

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**Inter-Group Contact through Peace Clubs in Shaping Positive
Inter-Ethnic Relations: Ethiopian Public University Students in
Focus**

**A Dissertation Submitted to
The Institute for Peace and Security Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Peace and Security Studies**

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Subject: **Approval for Submission of Dissertation**

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by Mrs. Messash Kassaye Woldetsadik, entitled: “**Inter-Group Contact through Peace Clubs in Shaping Positive Inter-Ethnic Relations: Ethiopian Public University Students in Focus**”, submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Security Studies, complies with the regulations of the Addis Ababa University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality. Therefore, we, the supervisors approve the dissertation for submission and defense.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of Peace Club towards building positive inter-ethnic relations of students in Addis Ababa, Ambo and Gondar universities. The study chose Peace Club as a CoC inter-group contact platform, which has objectives of relationship building and non-violence. Three research questions and two hypotheses were developed to address the research objective. The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed research design and data was gathered through questionnaires, interview and document review. Two set of questionnaires were developed to measure the nature of students' IER (Q-A) and the contribution of Peace Clubs for IER of students (Q-B) respectively. Accordingly, 346 students (150 Peace Club members and 196 non-club members) took part in responding to Q-A and 333 valid questionnaires were returned. For Q-B, 150 Peace Club members filled the survey and the return rate was hundred percent. Additionally, 24 students, six instructors and six management personnel were engaged in source of data in the qualitative part of the study. For document review, 14 policy documents relevant to Ethiopian higher education system were examined. Both Descriptive and Inferential statistics were applied and the major statistical tools used were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, an independent samples t-test, as well as linear and multiple regression analysis. Thematic and content analysis techniques were applied as qualitative analysis tools. The results showed, the legal frameworks of Ethiopian Higher Education System indeed leave some room for CoCPs and improve IER of students. However, the significance of CoCPs and how this can be implemented is not explicitly stated in relation to IER of students. It is further disclosed that students can be classified as having a fixed, mixed or a neutral view of ethnicity which has direct relations with the nature of IER of students that is manifested either negatively or positively. Particularly, students with mixed-ethnic background and those who choose ethnic neutrality display positive IER typified with willingness to learn from out-group fellows and non-violent attitude. However, students with fixed views of ethnicity seem to choose to resort to intra-ethnic cliques. On the other hand, the mediation analysis disclosed that, Peace Club is found to be a notable co-curricular platform to build positive IER among students in Addis Ababa, Ambo and Gondar universities. This platform is particularly relevant interms of equipping members with necessary knowledge on existence, acknowledgement and appreciation of difference as well as displaying non-violent behavior during conflictual situations with out-group fellows. The moderation analysis also revealed that, around 40.1% of variance in students' IER is explained by inter-ethnic contact through Peace Clubs. Moreover, Peace Clubs seem to achieve more in instilling knowledge that help students to learn about out-groups and display respectful behavior towards them than imparting affective ties like empathy. However, there were gaps on regularity of contact, equality of learning opportunities among members, setting suitable settings for dialogues and rewarding positive behaviors to make clubs impactful. Finally, the need to create Inter-Ethnic and Co-curricular Policies and Inter-cultural and Co-curricular wing in the Federal MoE officeis are proposed so as to systematically manage CoCPs in general and Peace Clubs in particular in a way they can contribute for positive IER of public university students in Ethiopia. Further more, areas of future research were implied.

Key words: Co-curriculum, inter-ethnic relations, inter-group contact, peace club, students, public universities

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Abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AU	Ambo University
CARD	Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy
CACUSS	Canadian Association of College and University Students Services
CBE	College of Business and Economics
CCR	Co-curricular Record
CEBS	College of Education and Behavioral Studies
CoC	Co-curriculum
CoCAs/Ps	Co-curricular activities/programs
CoE	College of Education
CSS	College of Social Sciences
CSSH	College of Social Sciences and Humanities
CHLSJC	College of Humanities, language Studies, Journalism and Communciation
ECAs	Extra-curricular Activities
EDPM	Educational Planning and Management
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
ETP	Education and Training Policy
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HES	Higher Education System

ICG	International Crisis Group
IEBS	Institute of Education and Behavioral Sciences
IER	Inter-ethnic relations
IGD	Inter-group Dialogue
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
IoT	Institute of Technology
LPI	Life & Peace Institute
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoSHE	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
NNP	Nations, Nationalities and Peoples
PADM	Public Administration and Development Management
PDC	Peace and Development Center
RCT	Realistic Conflict Theory
SD	Sustained Dialogue
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SOs	Student Organizations
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SU	Student Union
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UoG	University of Gondar
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

One of the objectives of multi-cultural universities is to prepare students to fit in a diverse learning and working environment. This is stimulated by the demographic shift of campuses in terms of ethnicity and other forms of identity and resulting tensions (Belford, 2017; Denson, 2009; Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Mulondo & Thomas, 2021; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). Hence, universities are responsible to establish a welcoming environment for heterogeneous groups and producing students who are culturally sensitive (Savchits, Ismailova & Turebayeva, 2018), open for cross-group dialogue (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler & Cytron-Walker (2007), devoid of prejudice (Ward, 2017), non-violent (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013), and voice the problems of the voiceless (Dalton & Crosby, 2013; Hay & Marais, 2011; Ratanakarn, 2011).

In the 21st century, the presence of ethnically diverse students and managing such diversity is among the top challenges. Competition and violence among diverse student groups exhibited in Jordan (Alrawwad & Alrfooh, 2014), Pakistan (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014), Russia (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015), Turkey (Özdikmenli-Demir, 2014) and African (Fomunyan, 2017; Mohamedbhai, 2010) universities are few indicators of these. These are largely attributed to historical grievances (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen & Allen, 1999), politicization of identity (Mulondo & Thomas, 2021), inter-communal rivalry (Özdikmenli-Demir, 2014), family and neighborhood influence (Besar, Jali, Lyndon, Selvadurai, 2015; Gasanova, 2021; Kooriakina, 2019), politicians targeting students on campuses (Kuttig, Suykens & Islam, 2020), biased media reporting (Naituli & Nasimiyu, 2019) and culture of violence in HEIs (Fomunyan, 2017).

Due to these, students develop lack of knowledge and interest to establish contact and socialize with fellows from ethnic groups other than one's own (Allport, 1954). This makes in-group affiliation as a safe haven which limits cross-ethnic relations and reinforce ethnocentric sentiment (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Karnyshev, Karnysheva & Ivanova, 2014). Evidences from previous research asserted, students who prefer intra-group affiliation tend to be less tolerant towards differentiated views and have a violent tendency (Hurtado et al., 1999). On the other hand,

those who are open to socialize with out-groups seem to respect and share varied cultures (Czepil, Karpenko & Istomina, 2019) and build an inter-ethnic relationship based on empathy (Hay & Marais, 2011). Accordingly, HEIs are tasked with encouraging intergroup contact and (re)building relationships among diverse student groups in order to foster peace (Clarke-Habibi, 2016; West, 2018).

The major entry points to realize positive inter-ethnic relationship of students were diversity-sensitive policies (Hurtado, 2007; Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005), multi-cultural syllabus (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, Alvarado & Guillermo-Wann, 2015), an interactive learning strategy (Shibankova, Dolganovskoya, Ishmuradova, Matveeva, Vlasova & Alexey, 2016) and non-classroom CoC interventions (Gurin et al., 2002; Denson, 2009). Out of these, CoCPs seem to be effective in addressing cultural awareness gap, prejudiced perceptions and violent out-group behavior in a friendly manner as evidenced in universities of US (Hurtado et al., 1999; Lopez, 2004), Ukraine (Czepil et al., 2019), Dominican Republic (Lewis, 2016), Malaysia (Mustapha, Azman, Karim, Ahmad & Lubis, 2009), Kazakhstan (Savchits et al., 2018) and UAE (Al Majali & Al Khaaldi, 2020) in the face of politicization of identity.

Movements to look beyond the structured classroom teaching to experiential learning have been debated by philosophers (Locke, 1889) and scholars (Bobbitt, 1918; Dewey, 1902; Friere & Shor, 1987; Spencer, 1911) for years. This is mainly because, it is believed that, students apply what they learn theoretically to real-life situations, think creatively about real-world solutions, and develop relations based on equality, empathy and mutual-learning through platforms beyond the four walls of the classroom (Dhanmeher, 2014; Siddiky, 2019). Co-curricular engagements have also been found among the 12 principles identified by Hurtado and colleagues (1999) as viable tools to realize positive inter-ethnic relations on campus. The potential of CoCPs to respond to diversity challenges in HEIs has also been recognized by UNESCO (1994).

Co-curricular interventions are found to create extensive opportunities for students to engage in challenging yet interactive assignments and come up with creative solutions to inter-group problems in an entertaining manner (Kuh, Douglas, Lund & Ramin-Gyurnek, 1994). Since promotion of inter-ethnic interaction necessitates more than telling and remembering, activities that help students to engage in dialogue and team-based activities are essential (Hurtado, Alvarez,

Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, Arellano, 2012). Systematically designed CoCPs therefore educate students about the benefits of having multitudes of cultures, respecting differences, non-violent problem solving and standing together for social cause (Denson & Chang, 2015; Edenberg, 2004; Gurin et al., 2002; Vagaeva, Mihalets, Morozova & Dudareva, 2020). Hence, programs in CoC carry potential to bring cognitive, affective and behavioral changes.

Among CoCPs, Peace Club aim to promote interactional and experiential learning among students. Active involvement in peace club activities like inter-group dialogues, peer-mediation, group-based projects, community service and prejudice and violence reduction trainings help students to develop team spirit and non-violent problem solving in schools (MoE Kenya, 2022) and build conflict analysis and mediation, dialogue, critical thinking skills and standing for social cause in colleges (Munywe, 2014). Due to such contributions, Peace Club is considered as a viable CoC tool to build inter-ethnic relations of students in peaceful and violent settings (Akorede & Oseremen, 2023; Juma, 2019; Munywe, 2014).

Universities are social systems defined by complex relationships between students, faculty, administration, institutional missions, structures, laws and the external environment at large (Hurtado et al., 1999). Hence, attempts to address IER issues on campus shall consider different interrelated issues. In this regard, consideration of promoting IER through inter-ethnic contact through CoCPs like Peace Clubs, should not be considered as a linear cause and effect relationship. Rather it calls for complex dynamics of learning approaches (Kuh, 2008, 2012; Kuh et al., 1994), changes at cognitive, affective and behavioral level as a result of learning interventions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011) as well as institutional support (Allport, 1954) and the broader societal forces (Pettigrew 1998).

Ethiopian public universities comprise multi-ethnic and multi-lingual students. Policy reforms on access and expansion of higher education institutions seem to contribute for such diversity which open doors for cross-cultural interaction (Abebaw, 2014). Yet, public HEIs have become a hostile setting due to negative IER of students that are manifested through limited inter-group contact, discrimination of out-groups (Abebaw, 2023; 2014; Abera, 2010; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Mekonnen, 2013) and deadly violence (CARD, 2020; Yonas, 2019, Zekarias, 2020). These

developments undermined student cohesion, cast doubt on their intelligence (Abera, 2010), and harmed university reputations (Abebaw, 2019; Yonas, 2019).

The majority of research in the context of Ethiopia's turbulent public university dynamics focuses on the causes and effects of ethnic related conflicts among students (Abebaw, 2019; Abera, 2010; Demewoz, 2012; Missaye, 2014; Mulumebet, 2018; Seid, 2012; Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2020). Very few attempts have been made to examine initiatives to address diversity challenges in general and inter-ethnic related problems in particular (Abebaw, 2023; Abebe, 2015; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021; Mesfin & Ford, 2021), and even fewer have attempted to provide space to evaluate the role of peace clubs in terms of realizing positive IER (Abebaw, 2014; Hailemariam, 2016; Mekonnen, 2013; Yoseph, 2019). However, it is rare to find research on how CoCPs on Ethiopian multiethnic public campuses impact students' IER while accounting for cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects as well as institutional and external factors. As this illustrates, more research is required to determine how CoCPs (in the current study Peace Clubs) contribute to students' positive IER in Ethiopian public universities.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Universities are assets for relationship building. The World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO, 1998) urged university students to defend values like 'peace' and take active role in addressing issues that impact the community. The 2018 Seminar on Peace and Global Civil Society further advised universities to take part in national and international peace building initiatives (West, 2018). Unfortunately, students in different parts of the world seem to struggle to live in harmony with each other let alone contribute positively at national level (Koriakina, 2019; Kuttig et al., 2020; Salmon-Letelier, 2019). Ethiopian regular undergraduate students within public universities are no exception.

Multi-cultural interaction among students is commended to inform academic engagement, tolerance and institutional capacity (Hurtado, 2007). It also contributes for students cognitive, affective and behavioral development in terms of expanding their knowledge base on ethnic difference and commonalities (Cheng & Selvaretnam, 2022), developing empathy (Czepil et al., 2019) and solving problems non-violently and cooperating for higher purposes (Belford, 2017;

Karnyshev et al., 2014). Hence, HEIs must ensure that students are ‘positively prepared,’ as defined by Karnyshev et al. (2014), to overcome prejudice and live in harmony with each other. Such practice is critically vital for multi-ethnic students in Ethiopian HEIs who are overwhelmed by ethnocentric attitude that resulted in-group affiliation, out-group hostility (Abera, 2010; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017) and direct violence (CARD, 2020; Zekarias, 2020).

Various studies were undertaken on the causes, consequences and measures taken with respect to ethnic related fissures among students of Ethiopian public Universities. Accordingly, failure to co-exist among students is influenced by contested ethno-federal political structure underpinned by oppressor-oppressed discourse (Abebaw, 2014; 2019; Abera, 2010; Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023; Zekarias, 2020), family and peer pressure (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Misrak & Addisu, 2011; Miressa, 2018), biased media reporting (Zekarias, 2020), partial treatment from university staff (Abera, 2010; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Miressa, 2018) and failure of university administration to create a space for discussion (Abera, 2010; Missaye, 2014). As a result, there were cases of fatalities and injuries, property damage, and interruptions to educational activities (Zekarias, 2020; Abebaw, 2019; Yonas, 2019). These explain why ethnic diversity in Ethiopian government owned universities is “more of a problem than an opportunity,” according to Abebaw (2023, p. 1332).

As reactive measures- introduction of tripartite agreement (Abebaw, 2019, 2023), imposition of curfew (MoSHE, 2019a), peace dialogue (MoSHE, 2019b), deployment of federal police and students’ and staff suspension, detention and expulsion (CARD, 2020), temporary closure of campuses and warning to permanently close universities (MoSHE, 2019c) were put to practice to address ethnic related incidents among students. However, violence seems to re-emerge despite the measures. Hence, alternative mechanism to address the problem was necessitated.

In reference to proactive measures, studies showed, interactional and experiential platforms that reinforce voluntary, regular, and face-to-face inter-ethnic contact among ethnically different students who share similar vernacular in a less formal setting are considered effective in promoting positive IER of students in multi-ethnic campuses (Hurtado, 2001; Hurtado, Arellano, Griffin & Cuellar, 2008; Hurtado et al., 1999; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tey, Awamg & Singaravello, 2009; Ward, 2017). Such platforms are commonly called CoCPs (Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2015; Kuh et al., 1994).

Co-curricular interventions usually entail clubs and associations that devise different engaging learning strategies like inter-group dialogue (Lewis, 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2007); bias reduction workshops (Denson, 2009; Denson & Clark, 2015), cross-cultural festivals (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015; Savchits et al., 2017), conflict resolution trainings (Akorede & Oseremen, 2023) and group-based community services (Astin, 1993; Dalton & Crosby, 2013; Tamam & Krauss, 2017) to expand knowledge on out-groups and inter-ethnic dynamics, minimize inter-ethnic anxiety, develop empathy and display non-violent behavior in ethnically diversified HEIs. Empirical studies further suggest, legal frameworks that promote and reward inter-ethnic equality at national and institutional level (Hurtado et al., 1999) and the potential of contact platform to reinforce equal status, common goal, and inter-dependent cooperation among members (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) and the presence of non-violence at societal level (Özdikmenli-Demir, 2014) determine the extent to which CoCPs contribute for positive IER of students on campuses.

One of the prominent CoC platforms to realize such positive relational changes is Peace Club (Akorede & Ozeremen, 2023; Irene, 2023; Jasson, 2016; MoE Kenya, 2022). This platform aimed at promoting positive IGR irrespective of students' ethnic or religious identity in and outside educational establishments (Akorede & Ozeremen, 2023; Irene, 2022, 2023; Jasson, 2016). Research findings on Peace Clubs revealed, the major learning strategies employed in this interactional platform are dialogues, trainings or workshops that focus on non-violent problem solving, culture-sensitive discussions and services to the wider community (Irene, 2023; Jasson, 2016; MoE Kenya, 2022). However, these studies are very few and are undertaken at school level.

In HEIs context, very few writings on Peace Clubs are available on college websites. In terms of full length research paper, only one study is found to the best knowledge of the researcher (Munywe, 2014). This study also fails to see if the platform embraces voluntarism, regularity, personal interaction, employment of similar language, cognitive, affective and behavioral changes, legal frameworks, equal status, common goal, and inter-dependent cooperation among members and wider societal conflict (Munywe, 2014). Literatures suggest studies on IER of HEI students shall adopt different methodologies to understand what is really happening in an ethnically diversified settings (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 2008). Even if Munywe's (2014) study

followed mixed approach, it was not thorough enough to entertain variety of approaches in terms of data collection and analysis. Also, for inter-ethnic contact to realize positive IER, cognitive, affective and behavioral changes are possible through employment of creative learning strategies (Denson & Chang, 2015; Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013; Savchits et al., 2018). However, the study on Peace Club fails to conceptually frame the nature of learning tools.

In Ethiopian multi-ethnic campuses, other studies that examine initiatives to improve students' IER in general and the role of CoCPs in particular are undertaken. Among these, the works of Abebaw (2014; 2023), Abebe (2015), Hailemariam (2016), Mekonnen (2013) Mesfin & Befekadu (2021), Misrak & Addisu (2011), Yoseph (2019) and Zekarias (2020) briefly discussed significance of CoCPs in improving students IER. Out of these, it is only the works of Abebaw (2014), Abebe (2015), Hailemariam (2013), Mekonnen (2013) and Yoseph (2019) that attempted to highlight the role of Peace Clubs in advocating for peaceful co-existence among diversified student group. In these studies, the methodological and conceptual gaps mentioned in the previous paragraph were prevalent. Hence, there is a gap in the literature related to studies that link CoCPs to IER of students in public HEIs with special emphasis to Peace Clubs.

In light of the discussion under this sub-section, the researcher attempted to fill the gaps from earlier studies by looking at how Peace Club as a CoC platform might be able to contribute for positive IER among students by examining the processes and contexts of contact through integrating inter-group and learning theories in Addis Ababa, Ambo and Gondar universities.

1.2.1. Research Questions

Depending on the discussion of problem statement, three research questions are developed in this study. These are:

1. How are co-curricular programs (peace clubs) integrated in the Ethiopia's higher education system's legal frameworks in connection with IER of students?
2. How do students at Addis Ababa, Ambo, and Gondar universities exhibit interethnic relations, both positively and negatively?
3. How do inter-group contact through Peace Club contribute to positive IER of students at Addis Ababa, Ambo, and Gondar Universities?

1.2.2. Hypotheses

In accordance with research questions and the stated objectives (*see* section 1.3.), the researcher formulated the following hypotheses. It is to be noted that, hypothesis is developed for question number three only because question number one is analyzed qualitatively through document analysis and question number two is analyzed descriptively.

Hypothesis 1

As briefly discussed in the problem statement and the subsequent chapter (*see* sections 2.4 and 2.5), CoCPs under certain conditions, serve to facilitate positive IER of students. However, the association is not necessarily a direct one. Rather, the cognitive, affective and behavioral development of learners has a mediating effect. Thus, ‘CoC interventions resulted in positive IER of students through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes’ is the premise. The independent variable in this instance is peace club participation as a CoCP, and the dependent variable is students' positive IER, which is mediated by cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. Hence, different layers of hypotheses are developed to test mediation effect for research question number three.

Hypothesis 1

The direct relationship between independent variable and dependent variable

H_0 : Students engagement in peace club has no effect on IER of students

H_1 : Students engagement in peace club has a positive effect on IER of students

The relationship between independent and mediation variable with dependent variable

H_0 : Students engagement in peace club as well as cognitive, affective ties and behavior changes has no effect on IER of students even when

H_1 : Students engagement in peace club as well as cognitive, affective ties and behavior changes has a positive effect on IER of students

Hypothesis 2

Contexts of contact that facilitate students IER are related to presence of equality of contact, common goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support and wider situational forces. Accordingly, these variables are considered as moderators and incorporated in moderation analysis for research question three.

H₀: Students engagement in peace club has no effect on positive IER of students even when moderated with equality of status, common goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support, and wider situational forces

H₁: Students engagement in peace club has an effect on positive IER of students even when moderated with equality of status, common goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support, and wider situational forces

1.3. Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how involvement in CoCPs (in this case Peace Clubs) at the universities of Addis Ababa, Ambo and Gondar contribute to the positive development of inter-ethnic relations among students.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Up to this point, research on IGR and education has shown that educational interventions, such as CoCPs, have a positive impact on students' IER in universities (*see* Chapter Two). This study attempted to fill in some of the gaps by adding insight into how the processes and contexts of inter-ethnic contact within CoC infrastructure, in this case Peace Club, affected students' IER in universities of Addis Ababa, Ambo and Gondar.

Literature on the link between CoC and IER is not extensively researched in Ethiopian context. Even though educational interventions to promote peace in universities are previously studied and recommended (Abebaw, 2014; Hailemariam, 2016; Mekonnen, 2013; Misrak & Addisu, 2011;

Yoseph, 2019; Zekarias, 2020) co-curricular platform is rarely put to test as an alternative relationship building mechanism in universities. Improving IER among public undergraduate students is alarming issue with no viable intervention so far in Ethiopia. Hence, there is a strong need to put to test various educational initiatives that are likely to improve students' IER. Hence, this research will fill the gap of knowledge in curriculum studies and higher education diversity scholarship through producing theoretical substance indicating how CoCPs can be of a substantial element in building positive relationships among students with diverse ethnic background within Ethiopian public universities domain.

