…) but the kids are not much" (MarMom), "My wish is for him to be like my older kids whom I educated and now are in high status." (YonDad) and "And the other one is weak, him especially" (YodMom).

Intuitively, it seems rational that the parents´ assessment of the support they provide is also affected by happenstances of their other children. The siblings´ happenstances appeared to either provide an alternative narrative of successful parenting or further a negative self-image of a parent unable to provide support. Some of these reflections also relate to how parents perceive their own academic ability. Parents´ assessments are categorized under parental self-concept and discussed here, as they offer relevant insight into how parents perceive the support provithey provide to their children at home.

Most common expressions related to the inadequacy of the support parents provide, and how the parents considered themselves to lack the know-how to support their children academically. Here, parents describe how their lack of know-how makes it challenging to support their children:

> I: Has he ever made you happy in his learning? Whether it be in Maths or English?
>
> HabMom: Yes, there is.
>
> I: Like what?
>
> HabMom: Now, he has good things in Maths.
>
> I: What was it like? How could you describe when you were happy? What feedback did you give him?

HabMom: It´s my help that is good for him, but I don't have the education.

MarMom: We can't help because what they learn is beyond our capacity. We do not know it. Our income is not enough to hire teachers for them although we make lots of effort. It's hard. We talk about it with my husband.

I: Why don't you help her? Especially you.

YodMom: I learned a long time ago; around Eritrea's independence time.

I: Did you complete your education?

YodMom: No, I didn't. I quit because of family problems, and then I went to Sawa. It has been 21 years since we got married. I spent all these years raising my kids, so my brain is almost…

This lack of know-how affects the instruments to support that are at the parents´ disposal. When the parent cannot help academically, they emphasize psychosocial and behavioral support. This toolkit involves encouragement, reminding the importance of education for life outcomes, discipline, and behavioral instruction. Contrary to Habtom´s, Maryam´s and Yodit´s parents, Yonas´and Froini´s parents are confident in their parenting – this is despite Froini´s mother pointing out that she cannot speak English and that Froini needs a supportive male figure in her life. Positive perception of parental support is grounded on the child´s previous good marks, the success of other siblings, the way their children are disciplined, and ability to provide study materials.

I: So what feeling did you have at that moment? What did you say to your child?

YonDad: Very good, and I told him my wish is for him to be like my older kids whom I educated and now are in high status. **(…)**

YonDad: First of all, we talk to him at home with my wife, and sometimes we hire a tutor (teacher at home) to help him so that he would be successful.

I: Are there people who help you, for example, in finding helping materials?

YonDad: Until now, I am the one who provides. (…)

I: How could you describe your role in the education of your child? Your role…?

YonDad: My role is good, we help him at home, me and my wife. We tell him to make efforts in his education and not spend time watching TV and other things, we take good care of him. (…)

I: Okay, is there a time you were proud or happy because of the grades or results of your child? Could you describe it for us?

YonDad: He started in [name of school] as a kindergarten student, and then after that, I made him join [name of school]; then when he got good points, I was happy then.

I: What challenges are there at home when you try to help your daughter?

FroMom: What do you mean by challenges? Do you mean in her educational work?

I: The challenges you face as a parent when trying to help her. A challenge that makes you not to help her.

FroMom: There is no challenge that makes me not to help her. I help her in a very good way when she comes after school as a teacher, as a parent, and as a friend.

Corporal punishment also arose in the interviews. Maryam´s mother reiterated that although her husband is "hasty" and "irritable", she tries to convince him to find other ways to guide their ten children: "I do tell him, 'don't beat them, don't rebuke them, make them understand slowly. Because you didn't provide them anything.' 'Then, what do you want me to do?' The life is like that." Yodit´s mother also concedes that Yodit is physically reprimanded at times; "If she doesn't listen, yes she gets beat like her brothers. But she is kind. She is beat…but she is the only girl…" Habtom´s mother considers beating as a useful method, although a sense of regret may also be interpreted from the following extracts:

(…) I: Sometimes you know she tells him to study, to study, then he perform… he does not perform well. Then at times she also hit him physically, things couldn´t work out.

R: Okay. With this kind of feedback, like hitting this kind of… trying to improve. Does his behavior change?

I: So does his behavior change because of what you say, what you advise him, and sometimes with the ways you hit him?

HabMom: He is better.

I: Better, really?

HabMom: It's not much in punishment, but when you advise him he shows a lot of change. Not only in reading but also in his other things. He changes his behavior. (…)

I: Do you hit him with your hand or with a stick?

HabMom: I hit him with my hand.

I: Do you hit him in the wrong places?

HabMom: I hit him with my hand, I usually hit him here (points at her temple).

I: Really, you hit him in his head.

HabMom: And I regret it after I hit him. Yes, I hit him in his head. And I regret if after. Because that place has a connection with the ear and something…I hit him with my hand. I don't grab anything, but…

I: Yes, it's like that. That's what comes to your mind, it's okay…

HabMom: It's usually in his head.

I: And then you regret it.

HabMom: Yes, I regret it; what do you expect?

