

Co-Curricular Programs and Students Inter-Ethnic Relations: The Case of Selected Public Universities in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the contribution of co-curricular programs [CoCPs] to peaceful inter-ethnic relations [IER] of students in Addis Ababa University [AAU], Ambo University [AU] and University of Gondar [UoG]. To this end, mixed research design was employed. Primary sources of data were 150 students for quantitative study and 24 students who are members and non-members of Peace Club, six instructors and six management personnel for qualitative study. Four research questions were set to guide this research. Data gathered through questionnaire and semi-structured interview were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis. The findings typically show inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club (one of the co-curricular platforms) engagement was found to be a contributory factor for positive IER of students. Statistically, inter-ethnic contact through participation in Peace Clubs accounts for about 40.1% of the variation in students' IER. However, there were gaps on having equality of status among members, regularity of activities, setting suitable settings for dialogues and institutional support to make clubs productive and impactful. It was recommended therefore, the Federal Ministry of Education [MoE] should focus on conducting a national study of wider scope on the subject, and it should create Inter-Ethnic and Co-curricular Policy to so as to systematically manage CoCPs particularly Peace Clubs in a way they can contribute for positive IER of students.

Key words: Co-curricular programs, inter-ethnic relations, peace club, public universities

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The presence of ethnically diverse students and managing such diversity in a way students can peacefully interact is among the top challenges in universities (Denson, 2009; Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). Such a challenge usually emanate from lack of enough exposure with out-groups that facilitate interaction, empathy and perspective taking (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). Through classroom and non-classroom engagements, universities seek to prepare students to function in a diverse environment. Particularly, engagement in CoCPs like Peace Club likely promote interactional and experiential learning (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Savchits, Ismailova & Turebayeva, 2017).

Ethiopian public universities comprise multi-ethnic students who are overwhelmed with inter-ethnic fear and out-group exclusion to the point where it became fatal (Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy [CARD], 2020). In such a volatile setting, few researchers attempted to present CoCPs as alternative tool to improve IER of students (Hailemariam, 2016) though the works lacks theoretical and methodological depth. It is therefore timely to look into how the contact platform, processes and contexts of CoCPs contribute for students IER in selected public universities.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Multi-cultural interaction among students is commended to inform academic progress and social skills. Such practice is mainly vital for multi-ethnic students in Ethiopian public HEIs to meet, interact, and learn from one another (Abebaw, 2014). Unfortunately, students are overwhelmed by prejudiced attitude that resulted in-group affiliation and out-group hostility (Abera, 2010; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017) and direct violence (CARD, 2020; Yonas, 2019).

Failure to co-exist is influenced by contested ethno-federal political structure underpinned by oppressor-oppressed discourse (Abebaw, 2014; Yonas, 2019), pressure from family and peers (Miressa, 2018), media (Zekarias, 2020), partial treatment from university staff (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017) and failure of management to create safe space for discussion (Abera, 2010; Yonas, 2019).

It is hard for students to fit into culturally diversified settings without deliberate action. Universities therefore introduced different approaches including CoCPs through inter-cultural dialogues, bias reduction workshops, peer-facilitated trainings (Denson, 2009; Ward, 2017), cross-cultural festivals and field visits (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015; Savchits et al., 2017), Peace Clubs (Munye, 2014), and service interventions. The success of such programs is however determined by contact situation, processes, principles of equality and interdependence and institutional support (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Savchits et al., 2017; Ward, 2017).

In Ethiopia, the potential of CoCPs to achieve unity in diversity is acknowledged by Education Sector Development Plan [ESDP] V (MoE, 2015), Ethiopian Education Roadmap (MoE, 2018) and few empirical studies (Abebaw, 2014; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Hailemariam, 2016; Zekarias, 2020). However, local research works rarely discuss inter-group contact theories and employ mostly qualitative approaches. Theoretical and methodological gaps are also observed in studies conducted abroad (Munye, 2016; Savchits et al., 2017; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015).

Thus, this study attempted to close these gaps by examining the potential contribution of CoCPs to IER of students in AAU, AU, and UoG using a mixed methods approach supported by improved version of intergroup contact [ICG] theory of Gordon Allport (1954) and High Impact Practices Learning Model of George Kuh (2008). For Allport (1954), prolonged contact among groups of equal status who have common goal and cooperate towards its achievement under good leadership helps to shift misconceived beliefs about out-groups. Subsequent research outputs refined the original thesis and label learning about out-groups, changing behavior, generating affective ties and intra-group reappraisal as essential processes while equality of status, common goal, inter-group cooperation, institutional support and larger societal factors like widespread inter-ethnic violence are facilitative conditions (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008, 2006; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011).