This research will also fill methodological gaps in past scholarship through adoption of mixed methods approach. Accordingly, questionnaires, interviews and document review are adopted in the current study. In particular, while other studies (Abebaw, 2014; Hailemariam, 2016; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021) use document analysis, the current legal framework analysis used content analysis and tried to relate how CoC issues are linked with students' IER. The researcher's attempt to analyze the extent by which the legal texts entertain CoC issues will bring a new light on future policy initiatives towards CoC interventions.

A direct association between CoC engagement and students IER is hard to establish, the processes and contexts of contact play a mediation and moderation role respectively. However, such robust analysis is a missing link in higher education diversity scholarship. The fact that this study attempted to address these issues seem to agree with the recent recommendations of inter-group theorists to respond to contemporary developments in IER of students as suggested by Pettigrew and colleagues (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017).

Different stakeholders are working in collaboration with Ethiopian public universities, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Peace (MoP) work more closely with public universities. Hence, the findings and implications of the research may help to (re)design policies and practical guidelines to consider CoCPs as alternative mechanisms to improve antagonistic relations among students. It is the researcher's belief that policy change will support in the reduction of the frequency of horizontal conflicts and improve the inter-ethnic relationship of students. Furthermore, this study will help AAU, AU, UoG and other universities not included in

this study to give emphasis on the co-curricular wing and analyze its strong and weak sides in relation to facilitating IER among diverse students.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focused on three government universities. They are: Addis Ababa, Ambo and Gondar universities. The reasons for selection of these universities are briefly discussed under chapter three (*see* section 3.4). On the other hand, this study is delimited in theory. There are different theories that explain IER and non-academic learning. This study however focused on improved version of inter-group contact theory or contact hypothesis and High Impact Learning model (*see* sections 2.4 and 2.5). To this end, this study was delimited to the link between inter-ethnic contact in Peace Clubs (as CoC platform) and positive IER of students under some mediating (cognitive, affective and behavioral factors) and moderating (equal status, common goal, inter-group cooperation, institutional support and wider societal factors) variables using contact paradigm and High Impact Learning model.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

This study had a few limitation.

The contact theory is an inter-group theory that has been tested across sectors and cultures including higher education. However, the process variables that include the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects that are believed to be altered due to inter-ethnic contact are still evolving as the nature of pedagogical tools and communication mechanisms that facilitate the learning process change over time (Dovidio, Eller & Hewstone, 2011; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Moreover, the debate over the nature of contextual factors and their level of effect on IER of students is still ongoing (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Therefore, the mediating and moderating variables in this study are based on the literature that is currently available in the context of HEIs and, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, which the researcher can access. Hence, there might be variables overlooked in this study. In order to overcome this, qualitative data was employed to compliment quantitative findings.

Methodologically, data collection is undertaken only once in the current study. However, meta-analysis publications on contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2011) and diversity related initiatives (Denson, 2009; Denson & Clark, 2015) showed that, collecting data before and after an intervention would show comparable results in changing behavior. However, this approach is less feasible in this study for three reasons: (1) in order to undertake pre and post-test of CoC interventions, there need to be well recorded data on the availability of structured activities designed to improve IER of students. Since, there is lack of information on this regard, the idea of longitudinal research is abandoned and (2) cross-sectional studies are not entirely rejected in studies that examine IER. Moreover, what happened before and after joining the CoC platform is discovered through students' interviews.

In keeping with methodological constraints, this study targeted non-members with strong ethnic consciousness and active peace club members who were ethnically neutral and had mixed-ethnic sentiments for qualitative research. The opinions of non-members who share a similar ethnic sentiment with mixed and neutral views of ethnicity should also be taken into consideration, as they might have valid reasons for their inactivity. Alternatively, they might offer an entirely distinct viewpoint that is relevant to enhancing the club's performance and positively influencing students' IER. Researchers in the future may be able to close this gap.

1.7. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Co-curricular programs are non-academic, interactional, experiential, and voluntary endeavors of ethnically diversified students in supervised clubs, organizations and programs outside the classroom and beyond campus.

Common goal is when students work together towards something that supercede their individual interest in a co-curricular setting.

Equal status is absence of superior and subordinate categorization among ethnically diverse university students in a co-curricular setting.

Ethnicity is a shared characteristics constructed objectively in terms of peculiar language, music, customs, clothing style, dietary experience etc. and subjectively with feelings of pride and belongingness.

Ethnic group is a collection of people that regards itself or is regarded by others as a distinct social group by virtue of certain characteristics that will help to distinguish the group from other communities. The virtues include but not limited to language, history, eating habits, clothing styles, cultural celebrations, and others. Ethnic groups in Ethiopia are Amhara, Oromo, Tigre, Somali, Afar, Berta, Keffa, Dawro, Wolaita, Gurage, Sidama, Hadiya, and so on. University students in this study identified themselves belonging to one or more of the ethnic groups.

Ethnic identity is a sense of self derived from affiliation to a certain ethnic group. This is expressed through high interest in in-group culture and friendship and/or out-group hostility; comparable interest for different ethnic group's culture and no interest in ethnic related cues at all.

Mixed ethnic identity is a sense of self derived from affiliation to more than one ethnic group. Due to this, individuals with mixed ethnic identity usually have positive attitude for varying community groups.

Ethnic neutrality is absence of ethnic identification due to irrelevant views of ethnicity.

Inter-ethnic relations refers to relationships among public university students from varied ethnic background inside and outside campus. Basically, the relationship takes two forms- positive or negative. *Positive inter-ethnic relations* of students are expressed through having reliable information about out-groups, friendship, empathy, non-competition and collaboration with out-groups, solving differences amicably, and standing for the right of out-groups. Contrary to that, *negative inter-ethnic relations* of students is characterized by lack of sufficient information about out-groups, dissemination of unfounded and hateful messages towards out-groups, minimal interaction with out-groups, in-group favoritism and intimidation and assault towards out-groups.

Inter-dependent cooperation refers to joint efforts of university students in a co-curricular setting.

Inter-group contact is an interaction that occurs among university students from various ethnic backgrounds in a co-curricular setting, especially through Peace Club.

Public university is a government owned higher education institution registered under first, second, third, fourth or fifth generations. In this study, AAU and UoG are part of first generation while AU belongs to second generation universities.

In-group is a form of group categorization that comprise university students from similar ethnic groups who identify with each other through shared history, language, dialect, dressing style, cultural celebrations and so on. These students have a sense of we-ness amongst themselves.

Out-group is a form of group categorization that comprises university students who do not belong to a specific in-group.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1. Ethnicity, Ethnic Categorization, Ethnocentrism and Inter-ethnic Relations

Ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity are enigmatic concepts involving hierarchies, cooperation and/or hostility. Due to this, one may develop friendliness or aggression towards others based on ethnic identification most of the time (Jenkins, 2008). This explains why there is a cyclic pattern of collaboration and animosity in inter-ethnic relations.

2.1.1. Ethnicity, Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity

The concept of ethnicity has been a topic of discourse among various scholars. For instance, Weber (1968/1978) defined ethnicity as a conviction of social actors in common ancestry and ethnic groups who share common descent, similar physical features, language, tradition and historical memories. Ethnic identity is therefore a presumed identity for the sake of social action (Weber, 1968/1978). Barth (1969) on the other hand, posits that ethnic groups are self or other ascribed interactional social groups that interact among themselves and others within the boundary created by the classifiers that signal group membership- dressing style, custom, life-style or standards of moral conduct. Ethnic identity is therefore maintained through interaction which is basis for inclusion and exclusion (Barth, 1969).

Conversely, ethnicity is circumstantial and ethnic identity is constructed through colonization, assimilation, migration and inter-marriages (Waters, 1990). Mixed ethnic identity is therefore likely (Spencer, 2006). Ethnicity can also be (re)created which makes ethnic identification optional (Nagel, 1994). Brubaker & Cooper (2000) added, elasticity of ethnic identification may even make someone lose meaning in it to express oneself. This can lead to irrelevant views of ethnicity as Vagaeva et al. (2020) stated. This may negate the collective ancestry discourse of Weber.

Overall, Isajiw (1993) argued that ethnic identity entails cognitive (knowledge of in-group past and values), affective attachments (sympathy for and preference of in-groups) and behavioral (speaking ethnic language, practicing ethnic customs and engage in ethnic networks) facets. These likely create a sense of ‘we-nesses’ among in-groups and determine the power relation with out-groups. As a result, ethno-centric attitude, a superior view of own group, is created through in-group devotion and prioritizing in-group needs (Bizumic, 2012). This can extend to purifying one’s culture and being violent towards out-groups (Vagaeva et al., 2020). Inter-ethnic relationship therefore oscillate between cooperation and learning on one hand and asymmetric power relation which results violence on the other (Jenkins, 2008; Spencer, 2006).

2.1.2. Ethnic Categorization: In-group versus Out-group

The common form of ethnic categorization is in-group versus out-group. In-group refers to a “cluster of people who can use the term ‘we’ with the same significance” (Allport, 1954, p.37). This makes out-groups outsiders to a specific in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Accordingly, in-groups consider themselves ‘us’ and label out-groups as ‘them’ (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Hence, cohesion and devotion towards in-group is consolidated and preference, superiority, purity and exploitativeness in inter-group context prevailed (Bizumic, 2012).

In elaborating what in-group implies, Allport (1954, p.29) mentioned:

...the crux of the matter is that the familiar provides the indispensable basis of our existence. Since existence is good, its accompanying groundwork seems good and desirable. A child’s parents, neighborhood, region, nation are given to him-so too his religion, race, and social traditions. To him all these affiliations are taken for granted. Since he is part of them, and they are part of him, they are *good*.

The above extract implies, through time and experience, the individual will develop attachment and loyalty to the family members, customs, and language, neighborhood and ethnic groups. Hence, there is a prevalent tendency to link positive qualities to in-group members than to out-group members (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Habtamu, 1998). Such strong identification is further developed through stories passed across generations (Waters, 1990) and feelings of obligation to

sustain in-group culture (Isajiw, 1993). Such collective internal identification therefore dictates interactions within the group and expectation from out-groups (Jenkins, 2004). Inclusion and exclusion criteria are also set to welcome and distance out-groups.

Moreover, ancient hostility (Toft, 2003), socio-historical processes (Spence, 2006) or elite's manipulation (Bizumic, 2012) can reinforce negative characterization of out-groups. The role of media in disseminating biased information about particular social groups (Udupa, Gagliardone, Deem & Csuka, 2020) and nationalistic education (Bayar, 2009) also solidify ethnic distancing. This will lead to the general belief that every member of the out-group possesses the same negative trait and attitude. These can extend to silent treatment and insults to physical attack of out-groups (Bizumic, 2012; Habtamu, 1998; Udupa et al., 2020). However, not all in-group members hold negative views of the out-groups (Bizumic, 2012).

2.1.3. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism implies strong devotion to in-group due to the belief that one's own ethnic group is a center of everything (Bizumic, 2012). The underlying assumptions of ethnocentrism are- (1) ethnicity is inborn identity (Geertz, 1973), (2) ethnic categorization is a natural characterization of social formation (Verkuyten, 2005) and (3) inter-ethnic peace is less likely due to historical animosity of social groups (Toft, 2003). Ethnocentrism therefore makes ethnic identity a determinant factor in defining self and relations with others.

Unbridled enthusiasm about own ethnic group can be expressed through preferring contact and interaction within intra-group and avoidance of out-groups (Bizumic, 2012). Perceptions like one's own ethnic group is pure and its long standing in-group values are standards of conduct therefore create partisanship in cross-group interactions (Allport, 1954) and foster a hostile approach towards out-groups (Bizumic, 2012; Habtamu, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These can be manifested through various negative verbal and non-verbal expressions (Allport, 1954). The ultimate form of ethnocentrism as explained by Vagaeva et al. (2020) is "irritation that arises as a reaction to the presence of members of other groups, to upholding their restrictive policies and opportunities, aggressive and violent actions against another group" (p.325). Individuals and

groups with such attitude and behavior are called extremists (Abera, 2010; Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023), isolationists or fanatical (Vagaeva et al., 2020) or radicalists (Besar et al., 2015).

Even though ethnocentrism is a major factor in inter-group division and violence, it may not always result in out-group hostility for many reasons. Ethnocentric attitudes and behaviors can be improved through promoting inter-ethnic equality (Verkuyten, 2005), inter-ethnic dialogues (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020), exposure to mixed ethnic groups (Czepil et al., 2019), prolonged contact with out-groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008) as well as rigorous intra-group criticism (Pettigrew, 1998; Verkuyten, Thijs & Bekhuis, 2010). Hence, ethnocentric sentiment can be modified, altered and resulted in positive IGR (Allport, 1954). These leave a room for negotiated, optional and mixed views of ethnicity (Jenkins, 2008; Nagel, 1994).

2.1.4. Inter-ethnic Relations

Majority of writings on inter-group relations (IGR) address inter-ethnic relation issues. As the name implies, IER includes accommodative and cooperative as well as competitive attitudes and behaviors among ethnic groups (Kim, 2006; Verkuyten, 2005; Verkuyten & Katarzyna, 2005). Ethnic-groups under inter-ethnic domain identify themselves based on language, religion, geographical territory, cultural cues, rituals, diet and behavioral standards set by each respective group (Barth, 1969; Geertz, 1973; Weber, 1968/78).

Depending on the socio-historical processes and socio-political violence in the community, inter-ethnic interactions can take negative or positive forms. Appreciation for diversity, forgiveness of past wrongdoings, intergroup marriages, and equitable access to socioeconomic opportunities all encourage people to move from rigid, mono-ethnic identities to flexible identities, which fosters positive IER (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Levin et al., 2003; Verkuyten et al., 2010). Positive IER therefore necessitate respect and appreciation of other's uniqueness, signaling commonalities and openness to learn from each other (Dovidio, Eller & Hewstone, 2011; Levin, Van Laar & Sidanius, 2003; Verkuyten, 2005). On the other hand, in communities where social and historical processes are filled with inter-group tension and conflict and political processes are hostile, solidified identities, and limited out-group exposure characterize negative IER (Bayar, 2009; Bizumic, 2012).

In general, IER refers to interaction between members of different ethnic groups (Kim, 2006; Spencer, 2006; Verkuyten, 2005; Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Due to a tendency to venerate own traditions and heroes beyond others, competition and conflict are likely in an effort to acquire recognition (Jenkins, 2008). Hence, IER fluctuate between perspective taking, empathy and cross-group friendship and cooperation (positive IER), and avoidance, defamation, mistrust and physical violence towards out-groups (negative IER) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

2.2. Inter-ethnic Relations of University Students

The age range of university students that basically fall between 17 and 29 is a period of curiosity about identity (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Russo, Fallon, Zhang & Acevedo, 2014). The resurgence of nationalism, identity politics, interethnic rivalry (Alrawwad & Alrfooh, 2014; Mustapha et al., 2009) and entering into a diversified campus further the inquisitiveness (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). This is because, ethnic consciousness varies in mono-ethnic and poly-ethnic settings (Savchits et al., 2018). Hence, positive or negative IER of students can be prevailed on campus grounds. This section explores both aspects.

2.2.1. Positive Inter-ethnic Relations of University Students

The expression of positive IER among university students includes respecting other students' traditions and being open to learning about them (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015); acknowledging differences and commonalities (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Savchits et al., 2018); openness to discuss ethnic related issues (Hurtado et al., 1999); developing sympathy towards out-groups trauma (Levin et al., 2003); lowered inter-ethnic anxiety in cross-group settings (Mulondo, 2018); developing empathy towards out-groups (Hirtado et al., 2012) and resolving inter-ethnic conflicts peacefully and advocating for the rights of out-groups (Karnyshev et. al, 2014).

Fundamentally, positive IER of students is the result of cognitive, affective and behavioral changes. Allport (1954) argued that, credible knowledge on other's ethnic values and beliefs, commonalities of ethnic cultures and barriers of inter-ethnic communication are foundations for changes at cognitive level. Besides content knowledge, abandoning out-group anxiety, building

perspective taking ability and developing empathy towards out-groups experience are great means of translating the knowledge in to action at affective level (Astin, 1993; Denson & Seltzer, 2011; Mulondo & Thomas, 2021). Moreover, non-violent problem solving, optimism towards practicing out-group's cultures and standing for out-groups rights are good indicators of positive out-group behavior (Dovidio et al., 2011; Hurtado et al., 1999; Levin et al., 2003).

Harmonious relations among cross-groups can be attributed to various factors. The fact that students were taught about their in-group values and to avoid stereotyping since childhood (Czepil et al., 2019; Gasanova, 2021; Mulondo, 2018) and elongated stay in a university (Allport, 1954; Mulondo & Thomas, 2021; Mustapha et al., 2009; Savchits et al., 2018) taught them to judge people by character and practice rationality. Such reasoning, openness to transformation, and receptivity of fresh perspectives is termed as psychological modernity (Habtamu, Beit-Hallahmi, & Abbink, 1997). Such fast-paced socialization amongst diversified groups influence people to embrace variety and even adopt out-groups way of life (Kim, 2006).

At times, knowledge of mixed ethnicity (Czepil et al, 2019), coming from mixed-ethnic families (Gasanova, 2021), staying in foreign land (Al Majali & Alkhaaldi, 2020; Nakamura, 2013) and positive media reports on cultural diversity (Chelysheva & Mikhaleva, 2019) promote openness. In Turkish university for instance, Erdogan & Okumuslar (2020) posited that, students of mixed ethnicity easily acknowledge the rights and uniqueness of out-groups. Findings from Russian (Karnyshev et al., 2014) and Malaysian (Tey et al., 2009) universities also show such students are open to engage in ethnic sensitive discussions.

2.2.2. Negative Inter-ethnic Relations of University Students

Higher education is the first ever encounter to meet cross-cultural population for many students. Hence, new entrants choose to affiliate with in-groups to manage the challenging transition (Belford, 2017). In the adjustment process, negative IER is characterized by reluctance to know about out-groups (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020), in-group devotion and out-group hostility (Vagaeva et al., 2020), non-verbal negative expressions (Maqbool, Ahmed & Akram, 2021), offensive comments over meida (Koriakina, 2019; Nakamura, 2013) and even physical violence

(Alrawwad & Alrfooh, 2014; Hassan & Ageed, 2015; Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Salmon-Letelier, 2019). Hence, 'us-versus-them' division as explained by (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) is consolidated.

Negative IER of students in universities grows out of various factors. The major reasons are historical grievances of ethnic communities (Besar et al., 2015), politicization of ethnicity (Naituli & Nasimiyyu, 2019), cross-group rivalry of ethnic nature (Özdikmenli-Demir, 2014), socio-economic inequality (Koriakina, 2019), lack of consensus on national values (Mustapha et al., 2009), low out-group contact (Allport, 1954), lack of institutional democratic culture (Hurtado et al., 1999), politicization of higher education (Kuttig et al., 2020), history of exclusion in HEIs (Hurtado et al., 2008; Hurtado et al., 1999; Taaliu, 2017) and inability of students to adapt in a multi-cultural context (Mulondo, 2018).

Universities are in a unique position to provide students with credible information about diversity and how they can place themselves in such dynamic setting (West, 2018). However, the fact that curricular and pedagogical practices in HEIs fail to promote open discussions (Doghonadze & Zoranyan, 2018; Freire & Shor, 1987) and failure to establish systematic CoCPs (Denson, 2009; Kuh et al., 1994; Meier, 2012; Dawson & Cuevas, 2020; Salmon-Letelier, 2019) seem to push students to rely on unreliable sources to guide their IER (Shibankova et al., 2016).

Usually, members of a larger ethnic community believed they achieved high status because they outnumbered other social groups and try to manifest superiority over minority groups on campus (Mulondo, 2018). Particularly, if students stayed longer in a neighborhood where their ethnic group is dominant, they have an ethnocentric tendency because their own ethnic group has been then center of their world for long (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020). Hence, they act in provocative way to make themselves visible (Karnyshev et al., 2014; Mulondo, 2018).

On the other hand, inter-group animosity can be solidified through exposure to nationalistic literacy (Bayar, 2009). This implies, indoctrination on ethnocentric or political views as partly typified in Bangladesh campuses where political elites brainwash and pressure students to pursue political agenda (Kuttig et al., 2020). At times, such extremist views are facilitated by technology (Chelysheva & Mikhaleva, 2020). Hence, building the critical and analytical skills of students on how to use technologies is suggested (Chelysheva & Mikhaleva, 2020; Russo et al., 2014).

Being a mixed-ethnic group member or propensity to change one's identification or remain indifferent can also be a source of negative IER, which leads to discrimination from people who hold the idea of ethnic distinctiveness (Mulondo & Thomas, 2021). Ethno-political and socio-economic tension intensified such dilemma (Özdikmenli-Demir, 2014; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). In such cases, students with high ethnic consciousness find it safe to preserve ethnic border (Mustapha et al, 2009; Nakamura, 2013), which weakens sensitivity towards out-groups.

Language is among attributes of ethnic identification. There are occasions when ethnic vernaculars are used to discriminate out-group members as evidenced in Malaysia (Tey et al., 2009), Nigerian (Salmon-Letelier, 2019), Turkish (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020), Ethiopian (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013) and South Africa (Mulondo & Thomas, 2021) universities. On the contrary, there are universities where students use ethnic language with in-group but also command the official language of the country or the university in inter-ethnic settings (Belford, 2017; Nakamura, 2013). Teaching students the national language that the majority speaks in addition to their local vernacular is, in Kim's (2006) opinion, a way to address language-related issues.

Institutions of higher learning are meant to serve as democratic workshops where students learn about self-leadership, responsibility, obedience to rules, and cooperation. However, there are occasions where nepotistic behavior of university staff resulted in cross-group distancing among students (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Nakamura, 2013; Taaliu, 2017). Moreover, loose implementation of administrative measures on ethnic-related discrimination and conflicts on campus is another factor for negative ethnocentrism (Salmon-Letelier, 2019). A further factor for negative IER was the appointment of university administrators based on political affiliation (Damtew & Altbach, 2004; Haskell, Fleming & Quirolgico, 2005; Naituli & Nasimiyu, 2019).