Analogous to children´s academic self-concepts, parents´ perceptions of themselves as parents were not directly related to their children´s learning achievement (Marsh & Hau 2004; Möller et al. 2009). Expressions of inadequacy not only connect to the parents´ inability to support academically but the inability to facilitate learning. For these parents, encouragement, discipline, and reminding of the importance of education are the only possible instruments of support. In the following extracts, parents make sense of the uncomfortable sensation of inadequacy:

MarMom: Yes, now I naturally don't pressurize them a lot. Study…I don't have any know-how. I do write, and I can somehow read Tigrigna, but I can't really help them. I make pressure by saying 'study, watch out for your books, do your homework; I can do the housework myself, and I don't even care if it goes without being done', like that. But the kids are not much.

HabMom: We are always together. I help him whenever I have the time to sit. Like anything, even if don't help him in his studies, I tell him 'study, get knowledge', that it's only through education that you get out of a bad life. I am not educated, and his father is not educated as well. We are from the lowest background of education. I tell him, I am like this because I was not educated. I understand everything but there is the case whether he accepts it or not. (…)

I: What kind of support would you have made if you had all the resources?

HabMom: You wish certain things. And if you are patient there is nothing that doesn't pass. He is my firstborn, they are three.

I: What would you have done if you had it all? What kind of help would you give?

HabMomI: I would have given him everything that he needs. I would have given everything that a kid needs. They don't even have a quarter of what a kid should get. That what I would like. If God helps.

YodMom: The problem is, I don't help her with Math and English. I will be honest with you. I spent all these years raising my children, so my brain is blocked.

Most parents could identify ways around their inability, although some of them involve sacrifices. Like Maryam, Yodit is exempted from housework despite being the only girl in the family. This facilitates extra time for learning at home; "I do not even say that she is the only girl, and tell her to do something. It is according to her will. 'Sit down and study'… even if the house is a mess. If there is homework, she does not do the housework."

Like the children, parents also identify the community as the primary outlet for support when the parent is unable to provide it. Some of the parents who considered themselves unable to support their child academically said they reach out to older siblings or older students in their neighborhood that provide support for their child. However, access to this support might require effort:

> HabMom: "Yes, there is a kid in the neighborhood who is 11th grade, he will go to Sawa (military training) now. He helps him whenever he has the time. I go there and beg him to help him. Please help him in English or Maths… He is better with him than with me."

Froini´s mother and Yonas´ father, who were the most confident in their ability to support their child academically, also referred to having a supportive community. For example, the sister from abroad, whom Yonas remembers to have promised a tablet for ranking in the top three, also sends learning materials when Yonas´ father asks for them. Froini´s mother is also able to utilize help from abroad as there is a supportive peer for her daughter in the same building:

> I: Are there people like you mentioned who could provide such support in your family or neighborhood?
>
> FroMom: My family are not here, they are from [countryside]. So, I don't have support from family.
>
> I: They are from somebody… somewhere away. It´s from [rural area].
>
> R: I see, It's far away.
>
> FroMom: But there are people in our neighborhood.
>
> I: There are some people around. Not family members.
>
> R: So, they are close friends?
>
> I: Are they your friends?

> FroMom: They are within the house we live in. There is a person who is like a brother who helps them. The kid came from [a foreign country]. He is good at school.

Unlike the children, some parents also considered their neighborhood to be unable to provide support, which is an insurmountable challenge to counter. Maryam´s mother describes her whole community as unable to provide support. Yodit´s father works far away and thus he is rarely home, while Yodit´s brother at the university cannot fit at home during the week:

> MarMom: They even make efforts to go around the neighborhood. Her older twin sisters also go around the neighborhood. But our neighbors are no good either. They are not good in education. But they make efforts to go around the neighborhood. It's just like what I said. We don't have financial capacity. We cannot afford paying (for a tutor).

> YodMom: There is no one else. If her father comes, she asks him to help her with her homework, and he helps her. And her brother comes on the weekends and helps her a little in English. But mostly she does it herself.

Results of the content analysis of parents´perceptions of support at home are presented in table 9. Some descriptive examples of the analysis process are presented in table 8.

Table 8. Examples from the analysis matrix.

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Code	Sub category	Category
YonDad: My role is good, we help him at home, me and my wife. We tell him to make efforts in his education and not spend time in watching TV and other things, we take good care of him.	Both parents take good care of their son by instructing to not spend time watching tv and do "other things"	Discipline	Expressed ability	Parental self-concept
MarMom: Yes, now I naturally don't pressurize them a lot. Study…I don't have any knowhow. I do write, and I can somehow read Tigrigna, but I can't really help them.	Does not have the knowhow to support child	No know-how	Expressed inability	
MarMom: 'Study, it's for your future. Our life is this one, that's just it. But try making yours better than ours, it's for you, education is for you. Believe that an educated person will always be successful.' I say like that.	Encourages by noting the importance of education for life outcomes	Note importance of Education	Psychosocial	Strategies
FroMom: I describe my role as to explain her learning, to make them disciplined, I tell them that education is a gain and knowledge, I help them in such ways.	Mothers role is to explain, discipline, and note the importance of education	Discipline	Behavioral	
I: What help would she need in order to do well? YodMom: Her brother helps her.	Brother helps her	Utilize siblings	Academic	
I: They even make efforts to go around the neighbour. Her older twin sisters also go around the neighbourhood. But our neighbours are no good either. They are not good in education. But they make efforts to go around the neighbourhood.	Kids look for help in the neighborhood, but they are also unable to support	Unable community	Challenges	Challenges