In order to facilitate learning however, Kuh's (2008) model allow students to reflect, interrogate and connect what they understand to the real world problem. While reflection aspect of Kuh's proposition seem to explain interactive trainings and workshops, integration aspect is associated with tools to alter affective ties like self-disclosure and application element as both behavioral and emotional manifestations. These seem to fit

to what IGC theorists like Pettigrew (1998) categorize as ‘processes of ultimate inter-group contact.’

By combining improved version of IGC theory and High Impact Practices model, the appearance of Peace Club as a platform for co-curricular interaction, processes within club activities, and club operating environment are assessed to determine whether or not they support or hinder students' IER in AAU, AU, and UoG.

1. How is Peace Club's appearance as a co-curricular platform appropriate for promoting interethnic relations at AAU, AU, and UoG?
2. What processes of Peace Club's activities influence inter-ethnic relations of students in AAU, AU and UoG?
3. How do contexts where Peace Club operates influence inter-ethnic relations of students in AAU, AU and UoG?
4. How can engagement in Peace Club's activities nurture interethnic relations among students at AAU, AU, and UoG?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the contribution of Peace Club towards IER of students in AAU, AU and UoG through examining the appearance of the club as well as the processes and conditions surrounding club's operations. Specifically, this research:

- Examined the appearance of Peace Club for IER of students;
- Examined the role of mediating processes between Peace Club and IER of students;
- Examined the role of moderating contexts between Peace Club and IER of students and
- Analyzed the contribution of students Peace Club engagement to their inter-ethnic relations.

2. Research Methods

Among the various CoCPs, Peace Club was selected because it aimed at creating peace-loving generation, fostering dialogue among multi-ethnic and resolving inter-ethnic conflicts among students (Abebaw, 2014). However, not all students are Peace Club members and there was no organized data of members. Accordingly only 150 who were

willing and active were selected randomly (65 students from AAU, 28 students from AU and 57 students from UoG).

For students from Peace Clubs, questionnaires and interviews were administered. But for the rest of the participants (instructors, Student Dean’s Office and Management staff representatives), qualitative tools were employed. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were applied to select informants. In total 24 students⁴, six instructors and six management staff were selected. Therefore, saturation principle determined the number of interviewees. According to Creswell (2014), multi-level mixed methods design is the term used to describe such an eclectic style.

For quantitative study, descriptive statistics, ANOVA and regressions were applied to analyze the data. The researcher adopt the arguments of Pimentel (2019) that recommends calculating uniformed numerical difference in each interval scale to obtain cut points to compare means (1-1.79-strongly disagree, 1.8-2.59-disagree, 2.6-3.39-neither agree nor disagree, 3.4-4.19- agree and 4.2-5- strongly agree). For qualitative analysis, thematic data analysis technique was employed and cross-case analysis was used to detect themes mutual or diverse among universities.

3. Results

3.1. Demographics Characteristics of Participants

Majority of respondents were from Law (18.7%), Management (9.3%) and Economics and Civil Engineering (8.7%) departments respectively. Gender wise, 76% of the respondents were male and 24% were female. In terms of age, around 68.7% of the respondents were between 21 and 23 years, and 22.7% were between age of 24 and 26 years. With respect to years of study, most participants were in their third year (80.0%).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Students (For Quantitative Study)

Department of Respondents	Name of Universities			
	AAU	AU	UoG	Total
Accounting and Finance	6	1	2	9 (6.0%)
Biology	4	3	4	11 (7.3%)
Chemistry	1	2	3	6 (4.0%)
Civil Engineering	1	4	8	13 (8.7%)
Economics	9	2	2	13 (8.7%)

⁴AAS1-8 is for students from AAU, AUS1-8 is for students from AU, US1-8 is for students from UoG, AA11-2 is for instructors students from AAU, AU11-2 is for instructors from AU, UI1-2 is for instructors from UoG, AAMI-2 is for management staff from AAU, AUM1-2 is for management staff from AU and UMI-2 is for management staff from UoG.