Generally, factors explained above oblige some students to believe contact with out-groups would result conflict (Mustapha et al., 2009), in-groups are the primary source of the moral and emotional support (Belford, 2017), or in the words of Mulondo (2018, p. 16), they develop "ethnic pride". Distancing certain groups is likely to result in psychological distress on some students from out-

groups (Karnyshev et al., 2014). Others even form a small group and attack ethnic-other which destabilize the teaching-learning process of HEIs (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Salmon-Letelier, 2019).

2.2.3. Interventions in Fostering Inter-ethnic Relations of University Students

In relation to improving IER of students, institutions are primarily advised to encourage enrollment from diversified groups (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2007). Moreover, dialogue and workshops on sensitive inter-ethnic issues (Milem et al., 2005; Savchits et al., 2018; Ward, 2017) seem to awaken student's cognitive, affective and behavioral cues through promoting critical thinking, group problem solving skills, empathy and developing a sense of 'we-ness' (Allport, 1954; Denson, 2009). Such campus-facilitated initiatives could be undertaken in and out of formal classroom (Hurtado, 2005; Hurtado et al., 1999; Kuh et al., 1994).

2.2.4. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Ethiopian Public Universities

In Ethiopia, access to higher education is expanding, which may present potential for better cross-ethnic relations. Nonetheless, diversified student body is unlikely to be a factor in the student positive IER. Therefore, a full comprehension of the nature of students' relations is required in order to rebuild IER of young adults in campus. This section attempts to move in this direction.

2.2.4.1. Inter-ethnic Relations in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a diversified country with over 80 ethnic groups. However, ethnicity was not a defining factor in politics and identity as observed in the post- 1991 era. The roots of ethnic based structure dated back to 1960s socio-political movement in the country. In 1969, Walelign allegedly blamed that the ruling class advanced fake nationalism and proposed the need to build a genuine nation-state where all nationalities exercise equal rights. Hence, Ethiopian Emperors nation-building policy is criticized for favoring a certain ethnic culture over others (Asebe, 2007; Vaughan, 2003). Some argue this is the root for ethnic based infightings in Ethiopia (Lubo, 2012; Merera, 2004).

Others contend that, Ethiopia's problem was rather a class struggle (Bekalu, 2018; Taye, 2019). Against this backdrop, ethno-nationalist movements with 'ethnic-domination' claim proliferated. Among these, Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which led ethnic federalist political

coalition called EPRDF, seized power in 1991, legalized regionalism along ethno-lingual lines and unity in diversity was aspired (FDRE, 1995). Queries on class vs. cultural domination, viability of ethno-lingual fiefdom and ethnocentric repercussions left unaddressed.

Despite the acknowledgement to exercise language and cultural development and local self-determination (Asebe, 2007) and aspiration to unity in diversity in post 1991 era, the fact that ethnicity was becoming a foremost basis of identity and administration remains controversial. Absence of nationwide dialogue on what would unite Ethiopians before the introduction of federal system (Bekalu 2018), hegemonic aspiration of TPLF (Merera, 2004), corruption (Vaughan, 2003), absence of state resilience (Semir, 2019; Yonas, 2019a) and oppressor-oppressed sentiment (Yonas, 2019; Semir, 2019) fomented grievances and violence among ethnic groups.

The terms ‘Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ (NNPs) prevail in Ethiopia instead of ethnic groups. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), defined NNPs as “people living in the same geographical area and having the same language and a common psychological makeup of identity” (1992, p.7). Accordingly, Ethiopia is a nation-state built by NNPs (Habtamu, 1998). However, some emphasize, such notion denies the plasticity of Ethiopian society as intermarriages and conquest (Taye, 2019), ethnic switching (Alemu, 2018), favoritism of certain ethnic cultures (Abebaw, 2013; Asebe, 2007), elite’s manipulation of ethnic identity (Yonas, 2019) and biased media reporting (Semir, 2019) contributed for fluidity of ethnic identity.

The cessation of TPLF’s influence in the ruling party, widening political space, freedom of political prisoners, return of opposing political parties and activists in exile, media freedom and freedom of speech (Cochrane & Asnake, 2019) were foremost shifts in the political antiquity of Ethiopia and motivate optimism towards inter-communal harmony in 2018. However, the competition within the ruling party, presence of ethnic-based insurgency, unclear role of activists and opposing parties and unmanaged public expectation put the IER of communities as well as the stability of the country in jeopardy (ICG, 2019; Semir, 2019).

2.2.4.2. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Ethiopian Public Universities

This sub-section discusses positive and negative aspects of IER in Ethiopian universities context.

2.2.4.2.1. Positive Inter-ethnic Relations of Students

Favorable aspects of IER of students in Ethiopian HEIs context is the least discussed topic. However, a quantitative study in Hawassa University for instance revealed, majority of respondents were optimist towards learning about out-groups culture, supporting out-groups, adopting out-groups language and relocating to regions where one's ethnic group is less dominant (Tesfaye, 2012). The author also indicates, students display shared national identity despite the ethno-political fissures in the community. Although they are few in number, the existence of students exhibiting similar positive behavior was also noted in the works of Abebaw (2014), Abera (2010), and Melkamu & Ameyu (2013).

Contributory factors for positive IER among students is attributed to allocation of dormitories based on department and alphabet (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010) and a willingness to take advantage of ethnic diversity as a chance to share experiences (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). For some, such out-group optimism is developed a way before they join campus due to various reasons including ability to command multiple languages (Misrak & Addisu, 2011). For others, frequent contact with out-groups played a major role in minimizing inter-ethnic anxiety and address cross-group ethnic related conflicts (Abebaw, 2014; Misrak & Addisu, 2011; Yoseph, 2019).

Students' testimonies from Addis Ababa, Ambo, Bahir Dar, Gondar, and Jimma universities further explained how spending quality time with out-groups in an entertaining cross-group dialogue at Peace Club contributed to positive cross-ethnic relations by causing in-group members to change their attitudes and misperceptions (LPI, 2014; LPI & PDC, 2019). This shows, positive IER of students is all about building bridges across students of difference through promoting inter-ethnic contact in a less formal setting beyond classrooms. Most local studies rather focus on how the bridge was broken and its impact on the travelers.

2.2.4.2.2. Negative Inter-ethnic Relations of Students

Federalism embrace unity in diversity. Ethiopian ethnic-federal structure rather promotes homogeneity as reflected in ‘sons of soil’ orientation (Bekalu, 2018) and oppressed-oppressor narration (Abebaw & Balsvik, 2018; Yonas, 2019). Hence, standing for out-groups rights seem to appear ‘standing against own group’ (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). Student’ IER is therefore manifested through in-group veneration (Abebaw, 2019; Tesfaye, 2012) and minor cross-group disagreements take on an ethnic dimension (Abebaw, 2019; CARD, 2020; Yonas, 2019).

Coming to terms with national values relating to each social group that all groups can accept helps students to form unity. However, due to elites’ manipulation of ethnic diversity and failure to promote multiculturalism (Lubo, 2012; Yonas, 2019a), division among nationalities, including university students became prevalent (Zekarias, 2020). The ‘national question’ in the 1960s therefore reduced to ‘ethnic question’ (Yonas, 2019) and students’ loyalty shift to ethnic-based political parties and in-groups (Abebaw & Balsvik, 2018; Demewoz, 2012; Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023; Miressa, 2018). For this reason, Abera (2010, p.52) concludes that “ethnic federalism ...diluted the unified voice of students.”

Involvement of political parties in internal affairs of universities has never turned out well (Kuttig et al., 2020). Political organizations in Ethiopia seem to involve in public campuses and get leverage to mobilize support from both the student body and the university community (Abebaw, 2014; Anteneh, 2012). Even in classrooms, students raise questions either in support of or rejection of a certain political view embraced by varied parties in the country (Abera, 2010). Mediating conflicts in such context is also difficult as mediation is not considered neutral (Abera, 2010; Yonas, 2019).

Political disposition of university staff also affects students in various ways (Haskell et al., 2005). The same is true in Ethiopian public HEIs. Some argue ethnic-based leadership appointment in public HEIs compromise leaders’ capacity to address critical institutional issues promoting cross-ethnic relations in an impartial manner (Anteneh, 2012; Arega & Mulugetea, 2017; Seid, 2021). This seems why Damtew & Altbach (2004, p.31) remarked, “..the manner in which the university is governed and the leadership is appointed often contributes to the magnitude and scope of the problems.”

Since ethnic languages started serving as the primary working languages in educational institutions in Ethiopia, language has emerged as a key determinant of inclusion and/or exclusion. This is mainly because, those who came from non-Amharic speaking regions largely have poor command of Amharic and there is a tendency to label ‘Amharic language’ as a vernacular of domination by some students (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). Some are not willing to use Amharic even if they know how to command it (Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023). This raises concerns as it appears that students lack a common language to communicate (Tesfaye, 2012).

Lack of democratic norm is also identified as a source of negative IER of students. Yonas (2019) strongly argues that absence of culture of dialogue and constructive ways of negotiating differences is among the roots of political crisis in Ethiopia. This culture take roots in public HEIs. Ethiopian universities fail to enlighten students on ethnic diversity and how to peacefully co-exist in such difference (Anteneh, 2009; Demewoz, 2012). Leaders’ avoidance strategy therefore open doors for un-ethnic ways of expression of opinions (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Miressa, 2018; Missaye, 2014). Cultural festivities becoming battlefields (Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021) and students beating instructors during class discussions (Abera, 2010) are examples of this.

Although expansion of HEIs was supposed to attract diverse students, this has actually contributed to student division due to uniform placement strategy that force students from similar regions to attend campuses (Abebaw, 2014), which affects compositional diversity as defined by Gurin et al. (2002). This is worsened by division of students as guests and hosts. According to Melkamu & Ameyu (2013), students who are linguistically related to the region where the university is located are ‘hosts’ and those who are from areas outside of that region as ‘guests.’ This in turn gives leverage for host community to fuel inter-ethnic tension in support of ‘hosts’ (Miressa, 2018).

The social distance across groups was furthered by non-uniform dormitory placement strategies such as pairing up dorm-mates from the same bus or region or allowing students to create groups among themselves (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). While careless dormitory assignment prevents room-sharing among diversified student population (Tey et al., 2009), haphazard approach is praised for promoting companionship (Allport, 1954) and cross-cultural contact (Vaughan, 2003). In Ethiopian public HEIs, the latter is not practiced consistently.

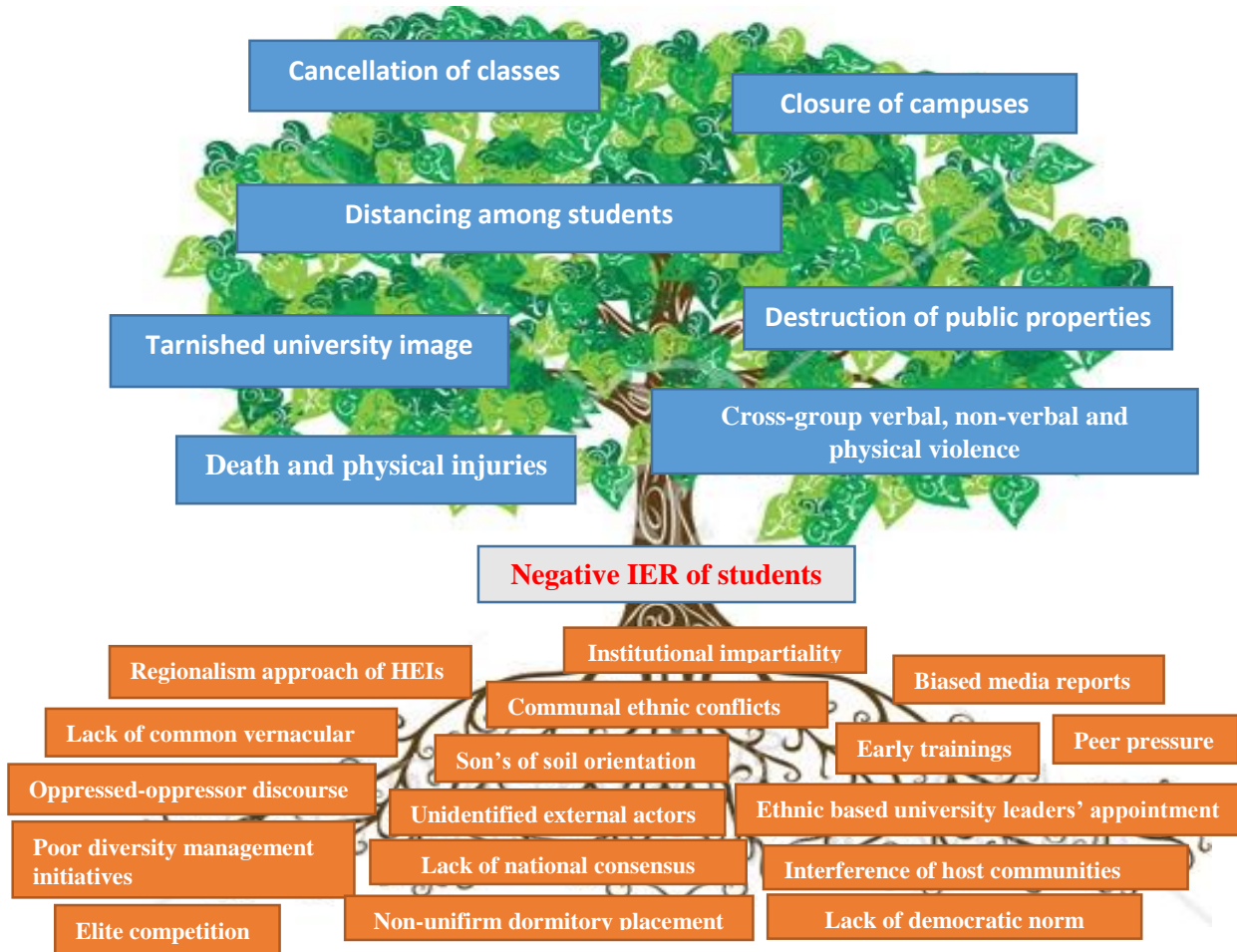
Unfavorable IER is also expanded by what students learn from their family and peers before campus. Such “early trainings” as Allport (1963, p.39) prefer to call them were also exhibited among Ethiopian public university students (Miressa, 2018; Misrak & Addisu, 2011). Peer pressure (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013) and the role of unidentified external forces (CARD, 2020; Yonas, 2019) or as Seid (2021) prefer to call them ‘conflict/ethnic entrepreneurs’, also sustained in-group favoritism and/or out-group hostility by reiterating the ethnic domination narration.

Inter-communal conflicts also fuel inter-ethnic anxiety. At such times, some switch dormitories to be with in-groups (Abera, 2010; Misrak & Addisu, 2011). Similar practices were observed in Jordan (Alrawwad & Alrfooh, 2014), and Bangladesh (Kuttig et al., 2020) HEIs. Tajfel & Turner’s (1986, p.277) assertion “real conflicts of group interests...heighten identification with, and positive attachment to, the in-group” explains why students prefer in-group affiliation during conflict episodes. Such events turned deadly, destroying properties and repeatedly disrupting the education process in Ethiopian HEIs (CARD, 2020). Media further the antagonistic sentiment (Mekonnen, 2013; Zekarias, 2020). Supporting this, Tian (2019, p.74) asserted, “.....online space appears to be more politically infused than offline space..” in HEIs context.

Experiences from universities abroad sufficiently indicated that, institutions systematically arrange non-classroom platforms like inter-group dialogue (Ward, 2017), inter-cultural festivities (Savchits et al., 2018), trainings on diversity issues (Denson, 2009; Griffin, Nichols, Perez II & Tuttle, 2008), and voluntary based community service (Ratanakarn, 2011) among others seem to overcome inter-ethnic anxiety, facilitate inter-ethnic contact, improve group problem solving skills of students and rebuild relations of students. But among Ethiopian students at public HEIs, a lack of initiative to create such spaces exacerbated distancing (Abebaw, 2023; Missaye, 2014).

Figure 1

Causes and Consequences of Negative IER of Ethiopian Public University Students



Note. Summarized from various sources (Developed by the researcher)

2.3. Co-curricular Programs and Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Universities

The literature has long recognized the impact of formal curriculum on students' growth. However, there is ongoing discussion about how CoC can foster both intellectual and non-academic skills. The history, conceptualization and application of CoC are briefly covered in this section.

2.3.1. A Shift from Traditional Curriculum

The prominent form, *formal curriculum* is conceptualized as a set of acquiring knowledge and skill in formal classroom setting within a specified time frame (Kridel, 2010; Pinar, 2004). However, over the years, the incompleteness of the formal syllabus to bring social and emotional development of learners was uncovered. Drawing on this thinking, arguments for extension of student engagement platforms prevailed (Bobbitt, 1914; Dewey, 1902; Spencer, 1911).

John Locke's 1889 writing proposed the need to shift from creation of 'bookish' people to virtuous citizens. This perspective has been refined by Dewey (1902) to incorporate students' experience into educational instruction. Maintained in the experience thesis, Locke (1889) argued on the potential of relaxed teaching settings to foster confidence and inter-group kindness, which in turn led Bobbitt (1918) to promote non-classroom learning. Such perspectives were shared by Dewey (1902), Freire & Shor (1987), Kridel (2010), and Hedberg, & Stevenson (2014).

The formal curriculum was therefore expanded to include teachings inside and beyond the classroom in response to growing critiques. Though the name *informal curriculum* is given for such learning method, it holds a prominent place in enriching students' academic experience. Basically, informal curriculum has two dimensions- hidden curriculum and extra-curriculum or co-curriculum. While the former implies unintended lessons in the teaching-learning process, the latter entails learning activities related to the formal curriculum or go beyond it (Kridel, 2010).

2.3.2. The Evolution of Co-curriculum

Extra-curricular activities (ECAs) first became organized in the 19th century at Harvard and Yale universities (Dhanmeher, 2014). By then, time was allotted for debate, sport, and literacy initiatives, to build students' physical, intellectual, behavioral and social development and there was no shared belief that such activities can serve more than recreation. As of 1917 however, ECAs gained passive acceptance due to the development of courses on ECAs in Teachers College at Columbia University and subsequent publications on the platform (Siddiky, 2019). However, official institutional support was still minimal because, educators are reluctant to take extra-loads of non-academic endeavors.

Between 1920 and 1950s, ECAs became part and parcel of curriculum (Siddiky, 2019). As a result, documentation on best practices (Fretwell, 1924) and research on how to better manage the platform overwhelm policy discussions (Siddiky, 2019; Stephen, Ngaruiya & Maithya, 2019). In the 1980s and 1990s, ECAs entail wide-range of modalities and affect all aspects of development domains (Hedberg & Stevenson, 2014). Due to this, Meseret (2009, p.10) call the era “period of recognition.” Hence, those non-academic practices termed ‘extra’ to the conventional curriculum are renamed as ‘co’ to the modern curriculum (Dhanmeher, 2014). However, the conversation on what and how CoC contribute to students’ development is still evolving.

2.3.3. Conceptualization of Co-curriculum

The father of co-curricular movement, Elbert Fretwell is believed to have formally coined the term extra-curriculum in his 1931 publication *Extra-curricular Activities in Secondary Schools*, as a set of legitimate non-classroom, non-credited and student-run engagements activities like newspaper publication, drama, debate, athletics, assemblies, and so on that help students to be active, caring, cooperative and develop sense of responsibility, self-direction and ethics. He further contends, it will enrich the syllabi indirectly (Fretwell, 1931). Over the years, different researchers have developed distinct but related conceptualizations of co-curriculum.

The most common form of conceptualization overwhelm literatures is, CoCPs are voluntary, non-credit, non-classroom and student-led learning experiences organized by clubs, associations and organizations (Dhanmeher, 2014; Elias & Drea, 2013; Jones, 2018; Siddiky, 2019). However, the process in CoCPs is supervised and there is always a room for students to enrich the effectiveness of the programs (Astin, 1993). Hence, the approach is flexible (Hedberg, & Stevenson, 2014). The fact that CoCPs entail non-academic nature align with Dewey (1902) and Bobbit’s (1918) experience thesis and are undertaken beyond classroom resonate with Locke (1889) relaxed setting suggestion.

Co-curricular activities are further defined in diversified universities context. Accordingly, CoCPs are conceptualized as student-led but institutionally supervised club or union based non-classroom engagements like diversity workshops, peer-facilitated programs, inter-group dialogues and service-oriented programs aimed at improving IGR of students (Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang,

2015; Engberg, 2004; Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; McFadden & Smeaton, 2017; Ratanakarn, 2011). Co-curricular endeavors cover a wide range of services to facilitate inter-ethnic interaction so that students can challenge their preconceived beliefs and better comprehend social realities (Savchits et al., 2017). This way, HEIs can prepare competitive, responsible and culturally conscious citizens (Ward, 2017) who can lead their intergroup relationship with civility. This in turn maintain and enhance institutional status (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2007).

2.3.4. Co-curricular Programs and Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Universities

For many students, college years are periods of development of strong sense of self, social and political identity (Haskell et al., 2005; Mulondo & Thomas, 2021), and/or openness to change their attitudes about self and others (Hurtado et al., 1999; Ratanakarn, 2014). Hence, it is critical to guide their attitude and behavior in a way they can contribute for national development (Tey et al., 2009). Among others, fostering inter-ethnic relations of students in diversified campuses is a huge step to win united voice of students and guide them towards a coordinated positive change.

2.3.4.1. Popular Co-curricular Programs to Foster Inter-ethnic Relations

Understanding ethnic diversity and maintaining positive IER in universities has been the concern of educators and researchers for years. Among the various mechanisms to achieve this, structural diversity, classroom diversity, informal interactions and co-curricular initiatives are implicated in research findings across nations.

Structural diversity deals with enriching ethnic composition of student population (Chang, Astin & Kim, 2004; Gurin et al., 2002). This can be executed through revisiting policies and procedures on admission and placement (Engberg, 2004; Meier, 2012). However, compositional variety is not a guarantee to positive IER unless students are educated on how to make cross-ethnic interaction (Hurtado, 2001). *Classroom diversity* on the other hand aimed at exposition of unversed and diverse perspectives in the syllabus (Denson & Seltzer, 2011; Hurtado, 2001; Shibankova et al., 2016). However, this approach suffer from practical exposure (Chelysheva & Mikhaleva, 2020).