Table 9. Parents´ perceptions of support at home

Category	Parental self-concept		Strategies					Challenges
Sub-cat-egory	Expressed ability	Expressed in-ability	Psychosocial	Behavioral	Academic	Community	Facilitation	Challenges
Code	Successful Sibling Previous good marks Discipline Ability to provide materials	No knowhow Lack of Re-source Inadequacy Deprived of support Unresponsive to support	Encouragement Sensitivity Note im-portance of ed-ucation Way to good life	Discipline Instruction Corporal punishment Rewards	Reaching out Utilize siblings Teaching	Peer support Able neigh-borhood Discussions with teacher	Materials Minimize disturbance Exemption from duties	Unavailable community Unable community No male fig-ure Limited space Resource Academic inability

The parents expressed discouraging views about their inability to support their child due to lack of know-how or resource. They expressed how their child is deprived of and unresponsive to support, which left them questioning their adequacy as a parent. Some parents were encouraged by previous good test scores, other "successful" children, the child´s discipline, and the parents' ability to provide materials for learning. Supporting strategies relied more on psychosocial, behavioral and community strategies for parents who expressed more inability as a parent. From the numerous challenges parents face, a community unable or unavailable to help in supporting their child was the most insurmountable.

6.5 Summary of Results

Table 10. Summary of results according to research questions.

RQ1. What are Eritrean 5th graders´ and their parents´ perceptions of low achievement		RQ2. What are Eritrean 5th graders´and their parents´perceptions of the support received at home?	
5th graders	Parents	5th Graders	Parents
Child is engaged	Child is engaged	Parent supports well	Parent struggles to support
Education important for life outcomes	Education important for life outcomes	Support always available in the community	The community may also struggle to support the child
React to parent perception of LA*	React to child perception of LA*	Siblings as supportive or hindering	Siblings as support or "no good either"
LA* temporary or subject-specific	LA* more an attribute of the child	No mention of corporal punishment	Corporal punishment
	Inconsistency in describing achievement		

*Low achievement

The children and parents both saw the fifth-grader as engaged in education and understood the significance of education for life outcomes. The fifth graders expressed their low achievement as temporary or subject-specific, whereas the parents considered low-achievement as a general attribute of their child. The parents felt that they are reacting emotionally to their child´s emotions, while the children felt they were reacting to their parents´ emotional state.

Perceptions of support at home were conflicting. The children considered both their parents and their community to support them well. Parents expressed how

they struggle to support their child, especially if they had nobody in their community to support their child. Those parents expressed how their other children were also low-achievers. Children did not discuss corporal punishment while three parents disclosed the matter openly.

7   DISCUSSION

By searching for answers to the two research questions; "what are Eritrean 5th graders' and their parents' perceptions of low achievement" and "what are Eritrean 5th graders' and their parents' perceptions of the support received at home?", this research attempts to shed light on the realities of a significant segment of Eritrean families. In retrospect, looking for an answer to only the other half of the research question, such as "What are Eritrean 5th graders perceptions of low achievement" or "What are Eritrean parents´ perceptions of low achievement" would have left blank spots to fill that would have been impossible to identify. For example, the 5th graders appeared to ignore most of the concerns raised by their parents in relation to the support they receive at home, or the significance of corporal punishment would not have been considered were only the children to be interviewed.

The fifth graders express how they react emotionally by mirroring their parents´ emotional reactions to low achievement, such as disappointment or anger. The parents considered themselves to be reacting to their child´s emotional reaction with sadness or happiness depending on their child´s results. While the reciprocal nature of how low achievement is perceived by children and their parents seems both intuitive and backed up by research (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 15; Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005, 230), it is notable that both children and their parents consider themselves as the reactive party.

Although the children considered their weaknesses in relation to their strong and weak subjects as well as their peers in a manner similar to the I/E

frame of reference model (Brunner et al. 2010; Marsh 1986b), their most meaningful reflections on achievement appear to emphasize external references. Possible explanations include sociocultural factors or the public ranking of students emphasizing external references and limitations of this study. However, none of the children explicitly referred to general low achievement. In fact, Froini is the only fifth-grader who openly perceived herself as modest in achievement.

Initially, this appeared also to be the parents´ stance as the parents started the interviews by describing their child as someone who" gets good grades", "is doing good", "receives fine results," or "works hard for academic results". However, when some of the parents started to express their limited ability to support their child, their expressions on their child´s achievement became more forthright and negative assessments more holistic or even condemning.

Both the children and their parents interviewed for this study considered the fifth graders to be engaged in their education. The fifth-graders engagement was manifest in the way the children expressed their ambitious educational aspirations, how they enjoy school the most, and how they reached out for support to achieve more educationally. The parents considered this engagement to be encouraging, which is not surprising when acknowledging that four out of the five parents considered themselves to have at least some kind of challenges in supporting their child academically themselves. This indicates that although low achievement can be inherited from family or even community (Dearing et al. 2006; MoE 2009b, 5-6), the children and their parents do acknowledge the significance of education for an individual´s future prospects. Thus, low achievement is not perceived to be the result of a lack of effort.