Electrical and Computer Engineering	4	0	5	9 (6.0%)
Information Systems	0	0	3	3 (2.0%)
Journalism and Communication	2	1	1	4 (2.7%)
Law	9	8	11	28 (18.7%)
Mathematics	0	0	2	2 (1.3%)
Mechanical Engineering	1	0	4	5 (3.3%)
Management	11	1	2	14 (9.3%)
Public Administration and Development Management	4	1	1	6 (4.0%)
Physics	0	0	2	2 (1.3%)
Psychology	2	0	0	2 (1.3%)
Sociology	1	1	1	3 (2.0%)
Social Work	7	1	1	9 (6.0%)
Sport Science	2	3	3	8 (5.3%)
Statistics	1	0	2	3 (2.0%)
TOTAL	65	28	57	150
Gender	AAU	AU	UoG	Total
Female	17	6	13	36 (24%)
Male	48	22	44	114 (76%)
Age	AAU	AU	UoG	Total
18-20	4	1	3	8 (5.3%)
21-23	42	18	43	103 (68.7%)
24-26	15	9	10	34 (22.7%)
27-29	4	0	1	5 (3.3%)
Years of Study	AAU	AU	UoG	Total
Second year	6	5	11	22 (14.7%)
Third Year	56	21	43	120 (80.0%)
Fourth Year	3	2	3	8 (5.3%)
TOTAL	65	28	57	150

For the qualitative study, 17 male and 7 female students were interviewed. For instructors and management staff, those who served over a decade and are willing to participate were targeted.

3.2. Aptness of Co-curricular Platform

The mean value 3.4 implies, majority of respondents agreed that peace club seemed to be a suitable to establish inter-ethnic contact(see Table 2).

Table 2. Aptness of Peace Club

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inter-ethnic contact through CoCP	150	1.50	4.00	3.4056	.57748

3.3. Processes within Co-curricular Program

The most common mediational variables between inter-ethnic contact and positive IGR are learning about out-groups (cognitive aspects), developing emotional ties with out-groups (affective aspects) and changing behavior (behavioral aspects) (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

3.3.1. Cognitive Aspects

The mean value 3.44 indicates, majority of participants agreed that the club engagements help students in learning about out-groups (see Table 3).

Table 3: Cognitive Variable

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cognitive variables	149	2.00	4.67	3.4437	.49260

3.3.2. Affective Aspects

As illustrated under Table 4, majority of respondents (mean value 30.03), are indecisive of whether club engagements inculcate positive emotions towards out-groups.

Table 4: Affective Variable

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Affective variables	150	1.00	5.00	3.0360	1.03576

3.3.3. Behavioral Aspects

Mean value 3.55 indicated, majority of respondents agreed behavioral changes towards out-groups was apparent due to club engagement (see Table 5).

Table 5: Behavioral Variable

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavioral variables	150	1.00	5.00	3.5507	1.09714

3.4. Conditions that Affect Inter-ethnic Relations of Students

According to Allport (1954), equality of status, common goal, inter-group cooperation and formal laws and procedures that promote diversity are considered as optimal conditions of IER. Wider forces like violent conflict is also highlighted as a facilitative condition (Pettigrew, 1998).

3.4.1. Equality of Status

According to the mean result 3.31 (see Table 6), majority of respondents are ambivalent about the existence of equal status among members in Peace Club.

Table 6: Equality of Status

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Equality status	150	1.00	5.00	3.3156	1.00021

3.4.2. Common Goal

Mean value 3.18 (see Table 7) indicated, majority of respondents hold neutral position on whether members of Peace Club work towards common goal.

Table 7: Common Goal

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Common goal	150	1.33	5.00	3.1889	.61720

3.4.3. Inter-group Cooperation

The mean value of 3.10 indicates, majority of respondents are neutral whether inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club is underpinned through inter-group cooperation (see Table 8).

Table8: Inter-group Cooperation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inter-group cooperation	150	1.33	4.67	3.1089	.58759

3.4.4. Institutional Support

Table 9 depicted, majority of club members disagree on the presence of well-organized institutional support to realize positive IER on campus (mean value of 1.93).

Table 9: Institutional Support

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Institutional support	150	1.50	2.33	1.9311	.18640

3.4.5. Wider Situational Forces

The mean value 3.21 under Table 10 depicted, majority of respondents neither agree nor disagree whether wider conflicts at campus and societal level affect their IER.