Hence, *informal interactional diversity* that includes interaction across students of difference inside and beyond campus is proposed to facilitate inter-ethnic communication (Gurn et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2001). Hence, diversity sensitive dormitory placement (Allport, 1954; Vaughan, 2003)

and residence hall experiential programs (Lopez, 2004) received institutional recognition. These approaches are however criticized due to limited time to establish inter-ethnic contact (Lopez, 2004). According to intergroup theorists, a brief encounter can worsen prejudice in addition to producing insignificant improvement in IGR (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

Hence, engagement in systematically organized co-curricular interventions is found to be an alternative to manage students' IER. These interventions includes a range of interactive and problem solving programs in supervised student-led clubs and associations where students from diversified groups participate voluntarily and regularly (Denson, 2009; McFadden & Smeaton, 2017; Savchits et al., 2018; Ward, 2017). It has been repeatedly demonstrated that a lack of oversight regarding the what, how, when, and why of CoCPs allows for unethical group acts and inefficient use of time, despite some suggesting that the student affairs office's supervision of CoC endeavors compromises the platform's independence and limits students' creativity (Dhanmeher, 2014; Savchits et al., 2017). In HEI settings, student-led but supervised CoCPs are therefore strongly advised (Australian National University, 2022; Nghia, 2017; Stellenbosch University, 2018). The most successful CoCPs in terms of fostering positive cross-ethnic relations of students in multi-ethnic campuses are discussed hereunder.

2.3.4.1.1. Co-curricular Clubs

Student clubs are supervised, voluntary entities made up of students across departments with the aim of enhancing learning experience in and beyond campus (Dhanmeher, 2014; Kridel, 2010). Among others, cultural clubs and peace clubs or alternately called diversity clubs are found to play a role in terms of creating credible knowledge base about ethnic diversity and (re)building IER.

Cultural Clubs

Cultural clubs create a democratic space for students of different nationalities to practice, promote and maintain their customs; learn creative ways of expressing cultural uniqueness and practicing other's culture (Hurtado et al., 2008). Students are encouraged to engage in active listening and evaluating their opinions in light of local, regional, and global realities (Astin, 1993; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). Such positive qualities can be enhanced through workshops/forums on national issues, tolerance, cultural integration, and other ethnic-related topics (Vorobyova &

Poleshchuk, 2015), cultural festivities (Kuh et al., 1994; Ward, 2017), and cross-group cultural field visits (Savchits et al., 2018).

Peace Clubs

Conceptually, peace club is defined as a tool to empower students with necessary knowledge, skill and practice in inter-group dynamics and conflict resolution (Akorede & Oseremen, 2023; United States Institute of Peace, 2017). Issa Said Ebombolo, a Peacebuilding Coordinator of the Mennonite Central Committee in Zambia, introduced this CoCPs in 2006 with the goal of helping diverse student and community groups undergo psycho-social transformation (Irene, 2022; Juma, 2019; Munywe, 2014). Among others, it aspires to establish “right relationships” among learners (Jasson, 2016, p.31). This can be realized through dialogues, conflict-sensitive workshops/trainings, cultural discussions, peace marches, art works, and community outreach activities (Irene, 2023, 2022; Jasson, 2016).

The fact that peace club broadens its scope to include examining the causes and trajectories of violence, non-violent problem-solving in intergroup settings, and finding solutions to prevent conflicts from recurring allow students to “apply the knowledge of peace in their everyday life” (Akorede, 2023, p. 4) and become “peace ambassadors” (Munywe, 2014, p.23). Hence, peace clubs are recognized as one of the many CoC interventions that effectively transforms students’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral conditioning. These can be realized mainly through group dialogue (Irene, 2023, 2022; Jasson, 2016; Juma, 2019).

2.3.4.1.2. Co-curricular Strategies

Different CoC strategies appear to respond differently to challenges in IER. Among others, clubs and unions adopt dialogue, workshops and community services as learning strategies positively associated with IER of students.

Dialogue

One of the many platforms that foster an honest conversation where participants from different ethnic groups are exposed to broader range of world views and share their understanding is

dialogue. This can be classified in to inter-group and intra-group dialogue. Basically, inter-group dialogue is conceptualized by Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler & Cytron-Walker (2007, p.2) as:

..a face-to-face facilitated learning experience that brings together students from different social identity groups over a sustained period of time to understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of societal inequalities, and explore ways of working together toward greater equality and justice.

The above extract implies, inter-group dialogues serve as a tool to facilitate interaction in a way students can jointly identify enablers and barriers of integration and engage in collaborative problem solving to address common problems. Through discerning commonalities and differences between in-group and out-group, students will be able to have a critical eye on friend-enemy relations of social groups, socio-political inequalities, and jointly explore ways to bring social justice (Zúñiga et al., 2007). They also learn how to manage conflicts (Gurin et al., 2002) and foster appreciation and acceptance over time (Lopez, 2004; Meier, 2012).

Inter-group dialogue or in the words of Allport (1954, p.488), “contact and acquaintance program” aim to foster mutual respect among diversified social groups under the optimal conditions he proposed (*see* section 2.4.1.). Usually, IGD is undertaken in sequential manner- (1) exploring self and other’s identities, (2) exploring commonalities and differences, (3) discussion on sensitive topics and (4) exploring the way forward (Zúñiga et al., 2007). In the last stage, students will get the chance to spread the message of peace and non-violence outside of their small circle and bring positive change on non-participants (LPI & PDC, 2019).

Educational processes include but not limited to discussions, group projects (Engberg, 2004), storytelling, brainstorming, written and fishbowl exercises (Zúñiga et al., 2007) and readings (Meier, 2012). Through these approaches, students set goals for the dialogue, travel through multiple identity layers, explore roots for hostility and develop a plan to guide future actions (Hurtado et al., 2008; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Hence, there is a room for content knowledge and transformation of ethnocentric attitudes and aggressive behavior (Czepil et al., 2019; Hurtado et al., 2008; Shibankova et al., 2016). On the other hand, in-group reappraisal allow in-group members to interrogate their own attitude and behavior towards out-groups amongst themselves

(Dovidio et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Pettigrew et al., 2011; Verkuyten et al., 2010).

Diversity Informed Workshops, Trainings and Panels

Workshops, trainings, seminars and panels can be designed to address a range of social issues. Experiences from multi-ethnic universities exhibited, such platforms are reframed in a way they can foster awareness and discussion on issues like prejudice, stereotypes, inter-group conflicts and transcending to interdependence (Denson, 2009; Engberg, 2004). Such content-based CoC interventions highlight directions on improving IER of students (Denson & Chang, 2015; Denson & Seltzer, 2011). The major learning tools employed are fact-based lectures, discussions and role playing under the guidance of the facilitator (Engberg, 2004).

Community Service Initiatives

Engagement in campus facilitated community service initiatives helped students to learn about the nature of social inequality, develop empathy and realize there is a superordinate aim that unites them (Dalton & Crosby, 2013; Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013; McFadden & Smeaton, 2017). This in turn strengthened the relationship between universities and surrounding community (Doghonadze & Zoranyan, 2018). Experience sharing, discussions, and reflections are major learning tools (Engberg, 2004; Ratanakarn, 2011). In general, intergroup contact is the focus of community service, with less emphasis on content knowledge (Engberg, 2004).

Not all CoCPs have similar effect in terms of building IER of students. As per discussions under 2.3.4.1.1 and 2.3.4.1.2, it is possible to learn, Peace Clubs demonstrated positive changes at cognitive, affective and behavioral levels through employing dialogue as a tool to educate students about inter-ethnic peace, inter-ethnic commonalities and non-violence. With this, the current study target Peace Clubs from CoCPs available in HEIs and its dialogue platform is revisited.

Table 1

Co-curricular Programs and Facets of Positive IER of Students

S/N	Facets of positive IGR	CoC Programs				
		<i>Diversity informed workshops</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>Community service</i>	<i>Cultural club</i>	<i>Peace club</i>
1	Cognitive shift	High	High	Medium	High	High
2	Affective shift	Medium	High	High	Medium	High
3	Behavioral shift	Medium	High	High	Medium	High

Note. Summarized from various sources (Developed by the researcher)

2.3.4.2. Enablers and Hindrances to Co-curricular Programs Effectiveness in Universities

The types of clubs and programs that foster positive IER are briefly discussed in the previous subsection. As clubs arrange different programs and activities, CoCPs in this study are understood in the context of clubs. However, clubs can result in positive outcomes when certain conditions are met. This is the focus of the discussion in this section.

2.3.4.2.1. Issues related to Club’s Nature

Co-curricular interventions, underpinned in experiential thesis, aimed at enriching learners experience and interaction via transcending communication barriers among students (Dneson, 2009; Hurtado et al., 1999; Hurtado et al., 2012). However, CoC clubs must adhere to a set of standards in order to improve students’ IER. These standards are outlined below.

Compositional Diversity

As repeatedly discussed in literatures, the prerequisite to improve IGR of students in campuses is enrollment of students from diversified social groups (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2008; Milem et al., 2005). Such compositional variety helps students to meet someone from out-groups in non-classroom interventions (Kuh et al., 1994).

Regularity of Contact

When mutually engaging and extended encounters are inevitable, cross-group connections are likely to form and sustain (Allport, 1954; Chang et al., 2004). Scholarship in multi-ethnic campuses indicated, students who meet and interact regularly in CoCPs exhibited positive ways of expressing ethnic identification and have high readiness to work in teams (Lewis, 2016; Tian, 2019; Vagaeva et al., 2020).

Face-to-Face Contact

Direct inter-ethnic contact creates a chance for heart-felt discussions (Zúñiga et al., 2007) and minimize the level of misunderstanding (Russo et al., 2014). Most positive cross-group relational stories are results of face-to-face CoCPs (Denson & Chang, 2015; Engberg, 2004; Lopez, 2004; Munywe, 2014; Ward, 2017).

Voluntary Participation

One of the lively debates over the conditions that determine effectiveness of CoCPs is whether to make participation voluntary or mandatory. However, large body of scholarship support voluntary participation (Dhanmeher, 2014; Elias & Drea, 2013; Jones, 2018; McFadden, 2017; Siddiky, 2019; Stephen et al., 2019; Stirling & Kerr ; Thompson, Ansoglenang & Antwi, 2019; Ward, 2017). Particularly in inter-ethnic encounters where the relationship among students of diverse ethnic background is not smooth, involuntary contact can further intolerance (Allport, 1954).

Relaxed Setting

Young adults are more stimulated to learn in a relaxed environment than formal classrooms. This facilitates self-expression and participation (Stephen et al., 2019). Co-curricular activities are dominated by flexible approaches that fit students' interests (Hedberg, & Stevenson, 2014) to foster their creativity and involvement. This does not, however, mean, a university will allow establishment of clubs to fit each student's interest, as this is less feasible in terms of management (Thompson et al., 2019) and even at times damaging (Jones, 2018). However, depending on institutional guidelines, flexible techniques that take students' suggestions are plausible.

2.3.4.2.2. Institutional Support

Institutional commitment towards passing legislations that reinforce inclusion among diversified student population (Hurtado, 2007), setting up student affairs office (Major & Mangope, 2014), allocation of sufficient funds (Nghia, 2017; Savchits et al., 2018) and rewarding students who actively participate in CoC clubs (Ward, 2017) are among facilitators of functional IGR in multi-cultural universities.

2.3.4.3. Legal Frameworks and Practices of Co-curricular Programs in Universities

Curiosity regarding students' campus experience and how they spend their time sparks rising interest by educationists and policy makers on how to structure the time outside classroom (Dhanmeher, 2014; Siddiky, 2019; Stephen et al., 2019). Henceforth, universities attempted to design policies and strategies and give proper legal status for co-curriculum. Under this section the legal status of CoC interventions and institutional practices are discussed.

2.3.4.3.1. Legal Frameworks of Co-curricular Programs in Universities

Non-classroom activities are primarily implemented by American institutions, which also provided legal support for CoCPs. For instance, the *Higher Education Opportunity Act* which aim to strengthen resource for post-secondary education (2008) articulates provision of funding CoC experiences in colleges. The paper *Greater Expectations* by Association of American Colleges and Universities in 2002 also focus on students' empowerment through co-curriculum. *Internationalizing the Co-curriculum* by American Council on Education in 2017 reinforce the idea of diversity related CoC interventions in HEIs. These documents, along with research outputs (Hurtado et al., 1999; Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2008; Milem et al., 2005), help US campuses to adopt CoC models that address inter-ethnic relation challenges.

In Vietnam, developing generic skills (like working in teams, critical thinking, resilience, and problem-solving) through CoCPs for university students, received a central place in the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in 2010 and Vietnamese National Congress in 2012 (cited in Nghia, 2017). Accordingly, the Ministry adopted a national guideline for universities in Vietnam to engage in generic skills development (Nghia, 2017). Hence, CoCPs hold legal basis in HEIs.

In Canada, most HEIs adopted CCR policy (*see* 2.3.4.3.2. for what CCR means) Accordingly, HEIs like University of Toronto, University of Alberta and McGill provide a range of CoC options (Elias & Drea, 2013). Students therefore gain a robust experience and develop peaceful attitude towards ‘out-groups’. The government even accredited a professional association named CACUSS (2019) that promote engagement and excellence in co-curriculum platform among other things.

In South Africa, the Joint Education Trust in 2003 discussed on investing community-sensitive programs in HEIs which allows students to engage in outdoor activities that enhance critical thinking, community awareness, collaboration and empathy towards ‘others’ (Hay & Marais, 2011). Accordingly, universities like University of the Western Cape issued a CCR policy, which intended to broaden students' experience and produce responsive citizens through self-awareness development, value exploration, and diversity management (University of the Western Cape, 2013) and Stellenbosch University issued a procedure on how CoC is undertaken through its Co-curriculum Office based on experiential learning theory and envisioned to foster inter-cultural understanding of students and social impact (Stellenbosch University, 2018).

In Australia, Australian National University’s CoC schedule clearly states the skills (community engagement, diversity, team work and critical thinking) attained through engagement in CoC activities (Australian National University, 2022). In a White Paper to enhance student life in University of Melbourne, CoC platforms like clubs, and cultural activities are identified as viable platforms to improve students’ higher education experience (University of Melbourne, 2019). The paper specifically identified a set of ‘must have’ skills to be developed by CoCPs for undergraduate students to fit in to the global environment in general and diversified campus in particular.

As the first African state to introduce Education Sector Policy on Peace Education, Kenya goes to a great length to clearly outline strategies and action plans to integrate messages of peace, equality, non-violence, conflict resolution and diversity in the education sector (MOEST, 2014). Accordingly, CoCPs like peace clubs, dialogues and community service are identified as tools to create a culture of peace (ADEA, 2022). The peace education policy portrays, the major role of CoCPs is to “provide an opportunity for character building” (MOEST, 2014, p. vii) which is highly relevant in ethnically diversified educational institutions. Experiences from different HEIs

generally demonstrated that the potential of CoCPs in nurturing rational thinking, positive inter-group contact and nonviolence has a legal basis.

2.3.4.3.2. Practice of Co-curricular Programs in Universities

Ownership of non-academic endeavors has been on an ongoing debate since the beginning of 20th century. Even though students took the lead before 1917, Fretwell and his successors in the extra-curriculum movement champion institutionalization (Fretwell, 1931; Siddiky, 2019; Thompson et al., 2019). Hence, it is important to comprehend the optimal institutional practices for reforming HEI's co-curricular orientation in light of changing needs of diverse student body.

Establishment of Student Affairs Wing

Universities are overwhelmed in reconciling dissimilar interests of learners. This calls for division of responsibilities among academic and student services wing. While the former is focused on scholastic achievements, the latter carries out supportive services that complement the academics including promoting diversity (CACUSS, 2019; O'Connor, 2012). This is mainly because, "Student affairs personnel bring a wealth of knowledge about student development, cultural identity, experiential learning, and the perspectives of international students, and can contribute in many ways to student learning outcomes" (Ward, 2017, p.5). This argument is reinforced by Gurin et al. (2002), Hurtado et al. (1999) and Savchits et al. (2017) among others

Clear Structure

The structure of HEIs displays functional units reporting to the president and vice presidents. Student affairs is run under a vice president office and its daily activities are undertaken by a Student Dean office (O'Connor, 2012). This wing generally comprises many units including SU, clubs and associations. Among others, SU is critical in terms of influencing students' perception, empowering clubs and institutional leadership decisions (Ou, Gao & Xu, 2018). However, some clubs like Peace Club may require sustainable collaboration beyond campus (Irene, 2022; United States Institute of Peace, 2017). In such cases, Student Affairs' office shall design a flexible guideline to guide the operations of peace clubs (ADEA, 2022).

Bestowing to the practical guide of ‘Clubs for UNESCO’, it was highlighted that, clubs in schools and HEIs shall be structured different from clubs meant to address the community (UNESCO, 2009). In so doing, the administrative structure of clubs in educational establishments shall be in a way it empower students’ leadership and conflict resolution capacity (Irene, 2022; UNESCO, 2009). Stakeholders like local authorities and community groups (UNESCO, 2009), and non-for-profit organizations (Jasson, 2016) therefore are collaborators.

Empowering the Student Affairs Professionals

Empowerment has two tales- being empowered and empowering others. For student affairs professionals to successfully guide students CoC experience, their proficiency in leadership, communication and particularly multi-cultural matters play a significant role. In line with this argument, Major & Mangope (2014, p.24) stated:

Student affairs professionals are decision-makers and play vital roles in addressing multicultural issues on campuses. Their unique positions call for the integration of multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills into practice.....If a goal of student affairs professionals is to promote a diverse and inclusive environment on campus, how can decisions on programs, goals, and outreach be equitable if individuals in student affairs lack the knowledge, skills and awareness of a diverse student body?

The excerpt above clearly states, the need of building the capacity of student affairs staff so as to realize the personal and inter-group needs of students. Supporting this, Torres, Jones & Renn, (2009) also argued, student affairs professionals are expected to be familiar with various forms of students’ self and group identification processes and how that affect their relationships. Hence, awareness on identity issues (Major & Mangope, 2014) and familiarity with principles of empathy and equality (Dalton & Crosby, 2013; Hurtado et al., 2015) are invaluable for CoCPs success.

Co-curricular interventions necessitate skills on communication, planning, scheduling, logistics, financial intelligence, promotion, monitoring, and evaluation as well as the reporting of significant accomplishments, opportunities, and challenges. Hence, resource management, time management, and coordination skills are mandatory (Dhanmeher, 2014; Stephen et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2019; Ward, 2017). Unfortunately, employment in student affairs office is not considerate of the

higher level of expectations of the office (O'Connor, 2012). Moreover, students' affairs office should be remunerated with sufficient budget to avoid over reliance on donors contributions for empowerment programs (Griffin et al., 2008; Nghia, 2017; Yakaboski & Birnbaum, 2013).

Learning Outcomes and Measures

Consideration of contemporary demands of the institution is mandatory to have justifiable CoCPs with valid outcomes. Hence, student's affairs experts shall be cautious of aligning CoC learning outcomes with diversity related challenges of that particular institution (Ward, 2017). In order to attain these, CoCPs must have clear learning outcomes and measures that clearly depict the developmental aspect it nurtures in students and are aligned with institutional policies (Stirling & Kerr, 2015). In doing so, articulation of specific knowledge, attitude and behavior to be addressed through CoCPs are easily identified, monitored and evaluated. These can be clearly outlined in policy guideline of institutions related to co-curriculum.

Co-curricular Record

Due to broader areas of excellence a student exposed to due to CoC endeavor, it is hard to know which activity or program builds which developmental aspect of a student (Ward, 2017). Hence, a measurable record to share their perceptions and learning is mandatory. Co-curricular Record [CCR] or Co-curricular Transcript [CCT] is an official record of the type of CoC activities, what is learned, changes through engagement, how changes are applied and how to apply it in the future, feedback from CoC coordinators, and certificates obtained (Elias & Drea, 2013; Stirling & Kerr, 2015) are reported. The importance of such record is endorsed by UNESCO (2009).

Stakeholder Integration

Co-curricular activities call for an urge in collaboration of stakeholders. These can be realized through disseminating information related to CoCPs (Elias & Drea, 2013; Ward, 2017) and organizing consultative workshops to discuss the status of CoCPs (Dhanmeher, 2014). Sterling & Kerr (2015, p.3), call such continual communication "purposive co-curricular participation."

Reward System

In order to promote and maintain CoC participation and reap social benefits of CoC engagement in multi-ethnic universities, systematic award schemes are recommended (Dhanmeher, 2014; Kuh et al., 1994; Meier, 2012; Milem et al., 2005; Ward, 2017). The reward approach may vary from oral appreciation and certification to scholarship and monetary incentives. Such stand is supported by researchers from Malaysia (Tey et al., 2009), USA (Lewis, 2016; Ward, 2017; Zúñiga et al., 2007), and Kenya (Munywe, 2014) among others. However, rewarding positive inter-ethnic behavior resulted from CoC engagement is a rare practice.

2.3.5. Co-curricular Programs and Students Inter-ethnic Relations in Ethiopian Universities

A brief literature on the development of CoC learning in Ethiopian HEIs is not extensively available. However, the researcher made an effort to review the development of CoCPs and how they are employed to address the growing concern over IER problems on campuses.

2.3.5.1. The Development of Co-curricular Programs in Ethiopia: A Glimpse

From 1906-1974

Between 1906 and 1950s, different non-classroom activities like football, athletics, artistic engagements and inter-school sport competitions were common in Ethiopian schools (Teshome, 1990). Between 1963 and 1964, the curriculum included “health and safety, morals, agricultural, arts and crafts, home making, physical training and games, and music” as non-academic subjects taught in schools (Ayele, 2007, p.28). However, such non-academic subjects were also undertaken outdoors since the end of 1950s (Teshome, 1990).

In her book entitled *ዳኛው ማነው?* [roughly translated as-*Who is the Judge?*], Tadelech (2020) briefly mentioned the nature of after-class debate and literary activities in high school and Haile Selassie I University [HSIU]¹ in the 1960s and 1970s. In the university, the SU took the initiative in managing ECAs on campus independently and with little assistance from some instructors (Ayele, 2007). Yet, due to strong anti-government thesis reflected in literary works, the

¹ The current Addis Ababa University was called University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) when it was established in 1950. It was renamed Haile Selassie I University in 1961 and adopted its present name in 1962.

administration was keen to censor students' works which students' repudiated (Tadelech, 2020). The activities of the union were therefore banned between 1966 and 1967 (Teshome, 1990).