Repeated exposure to failure further increases low achieving children´s beliefs of incompetence (Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005, 227), which can disengage children from school (Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon & Craven 2010; Persehey 2011). The parents and even extended families were willing to go at great lengths to prevent this from happening, best exemplified Yonas´ father, who transferred Yonas to Highland Elementary School after failing a grade in his school, as he

"did not want him to be demoralized". Positive approaches to promote engagement are the coffee ceremonies and gifts to which family in the neighborhood and abroad commit to in an effort to encourage and reinforce success.

The results of this study are in line with results by Zemichael et al. (2017) , which indicate that parents of low achieving children in Eritrea struggle to participate in their children´s education and describes some of these challenges. However, the children were almost unanimously more descriptive, if not positive, about the support their parents provide. This may be in part due to the socio-economic status of their surroundings, which means they consider their situation in relation to other families likely socio-economically deprived too. Still, whatever the classification level of children, their perception of parental support contributes to their self-perception and socio-emotional adjustment (Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005, 229). Children´s perceived parental involvement has been found to positively influence children´s self-perceptions and engagement at school (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012; Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005). As the children perceived their parents as active and able supporters in their education, it is unsurprising that both the fifth-graders and their parents considered the children to be engaged in their education.

The parents´ assessments of the support they were able to provide were more dispersed, while two parents even expressed the support their children receive as wholly inadequate. The parents' perceptions of the support their children receive were heavily based on evaluations of the child´s academic capability, and resources available to support the child as expected (Yamamoto & Holloway 2010, 191). The academic capability was often reflected by comparing the child to his or her peers. The discrepancy between the children´s positive views in contrast to the parents implies that the children are more aware of the support that is available to them, than of the support that could be available under different circumstances. This could explain why some parents also described their community as unable to support their children while the fifth graders only paid attention to the community when they considered it to be supportive.

Another peculiar discrepancy between parents´ expressed beliefs or expectations for their children and the current ability of their children. This is showcased by Yodit as well as Habtom and his mother, who all express desire for him and her to become doctors. This could be for various reasons; for example, the parents may lack an understanding of the academic requirements to become a doctor or they may be expressing their wishes more than expectations. Whatever the case, these parents remain persistent in supporting their children and are positive of their children achieving better despite their feelings of inadequacy and describing numerous difficulties to support their child.

Considering how parental efficacy influences parental involvement (Hoover-Depmsey 2005, 108-110), there ought to be some protective factors that keep these parents engaged in their children´s education. It is possible that the surprisingly positive self-perceptions and persistence the children express in this study are in part a result of their parents´ persistence, as children´s school-related experience and academic self-concept is heavily shaped by reflected appraisals of significant others (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 2), as well as parents´ beliefs, behavior and expectations (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 15; Yamamoto & Holloway 2010, 191).

The most extensive responses in the whole interview reflected the parents´ perceptions of support at home. This indicates that these parents reflect on this matter extensively in their everyday life. Froini´s mother and especially Yonas´ father expressed more confidence in their ability to support their child than other parents. Yonas´ father discussed his other "successful" children, ability to discipline, instruct, facilitate materials and teach his son. Yodit´s, Habtom´s and Maryam´s mothers used expressions such as "my brain is blocked", "It´s my help that is good for him, but I don't have the education." and "We can't help because what they learn is beyond our capacity, we do not know it" to explain why they struggle to support their child. These parents appear to lack a sense of efficacy and belief that through their involvement they can exert a positive influence on their children´s educational outcomes, which Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997; 2005) argue is integral for the parents to get involved under all socio-economic circumstances.

All parents acknowledged that a parent plays a significant role in a child´s learning (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012, 316; Dearing et al. 2006). Contradiction between the ideal of a supportive parent and the support the parent was able to provide caused feelings of inadequacy when coupled together with a perception of a low-achieving child. This was emphasized by the acknowledgment of the significance of education en route to a "better life". Yonas´s father, who had "successful" children, appropriate resources, and a supportive community, was protected from discouraging perceptions of parental support even when Yonas´ results were perceived as limited. For Froini´s mother, just support in the community by other educated people such as the "kid from abroad" appears to be adequate help and consider the support her child receives as acceptable.

No matter how the parents evaluated their ability to support their child, all parents were confident in their behavioral strategies to support their child. The children and their parents had similar views of the importance of behavioral control in support of the child´s education. However, none of the children raised corporal punishment as a strategy used by parents, whereas three parents spontaneously discussed the matter. Possible explanations could be children´s fear of repercussions, a sort of defense mechanism, or simply forgetting to mention it.

Inconsistencies in some of the parent´s outputs indicate that low achievement of a child is a complex and a touchy subject. A common theme in most of the interviews is that the same parent may consider their child to have good grades, be doing good and receive fine results, when later bemoaning the child´s limited ability, the scarce positives or weakness in most subjects. Considering the great lengths to which these parents go to ensure their child´s morale, such as changing schools after failing a grade (YonDad), or how sad the families get when their child gets poor results (MarMom), it is no surprise that the parents are initially cautious in describing their children´s weaknesses. The results of this study underline how parents, as children´s primary guides through their schooling experiences, serve to greatly buffer or compound risk factors for disengagement (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012, 316).

Limitations. Due to excitement generated by the research at Highland Elementary School, some interviews were interrupted by other children at the school. To my assessment, the interviewees were not distressed about these incidents, but I did reiterate that if the participants felt discomfort, we could stop the interview or have a break. Conducting the interviews in other locations than the school were not considered feasible options for practical reasons.