Table 10: WiderSituational Forces

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wider situational forces	150	1.00	5.00	3.2133	.71239

3.5. Engagement in Co-curricular Program and Students Inter-ethnic Relations

The independent variable in this study is Peace Club engagement while the dependent variable is positive IER of students as a result of the engagement. Positive IER is explained through enthusiasm to know out-group culture, inter-group cooperation, mutual respect, defending out-groups rights and non-violent inter-group problem solving (Savchits et al., 2017; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk's, 2015). Table 11 depicted, majority of students agreed participation in Peace Club assured the presence of such qualities (mean result, 3.41).

Table 11: **Positive Inter-ethnic Relations**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive IER	150	2.33	4.67	3.4156	.44527

Mediation analysis under Table 12 showed, there is significant relation between inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club and Positive IER (p-value 0.029 is below 0.05), cognitive aspects and Positive IER (p-value 0.019 is below 0.05), and behavioral aspects and Positive IER (p-value 0.024 is below 0.05).

Table 12: **Simple Linear Regression**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.108	.563		1.967	.000
Inter-ethnic contact through CoCP	.306	.128	.514	2.400	.029
Cognitive Variables	1.036	.477	.440	1.465	.019
Affective Variables	.026	.063	.060	-.408	.048
Behavioral Variables	1.068	.460	.369	1.139	.027

a. Dependent Variable: Positive Inter-ethnic relations

Overall, 40.1% of variance in students positive IER is explained by inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club (see Table 13).

Table 13: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.514 ^a	.265	.401	1.00553

a. Predictors: (Constant), Inter-ethnic contact through CoCP

In moderation analysis, inter-ethnic contact through club engagement, equality of status, common goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support and wider situational forces were changed to standardize Z score and simple linear regression run to understand the level of effect. Table 14 therefore shows, all variables (independent and moderating) have statistically significant relationship with IER of students in AAU, AU and UoG.

Table 14: Moderation Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.412	.037		91.674	.000
Z score: Inter-ethnic contact through CoCP	.004	.043	.010	.103	.02918
Z score: Common Goal	.089	.125	.199	.706	.048
Z score: Equality of Status	.008	.041	.017	.182	.036
Z score: Institutional Support	-.007	.038	-.016	-.192	.048
Z score: Wider Situational Forces	-.004	.039	-.008	-.098	.022
Z score: Inter-dependent Cooperation	-.067	.125	-.151	-.538	.041
INT	-.014	.014	-.090	-.992	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Positive Inter-ethnic relations

4. Discussion

4.1. Aptness of Co-curricular Platform

Different writings on IGR through contact outlined, involvement of members from varying ethnic communities, regularity of contact (Pettigrew, 1998), face-to-face interaction (Allport, 1954), voluntary contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew et al., 2011), employing a language all are familiar with (Pettigrew, 1998), and non-formal and relaxed settings (Allport, 1954) set the tone of optimal inter-ethnic relations that is based on authentic knowledge of out-groups.

In line with quantitative results depicted under Table 2, interview results showed strong positive sides of Peace Club. These include- absence of discrimination in membership, mandatory participation and opportunity for face to face communication (AAS₂, 4, 6, 7, 8; AUS₂, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; US₂, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Since optimal IER necessitates diversity in contact situation and higher degree of choice in establishing the inter-ethnic contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and direct interaction among group members (Allport, 1954), the fact that Peace club within AAU, AU and UoG fulfills these pre-conditions makes it a suitable CoC platform to develop positive IER. Besides, the fact that Amharic is a working language of the club fulfills the condition common vernacular is employed in the club to facilitate communication. This does not mean however, the club fulfills all the criteria fully.

For instance, students explained concerns over regularity and dialogue setting. A student from AAU in Journalism stream (AAS₂) said:

I have been a member since I joined campus. Within these three years, dialogue has been carried out numerous times, but not everyone is invited. For one, members are distributed across departments and the program of the club usually clashes with students class or study schedule. Another factor is, there is no suitable setting to accommodate all members. We usually meet in the hall that was originally designed for lecture. Discussions on peace necessitate a relaxed environment.