One of the renowned clubs in HSIU was Creative Arts Center. This center presented literary works of students focused on justice, nationalism and democracy. According to Tadelech (2020), “ምላሴን ተጠልኝ” [roughly translated as- *My Voice My Right*], “ድሃው ይናገር” [roughly translated as- *The Voice of the Poor*], “ኢትዮጵያዊው ማካው?” [roughly translated as- *Who is the real Ethiopian?*] and “መሬት ለራሹ” [roughly translated as *Land to the Tiller*] were prominent. There was also a debate committee that organized debates on sensitive national and international issues (Tadelech, 2020).

From 1974-1991

During Dergue regime, sending students for a two-year literacy program in rural areas was a major strategy to prevent university student unionization (Teshome, 1990). However, no significant development in instructional as well as non-classroom programs are recorded. On a positive note, comparable local term was given to CoC education. The name- *Tegwadagn Timihrtoch* was given for non-academic experiences in 1974's MoE manual on school leadership and management.

In Post-1991 Era

Even though ECA or CoC is not explicitly stated in the 1994 Education and Training Policy [ETP], subsequent Education and Sustainable Development Program documents such as ESDP II (2002), ESDP III (2005), ESDP IV (2010), and ESDP V (2015) acknowledged its role in character development. Research publications on the topic further use the terms interchangeably (Meseret, 2019; Panigrahi & Yadessa, 2012; Rahel, 2012). In post 1991 Ethiopia, the role of CoCPs is pertinent to build students problem solving, leadership and team work skills and produce law-abiding citizens (Panigrahi & Yadessa, 2012; Yoseph, 2019).

Regarding CoC management, lack of institutional awareness and unclear structure (Ayele, 2007), improper implementation of scheduled activities (Mekonnen, 2013; Misrak & Addisu, 2011), undemocratic institutional processes (Yoseph, 2019) and lack of budget (Abebaw, 2014) are major challenges. Moreover, absence of ECA guideline and lack of trained professionals to guide students on how to systematically engage in ECAs are major bottlenecks (Meseret, 2019; Rahel,

2012). Supporting these, Panigrahi & Yadessa (2012) added, lack of reward for CoC participation and absence of proper monitoring and evaluation and feedback to the list. Lack of coordination with relevant stakeholder is also a widely exhibited limitation (Rahel, 2012).

The experiences of university students in the 1960s demonstrated that participation in debate, drama, and literature clubs improved students' critical thinking, public speaking abilities, knowledge of socioeconomic problems, and cross-group interaction (Abera, 2007; Teshome, 1998; Tadelech, 2020;). Given the difficulties in putting CoCPs into practice, it is unclear whether post-1991 university students are benefiting from the platforms in the same way as students did fifty years ago, even though non-classroom endeavors appear to be recognized.

2.3.5.2. Co-curricular Programs and Inter-ethnic Relations of Ethiopian University Students

Prior research on Ethiopian HEIs emphasized on non-academic initiatives to dismantle narrow ethnic perspectives and promote cooperation among diversified student population. Accordingly, CoCPs are regarded to bridge the broken unity among students (Abera, 2010), create awareness on peaceful co-existence and promote tolerance (Abebe, 2015), enhance students' team spirit (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Miressa, 2018), impart peace values (Yoseph, 2019) and transform dysfunctional students' relationship along ethnic lines (Hailemariam, 2016; Zekarias, 2020).

Among the CoC strategies, inter-group dialogues are found to be effective in fostering inter-ethnic contact, heart-felt conversations and motivate students to work together (Misrak & Addisu, 2011; Zekarias, 2020). Particularly, a project entitled 'sustained dialogue' has been implemented in universities like AAU since 2009, Haramaya since 2013, Jimma since 2014 and Ambo, Bahir Dar and Gondar from 2017 onwards (LPI & PDC, 2019). The aim was to enhance the role of universities in championing tolerance and dialogue through supporting students and CoC clubs (LPI, 2014). In order to overcome misunderstandings, mistrust, and ethnic tension, the dialogue sessions come up with engaging educational strategies like coffee ceremonies, panel discussions, games, literary works, and walking for peace.

In Ethiopian public universities, there are different clubs intended to facilitate cross-group relations. Among others, Peace Club is worth mentioning. Even though the AAU Peace Club has been around for a while, የፌዴራል ጉዳዮች ሚኒስቴር [translated as Ministry of Federal Affairs], has

formally supported the club’s establishment in public HEIs as a means of fostering the values of equality, justice, nonviolence, peace and patriotism in 2013. This initiation is furthered by joint guideline of የፌዴራል እና ኦሮሞ አድር ልማት ጉዳዮች ሚኒስቴር [translated as Ministry of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs] and የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር [translated as Ministry of Education] in 2017.

Despite the legal support for Peace Clubs, its effectiveness is compromised due to lack of institutional support (Mekonnen, 2013) and leadership homogeneity (Hailemariam, 2016). While the latter hinders diversified membership and compromise the club’s impartiality, the former affects club’s role in imparting peace values and resolving conflicts. These appear to go against the goals of the Ministry of Federal Affairs (2013), the Ministry of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs, and the Ministry of Education (2017) regarding the goal of Peace Clubs in Higher Education Institutions.

To create a safe environment where students from different ethnic backgrounds can live and learn together in harmony, the topic of national and institutional policies and regulations regarding student diversity and mission statements of HEIs are recognized as crucial starting points for positively influencing students’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This is primarily due to the fact that plans, curriculum, pedagogy and procedures, are based on policies, strategies, laws, and regulations (Hurtado 2005, 2007). In responding to this growing interest, very few local researchers have attempted to analyze the legal frameworks in the HES at different times (*see* Table 2).

Table 2
Past Scholarship on Legal Frameworks within Ethiopian Higher Education System

S/N	Author(s)	Year	Title and type of publication	Scope of the legal framework analysis	Data analysis technique	Findings and conclusion
1	Abebaw	2014	Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Higher Education in Ethiopia: The Case of Bahir Dar University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic plan and senate legislation of Bahir Dar University Student disciplinary guideline 	Thematic analysis	Regulations and disciplinary measures are dominant strategies to manage students

						ethnic diversity challenges
2	Abebaw	2023	Student Ethnic Diversity Management In Ethiopian Universities: Practices, Challenges, And Way Forward (Article)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2019 proclamation, • the 10 year plan and • senate legislations of selected HEIs 	Thematic analysis	The subject of students ethnic diversity is not mainstreamed in planning documents
3	Mesfin & Befekadu	2021	Managing Students' Diversity in Ethiopian Public Universities: Practices and Challenges (Article)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight universities' senate legislations • Universities' students code of conduct • The 2018 education development road map 	Thematic analysis	The codes of conduct stipulated appropriate behavior in diversified campuses and repercussions of breaking them. The 2018 roadmap consider CoCPs as a means to manage students ethnic diversity
4	Mesfin & Ford	2021	Campus climate for diversity and students' sense of belonging in Ethiopian public universities (Article)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' higher education placement guideline, • Eight universities' students' discipline policy and • The 2018 education development road map 	Thematic analysis	Legal papers fail to address students' compositional diversity and related problems
5	Hailemariam	2016	Diversity management and students' cross-border learning Experiences: At selected Ethiopian universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1994 policy and ESDP IV • Three universities' strategic plans, senate legislations and code of conduct • The 2009 and 2009 proclamations, 	Thematic analysis	Legal papers fairly address compositional diversity. Moreover, CoCPs potential for constructive IER is indicated in senate legislations

Note. Summarized by the researcher

As briefly discussed under section 2.2.4.2, the roots of students negative IER are intertwined with political and socio-historical as well as media influence. In the same chapter, it was stipulated, positive IER can be nurtured through changing external and institutional contexts that exacerbate ethnic distancing and promote understanding, togetherness, and living beyond the self (*see* sections 2.2.4.2.1. and 2.3.4.1.). According to Table 10's summary of the five local research papers, a dynamic approach was required to address the increasing challenges posed by students' ethnic diversity. It is sometimes crucial to move beyond topics that dominate academia, such as analyzing how socio-historical and sociopolitical contexts led to negative IER and investigating potential enabling factors to address issues of ethnic diversity among students and assert positive IER within Ethiopian HEIs' legal frameworks.

The legal documents analyzed by five researchers include the three higher education system proclamations, the 2018 roadmap, the recent 10 year strategic plan of HEIs, strategic plan of institutions, higher education placement guideline, students' code of conduct, senate legislations, the 1994 policy and ESDP IV (*see* Table 2). However, it is to be noted that not all documents are used across the research papers. Some documents like university legislations, the 2018 roadmap and disciplinary manuals are analyzed frequently while the 1994 policy along the implementation strategies, proclamations, and the 10 year plan are discussed by particular researcher. Moreover, thematic analysis is the dominant document analysis strategy employed across researchers.

As indicated under chapter three (*see* section 3.6.1.), the current research selected around 13 documents for analysis. Points of departure from past scholarship is inclusion of ESDPII (2002), ESDPIII (2005), ESDPIV (2010), ESDPV (2015), and peace club guidelines of AAU, AU and UoG. Additionally, the analytical method used in this study is content analysis, which helps in pointing out the existence of specific words or concepts as well as quantifying and analyzing their occurrence, meanings, and relationships (Creswell, 2014). Although the frequency of terms and concepts related to CoCPs, student ethnic diversity, and positive IER will demonstrate the degree of focus placed on these determining factors in diverse universities, knowing their contextual meanings will have significant practical implications.

2.4. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Inter-ethnic relations are overwhelmed by competing interests. Hence, transcending such competition and form relationship based on mutual respect is challenging (Jenkins, 2008; Spencer, 2006). Similarly, university students, who came from a volatile environment are likely enter in to competitive and tense relations due to historical, socio-economic and political differences (Torres et al., 2009). A society can sustain when members fight against injustices in unison. An intervention in such manner therefore should help students minimize or transcend long standing entanglements and stand together to fight any form of injustices (Hurtado et al., 1999).

Co-curriculum, underpinned by experiential thesis, provides interactive space to share experiences, understand things in a new manner, evaluate what they know and apply what they learn (Elias & Drea, 2013; Hedberg & Stevenson, 2014; McFadden & Smeaton, 2017; Stirling & Kerr, 2015). These can lead to cognitive, affective and behavioral changes that can subsequently result in positive IER (Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2015; Kuh et al., 1994; Hurtado et al., 1999).

Diversity informed CoCPs are effective in minimizing inter-ethnic differences, promoting non-violence and standing for social justice in general and out-groups rights in particular (*see* sections 2.3.4.1.). The discussion further revealed- inter-ethnic contact through CoC platforms is an important but insufficient criteria to overcome out-group prejudice and realize positive IGR. Hence, intentionally designed interactional and experimental methodologies are critical to sustain the relation and inform cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral shift (Irene, 2022; Munywe, 2014). Furthermore, institutional support (*see* section 2.3.4.2.2.) plays a role in the whole process

Among other difficulties, problems of IER have been significant in Ethiopia's public HEIs. The problem ranges from minimizing frequent contact with out-group member to avoiding any form of conversation, hostility and deadly violence (Abebaw, 2014, 2019; Abera, 2010; CARD, 2020; Demewoz, 2012; Deslaegn & Seyoum, 2023; Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2020). What exacerbates the tension is lack of well-established forums for inter-ethnic interaction (*see* sections 1.2, 2.2.4.2.2 and 2.3.5.2) and instability at the political and communal levels (*see* section 2.2.4.2.2.).

A university environment that replicates students' home environment reinforces homogeneity and impede IER (Allport, 1954; Gurin et al, 2002). The fact that in-group affiliation is sought among

Ethiopian public university students is therefore a sign of creating home-like climate. Hence, Ethiopian public universities need more engaging platforms where students interact, interrogate existing belief systems, negotiate differences, solve problems amicably amongst themselves and fight inter-group biases and institutional and societal injustices jointly (Miressa, 2018; Tesfaye, 2012). For this, a sound CoC intervention that facilitate inter-ethnic interaction, cross group and in-group dialogue and group problem solving is required (*see* discussion 2.3.4.1).

Hence, the kind of theoretical framework suitable for this study shall be based on the following premises: (1) contact among inter-ethnic students can change inter-ethnic dynamics; (2) a less structured contact situation create a room for positive IER; (3) cognitive, affective and behavioral changes are possible through interactive methodologies to result positive IER; (4) institutional commitment is mandatory to realize positive IER; and (5) external factors like instability at social level can affect IER of students. Therefore, an intervention must help students cope with these external pressures.

2.4.1. Inter-Group Relation Theories

There are a number of theories that deal with IGR. Among these, realistic conflict theory [RCT] (Sherif, 1966), social identity theory [SIT] (Tajfel & Turner (1979), de-categorization approach (Brewer & Miller, 1984), re-categorization approach (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005) and contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) are notable. Out of these, realistic conflict theory and social identity theory are mainly focused on how prejudice exists. On the other hand, de-categorization and re-categorization models deal with how to transcend in-group vs. out-group categorization. While the former argues on how to conceive one self as a separate individual from an in-group (Brewer & Miller, 1984), the latter is all about forming a super-ordinate group that fade in-group values into insignificance (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005).

The central thesis of RCT is that, in-group-out-group hostility arise due to competition for resources (Sherif, 1966, as cited in Bizumic, 2012). Hence, establishing interdependent goal seems a hard to hit target in the absence of fair distribution of resources (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). On the other hand, SIT is criticized as it is overwhelmed by out-group fear and fails to outline conditions and processes of improved IGR (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Education about out-groups, the

cultivation of positive feelings toward them, and the use of information and feelings to direct IER are all necessary for transcending group boundaries (Dovidio et al., 2005). Such analysis is however lacking in de-categorization and re-categorization theories. Allport (1954) even argues that, abolishing social categorization is impossible as human beings natural order depends on it. Hence, a theory that seem to fill these gaps and improve IGR with special emphasis to cognitive, affective and behavioral processes of contact was needed.

2.4.1.1. Contact Hypothesis

Scientists in social science field have long been engaged in investigation of mechanisms to alleviate inter-ethnic conflicts. For Allport (1963, p.33) inter-ethnic problems “are group phenomena, to be understood only in terms of group theory and alleviated only through group action.” He therefore suggests a means to improve inter-group relations through contact hypothesis. Accordingly, Allport (1954) argues, face-to-face inter-group contact improves negative inter-group understanding, emotions and behavior. He further highlighted equal status, common goal, inter-group cooperation and institutional support as prerequisites for positive inter-racial and inter-ethnic contact.

Equal Status refers to absence of superior and subordinate categorization among ethnically diverse group. When in-group and out-group members believe they obtain equal status, inter-group anxiety decreases (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). This can be realized through numerical representation and creating a space for equality (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Working together towards something that supercede individual interests is attributed to having *common goal* (Allport, 1954; Koriakina, 2019). This calls for *inter-dependent* efforts of ethnically diversified groups (Allport, 1954; Bizumic, 2012). Positive IER also necessities endorsement by *authorities, institutions, or laws* (Allport, 1954). This model has received considerable empirical support (Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2015; Engberg, 2004; Gurin et al., 2002; Lopez, 2004; Tesfaye, 2012) over the years.

2.4.1.2. Improved Version of Contact Hypothesis

Thomas Pettigrew, Allport’s student, took the lead in refining the contact model through examining positive as well as negative forces of IER. His works are also backed by researchers in

varied contexts. Accordingly, improvements are made on the following points: contexts of contact, processes of contact, issues of generalizability, and the roles of societal forces

Contexts of Contact

The four essential conditions set by Allport for optimal inter-group contact have been tested to determine the direction of IER. Among the four optimal conditions of Allport, institutional support are elaborated to incorporate non-competitive environment (Chang et al., 2004; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2011), non-violent institutional approaches to belligerence, proportional representation of ethnic groups (Gurin et al, 2002), the will to establish platforms for diversity related interaction (Dawson & Cuevas, 2020) and rewarding changing behavior (Pettigrew, 1998). Such elasticity makes it possible to analyze the legal arrangements' suitability for enhanced IER (Alrwad & Alrfooh, 2014; Hurtado et al., 1999; Hassan & Ageed, 2015).

Processes of contact

According to Pettigrew (1998), Allport's original thesis concentrated on *when* intergroup contact results in positive change, but fails to address mediating forces that explain *how* and *why* this occurs. Thus, three interrelated processes namely- learning about the out-group, changing behavior and generating affective ties re proposed. Accurate analysis of the out-group is possibly the outcome of *learning* about it (Allport, 1954). This helps group members in identifying both commonalities and differences (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Learning over time likely *modify behavior* which is explained by acceptance of out-groups that can be a precursor to minimize negative *affective ties* like inter-ethnic anxiety and promote empathy and perspective taking (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017).

Reformists of the original Allportain view criticized Allport's too much focus on out-groups. Therefore, they contend that positive IGR will only occur when the intergroup contact process allows in-group members to reflect on what they have learned from out-group contact, exchange viewpoints on long-standing misconceptions, and pledge to change (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Pettigrew et al., 2011). Such afresh view of out-groups is termed as 'in-group reappraisal' (Pettigrew, 1998). This makes positive changes to be applied outside of direct contact situations (Dovidio et al., 2011; Verkuyten et al., 2010). In-group reappraisal can complement

IGD. Such experiential endeavors foster deeper understanding of inter-ethnic divisions are effective tools to generate emotional ties (Densonn & Chang, 2015; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In these processes, members understand *why* they interact (Pettigrew, 1998).

Contact Platform

The basic premise of contact hypothesis is improvement of IER through promoting inter-ethnic contact. Hence, the nature of contact platform plays a determinant role. The features that determine the suitability of the contact platform for positive cross-group relations include diversified composition (Dawson & Cuevas, 2020; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), face-to-face contact (Allport, 1954; Savchits et al., 2018), and regular and voluntary contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Furthermore, since language has emerged as a key identity marker in ethnically diverse HEIs, using common vernacular on the contact platform has promoted a positive IER (Belford, 2017; Nakamura, 2013; Tey et al., 2009).

Larger Societal Forces

Wider societal conflict and hostility, as well as political violence, can play an immense role in preventing stronger IER or all forms of inter-ethnic contact. Pettigrew (1998, p. 78) argues, “This is difficult to achieve when a struggle over power fuels the larger intergroup conflict.” In his later writings, he propose the need to give relatively equal weight to societal forces like Allport’s four conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008). However, Allport (1954) propose the possibility to maintain equal status in smaller circles despite group’s actual position in the society. His standpoint received empirical support (Al Majali & Alkhaaldi, 2020; Czepil et al., 2019; Lewis, 2016). Hence, the presence of conflict is considered among the contextual variables in addition to Allport’s four conditions in this study.

2.4.2. Learning Models

Learning theory tell us how learning occurs. It gives educators direction and clarity so they may adapt their teaching approach to suit the needs of diverse student group (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Hence, a learning theory employed shall correspond to students learning needs. Resonating with the problem statement of the current study, it is possible to iterate, students in public campuses need to establish structured inter-ethnic contact. For the contact to be meaningful, learning tools

that can teach students about out-groups and offering alternative perspectives on IER (cognitive processes), foster an environment in which students feel comfortable sharing their emotions and growing in empathy for others (affective process), and assist students acting in a way that is harmonious with out-groups (behavioral process) are crucial (*see* sections 2.2.4.2.1 and 2.3.4.1.)

A learning model suitable for this study therefore shall recognize learning as an interplay of cognitive, affective and behavioral processes and this can be realized through interactive and experiential teaching strategies. Rooted in experience thesis of Dewey (1902) and Bobbitt (1918), experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and Kuh's (2008) high impact practices model seem to provide systematic explanation on how learning occurs through CoCPs. Kolb (1984) proposed obtaining first-hand experience through purposive engagement in a well-planned and structured educational platform enable students to know what they want, why they do what they do and how to get the most out of their experience.

The four learning cycles in Kolb's (1984) model are: concrete experience (students encounter a new experience or reinterpret old experience in a new way), reflective observation (students reflect on the new experience based on their existing knowledge), abstract conceptualization (students develop new idea based on their experience) and active experimentation (students apply their new or modified idea in to practice). These imply there is a room for direct experience, sharing feelings, challenging old assumptions, and new actions (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). However, they theory was largely tied to academic stream and how it can be useful to multi-ethnic students is not sufficiently discussed. This gap seem to be filled by George Kuh's high impact practices model.

2.4.2.1. High Impact Practices Model

Building on Kolb's experiential learning theory, George Kuh (2008) developed techniques to use experiential learning in a way that might have a greater influence on HEI students. In order to be ready for the challenges of the 21st century, Kuh (2012) maintained that university students must learn about cultural diversity among other things through various ways. He contend, meaningful learning experience in HEIs will not be comprehensive unless students are taught to discuss on sensitive topics or as he prefer to call it "difficult differences" like ethnic issues (Kuh, 2008).

While academic and non-academic learning strategies are proposed by Kuh for students to fit in a diverse learning environment, Sterling & Kerr (2015, p.3) contend, “his work in enhancing student life, supportive campus environments, and the respective programming therein is analogous to the co-curricular student life programs.” According to Kuh and his colleagues’ 1994 publication, classrooms are merely artificial barriers that must be broken down by innovative means if student affairs administrators are to foster genuine connections among diverse students. As a result, he expanded on Bobbitt’s (1918) and Locke’s (1889) arguments regarding the importance of relaxed non-classroom learning for better IER. He further acknowledged CoCPs as “realistic” educational practices (Kuh, 2008, p.2) to prepare students for the interconnected world.

Despite Kuh’s openness regarding ‘how should students learn about diversity-related challenges through CoC, he constantly highlighted the necessity of making CoC learning strategies dynamic (Kuh, 2008). He also stressed, discussion on issues of diversity requires a safe space where students can remain open to new standpoints, self-reflective, and changing examine long-standing assumptions. Dialogue, as a non-academic learning strategy, can create such an open, contemplative and inclusive space (Allport, 1954; Diaz & Gilchrist, 2010; Freire & Shor, 1987; Hurtado et al., 1999). Kuh (2008) contend, CoC strategies to address diversity challenges shall include intensive face-to-face cross-group interaction, reflection, interrogating existing world views, synthesizing knowledge, and apply the knowledge. These appear to reinforce group dialogue analogy, an effective CoC strategy in addressing IER problems (Zúñiga et al., 2007).