Particularly some children were prompted more by the interpreter in an effort to encourage the children to participate. This can be seen in some of the extracts from the interviews, in which communication appears rigid. Thus, the ideal manifest in the interview questions (Appendix 3.) of allowing the children to speak for themselves was not fully realized (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 199.). Possible explanations for this include deficiencies in easing the participants (Alasuutari 2015), inadequate design for a child-friendly approach (Powell & Smith 2009, 131), or failing to offer communication tools for children in relation to the interview questions (Seargeant & Harcourt 2012, 26-27), although the children were more expressive when discussing their drawings. It is also possible, that these children represent a marginalized group, and thus are not used to giving extensive responses to adults.

Finally, my interpretations are from a Westerner´s perspective further enhancing the deeply entrenched hierarchical structures and power positions in the academia (Parsons & Harding 2011, 5), although my views have been shaped by Eritrean family. Similarly, my lack of understanding of Tigrigna may cause added challenges in understanding the participants' perceptions from their perspective (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 3). I have pursued to negate the effects of this by methodological choices and discussing extensively with the translators (see 7.1 Trustworthiness).

7.1 Trustworthiness

This study is assessed for trustworthiness in the manner defined by Merriam (2009). The concept incorporates internal validity, reliability, and generalizability

(Merriam 2009). This study aims to provide an insight to the experiences of low achievement and support available at home to low achieving Eritrean children. In this particular context, this is, of my opinion, the first attempt to do so by asking the children themselves. The findings should be interpreted with caution as there is a little background to reflect the findings on. Still, triangulating the phenomenon by interviewing both the parents and their children on the phenomenon of low achievement, self-perception, and support at home enhances the trustworthiness of the study (Merriam 2009, 229; Patton 2002, 247).

Knowledge vital to addressing the circumstances affecting low achievement is accumulating in the Eritrean context. Zemichael et al. (2017) have credibly researched parents´ perceptions of the support they provide and the teachers' perceptions of parental support. Previous research implies that it is precisely the low achieving children´s parents that are less likely to show up at school when invited (Zemichael et al. 2017). It is possible that the two parents who did not show up for interviewing could have represented a different type of parenting.

In the introduction section, I discuss how my initial interest in the topic arose from personal experience in my family. While a certain emotional attachment can direct efforts to ensure the quality of work, issues of friendship, familiarity, shared stories and futures, and taken-for-granted ´truths´ could jeopardize the integrity of the research (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 177.) Considering that there is no previous research on low-achievement and self-concepts in Eritrea to base academic assumptions on, there is an elevated risk of presenting the topic from a personal, and possibly biased, perspective.

A rich thematic description of the whole data set instead of a detailed account of a particular aspect comes with the necessary loss of some depth and complexity (Braun & Clarke 2006, 83). However, an attempt to describe the overall dataset is made here to negate the influence of the aforementioned liabilities (Curtis, Murphy & Shields 2014, 177). The decision to describe the whole data is primarily informed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 83), who consider this a particularly useful method when investigating an under-researched topic or working with participants whose views on the topic are not known.

Presentation of the analysis process and its results is critical for validity and trustworthiness in qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 112-113). Demonstration of the reliability of the findings and interpretations are required to enable someone else to follow the process (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 112). Here, authentic citations and tables are used extensively to demonstrate links between the data and the results (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 112). Tables two, four, six and eight are presented to make transparent the process from raw data to results (Bengtsson 2016, 11).

An integral component of trustworthiness in a cross-language qualitative study is the translation process (Squires 2009), although a comprehensive translation process can be time-consuming and require resources unavailable in some cases (Sutrisno, Nguyen & Tangen 2014, 1338). The methodological considerations for cross-language research to maximize the trustworthiness of translated qualitative data proposed by Squires (2009, 280) were reasonably adapted throughout this research (see Methodology). Still, translated data is liable to be misinterpretation despite efforts to maximize trustworthiness. For example, a word in the source language may have more than one equivalent in the target language and vice versa (Sutrisno, Nguyen & Tangen 2014, 1339), of which a descriptive example in the data set is the way the Tigrigna word for "good" (ጽቡቕ) may also be used to describe somebody being clever.

Tigrigna sentences are often formed as subject-object-verb as opposed to the relatively strict subject-verb-object -structure of the English language. The way information is structured in a language affects how individuals express ideas and statements coherently (Sutrisno, Nguyen & Tangen 2014, 1339). Hence, it cannot be claimed that the findings of this study unequivocally represent all Eritrean 5th graders´ and their parents' perceptions of low-achievement and parental support. Furthermore, the sample is typically small for a qualitative study and the research on the topic is scarce (Patton 2002, 230), thus generalization of results warrants further research.

Being able to describe concepts with no equivalence in the target language is particularly significant in translating between Tigrigna and English, where the

differences in the structure of language and culture challenge the translator in communicating the original meaning. As both translators are locals, their identities due not dramatically contrast to that of the participants on the macro level, although, as successful academics, they are in a position of authority on the micro-level, especially when considering the research topic of low achievement. Still, incorporating translators with an academic background to translate the interviews was a measure to ensure the integrity of the translators.