Supporting views of AAS₂, AUS₇ mentioned, “The problem is, there is no enough facility to undertake such impactful activities.” Frequency of contact is further impaired due to Peace Club’s structure that places it under university President Office as well as political and judiciary structure, which make it loose integrity in the face of students. Some members even remarked, non-members think of them as ‘ear’ of the government as they feel they reported their every move (AAS₄; AUS₂, 6; US₄). Due to this, there is a tendency to refrain from membership or taking active role. Clubs that face such pressure became weak to improve inter-group behavior (Munywe, 2014).

On the other hand, student participants' mentioned, ethnic affiliation is not a criteria for club membership which paves the way for diversified student group to join the club (AAS₂, 4, 6; AUS₅, 6, 7, 8; US₂, 4, 7, 8). However, no intentional effort is made by club leaders to make sure the crowd is indeed diversified and there are moments when students from similar ethnic group attend club events (AAS₂, 6; AUS₂, 7; US₆). Hence, there are occasions where inter-ethnic contact through CoC suffered from ethnic diversity which paves the way for intra-group cohesion as (Denson, 2009; Pettigrew, 1998).

Employment of common vernacular within Peace Clubs was mentioned earlier as strong point. However, past scholarship in Ethiopia disclosed that, students lose interest in Amharic language due to strong nationalist sentiment propagated by elites despite its official usage (Dumessa and Godesso, 2013). Even though many students in the club are ok to communicate with Amharic, there are few who look for ethnic cliques and advocate for usage of ethnic languages. A student from Oromia in UoG (US₂) for instance mentioned, "We need a single language to be on the same page. However, few non-Amharic speakers have a hidden interest to use ethnic languages. In our university however, such tendency is not highly obvious." Some argue such tendency is due to pressure from students with fixed views of ethnicity (AAS₄; AUS₄, 7; US₇).

Differently, there are students who choose to overlook inconveniences and try to get the most out of club's activities. A student from SNNP from UoG for instance said, "I believe the club create a space for members from different regions to meet. Though leaders' role is essential, we as members are also expected to be innovative and come up with fun, engaging and impactful projects." Such optimism can be sustained via sound institutional framework that systematically plan, organize, finance and monitor club programs (Ward, 2017).

Even though representatives from Student Dean's Office in AAU, AU and UoG highlighted Peace Club received recognition by university management, a professional that oversee the work of Peace Club is only present in AAU. The representatives also have varied opinion on how Peace Club should run. In AU and UoG, they support the structural link beyond campus while a representative from AAU posited, the club should be run by students and government institutions can support the club technically and financially. However, the notion that resources are limited for running club events smoothly has brought the management staff at AAU, AU, and UoG to consensus. Allport (1954, p.279) call for "sound leadership" that signify systematic preparedness in all aspects to minimize prejudice and promote regular inter-ethnic interaction. However, according

to AAS₂, 6, 7; AUS₂, 4, 8, and US₂, 4, 5, 8 such preparation appears to be lacking in clubs. Similar findings were reported in the works of Abebaw (2014) and Hailemariam (2016). Due to the inconveniences on club structure, funding, facilities, schedules therefore, members' claims that the Peace Club's goal is appealing from the start rather than the club's specifics, which need to be revisited further (AAS₂, 7; AUS₄; US₈).

4.2. Co-curricular Program Processes

4.2.1. Cognitive Aspects

Originally, Allport (1954) assumed, elongated exposure to out-groups helps people to gain extensive knowhow of their needs which foster understanding and respect that translated in to minimal prejudice over time. In universities, this may take place in classrooms or in CoC platforms (Denson, 2009). As indicated under Table 3, majority of students concurred, club's activities helped them to know about out-groups. With regard to the nature of platforms used to impart balanced knowledge about ethnic variety, Sustained Dialogue (SD) project run by moderators is highlighted by students from AAU, AU and UoG. During the project period and after its completion, Peace Club leaders and members were active participants (AAM₁, 2; AUM₁, 2 and UM₁, 2). Besides, there are workshops, public lectures and trainings organized for Peace club leaders and members on issues of tolerance, peace, conflict resolution and non-violence (AAS₂, AUS₆, US₄).

Another facilitative condition for learning about out-groups is intra-group interaction (Pettigrew, 1998). This is however non-existent in AAU, AU and UoG. The club leaders in AAU, AU and UoG (AAS₄, AUS₆ and US₄) even highlighted the dangers of such practice because some may use it to consolidate in-group sentiment. Student Dean's Office representatives also believed such grouping may create suspicion in the eyes of out-groups (AAM₁; AM₁, 2; UM₁).