According to Diaz & Gilchrist (2010, p. 2), dialogue on campus “enables the inclusive and respectful public decision-making on which a diverse and deliberative democracy rests.” Students therefore get an opportunity to interact regularly, examine inter-ethnic anxiety thereby transforming ‘we vs. them’ dichotomy (Diaz & Gilchrist, 2010; Zúñiga et al., 2007). These are realized by students reflecting together on what they know and don’t know (Freire & Shor, 1987) about out-groups and IER dynamics. Kuh’s (2008) model is focused on critical reflection of what students know, the need to learn what they do not know, mediating emotions, and action for better reality, it leaves a room for dialogue as a CoC learning strategy.

2.5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual frame work of this study followed the objectives of the study and variables from empirical researches and theories on IER and CoC learning practices in diversified HEIs. The objective of this study is to examine the role of CoCPs to students' IER in selected Ethiopian public HEIs. Empirical studies lay out optimal conditions under which CoC engagement contributes for positive IER. The revised version of contact hypothesis classify these requirements in three: conditions related to contact platform and processes and conditions of contact (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006, 2008). Hence; group diversity and regular, direct and voluntary contact, and employment of common vernacular are attributed to the nature of contact platform.

In this study, Peace Club serves as a CoC platform in which students come together and establish cross-ethnic contact. Even though rigorous research is scant on Peace Clubs in Ethiopian HEI context, the fact that club activities entail inter-ethnic harmony goals (Abebaw, 2014; Mekonnen, 2013; Ministry of Federal Affairs, 2013; Yoseph, 2019), voluntary participation (Hailemariam, 2016), apply interactive methodologies (LPI & PDC, 2019) and ruled under institutional norms (Abebaw, 2014; Ayele, 2007) establish premise to consider the club as contact platform.

The negative IER of students in Ethiopian multi-ethnic universities (*see* section 2.2.4.2.2.) is explained through accepting and disseminating rumors, absence of/limited discussion, anxiety, , recrimination, and pejorative labeling that resulted intra-group friendship and abuse (Abera, 2010; Mesfin & Ford, 2021; Miressa, 2018; Missaye, 2014; Seid, 2021). These show, negative IER prevails due to lack of contact, concrete information, affection and positive out-group behavior. Hence, the kind of intervention introduced in such setting shall focus on the process of interaction beyond contact (Gurin et al., 2002). This assertion seems to concede with Pettigrew's (1998) notion of 'inter-related processes' in IER or mediating variables. Dialogue seems to be a learning tool to realize positive IER through altering cognitive, affective and behavioral processes of students (Diaz & Gilchrist, 2010; Freire & Shor, 1987; Kuh, 2008; Zúñiga et al., 2007).

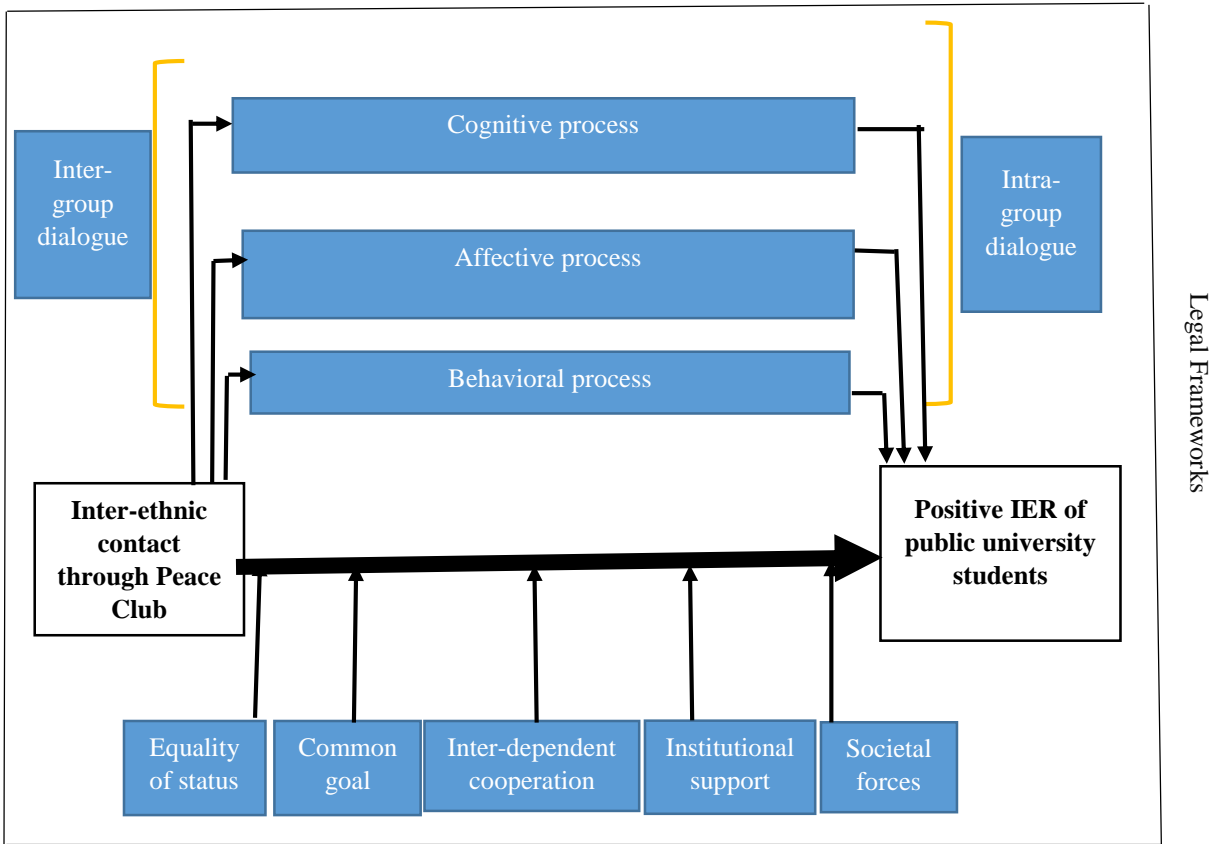
In HEIs context, Allport (1954) highlighted, increasing the frequency of contact among groups through playing, eating, sharing residence halls and doing cooperative projects contributed for

positive IGR. Among other institutional platforms, CoCPs are found to be effective in exposing students to diverse knowledge, values, customs and experience. The fact that CoCPs have goals of inter-group harmony (Denson, 2009; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015) and call for collaboration of members (Kuh, 2008; Munywe, 2014; Savchits et al., 2018) showed there is a room for equality of status, achieving common goal through cross-group cooperation and institutional support is necessary to realize positive IGR. These conditions seem to concede Allport's optimal or Pettigrew's facilitative conditions. These variables are coined as moderating variables.

Exposure to volatile environment is likely to reinforce prejudice. However, mediating forces and Allport's four conditions are found to overwhelm the role of societal factors and create positive IGR (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017; Chang et al., 2004). Another indication that quality contact matters more than conditional factors is the fact that participation in CoCPs reduced negative perceptions of out-groups in a volatile political and communal environment (Denson, 2009; Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Besides, voluntary engagement in CoCPs (Pettigrew & Tropp's (2011) is a factor for participants to look beyond existential situation. However, societal issues are examined as moderating forces in this study because their relevance in creating negative IER of Ethiopian university students is underlined in many studies (*see* section 2.2.4.2.2.).

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Note. Developed by the Researcher

2.6. Summary of Gaps in the Literature

In this chapter, two major themes: CoC learning and IER in ethnically diversified HEIS are reviewed. Co-curricular programs are generally conceptualized as non-classroom, non-credit, regular, voluntary and supervised programs and activities undertaken in a relaxed setting to help campus students come together, know about out-groups and differentiated world views, reflect on what they have learned, create innovative ideas to transcend challenges to IER and apply what they know so as to realize positive IER. On the other hand IER is a group relationship among diversified student population that is explained either favorably or unfavorably. With these in mind, the current research attempted to examine the role of CoCPs in informing students IER in selected public unviersities in Ethiopia.

Most studies undertaken locally and abroad on issues of students IER are focused on the causes, processes and consequences. In so doing, negative IER of university students is largely associated with historical animosity among ethnic groups students represent, politicization of ethnicity, socio-economic deprivation, lack of institutional autonomy, impartiality at institutional level, family and peer pressure and biased media reporting. Due to these, ethnic distancing and prejudice are prevalent that limit students inter-group contact. Furthermore, the issue is made worse by the absence of democratic spaces where students can interact, exchange ideas and feelings, and work together to create a better future while also gaining credible information about socio-historical and political processes that shape IER. Universities thus turn into battlefields where ‘we vs. them’ division endures. There are however students who overlook ethnic identity and manage to establish positive IER with out-groups.

The research problems and gaps identified in the literatures are: (a) inter-group relationship of students is the backbone for HEIs success but there is problem in attaining it, (b) most studies at local level are focused on negative IER experiences of students (c) ineffective management of students IER is resulting distancing, hostility and direct violence which affects the teaching and learning processes and university’s image, (d) formal curriculum not effective in addressing IER problems of students and need to be complemented by CoC learning, and (e) local studies fall short of examining the cognitive, affective and behavioural shift up on students due to CoC learning, and (f) most studies on IER are studied qualitatively mostly through interview. Although proponents of the improved contact hypothesis strongly encourage it, a mixed method approach that integrates a variety of data collection tools such as questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis is a missing piece.

Moreover, (g) to the best knowledge of the researcher, a study that address such a relationship in consideration of improved IGR theory (considering both mediating and moderating forces) as well as CoC learning to ensure changes at cognitive, affective and behavioural changes of students seem hard to find in the wider literature in diversified HEIs context (h) improved version of contact hypothesis and high impact practices model have never been used jointly to examine the role of CoCPs towards improved students IER. Within the framework of the stated gaps, three research questions were developed and two sets of hypotheses formed.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1. Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

It is no brainer, ontology and epistemology go hand in hand. As the former deals with the nature of social reality, the latter explains how that reality can be known (Blaikie, 2010). Among the many ontological assumptions, depth realist ontology is chosen to explain the reality for this study. Huang (2022) stated that, depth realist ontology has “positivist and constructivist ancestry” which makes reality a product of objective observation as well as direct experience (p.57). Accordingly, it is necessary to see the patterns at the surface and below or behind the surface to reach to explain ‘what is’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Blaikie, 2010).

In the current study, literatures hypothesized, engagement in CoCPs can improve students’ IER under certain conditions (*see* sections 2.2.3, 2.2.4.2.1., 2.3.4. and 2.3.5.2.). Hence, the queries regarding the type of CoC package that results in positive IER and how and why this works is very important to have a comprehensive understanding of how CoCPs contributes for positive IER of university students. In this case, reality is not just what is surfaced and observed but rooted in underlying structures and mechanisms that work under peculiar conditions. Hence, analysis of how and why a phenomenon occurs under certain conditions implies reality in the current research context, as Blaikie (2010) argued has “stratified and has ontological depth” (p.93).

The query of ‘how can we know such complex reality’ is the focus of epistemology. Like ontology, epistemology has many branches. A branch that goes hand in hand with realist ontology is neo-realism epistemology. This approach states, a reality that has ontological depth can be known through analyzing underlying structures and mechanisms (Blaikie, 2010). Therefore, in order to fully comprehend an observed pattern, empirical data and firsthand experience are required (Huang, 2022) to interrogate structures and mechanisms.

3.2. Research Paradigm

In this research, the objective is to analyze how engagement in CoCPs contributed for inter-ethnic relations of students. The discussion in chapter two and the conceptual model portrays, different factors are interplayed between the independent and dependent variables. The researcher believed such variables are hard to grasp unless investigated through employing variety of research techniques. In discussing depth realist ontology and neo-realism epistemology, Blaikie (2010) argued that, a researcher shall go to a great length to verify whether the tentative causal models are real models through employing descriptive, exploratory and explanatory techniques. This calls for a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning (Johnson, 2014). Since pragmatism paradigm is not confined to a certain ontological notion and see reality beyond classical positivist or constructivist notion (Creswell, 2014), it makes it a viable research paradigm for this study.

As a philosophical standpoint, pragmatism assumes what works in a certain context may fail to give similar results in another context (Creswell, 2012). This needs “a dynamic back-and-forth listening to multiple perspectives and multiple forms of data” (Jonson, 2014, p.36). This is particularly important in studying issues of diversity like inter-ethnic relations because the layers that explain the nature of IER are dynamic and having a full picture of what is happening is less likely without hearing multiple perspectives. The reason behind the idea of adopting a variety of research methods to understand how contact informs positive IER (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), also stem from pragmatic views.

Pragmatism is problem focused and anticipate for change (Creswell (2014; Johnson, 2014). Since the study’s goal is to examine the relationship between CoCPs and students’ IER using quantitative data and experiences of students, instructors, and management staff, there is a chance to produce reliable information that could serve as a central prelude to the development of positive IER relationships in Ethiopian public HEIs. The fact that this study attempted to research alternative ways to change the negative IER dynamics in public campuses demonstrated its pragmatist inclination.

3.3. Research Method and Research Design

Pragmatists assume the nature of social reality is negotiated, debated and interpreted in light of its usefulness in new unpredictable situation (Creswell, 2014). This allows pragmatist researcher to adopt objective and subjective approaches to draw singular and multiple realities (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). The notion of ‘starified reality’ of Blaikie’s (2010), that implies the explanation of different layers of mechanisms, therefore justifies the adopting of different methods of arriving to what is real. Such flexibility allowed the researcher to combine the positives of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Hence, mixed research methods quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed in the current study.

With respect to research design, the current study employed convergent parallel mixed-methods design that allows collection of qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously (Balakie, 2010). The stated design was employed in this study for three reasons: First, the IER issue is delicate, and it can be difficult to find trustworthy information about it by relying on a single data, especially given Ethiopia's current unstable political climate. Therefore, it is necessary to entertain quantitative and qualitative data in order to ensure a thorough understanding of a phenomenon. Convergent parallel design support such style by enabling the independent collection of both numerical and non-numerical data and by comparing the outcomes (Blaikie, 2010; Creswell, 2012; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012).

Second, this study aimed at undertaking content analysis in analyzing Ethiopian higher education legislative documents. This was undertaken through counting words/concepts or themes relevant to the objectives of the study. Convergent parallel design quantifies qualitative data through coding (Gay et al., 2012). Therefore, coding texts during document analysis is justified when using this mixed methods approach (*see* section 3.9.2). Third, convergent parallel design is cost-effective in dispersed research sites (Mesfin & Ford, 2021). Since AAU, AU and UoG are located in different regions of the country, concurrently collecting quantitative and qualitative data allowed the researcher to accomplish more in a limited time frame.

3.4. Research Sites

In this study, the researcher chose, AAU from city administrative structure and AU from Oromia and UoG from Amhara regions out of the many HEIs that experienced ethnic related violence in previous years. The reason behind site selection is briefly discussed hereunder.

3.4.1. Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa University is the first ever universally acknowledged HEI in Ethiopia. It was established in 1950 under the name University College of Addis Ababa, changed its name to Haile Selassie I University in 1962, and received its current designation, Addis Ababa University, in 1975 (Ayele, 2007; Hailemariam, 2016). This university is targeted in this study for four reasons.

Firstly, it has been a home of student movement with violent nature over the years (Abebaw, 2023; Vaughan, 2003). Secondly, ethnic related violence has been manifested implicitly and explicitly within the university (Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023; Missaye, 2014). Thirdly, there are recorded initiations with respect to CoC that aim to address IER issues (Hailemariam, 2016; LPI & PDC, 2019; Mekonnen, 2013; Yoseph, 2019). Fourthly, its leaders believed that AAU is a model for bringing new practices to the HES, and other universities emulate it (LPI, 2014).

3.4.2. Ambo University

Ambo University went through numerous stages before acquiring its present name and status. Founded in 1946 as one of the country's oldest agricultural schools, it changed its name to Ambo Agriculture and Forestry Secondary School in 1958, then to Ambo Institute of Agriculture in 1967 and it was promoted to junior college in 1974 and then to Ambo College of Agriculture in 1992 (AU, 2019). It began offering undergraduate courses under the names Jimma University-Ambo College in 2003, and in 2008 it was granted university college status (AU, 2019). A year later, it was given its present name, Ambo University, as a second-generation university in Oromia regional state (AU, 2019).

This institution is selected for three reasons. Firstly, it has been a site of ethnic related violent incidents repeatedly (CARD, 2020). Secondly, compared to other universities which are located in various parts of the Oromiya region and are plagued by security issues, Ambo is the closest

university to Addis Ababa and is relatively stable during the time of data collection. Thirdly, there are evidences that practices of inter-group dialogue through Peace Clubs is apparent (LPI & PDC, 2019). This makes it a good target to examine the practice of CoC and how it affects IER of students.

3.4.3. University of Gondar

University of Gondar is among the oldest and reputable HEIs. It started its journey in 1954 as a Public Health College and Training Center and changed its name to Gondar College of Medical Sciences in 1988 (UoG, 2023). The university got its present name and autonomy in 2004 (UoG, 2013). This historical university has become a target of this study for three reasons.

Firstly, it was a pioneer in establishing the scheme ‘One Student for One Family’ on December 2019 with the aim to make new entrants from different culture feel at home and strengthen the bond between students and the local community in Gondar city (UoG, 2019). As a result, there might be a best practice that other HEIs could share and adopt. Secondly, there have been waves of conflicts there, especially in 2020, which has forced the administration to take drastic measures like suspending students, faculty, administrative staff, and medical personnel (CARD, 2020). Thirdly, like AAU and AU, UoG was part of non-classroom dialogue project which aims to reinforce students’ inter-ethnic relations (LPI & PDC, 2019).

3.5. Population and Sampling

This section discussed the research population and the sampling techniques applied in this study.

3.5.1. Population

The populations of the study were regular under graduate students, academic and administrative staff and management team. Out of these, students took the largest share. Data on students’ population was gathered from registrar offices of targeted three universities. Accordingly, 2776 students in Addis Ababa (1828 male and 948 female), 1136 students in Ambo (845 male and 291 female), and 1356 (977 male and 379 female) students in Gondar universities are registered in regular undergraduate program of 2021/2022 academic year (*see* Table 3). In sum, 5268 students were enrolled in undergraduate program across seven colleges/institutes and 19 departments.

Table 3

Student Population in AAU, AU and UoG

College/ Institute / School	Dep.	AAU				AU				UoG				Total
		2 nd yr.	3 rd yr.	4 th yr.	5 th yr.	2 nd yr.	3 rd yr.	4 th yr.	5 th yr.	2 nd yr.	3 rd yr.	4 th yr.	5 th yr.	
CEBS/ IEBS/ CoE	Psychology	9M 21F	16 M 11F	-	-	14 M 2F	8M 5F	-	-	-	12 M 7F			59M 46F
	Sociology	5M 8F	17 M 8F	-	-	18 M 7F	17 M 6F	-	-	-	12 M 14F	-	-	69M 43F
CoSS/ CoSSH	Social Work	35M 31F	63 M 35F	-	-	24 M 6F	14 M 2F	-	-	-	12 M 14F	-	-	148 M 88F
	Broadcast Journalism/Jo urnalism and Communicati on	-	21 M 17F	-	-	11 M 4F	14 M 3F	-	-	-	10 M 14F	-	-	56M 38F
SoL	Law	-	25 M 23F	32M 30F	32 M 26F	22 M 16F	29 M 11F	45 M 17F	27 M 8F	41 M 9F	60 M 23F	51 M 29 F	62 M 27F	426 M 219 F
CBE	Economics	124M 36F	119 M 31F	-	-	27 M 13F	22 M 10F	-	-	-	30 M 13F	-	-	322 M 103 F
	PADM	55M 86F	47 M 44F	-	-	16 M 10F	12 M 7F	-	-	-	15 M 9F	-	-	145 M 156 F

Inter-Group Contact through Peace Clubs in Shaping Positive Inter-Ethnic Relations: Ethiopian Public University Students in Focus

	<i>Management</i>	100M 46F	133 M 116 F	-	-	26 M 10F	25 M 6F	-	-	-	20 M 25F	-	-	304 M 203 F
	<i>Accounting and Finance</i>	100M 68F	96 M 42F	-	-	21 M 6F	23 M 8F	-	-	-	23 M 25F	-	-	263 M 149 F
CoNCS	<i>Biology</i>	37M 66F	39 M 0F	-	-	27 M 8F	15 M 4F	-	-	15 M 13F	31 M 16F	-	-	164 M 107 F
	<i>Chemistry</i>	25M 21F	14 M 7F	-	-	29 M 1F	16 M 4F	-	-	22 M 3F	34 M 7F	-	-	140 M 43F
	<i>Physics</i>	17M 2F	9M 1F	-	-	7M 0F	7M 2F	-	-	25 M 0F	22 M 3F	-	-	87M 8F
	<i>Mathematics</i>	9M 5F	16 M 8F			13 M 1F	8M 4F	-	-	26 M 0F	27 M 3F	-	-	99M 21F
	<i>Statistics</i>	24M 7F	14 M 4F	-	-	13 M 0F	17 M 6F	-	-	20 M 6F	24 M 14F	-	-	112 M 37F
	<i>Sport Science</i>	32M 14F	15 M 5F	-	-	21 M 8F	7M 5F	-	-	21 M 7F	26 M 6F	-	-	122 M 45F
	<i>Information science</i>	-	4M 1F	47M 7F			12 M 10F	9M 5F	30 M 24F			32 M 15F		
IoT	<i>Electrical and Computer Engineering</i>	134M 34F	78 M 13F	-	-	16 M 3F	13 M 0F	-	-	-	98 M 23F		-	339 M 73F

	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	81M 5F	29 M 1F	35M 6F	55 M 13F	13 M 1F	9M 2F	-	-	-	91 M 12F	7 M 4F	-	320 M 44F
	<i>Civil Engineering</i>	-	0M 18F	20M 10F	65 M 21F	29 M 4F	15 M 3F	44 M 5F	60 M 34 F	-	76 M 28F	32 M 10 F	-	341 M 133 F
Total		787M 450F	755 M 385 F	134 M 53F	152 M 60F	359 M 110 F	280 M 93F	119 M 46F	87 M 42 F	170 M 38F	655 M 271 F	90 M 43 F	62 M 27F	3650 M 1618 F

Note. Data obtained from Registrars’ office from AAU, AU and UoG. Summarized by the researcher. * The blue shade denotes students whose enrollment year was comparable across AAU, AU, and UoG.