Two translators participated in this research. Here, it is necessary to describe the translator´s roles and their credentials (see Squires 2009, 280). The first translator is a bachelor of developmental psychology from Asmara who now works at the university as a graduate assistant; hence he has completed his whole degree in English. Working and studying at Asmara College of Education, he has previous experience of transcribing and translating Tigrigna into English. Therefore, he has had to demonstrate the ability to communicate between languages and describe concepts or words when not knowing the actual word or phrase, which is required from an adequate translator (Squires 2009, 280; see also Nes et al., 2010, 314). The second translator is a local Eritrean with years of experience at the local university, now conducting his doctoral studies in special needs education at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He significantly adds to the translator pairs experience in translating research from Tigrigna to English.

The original translations were reviewed and refined with the second translator. Having this qualified doctoral student of psychology, who was familiar with the Eritrean context but had also acted as an interpreter in three of the interviews, was prioritized for validating the translation over having the translation validated by a qualified bilingual individual not directly involved with data collection (Squires 2009, 280). Similarly, developing a translation lexicon (criteria 2.) was not feasible, but instead, a dynamic parallel translation was applied. Reviewing and refining the original translations with an Eritrean doctoral student in psychology, the researcher had an opportunity to discuss translation dilemmas.

The analysis was conducted in English based on refined translations of the transcribed interviews, as it is also the language of the thesis presenting the study (criteria 1).

All the interviews were transcribed into Tigrigna by one of the interpreters of the interviews. He was also responsible for translating the transcribed interviews from Tigrigna into English. Since Tigrigna and English belong to different language families, and the communities in which they are used differ in culture, it was apparent that the translator´s role as not only a translator but also an analyst and a cultural broker had to be acknowledged (Temple & Young 2004, 171-172). Additionally, Tigrigna and English use a different alphabet and a different word order, which further challenge the translator. Without discussing the translators´ views on the translations, I would not have been able to begin to allow for differences in understandings of words, concepts, and worldviews across languages (Temple & Young 2004, 171).

Initially, the transcription was translated into English verbatim, with the translator addressing his uncertainty or providing his interpretation of an unconventional expression in brackets after, for example: "He said ´good´ (clever)". We also discussed my concerns or uncertainties after my first couple of readings of the translated data set. Later, I reviewed the translated transcripts with the second translator. If he had something to add to the translation or a differing opinion, I would write a comment in the column about his correction suggestion. I communicated with the original translator on the suggestions of the latter translator.

It is essential to ensure that interpreters understand precisely what is to be asked (Patton 2002, 392). The first translator acted as an interpreter in four of the interviews, whereas the second translator interpreted three interviews. The remaining three interviews were interpreted by another doctoral student from the ACE. To ensure the integrity of the interview data, both the research- and interview questions were revised the interpreter; an academic fluent both in Tigrinya and in English. Familiar with the cultural context and the concepts used in the study, they then acted as well-informed interpreters during the interviews.

7.2   Conclusions

(…) it is for you, education is for you. Believe that an educated person will always be successful (Maryam´s mother)

Torrance (2011, 577) argues that on a policy-oriented field such as education, scientific disinterest and independence must be subordinate to policy relevance and social utility. In a challenging context such as Eritrea, there is a risk of discussing banal self-evident truths, which, although interesting and valuable per se, may not contribute much to the participants or their demographic. While implications and suggestions for future research presented here emerge from this study, this is not to say some of the applications befitting the Eritrean context have not been explored by the local authorities or individuals before. Initiatives already in place include national strategy and implementation framework for out of school children, Comprehensive National Child Policy and Rural Community Care Giving Centres (MoE2018; Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare 2013).

The overall objective of Eritrean education is the development of a population equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and culture for a self-reliant economy (MoE 2013a, 6). However, the discrepancy between the rural areas and urban Asmara is to be kept in mind when considering applicable solutions, as noted in the Educational Sector Analysis (2017, 55-57). Contrary to attitudes towards education in rural areas (ESA 2017, 55-57), it appears that the children and their parents in urban Asmara are well aware of the importance of education for life outcomes. This implies that pressurizing the children on their achievement levels further might not be a fruitful approach in supporting these children.

In this sense, the normal progression initiative in which pupils do not face the risk of repetition before entering the final years of elementary school stands to scrutiny (MoE 2013b as referred to in Belay et al. 2017, 101). As the formation of Academic Self-Concept becomes apparent during the first two to three years of schooling (Schmidt et al. 2017), unnecessary hindrances to positive self-concept ought to be avoided. Then again, measures to make students less preoccupied with normative ability comparisons in school can, and possibly should, be

entertained (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 33). One approach to encourage self-assessments could be at least reconsidering the ranking system and its justifications, as normative ranking of pupils may actually cause anxiety (Bong & Skaalvik 2003, 28), while the positives are still up to debate.

It is no secret that Eritrean children have missed out on schooling for decades due to war and conflict (MoE 2009b, 5-6). Those children are now the mothers and fathers striving to provide support to their children in modern-day Eritrea. It is not surprising that most of the parents interviewed here expressed challenges in providing support to their children despite their efforts and sacrifices. Fortunately, collectivism can be considered a core value in Eritrea. It appears that it is actually the ability or inability of the community to support their child that renders their children´s support at home as adequate or inadequate in the parents´ thinking.