Despite the role of Peace Club in fostering inter-ethnic learning, lack of commitment is considered as a major gap. A non-member from AAU (AAS₁) for instance said, "They think they are doing a hilarious job by talking in groups. There is no respect for hierarchy mostly. They just make a noise in groups till refreshment break and the meeting is adjourned." An active member (AAS₇) added, "More members attend when there is refreshment." Such practice likely impede effective learning.

4.2.2. Affective Aspects

Affective facets include minimum inter-group anxiety, empathy, admiration, sympathy and trust (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew et al., 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2008, p.922), "The mediational value of increased knowledge

appears less strong than anxiety reduction and empathy.” This implies, affective ties created through inter-group contact have higher influence on the nature of inter-group relationship than cognitive ties.

As illustrated under Table 4, majority of students were neutral about club’s role to encourage positive emotions toward out-groups. This is mainly due to lack of purposefully organized prejudice-reduction programs, and a failure to measure the impact of activities (AAS₂, 4, 6; AAS₄, 5, 7; US₂, 4, 5, 7, 8). The fact that Student Dean’s Office fail to consciously plan club activities in a way it can change emotional development of students and it is understaffed contributed for minimal achievement of club’s activities for emotional change (AAM₂, AAI₁; AUM₂ and UM₂). There are however some exceptions in all the three universities. A testimony of a student from Tigray in UoG (US₅) is an indicator of this,

I met students who used to have rigid and suspicious attitude towards out-groups but developed admiration and sympathy through their Peace Club engagement. One of my club mates from Tigray told me he regrets the time he used to fear individuals from Amhara region (laughter). So, with all its limitations, I believe engagement in Peace Club helps to look beyond what you already know about others and form friendship with them.

4.2.3. Behavioral Aspects

Cooperation, non-violence, protection, and reducing or eliminating out-group discrimination are examples of changing behavior (Denson, 2009). Quantitative data under Table 5 depicted positive results on behavioral aspects due to club engagement. Interviews also showed, it is uncommon to bad-mouth out-groups or manage conflicts violently. Moreover, cooperation and practicing cultural aspects of out-groups is common among club members. However, it was highlighted that, it is difficult to know whether inner emotions are changed. A remark from AAS₇ is a good indicator of this:

Some students have strong negative view of out-groups even though they try to socialize with out-group members positively. I have a friend within the club who positively socialize with out-group members. But once he told me he still have a disgusting feeling towards X ethnic group members due to their unfair treatment of the ethnic group he belongs to in the past. If you just observe his behavior, he seems a positive person. Conversely, there are members who transform their misconceived attitudes and now form strong relations with out-groups.

The views of AAS₇ was also shared by AUS₆ and US₄. Non-member students on the other hand label Peace Club leaders as ‘pretenders’ because they are there not to bring real change (AAS₁, 3, 5; AUS₁, 3 and US₁, 3). Pettigrew (1998) strongly argued, positive emotions towards out-groups due to extensive and reliable knowledge about them and extended contact are basis for sustainable positive IGR. This is because knowledge is not necessarily translated in to attitudinal change and behavioral modification can be deceiving as some try to conduct themselves to fit to the environment (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). The latter argument could be plausible in Ethiopian public campuses.

4.3. Conditions of Students’ Inter-ethnic Relations

4.3.1. Equality of Status

While quantitative results under Table 6 showed, majority of participants are neutral on the existence of equal status, interviews showed no discrimination is existed for registration and expression of opinions in the club. There is however favoritism to join the leadership team based on ethnic membership. A Management student (AAS₁) for instance complained,

During election time for club leadership, the former leadership team conspire to bring their friend or whom they affiliate ethnically. So, I do not believe there is level playing field for all students from diversified background.

The views of AAS₁ was shared by AAS₃ and AAS₈. Student Dean’s Office representatives in AAU and AU on the other hand responded, they try to make the election fair by allowing candidates to answer questions from the election panel and make oral presentation on what they intend to do once they get the chance to lead the club. Though such approach seem to be merit-based, the complaints from students on the homogeneity of leadership shall not be ignored. Complaints of such kind is however minimum in UoG (US₂, 4, 5, 6).

4.3.2. Common Goal

Having shared goal helps people to overlook identity markers (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Since Students, particularly in AAU and AU complained about self-serving intention of leadership team, it likely affects motivation for common goal.