3.5.2. Sampling Techniques

The sampling techniques are discussed separately for the quantitative and qualitative study.

3.5.2.1. Sampling Techniques for the Quantitative Study

Prior to determining the number of samples from the student population, efforts were made to identify the number of regular undergraduate students within departments (*see* Table 2).] The researcher had to take into account certain developments that have an impact on the sampling process in order to move forward. This is primarily because, following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, classes were disrupted and programs were not operating as usual; certain departments may be operational in certain universities but unavailable in others; and the year of enrollment for students varies amongst universities at the time of data collection.

1. A certain department can be housed in different college, institute or school. For instance, EDPM department is under CEBS in AAU while it is under IEBS in AU and CoE in UoG.
2. The level of students’ enrollment varies in each university. For example, only third-year students may be available at one university, while second and third-year students are

available at another. For example, EDPM students at AAU were in their second year, whereas they are in their second and third years at AU and in their third year at UoG. Students in EDPM were excluded as a result of this discrepancy. There were no first-year students available at any of the three universities at the time of data collection. The three universities appear to have this in common.

3. The researcher also discovered that some universities do not offer programs in certain departments. For instance, only AAU and AU offered students studying Political Science and International Relations and Oromifa Language; only AAU and UoG offered students studying Amharic Language; and only UoG offered undergraduate-level courses like Social Anthropology. In terms of technology-related departments, UoG does not have departments such as Electrical and Computer Engineering with specializations in computers, communication, control, power, electronics, and industrial computers. In the same way, mechanical engineering departments that specialize in design, manufacturing motors, thermal engineering, and industrial engineering are available at AU and UoG but not at AAU. As a result, departments that are unavailable in the three universities are excluded.

The researcher tried to choose departments that are available within the three universities and students who are enrolled in the respective departments in similar years, taking into account the information previously described. As a result, there were 1,549, 647, and 1,295 students in AAU, AU, and UoG, respectively, instead of the original 2,776, 1,136, and 1,356 students in AAU, AU, and UoG, for a total of 3,491. Consequently, students with comparable years of enrollment across all departments offered by the three HEIs make up the population list (Table 4, fourth column).

To determine the sample size for student population, rule of thumb is applied using the 1970's Krejcie and Morgan table. This table is used because it was widely applicable in educational and social science research. The table displays proposed sample figures on predetermined confidence level and margin of error. Accordingly, a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error are taken in consideration. Unfortunately, in Krejcie and Morgan table (1970) the sample size for a population of 3,491 was not clearly stated. For 3,000 population size, recommended sample size

is 341 and for 3,500, the recommended sample is 346. The researcher selected 346 samples, the highest number, because the 3,491 population size falls between 341 and 346 sample.

Then after, proportional stratified sampling technique was employed to obtain a gross number of respondents from each university. This technique is deemed appropriate because students' population is dispersed in three universities and to address the teaching departments within universities. Besides; proportional stratified sampling helps to make the strata sample size proportional to population sample size, reduces sampling bias and ensure representativeness (Gay et al., 2012). Accordingly, AAU students account for 44% of the population, while AU and UoG students account for 19% and 37% respectively. Thus, a similar ratio was chosen to include 152 students from AAU, 65 from AU, and 128 from UoG (*see* Table 4, sixth column).

Table 4

Proportional Allocation of Students' Sample population

Stratum	Study population (a)	Students who are enrolled in different years across universities (b)	Stratum population c= (a-b)	Stratum weight (in %) $\left(\frac{\text{Stratum population}}{\text{Total Stratum population}} \right)$	Proportional sample allocation {Stratum weight × n} (Approximate value)
AAU	2776	1227	1549	44.0	152
AU	1136	489	647	19.0	66
UoG	1356	61	1295	37.0	128
Total	5268	1777	3491	100	346

Key: n= Sample size (346)

After the expected number of participants from each university was determined, the numbers are allocated within departments to each university. Once more, proportional stratified sampling technique was employed (*see* Table 5).

Table 5

Proportional Allocation of Students' Sample Population across Departments

Departments		Total number of Students (a)	Students who are not enrolled in the same year across HEIs (b)	Stratum population c= (a-b)	Stratum weight (In %) (Stratum population/ total stratum population)	Proportional sample allocation {Stratum weight ×n/100} (Approximate value)
AAU						
1	Psychology	57	30	27	1.7	3
2	Sociology	38	13	25	1.6	2
3	Social Work	164	66	98	6.3	10
4	Broadcast Journalism/Journalism and Communication	38	-	38	2.5	4
5	Law	168	-	168	10.8	16
6	Economics	310	160	150	9.7	15
7	<i>Public Administration and Development Management [PADM]</i>	232	141	91	5.9	9
8	<i>Management</i>	395	146	249	16	24
9	<i>Accounting and Finance</i>	306	168	138	8.9	13
10	<i>Biology</i>	142	-	142	9.2	14
11	<i>Chemistry</i>	67	-	67	4.3	6
12	<i>Physics</i>	29	-	29	1.9	3
13	<i>Mathematics</i>	38	-	38	2.5	4
14	<i>Statistics</i>	49	-	49	3.2	5
15	<i>Sport Science</i>	66	-	66	4.3	7
16	<i>Information Science</i>	59	54	5	0.3	1
17	<i>Electrical and Computer Engineering</i>	259	168	91	5.9	9
18	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	225	195	30	1.9	3
19	<i>Civil Engineering</i>	134	86	48	3.1	4
Total		2776	1227	1549	100	152

AU						
1	Psychology	29	16	13	2.0	1
2	Sociology	48	25	23	3.6	2
3	Social Work	46	30	16	2.5	2
4	Broadcast Journalism/Journalism and Communication	32	15	17	2.6	2
5	Law	175	38	137	21.2	14
6	Economics	72	40	32	4.9	3
7	<i>Public Administration and Development Management [PADM]</i>	45	26	19	2.9	2
8	<i>Management</i>	67	36	31	4.8	3
9	<i>Accounting and Finance</i>	58	27	31	4.8	3
10	<i>Biology</i>	54	-	54	8.3	6
11	<i>Chemistry</i>	50	-	50	7.7	5
12	<i>Physics</i>	16	-	16	2.5	2
13	<i>Mathematics</i>	26	-	26	4.0	3
14	<i>Statistics</i>	36	-	36	5.6	4
15	<i>Sport Science</i>	41	-	41	6.3	4
16	<i>Information Science</i>	90	76	14	2.2	1
17	<i>Electrical and Computer Engineering</i>	32	19	13	2.0	1
18	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	25	14	11	1.7	1
19	<i>Civil Engineering</i>	194	127	67	10.4	7
Total		1136	489	647	100	66
UoG						
1	Psychology	19	-	19	1.5	1
2	Sociology	26	-	26	2.0	2
3	Social Work	26	-	26	2.0	2
4	Broadcast Journalism/Journalism and Communication	24	-	24	1.8	2
5	Law	302	50	252	20.0	26
6	Economics	43	-	43	3.3	4

7	<i>Public Administration and Development Management [PADM]</i>	24	-	24	1.8	2
8	<i>Management</i>	45	-	45	3.4	4
9	<i>Accounting and Finance</i>	48	-	48	3.7	5
10	<i>Biology</i>	75	-	75	5.8	8
11	<i>Chemistry</i>	66	-	66	5.0	7
12	<i>Physics</i>	50	-	50	3.8	5
13	<i>Mathematics</i>	56	-	56	4.3	6
14	<i>Statistics</i>	64	-	64	4.9	6
15	<i>Sport Science</i>	60	-	60	4.6	6
16	<i>Information Science</i>	47	-	47	3.6	5
17	<i>Electrical and Computer Engineering</i>	121	-	121	9.3	12
18	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	114	11	103	8.0	10
19	<i>Civil Engineering</i>	146	-	146	11.2	15
Sample Total		1356	61	1295	100	128
Grand Total		5268	1777	3491	100	<u>346</u>

Note: n= Sample size (152, 66 and 128 respectively)

In the process of distributing sample among departments, efforts were made to make the sample proportional gender wise. Thus, out of 152 students, 58 males and 36 females in AAU; out of 66 students', 54 males and 14 females from AU and out of 128 students, 58 males and 20 females from UoG were selected. Overall, the sample consists of 170 male and 70 female students (see Table 6).

Table 6

Gender Proportion across Departments

Departments	Total number of students	Number and percentage of female and male students out of the total student population				Number of sample	Number and percentage of female and male students out of sample student population (Total number of sample*%/100)				
		Male		Female			Male		Female		
		No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
AAU											
1	Psychology	27	16	1.0	11	0.7	3	2	1.0	1	0.7
2	Sociology	25	17	1.1	8	0.5	2	1	1.1	1	0.5
3	Social Work	98	63	4.1	35	2.3	10	6	4.1	4	2.3
4	Broadcast Journalism/Journalism and Communication	38	21	1.4	17	1.1	4	2	1.4	2	1.1
5	Law	168	89	5.8	79	5.1	16	8	5.8	8	5.1
6	Economics	150	119	7.7	31	2.0	15	12	7.7	3	2.0
7	Public Administration and Development Management [PADM]	91	47	3.0	44	2.8	9	5	3.0	4	2.8
8	Management	249	133	8.6	116	7.5	24	13	8.6	11	7.5
9	Accounting and Finance	138	96	6.2	42	2.7	13	9	6.2	4	2.7
10	Biology	142	76	4.9	66	4.3	14	8	4.9	6	4.3
11	Chemistry	67	39	2.5	28	1.8	6	4	2.5	2	1.8

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12	<i>Physics</i>	29	26	1.7	3	0.1	3	3	1.7	-	0.1
13	<i>Mathematics</i>	38	25	1.6	13	0.8	4	3	1.6	1	0.8
14	<i>Statistics</i>	49	38	2.5	11	0.7	5	4	2.5	1	0.7
15	<i>Sport Science</i>	66	47	3.0	19	1.2	7	5	3.0	2	1.2
16	<i>Information Science</i>	5	4	0.3	1	0.1	1	1	0.3	-	0.1
17	<i>Electrical and Computer Engineering</i>	91	78	5.0	13	0.8	9	8	5.0	1	0.8
18	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	30	29	1.9	1	0.1	3	3	1.9	-	0.1
19	<i>Civil Engineering</i>	48	20	1.3	28	1.8	4	2	1.3	2	1.8
Total		1549	983	63.6	566	36.4	152	99	65.0	53	35.0
AU											
1	Psychology	13	8	1.2	5	0.8	1	1	1.2	-	0.8
2	Sociology	23	17	2.6	6	0.9	2	1	2.6	1	0.9
3	Social Work	16	14	2.2	2	0.3	2	2	2.2	-	0.3
4	Broadcast Journalism/Journalism and Communication	17	14	2.2	3	0.5	2	2	2.2	-	0.5
5	Law	137	101	15.6	36	5.6	14	10	15.6	4	5.6
6	Economics	32	22	3.4	10	1.5	3	2	3.4	1	1.5
7	<i>Public Administration and Development Management [PADM]</i>	19	12	1.9	7	1.1	2	1	1.9	1	1.1
8	<i>Management</i>	31	25	3.9	6	0.9	3	2	3.9	1	0.9
9	<i>Accounting and Finance</i>	31	23	3.6	8	1.2	3	2	3.6	1	1.2

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10	Biology	54	42	6.5	12	1.9	6	5	6.5	1	1.9
11	Chemistry	50	45	6.9	5	0.8	5	5	6.9	-	0.8
12	Physics	16	14	2.2	2	0.3	2	2	2.2	-	0.3
13	Mathematics	26	21	3.2	5	0.8	3	2	3.2	1	0.8
14	Statistics	36	30	4.6	6	0.9	4	3	4.6	1	0.9
15	Sport Science	41	28	4.3	13	2.0	4	3	4.3	1	2.0
16	Information Science	14	9	1.4	5	0.8	1	1	1.4	-	0.8
17	Electrical and Computer Engineering	13	13	2.0	-	-	1	1	2.0	-	-
18	Mechanical Engineering	11	9	1.4	2	0.3	1	1	1.4	-	0.3
19	Civil Engineering	67	59	9.1	8	1.2	7	6	9.1	1	1.2
Total		647	506	78.2	141	21.8	66	52	78.2	14	21.8
UoG											
1	Psychology	19	12	0.9	7	0.5	1	1	0.9	-	0.5
2	Sociology	26	12	0.9	14	1.1	2	1	0.9	1	1.1
3	Social Work	26	12	0.9	14	1.1	2	1	0.9	1	1.1
4	Broadcast Journalism/Journalism and Communication	24	10	0.8	14	1.1	2	1	0.8	1	1.1
5	Law	252	173	13.3	79	6.1	26	17	13.3	9	6.1
6	Economics	43	30	2.3	13	1.0	4	3	2.3	1	1.0
7	Public Administration and Development Management [PADM]	24	15	1.2	9	0.6	2	1	1.2	1	0.7

8	<i>Management</i>	45	20	1.6	25	2.0	4	1	1.6	3	2.0
9	<i>Accounting and Finance</i>	48	23	1.8	25	2.0	5	2	1.8	3	2.0
10	<i>Biology</i>	75	46	3.6	29	2.3	8	5	3.6	3	2.3
11	<i>Chemistry</i>	66	56	4.6	10	0.9	7	6	4.6	1	0.9
12	<i>Physics</i>	50	47	3.6	3	0.2	5	5	3.6	-	0.2
13	<i>Mathematics</i>	56	53	4.1	3	0.2	6	6	4.1	-	0.2
14	<i>Statistics</i>	64	44	3.3	20	1.4	6	4	3.3	2	1.4
15	<i>Sport Science</i>	60	47	3.6	13	1.0	6	5	3.6	1	1.0
16	<i>Information Science</i>	47	32	2.4	15	1.2	5	4	2.4	1	1.2
17	<i>Electrical and Computer Engineering</i>	121	98	7.5	23	1.8	12	10	7.5	2	1.8
18	<i>Mechanical Engineering</i>	103	91	7.0	12	0.9	10	9	7.0	1	0.9
19	<i>Civil Engineering</i>	146	108	8.3	38	2.9	15	10	8.3	5	2.9
Total		1295	929	71.7	366	28.3	128	92	71.7	36	28.3

Note. Percentages are put in approximate value

The researcher used no more justification for who should respond to the quantitative study because every department's participant count was carefully considered and proportionately gendered. To pool the suggested data, simple random sampling was employed. It was helpful to obtain ethnically disaggregated data because the goal of this study is related to the IER of students. However, because of its sensitivity, the registrar's offices at the individual universities decline to provide such information. Abera's 2010 study has also highlighted the challenge of obtaining such data.

There is no evidence that Ethiopian public universities divide up their student bodies into ethnically specific classes. However, Mulondo (2018) asserts that ethnic diversity is likely to exist in universities where students' ethnicity is not taken into account when assigning them to classes. Because the MoE randomly selected the students, it is believed that a given classroom contains

students from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, because participants are chosen at random, there was a good chance to hear from a variety of student groups at AAU, AU, and UoG.

3.5.2.2. Sampling Techniques for the Qualitative Study

To select key-informants, purposive and snowball sampling techniques were applied. The former sampling was employed because it gives the researcher the autonomy to judge and select informants. This technique was used to select instructors, management staff and students with mixed and neutral views of ethnicity. The inclusion of instructors and management personnel in the sample is due to the fact that improving IER of university students through CoCPs necessitate active participation from academic staff and university administration in planning, organizing, leading, monitoring and evaluating the co-curricular activities. Multi-ethnic universities around the world strongly encourage the need for supervised CoC engagement and active participation from the student affairs office, management, academic staff, and other stakeholders in the process (Denson, 2009; Engberg, 2004; Savchits et al., 2017; Ward, 2017).

Snowball sampling is a method in which study participants recommend other participants from their network (Creswell, 2012). This method works well, especially when the study population is difficult to access (Gay et al., 2012). According to the current study, students fear and find it difficult to approach students who have "fixed views." As a result, the researcher was expected to have extensive knowledge of the campus environment and to consult with students and management personnel from the Vice President Office for Administration and Student Services in order to reach out to these students.

Students

Since ethnicity is ‘at the heart of everyone’, students in all walks of education have a stake. Though studies in Ethiopia usually target social sciences students (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Yonas, 2019), this researcher selected students from social, natural and technology streams. Accordingly, 8 students were selected from each university and a total of 24 students were targeted

for qualitative study². The selection was based on their publicly displayed positive or negative attitude towards fellows from out-groups as well as their attitude towards CoC and the level of their participation in peace club. Moreover information pertinent to their views on ethnicity, whether they have personally experienced ethnic related violence, peace club membership and preference towards group relations are considered in sample selection (*see* Table 7). Students who have been on campus for a long time are exposed to a range of experiences (Mulondo & Thomas, 2021; Mustapha et al., 2009), so those in their third year and up were the target interviewees.’

In order to minimize sampling bias in inter-group relation studies, Pettigrew (1998) suggested inclusion of typical group representatives as they can likely influence inter-group behavior. This is mainly because, they have great deal of contact with in-group members and have influential potential over group members. In doing so, students with ‘fixed views’ were identified as students who are typical of their ethnic groups. These students were AAS1, 3, and 5 from AAU, AUS1 and 3 from AU, and US1 and 3 from UoG.

Table 7

Characteristics of Student Interviewees’

University and students		Ethnic identity	Department	Year	Gender	Other selection Criteria				
						Views on ethnicity	Experienced ethnic violence	Peace club membership	Strong intra-group or inter-group attitude	In leadership, regular member or non-member
AAU	AAS1	Oromo	Management	3	Male	Fixed	Yes	No	Intra-group	Non-member
	AAS2		Journalism	3	Male	Mixed	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	AAS3	Amhara	Law	4	Male	Fixed	Not yet	No	Intra-group	Non-member

² Using orderly numbers, students from AAU were given the name AAS, students from AU were given the name AUS, and students from UoG were given the name US (see Table 6 for name coding).

	AAS4		Electrical and Computer Engineering	3	Male	Mixed	Yes	Yes	Inter-group	Leader
	AAS5	Tigre	Information Science	3	Female	Fixed	Not yet	No	Intra-group	Non-member
	AAS6	Addis Ababa	Social Work	3	Male	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	AAS7	Gurage (Central Ethiopia)	Biology	3	Female	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	AAS8	Berta (Benishangul-Gumuz)	Civil Engineering	4	Male	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
AU	AUS1	Oromia	Law	4	Male	Fixed	Not yet	No	Intra-group	Non-member
	AUS2		Civil Engineering	4	Female	Mixed	Yes	Yes	Inter-group	Member (former leader)
	AUS3	Amhara	Accounting and Finance	3	Male	Fixed	Yes	No	Intra-group	Non-member
	AUS4		Psychology	3	Female	Mixed view	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	AUS5	Tigre	Journalism	3	Male	Mixed view	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	AUS6	Addis Ababa	PADM	3	Male	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Leader
	AUS7	Sidama	Sport Science	3	Male	Mixed view	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	AUS8	Nuer (Gambella)	Law	4	Male	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
UoG	US1	Oromia	Law	4	Male	Fixed view	Yes	No	Intra-group	Non-member
	US2		Civil Engineering	4	Male	Mixed view	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
	US3	Amhara	Chemistry	3	Male	Fixed view	Not yet	No	Intra-group	Non-member

US4		Statistics	3	Male	Mixed view	Yes	Yes	Inter-group	Leader
US5	Tigre	Economics	3	Female	Mixed view	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
US6	Addis Ababa	Sociology	3	Female	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
US7	Wolaita (SNNP)	Journalism	3	Male	Mixed view	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member
US8	Somali	Mechanical Engineering	3	Male	Neutral	Not yet	Yes	Inter-group	Member

Note. Summarized by the researcher

As shown in Table 6, three of the students were from journalism and communication, similar to those from civil engineering, and four were from law school. The rest 14 students were from varied departments: psychology, sociology, social work, economics, PADM, management, accounting and finance, biology, chemistry, statistics, sport science, mechanical engineering and information science. In sum, 17 male (five from AAU, six from AU and six from UoG) and 7 female (three from AAU, two from AU and two from UoG) students were interviewed. Hence, 70.8% and 29.2% of qualitative study participants were male and female students respectively. Such a ratio discrepancy is expected given the high proportion of male students in the population distribution. Moreover, male students usually have a tendency to engage in violence and display out-group bias than their female counterparts (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020).

Academic Staff

With the intention of entertaining points of view of different participants, those instructors who have stayed in the university for at least 10 years and are believed to have extensive knowledge on students relations were selected from AAU, AU and UoG. Past studies that target university instructors also consider those who serve their respective campuses between 5 and 15 years (Mesfin & Ford, 2021). This is because experience can make people more thoughtful and compare past trends with the present. Accordingly, two instructors from each university were selected (*see* Table 8). Female academic staff members however were unwilling to participate, so all interviewees were males.

Table 8

Characteristics of Instructor Interviewees'

University and instructors		Service year	College/Institute/School	Gender
AAU	AAI1	10 years and above	College of Education and Behavioral Studies	Male
	AAI2		College of Social Sciences	Male
AU	AUI1		College of Business and Economics	Male
	AUI2		School of Law	Male
UoG	UI1		College of Education	Male
	UI2		College of Social Sciences and Humanities	Male

Note. Summarized by the researcher

Management Staff

The researcher gathered information from past scholarship and student dean’s office, students and instructors informally as to who can be informative with regard to IER and CoCPs. Accordingly, two management staff members from Vice President Office for Administration were selected from each university. In sum, six management members form the sample for interview sessions (*see* Table 9).