In this instance, it is fortunate that families are often large in number, and that culture changes slower than societal structures - tight-knit local communities that extend over the boundaries of extended family and neighbors provide an asset, which would be unavailable in individualistic societies. In fact, the Ministry of Education has already had a positive experience with active community participation, as indicated by the construction of numerous primary level schools with the governments´ Rapid Results Approach (ESA 2017, 93).

So, as the Eritrean government has noted, awareness-raising campaigns may promote education only to an extent (ESA 2017, 56). Where the whole community has challenges, it may be worthwhile to utilize the tight fabric of social ties to collaborate with the communities to find platforms where concrete support could be directed into those communities. Identifying these challenging neighborhoods and communities is one challenge. Facilitating premises, access, and resource to willing individuals and bringing support into these communities could provide cost-effective, distinctively Eritrean ways to provide support to children in need. For instance, having teacher-students work in challenging communities providing assistance for study credits may be a valuable experience in

supporting pupils with special needs for the teacher-students as well as the pupils struggling to receive support in the home environment. However, finding ways for institutions such as university to approach these at-risk neighborhoods, make their presence felt in the communities, and seek functioning interventions are most certainly best innovated by local experts and communities.

Based on this study, it is difficult to assess why the children expressed the support they receive in a more positive manner than their parents. However, this appears to be a positive problem as perceived parental support is connected to student engagement (Bempechat & Shernoff 2012; Bouffard, Roy & Vezeau 2005). Parents struggling with feelings of inadequacy or even failed parenting should be encouraged by the notion that helping with homework may not be a priority in parental support, as its effect on student achievement may be smaller than it intuitively seems (Wilder 2014). Instead, Eritrean parents could benefit form practices in which it is noted that even when student learning tasks surpass parents' knowledge, parents' interest in child's schooling, encouragement, reinforcement for learning, and modeling continue to support student learning and school success (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, 120). It has been shown elsewhere, that assisting parents who lack confidence in their ability to support their children may promote parental involvement, particularly in families where low achievement is inherited (Dearing et al. 2006).

Here, the school may play an integral role. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) suggest that even well-designed school programs inviting involvement will see limited success if they do not address issues of parental role construction and parental sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school. Research from Yikealo et al. (2017) and Zemichael et al. (2017) suggests that active home-school communication is still more down to individual parents and teachers than a feature of the educational system. For example, teachers paid working time may be allocated to assisting the parents in understanding how they may support their child at home. This could be further emphasized in educating teachers and school directors to enforce locally identified functioning practices on the systemic

level. In line with building a strong confident nation is to educate confident children, so focusing on a supportive environment with positive appraisals is also an objective per se.

Whatever the context, there will most certainly always be individuals and families on the fringes of the society; however, this does not excuse ignoring them. The aim of this study is to empower and engage the participants (Torrance 2011, 576-577). Reflecting on this, however, I cannot restrain myself from making a suggestion for future research. This study is an introduction to the highly relevant topic of low achievement from the primary stakeholder´s perspective, the importance of which is emphasized by the Eritrean government as well as the parents and children in this study (MoE 2009a). It should also be considered as an invitation to engage the primary stakeholders into creative discussions to find approaches which utilize the tight community fabric in Eritrea, whilst acknowledging the research-based evidence constructed universally in the academic community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Instructions to the drawing process

With the Children

You will not be judged based on how the drawing looks like. I/We are interested only on the content of the drawing, not on the quality. These drawings will be used to get an idea of how you experience school. Feel free to express yourself. Please start by writing your name on the corner of the paper. I/We only ask you to not identify place or person by name in the drawing. You do not have to fill the whole paper. Enjoy.

First, draw a picture of yourself learning at school

- Who else is there?
- What are they doing?
- How do you feel?
- What is around you?

Second, draw a picture of you learning or trying to learn at home

- Who else is there?
- What are they doing?
- How do you feel?
- What is around you

Appendix 2.

CONSENT FORM

General information about the research

I, Hagos Solomon Berhane, am doing my research at ███████████████ elementary school on students´ self-perceptions and how students are supported by their parents at home. This research is carried out as a part of a master´s thesis in the University of Jyväskylä (JYU, Finland). Dr Hanna Posti-Ahokas is the supervisor of masters' thesis.

The data will be collected by Hagos Berhane and PhD-student Desalegn Zerai. The data consists of:
1. Students' drawings, 2. Students' interviews, and 3. Students' parents' interviews.
For ethical reasons, the data is only used for research purposes. Anonymity will be ensured with code names (pseudo names) for place and personnel. You and your child can at any point refuse to participate in the study, ask for more information about the study or cancel your participation without any consequences.

Consent

I am aware of the purpose and the content of this research, that the data will be used for research purpose only, the possible harm for participants and the rights of the participant. I can cancel or quit participating at any moment. The results and data collected from me and my child can be used in the master´s thesis.