4.3.3. Inter-group Cooperation

Common goal is attained through cooperation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Since inter-group integration is a prerequisite for attainment of common goal and the aggregate

mean value for the latter attribute falls under 'neither agree nor disagree' gauge, it is no brainer the mean value for the former indicated neutrality.

4.3.4. Institutional Support

Inter-ethnic contact in conditions where institutional laws support multiculturalism and inhibit prejudice (Allport, 1954) and rewarding positive inter-group behavior are apparent (Pettigrew, 1998) contributed for positive IER. Numerical data under Table 9 revealed that, most participants disagree on the presence of such institutional support. Most interviewees disclosed that, they are aware of guidelines that prohibit discrimination and violence based on ethnic identity but not aware of laws that promote IER. Interviewees from Vice President Office and Student Dean's Office on the other hand argue, respective university legislation that discourage ethnic bias encourage multi-cultural cooperation (AAM₁, 2; AUM₁, 2; UM₁, 2).

With respect to dialogue, both Peace Club members and non-members agreed there is no such open culture rather a tighten security to handle problems in AAU, AU and UoG. Students and instructors even accuse respective universities management they have no interest to have a dialogue with students (AAS₅, AAI₁, 2; AUS₇, AUI₁, 2; UI₁, 2). On the part of university's management however, they admit meetings and dialogue sessions are not organized so often however, students concerns reached to the management through Student Union (AAM₁, AUM₁, and UM₁).

Funding, monitoring and rewarding positive inter-ethnic behavior are backbones for successful co-curricular engagement (Savchits et al., 2017; Ward, 2017). However, students complained different club programs are cancelled due to lack of budget and monitoring club activities are almost non-existent. Regarding reward, it is only AAU that provide maser's scholarship for club President and Vice President irrespective of their contribution for improved IGR.

4.3.5. Wider Situational Forces

One of the modifications on Allport's four initial conditions was assessment on wider social conflict (Pettigrew, 1998). In this study, wider situation forces were focused on whether conflicting interethnic contact on campus and at community level had effect on interethnic engagement. Contrary to the findings in the past, statistical results under Table 10 indicated, majority of students are neutral to the idea wider conflicts at university and societal level affect their IER. Due to the presence of students with mixed

and neutral views of ethnicity in Peace Club, the negative effect of wider situational forces could be overlooked (AAS6, AAI2; AUS8, AUI1; US4, UI1, 2).

4.4. Engagement in Co-curricular Program and Students Inter-ethnic Relations

Findings demonstrated that Peace Club helped raise awareness of nonviolence and interethnic cooperation. The works of Abebaw (2014), Haukab & Saeed (2014) and Hailemariam (2016) presented similar results about CoC engagements. Quantitative data under Table 11, 12 and 13 illustrate taking part in Peace Club contributed for positive IER of students and 40.1% of variance in students positive IER is explained by inter-ethnic contact created through Peace Club engagement. Under Table 14, the direction of the relationship is negative for institutional factors, inter-group cooperation, wider institutional forces and interactional variable. This implies, the variance in IER of students would be greater than 40.1% if the negative scores were improved.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

Some of the main conclusions of this article are the following.

- Peace Club is a notable co-curricular platform to build peace loving student group in AAU, AU and UoG. Particularly, absence of ethnic discrimination to join the club, promotion of face-to-face discussion and employment of common vernacular as working language made the club a home for everybody.
- Regarding processes of contact, Peace Club seem to achieve more in instilling knowledge that help students to learn about out-groups and display respectful behavior towards them.
- Even though there is no open discrimination on students to join and take active role in Peace Club, club leaders seem to be favored to learn and grow than the rest of members. Due to these, having common goal and inter-dependent cooperation among fellows is seriously compromised. Lack of institutional support to the club seem to further the gap.
- In AAU, AU and UoG, around 40.1% of variance in students IER is explained by inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club engagement.

5.2. Recommendation

The Federal MoE in collaboration with public universities and other stakeholders should undertake a national study on the status of Peace Clubs and their possible contribution for students IER in public universities. Findings therefore help to design Inter-Ethnic Policy and Co-curricular Policy that help universities to manage CoCPs in general and Peace Clubs in particular so as the platform is beneficial for multi-ethnic engagement.

Disclosure Statement

Authors declare that they have no material or financial interest related to this research.

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