Hagos Berhane, Masters' Student, JYU

Parents´ name & Signature   Date

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ሓፈሻዊ ሓበሬታ ብዛዕባ እዚ መጽናዕቲ

ኣነ ሓጎስ ሰሎሞን ብርሃነ ኣብ መባእታ ደረጃ ቤት ትምህርቲ ⬛⬛⬛⬛ ዝርከቡ ተመሃሮ ብዛዕባ ገዛእ ርእሶም ዘለዎም ርድኢትን ኣብ ገዛ ብወለዶም ዝግበረሎም ሓገዝን ዝምልከት መጽናዕቲ ኣካይድ ኣሎኹ። እዚ መጽናዕቲ ኣካል ናይ ማስትሬት ዲግሪ መመረቕታ መጽናዕታዊ ጽሑፍ ኣብ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ይቫስኪላ (ፈንላንድ) እዩ። ዶክተር ሃና ፖስቲ ኣሀከስ ከአ ናይዚ መጽናዕታዊ ጽሑፍ እያ።

ሓበሬታ ካብዚ ቤት ትምህርቲ ብ ሓጎስ ብርሃነን ናይ ዶክትሬት ትምሃራይ ደሳለኝ ዘርኣይን እዩ ዝእከብ። እዚ ሓበሬታ ድማ ብዛዕባ፡ 1. ናይ ተመሃሮ ስእሊ 2. ናይ ተመሃሮ ቃለ መሕትትን 3. ናይ መምህራን ቃለ መሕትት የጠቓልል።

ቅኑዕ ኣገባብ ስነ ምግባር ምእካብ ሓበሬታ ክስዕብ ስለ ዝግብኣኒ እቲ ዝእከብ ሓበሬታ ንመጽናዕቲ ጥራይ የገልግል። ናይ ተሳተፍቲ ተመሃሮን ወለድን መንነትን ስም ናይ ቤት ትምህርትን መምህራንን ስቱር እዩ፡ ኣይግለጽን። ንስኹምን ዉላድኩምን ኣብዚ መጽናዕቲ ናይ ዘይምስታፍ መሰልኩም ዝተሓለወ እዩ። ኣድላዪ ዝበልኩምዋ ተወሳኺ ሕቶታት ክትሓቱ ወይዉን ኣብ መንጎ መጽናዕቲ ኣቋሪጽኩም ክትወጹ ትኽእሉ ኢኹም።

ስምምዕ

ኣነ ዕላማ ናይዚ መጽናዕዕትን ትሕዝቶኡን፡ እቲ ዝእከብ ሓበሬታዉን ንመጽናዕቲ ጥራይ ከም ዘገልግል፡ ኣብዚ መጽናዕቲ ምስታፍ ዘስዕቦ ጸገም ከም ዘይብሉ ድማ ተረዲኣዮ ኣሎኹ። ኣብ ዝደለኹሉ እዋን ተሳትፎይ ከቋርጽዉን እኽእል እየ። ካባይን ካብ ዉሉደይን ዝተረኽበ ሓበሬታ ኣብ ናይ ማስትሬት ዲግሪ መጽናዕቲ ጽሑፍ ከትጥቀሙሉ ትኽእሉ ኢኹም።

ሓጎስ ብርሃነ፡ ናይ ማስትሬት ዲግሪ ተመሃራይ ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛
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Appendix 3.

Interview questions:

Children (How low-achieving pupils in Eritrea perceive themselves as learners)

- Could you tell me about your first drawing (you learning at school)?
    o Where are you in the picture?
    o Probe for feelings, facial expressions, proximity from people, who is included (e.g. Who are in the picture?Why are they standing there? You don't seem to be smiling…?)
- Take your time to think of a moment you have felt successful at school. Could you describe what happened?
    o How did you feel then?
    o What kind of feedback did you receive?
- Please, try to think of a moment you felt like learning is difficult. If you may, could you tell me how you felt at that time? What do you think about when you face difficulty?
    o Feeling?
    o Feedback?
    o Support?

Parental Support & Involvement from child´s perspective

- Next, I would like you to tell me about your other drawing
    o Where are you in the picture?
    o Probe for feelings, facial expressions, proximity from people, who is included (e.g. Who are in the picture? Why are they standing there? You don't seem to be smiling…?)
- Can you remember a situation where your parents have spoken to you about your learning? Could you describe what happened?
    o How did you react?
    o Did you change something in your behavior after that? In what way?
    o What kind of discussion would you have hoped with your parents?

Parents (How parents perceive support at home)

Parental support & involvement

- Could you describe your child´s strengths to me?
  - o How do you see these strengths in action?
  - o I would like you to think of a moment you have felt proud or positive about your child´s academic performance. Describe what happened
    - ▪ What kind of feedback did you give?
- How would you describe your role in your child´s learning?
  - o Expectations towards child?
  - o Could you give me an example of a situation where the child´s learning is discussed? (Description of conversation or event)
  - o What kind of challenges do you experience in supporting your child´s learning? Can you think of something that would support you as a parent?
- Can you identify some learning your child still has to work on?
  - o How do you feel about this?
  - o What do you think could support his/her learning at home?
  - o I would like you to think of a moment you have been disappointed in your child´s academic performance. Could you describe what kind of feedback you gave at the time?
- Provision of learning facilities at home
  - o Description of the space where the child can study
  - o How he/she can receive support for studying? What materials are present to the child?

- Can you describe a situation where you discussed your child´s learning with the teacher?
  - o What topics do come up when discussing learning of the child?

- Is there anything you would like to add or comment? Is there anything important you would like to talk about that I did not ask before?

Thank you for providing me with the valuable information!