Table 9

Characteristics of Management Staff Interviewees’

Universities and management staff		Office	Gender
AAU	AAM1	Vice President Office for Administration and Student Services	Male
	AAM2		Male
AU	AUM1	Vice President Office for Administration and Student Services	Male
	AUM2		Male
UoG	UM1	Vice President Office for Administration and Student Services	Male
	UM2		Male

Note. Summarized by the researcher

In total, 36 interviews were undertaken for this study. Even though this number seem large, qualitative studies related to IER in Ethiopian HEIs have taken more numbers. For instance, Abebaw (2014) targeted 53 students, Arega & Mulugeta (2017) targeted 25 and Mekonnen (2013) took 43 participants and Yoseph (2019) sampled 70 students. It is to be noted that, there is no hard and fast rule on the maximum sample size for qualitative research. Usually, the number can fall between 30-70 interviewees mostly (Cresswell, 2012; Gay et al, 2012). Accordingly, the fact that the current study carried out 36 interviews fit to the standard. The saturation principle, which Gay et al. (212) define as a “redundancy of the information gathered from the participants,” is used to compute this number (p.143). The sample size was therefore established after the researcher discovered that certain perspectives are recurrently brought up in the data.

3.5.2.3.Sampling Bias

This research tried to fill the sampling bias observed in past studies through employing different techniques. For instance, most studies in the past targeted social sciences students (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Yonas, 2019). Even though there is no sufficient evidence on why students from technical fields are not part of ethnic-related studies in universities, Abera (2010) indirectly imply, the courses rendered in social sciences are somehow ‘politically sensitive’. Melkamu & Ameyu (2013, p.180) also claim students of social science and Law are “more

sensitive to the topic” than students in other departments. Following the experience of Mesfin & Ford (2021), who included students from Civil Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Engineering, the current study invited students from all streams.

Research documents in the past targeted students from different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, including developing regions (Abebaw, 2014; Tesfaye, 2012). In these studies, there is a tendency to equate student’s place of origin with his or her ethnic identification. In order to overcome this, the researcher attempted to include students who choose to categorize their ethnic affiliation in differing ways. Students with neutral, mixed, and fixed opinions were therefore included in this study. Such taxonomy in the sample section is a relatively new practice in IER and conflict-related Ethiopian HEIs studies. In this manner, it was possible to go beyond the tendency in past research that seem to undermine the voice of students who are labeled as ‘peaceful’ and ‘violent’ in relation to IER, which are explained by study participants rather than directly involved.

In order to minimize response bias, the researcher tried to ask clarification on ambiguous responses not to erroneously interpret the data. For instance, when there is a phrase like ‘those from X ethnic group are bad’, the researcher raise follow up questions like- ‘what do you mean by bad?’ and ‘did you personally witness such attributes?’ In some cases, the researcher also asked, “you told me earlier....so, how can this be related to the one you are telling me now?” This way, interviewees get the chance to validate or correct their previous response and the researcher was able to minimize social desirability, exaggeration or understatement during interview.

3.6. Data Sources

A combination of primary and secondary data sources were employed to get sufficient information on the issues of the study.

3.6.1. Primary Data Sources

Primary data are data “collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character” (Kothari, 2004, p.95). This type of data is collected for the first time by the researcher (Johnson, 2014). In the current study, regular undergraduate students, instructors, and management staff were primary data sources as they brought first had information on issues of students IER and CoC

experiences in respective universities. Among the primary data sources, students were of two category: peace club members and non-members.

Peace club as a co-curricular platform was chosen for various reasons: (a) the club's objective is directly related to prejudice reduction and promotion of IER (Ministry of Federal Affairs, 2013; Ministry of Federal and Pastoral Development Affairs and Ministry of Education, 2017); (b) the club is expected to contribute for positive IER through facilitating cognitive, affective and behavioral changes of students through reflection, interrogation, and application of knowledge through designing small-scale peace building projects (LPI & PDC, 2019), (c) the club has a legal personality as it gains the support of the government and the university management to work on (re)building IER of students on campus and beyond (LPI, 2014) and (d) with the help of LPI and PDC, peace club leaders and members were coached to undertake dialogue (LPI, 2014; LPI & PDC, 2019).

Policy documents also account to primary data sources in this study. These include ETP (MoE, 1994), ESDPII (2002), ESDPIII (2005), ESDPIV (2010), ESDPV (2015), Education Sector Development Roadmap (Tirussew Teferra, Amare Asgedom, Jeilu Oumer, Tassew W/hanna, Aklilu Dalelo & Berhannu Affefa (2018), የከፍተኛ ትምህርት ዘርፍ የአሥር ዓመት ልማት ዕቅድ [translated as The 10 year Higher Education System Development Plan] (MoSHE, 2021), Proclamation No.351/2003 (FDRE, 2003), Proclamation No.650/2009 (FDRE, 2009) and Proclamation No.1152/2019 (FDRE, 2019), AAU senate legislation (AAU, 2019), AU senate legislation (AU, 2019) and UoG senate legislation (UoG, 2013).

3.6.2. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources are data sources “which have already been collected by someone else” (Kothari, 2004, p.95). Accordingly, books, journal articles, academic research papers and documents that are relevant to the objectives of the study were referred.

3.7. Data Collection Instruments, Validity, Pilot-testing and Reliability

Questionnaires, interviews, and archival documents were used in this study to address the objectives and research questions.

3.7.1. Questionnaires

This section discusses the data collection instruments, the pilot-testing, validity and reliability analysis of the instruments and the rate of return. Quantitative data collection instruments were developed by the researcher. These instruments were prepared in two formats: questionnaire-A (Q-A) measure the nature of students IER and questionnaire-B (Q-B) assessed the link between CoC engagement and IER of students.

3.7.1.1. Questionnaire for the Nature of IER of Students (Q-A)

The instrument opted to measure the nature of IER of students within AAU, AU and UoG (research question two). The questionnaire involves two sections namely- bio-data and positive and negative aspects of IER on campus. Responses were given using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1-5 (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree and 5= strongly agree) for 31 items. Items in Q-A comprise closed as well as open questions. The English version was used as English is the working language of HEIs (*see* Appendix I-A).

Closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire is recommended to overcome the shortcomings of both set of questions. For instance, closed questions are criticized for “putting answers in people’s mouths” (Kothari, 2004, p.103), while open questions are difficult to interpret (Cresswell, 2014). However, employment of the latter seems appropriate when the researcher is keen to know the world of participants in an in-depth manner (Johnson, 2014). As explained in chapter 2 (*see* section 2.5), there are missing links in previous studies that need to be thoroughly explained. The benefits of both open-ended and closed-ended questions are vital to this kind of description. Employment of both set of questions is also a common approach in mixed-methods research (Creswell, 2012). Since the current study adopted this approach, it was possible to use both closed and open-ended questions.

3.7.1.2. Questionnaire on CoCPs and IER of Students (Q-B)

This instrument was developed to answer the third research question (*see* section 1.2.1.). Accordingly, the questionnaire comprises four sections namely- bio-data, processes of students IER, conditions of students IER and nature of students IER. Responses were given using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1-5 (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree and 5= strongly agree). The English version was used as English is the working language of HEIs (*see* Appendix I-B).

Total number of items for Q-A were 31 close-ended and three open-ended questions. On the other hand, the number of items for Q-B were 50 close-ended questions (not including bio-data items) in total. The number of questions created for this study is appropriate, considering that questionnaires for diversity-related research typically contain 20 to 50 items (Chang et al., 2004; Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2015; Mesfin & Angela, 2021; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021; Munywe, 2014; Mustapha et al., 2009; Tesfaye, 2012).

3.7.1.3. Validity

Self-created questionnaires were used in the current study. Therefore, it was necessary to verify that the instruments measure the things they were supposed to measure. The researcher goes through a thorough process of creating the questionnaires to make sure of this.

Firstly, revision of the objective of the study as well as the research questions, hypothesis and conceptual framework was undertaken to determine the dimension of the survey. Secondly, (re) definition of the target respondents was undertaken to determine the ‘appropriate’ sample. This was particularly important because the content and complexity or simplicity of the questions should be considerate of the target respondents. Thirdly, the question of ‘what to measure’ was decided. Accordingly, perceptions of undergraduate university students was intended to be measured. Fourthly, the nature of questions in past studies in IER and CoC were revisited in order to learn how previous researchers’ crafted items to measure different constructs.

Fifthly, Rating/scale measurement was determined that portrays scale points with brief description (e.g. Strongly Agree has 5 points, Agree has 4 points, Neight agree nor disagree has 3 points, Disagree has 2 points and Strongly Disagree has 1 pont). Sixthly, question items were developed by focusing on ‘need to know’ rather ‘nice to know’ issues with respect to IER of university students and CoCPs. Seventhly, the items were revisited in reference to research objective, research questions, hypothesis and conceptual framework of the current study to ensure relevance. Tenthly, cover letter was developed and included in roder to create clarity for respondents. Moreover, proof reading was undertaken.

Eleventhly, content validity was checked by three experts (with PhD degrees) from Peace and Conflict Studies, Social Psychology and Curriculum studies. Accordingly, the subject matter experts judged how well the items on Q-A and Q-B fit to measure the nature of IER and how well CoCPs contribute for IER of students in Ethiopian public HEIs context. Accordingly, each expert evaluate the items as ‘necessary’ or ‘not necessary’. For instance, the number of items originally developed for Q-A and Q-B were 35 and 57 respectively. The items evaluateated as ‘unnecessary’ by panel of experts were excluded from the survey. Finally, items that are considered as ‘necessary’ by the experts are included in Q-A and Q-B. Numerically, content validity can be expressed through content validity ration (CVR). You can test this by taking the total number of experts and dividing it by two. Then, you can divide the total result by the number of experts who indicated that each item was necessary. The CVR ratio was thus rated as 1 following the removal of the ‘unnecessary’ items from every survey, indicating ‘high’ content validity of the questionnaires.

Formula for Content validity ratio = $(ne - N/2) / (N/2)$

- ne = Number of panelists indicating “necessary”
- N = Total number of panelists

Note. Adopted from Lawshe’s Content Validity Ratio (Ayre & Scally, 2014).

Pilot-testing

Once content validity was checked, quantitative instruments were subjected to pilot-testing to check the appropriateness of the tool in general and the specific items, identify items or ideas that are ambiguous, and enable the researcher to make necessary corrections. Moreover, the small-scale study would help in testing the reliability of the instruments. Addis Ababa Science and Technology University [AASTU] and Adama Science and Technology University [ASTU] were targeted for pilot-testing. This is primarily because the researcher finds the universities' locations expedient. Additionally, the researcher aimed to examine IER and the ways in which CoCPs affect it in universities that are both relatively stable and rife with conflict. ASTU had seen regular disturbances, but AASTU was comparatively peaceful. Following pilot testing, the questionnaires underwent the required changes.

In total, 100 questionnaires (50 in each university, 25 Q-A and Q-B each) were distributed for students. Moreover, 10 students (five from each university), two management staff and two instructors (one from each university), in total 14 interviewees participated in the face-to-face interview. The number of participants were randomly decided because the aim of the pilot-testing was to make necessary corrections on the tools and research methods, henceforth, a few number of participants was found enough. Johnson (2014) even suggested, the likelihood of undertaking pilot-test “with a minimum of 5 to 10 people” (p.253).

The data collection for the pilot-testing was administered personally by the researcher for two weeks (from August 1 to 15, 2021). During pilot-testing, it was possible to collect 98 questionnaires and 14 interviews and suggestions from participants on the content of the survey and interview items. A total of 98 questionnaires, 14 interviews, and participant suggestions concerning the survey and interview items were collected. The correction includes linguistic matters and content modification. In the case of Q-A, questions 15, 28, 29, and 31 as well as Q-B's questions 12 and 13 (section III), 12 (section IV), and 3 (section V) are included in the current version following student feedback from pilot testing. The researcher sought advice from subject matter experts who verified the content validity prior to making the changes, and they approved of them.

The final questionnaires were therefore typed to include the suggestions offered from the pilot-test. This test is not a replacement for gathering population data, but rather a component of the process of evaluating question performance and the time required to complete the questionnaire and conduct the interview. De Vaus (2004) demonstrated that, pilot-test results do not necessarily need to be reported in the analysis section. Thus, the researcher included no data from the pilot-test in the data analysis.

3.7.1.4. Reliability Analysis

For this current study, reliability analysis was made using SPSS statistical model and reported using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and 'corrected item-total correlation' for item-total statistics output table. Subsequently, inter-item consistency reliability for Q-A ranged from 0.770-0.897 and the item-total reliability was between 0.765-.888 (see Appendix II: A and B). The inter-item consistency for Q-B ranged from 0.791-0.879 and the item-total reliability fall between 0.721-.898 (see Appendix II: C and D). Usually, reliability test is undertaken using pilot-test results. Sundram & Romli (2023) stated that, "reliability is tested by using a sample that has almost the same homogeneity as the real sample so that the test is more accurate" (p.2). Therefore, reliability test was carried out using pilot-test data.

After reliability analysis and few corrections on questionnaire items, the actual quantitative data collection took place between 1st June and 19th August 2022. In total, 346 Q-A were distributed to 196 non-club members and 150 peace club members (50 members were selected from each university) in order to compare their perspectives on the nature of IER of students. Accordingly, 333 questionnaires (96.24%) valid questionnaires were collected. The returned questionnaires were 183 from non-members and 150 from peace club members. Since the number of active peace club members were limited, those peace club members who filled Q-A were selected to fill Q-B. And the return rate was 100%. This was made possible by the researcher's discussions with the leaders of the Peace Clubs in AAU, AU, and UoG, who provided orientation to members that the study's success would directly contribute for club's future success.

Table 10

Chatacteristics of Quantitative Study Respondents

Name of universities	Gender of students	Enrollemtn year			Total
		2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	
AAU	Male	14	82	2	98
	Female	5	39	5	49
AU	Male	12	32	6	50
	Female	1	11	2	14
UoG	Male	14	61	12	87
	Female	5	24	6	35
Total		51	249	33	333

3.7.2. Interview

The qualitative instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide. This tool is chosen due to its investigative nature of situations in an in-depth manner through forwarding structured questions and posing follow-up questions based on the responses of the interviewer (Creswell, 2012). This explains the claim made by Gay et al. (2012) that “semi structured interviews combine both structured and unstructured approaches” (p.386). The interviews were largely done in Amharic. However, two students from AU requested a translator and the researcher hired one³ to translate from Oromiffa to Amharic. Interviews were conducted from 1st June to 19th August 2022 through mainly face-to-face and via telephone for additional information. While the former took between 45-60 minutes, the latter took between 7-10 minutes. Two management staff members, one from AU and the other from UoG, were interviewed over the phone because they were too busy to attend face-to-face interviews for more than 25 minutes. The main goal of the interview questions was to find out about students' positive and negative IER manifestations, the factors that contribute to each, and the part that CoCPs play in encouraging students to have positive IER (*see* Appendix III for interview guides for students, instructors and management staff).

³ Born and raised in Addis Ababa, the hired translator was a fifth-year, an A-grade law student who speaks Oromiffa.

3.7.3. Document Review

In qualitative research, documents like laws, policy papers, legislations and others can be used as source of data. Gay et al. (2012) stated, archival documents help the researcher “to gain valuable historical insights, identify potential trends, and explain how things got to be the way they are.” These documents are usually obtained in the public or institutional repository with no or very limited bureaucracy (Creswell, 2014). Archival documents referred for the current research are listed under section 3.6.1.

3.8. Procedures

This section discusses the steps followed while collecting the data from the research sites and data analysis. Each step is described in detail.

3.8.1. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure followed a nine-step process of (a) obtaining support letter form IPSS, AAU, (b) making initial contact with the three universities to get permission for data collection, (c) presenting letter of cooperation and get approval, (d) collecting number of students, instructors and management data, (e) doing validity test for the questionnaires, (f) pilot-study and reliability test, (g) assigning facilitators and providing orientation, (h) making an on-site delivery of the questionnaires and follow-up, (i) collecting the completed questionnaires and conducting interviews.

First, the researcher contacted the IPSS Director’s office to get support letter for AAU Student Dean’s Office and Vice President Offices and AU and UoG. The letters for each unit was written, signed and stamped by IPSS Director mentioning the title and objective the research.

Second, the researcher brought the letter of support to AAU Student Dean’s Office and Academic Vice President Office and Vice President for Administration and Student Services and explained the objective of the research and the duration of the research project for AAU, AU and UoG.

Third, the letter of support was approved by respective management body (*see* Appendix IV) and the researcher was linked to resource persons within departments and student dean's office to have informal discussion on how to collect the data and who can be informants from students' population as well as instructors and management team. Similar informal discussions were conducted with students' council and student union members in multiple occasions prior to data collection.

Fourth, list of students within each departments was collected from registrar offices of AAU, AU and UoG. To obtain trustworthy and current data, the researcher was occasionally advised to contact departments as the registrars data may not be updated frequently and there may be a disparity between the registrar's and the department's numbers. Such gap is observed across the three universities. According to registrar officers, this mismatch is particularly obvious as a result of the unplanned academic year brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. No university has a standard academic timetable as of March 2020. Data on the number of instructors and management staff was also collected.

Fifth, the two sets of questionnaires (Q-A and Q-B) were written in English and the content validity was checked by knowledgeable individuals in Peace and Conflict Studies, Social Psychology and Curriculum studies. Both content and linguistic issues were reviewed by experts. *Sixth*, pilot-study was undertaken personally by the researcher and internal consistency and item-total reliability were checked and the instruments were found dependable.

Seventh, the researcher has assigned three students who have good relations with students from different ethnic groups in each university to facilitate data collection. These students were assigned with no duress. One day prior to the on-site delivery of the questionnaires, orientation was given to the assignees on the objective of the study, the nature of items and how to fill the questionnaires.

Eighth, on-site delivery was made. The researcher moved to each HEI and distributes few questionnaires personally and monitors the assignees when they orient their fellows on how to fill out the questionnaires. To ease information exchange and retrieval process, the researcher also put her contact address in case respondents came up with difficulties in filling the instruments.

Besides, follow-up activities were made through frequent contact with the assignees by phone and in person. Three student participants from AAU have contacted the researcher through phone. These participants needed additional orientation on the objective and significance of the study and brief explanation was given by the researcher.

Ninth, the researcher collected the questionnaires from participants. All in all, the actual data collection took place between 1st June and 19th August 2022. Quantitative data was collected in classrooms, on campus and outside campus at student's convenience. Concurrently, the researcher approached targeted informants for interview, build rapport and establish day and time to discuss the research objectives and the focus of interview questions. The interview date and time were set in consultation with informants. The first meeting and the face-to-face interview was made in the research setting. Key informants have been given a code name to simplify the data presentation and analysis (*see* section 3.5.2.2.).

3.8.2. Data Analysis Procedures

Before the quantitative data analysis, data classification, coding, data entry and transformation were done respectively. Once the responses were collected, each item was coded on SPSS version 25 and each question was assigned with a two or more digit identification number (*see* Appendix V). Then, the data were entered with the support of Information Systems Graduate from AAU and the scores were inspected visually for completeness on SPSS 'variable view' and 'data view' sections.

Other than the bio-data and open-ended questions, all of the items in Q-A and Q-B were rated using a Likert scale. Since Likert scales are usually categorized under ordinal scale their use violate the assumptions of parametric tests like t-test (Pimentel, 2019). Moreover, analyzing each item on the questionnaire is inappropriate. This is because, "individual item is not a measure of the overall phenomenon of interest" (Harpe, 2015, p.840). For instance, in order to understand the IER of students in classrooms, there are series of questions displayed in the questionnaire that collectively indicate what is happening on the ground. Hence, item-by-item analysis fails to give the whole picture (Harpe, 2015).

In order to fill the gap of item-by-item analysis and run parametric tests using Likert-scale data, literatures suggest transforming the individual items under each construct to aggregate variable which automatically change the ordinal scale to interval scale (Harpe, 2015). This is done using SPSS (transform>>compute variable option). Once, new variable that show aggregate scale is developed, the option ‘descriptives’ from descriptive statistics was run to get the mean results and standard deviation. Since a five-point Likert scale is used in this study (5= strongly agree, 4=agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 2= disagree and 1 strongly disagree), cut points for comparing means is vital to obtain weighted mean. After rigorous revision of literatures, the researcher has adopted the arguments of Pimentel (2019) that recommends calculating uniformed numerical difference in each interval scale through trial and error. Accordingly, Likert scale, interval, difference and description are developed.

Table 11

Five-point Likert-scale Weighted Mean

Likert Scale	Interval	Difference	Scale description
1	1.00-1.79	0.79	Strongly disagree
2	1.80-2.59	0.79	Disagree
3	2.60-3.39	0.79	Neither agree nor disagree
4	3.40-4.19	0.79	Agree
5	4.20-5.00	0.80	Strongly Agree

Note. Adopted from Pimentel (2019, p.188). Summarized by the researcher

For interview data analysis, the following steps were followed- (1) listening interview recordings, transcription, translation and assigning labels, (2) use hierarchical coding and identify themes of related words and (3) interpreting themes in terms of conceptual frames and past researches. For document review, words and concepts that (1) acknowledge the presence of CoCPs, (2) encouraged participation of students in CoCPs, and (3) directly or indirectly link CoCPs with IER of students were detected within the legal documents.

3.9. Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed separately.

3.9.1. Quantitative Data Analysis Techniques

In this study descriptive statistics, independent-samples *t*-test, linear and multiple-regressions were applied. The justification for each statistical tool is elaborated below.

Descriptive Statistics

Frequency and percentage were used to describe demographic variables. Further, mean and standard deviations were used to describe research question number two and three.

Regression

Linear regression analysis attempted to explore mediation effect and multiple linear regression attempted to explore moderation effect. In this study, there are mediating variables (cognitive, affective and behavioral changes due to interactive and reflective activities) and moderating variables (Allport's optimal conditions and wider situational forces). As a result, linear regression helped to answer how students' club engagement explained IER. Multiple regression on the other hand portrays the level of effect or the predictive ability of independent variable (Peace Club engagement) on IER of students. It revealed how well CoC engagement of students is able to predict a significant amount of variance in nature of IER of students. The ' R^2 ' used to explain the variability caused by predictor variables on criterion variables. In this research, the assumptions to of regression: normality distribution and non multicollinearity have been met (*see* Appendix VI for normality and non-multicollinearity).

3.9.2. Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques

The qualitative research bears the characteristics of thematic analysis. This approach helps to detect patterns in a data set and derive themes that can systematically explain the research questions (Saldaña, 2013). Thematic analysis is commonly used to analyze interview data (Creswell, 2014). The processes in thematic analysis generally include collection of interview data,

transcription, listening the audio and reading the field note, coding the data by locating texts and labelling them and developing themes (Cresswell, 2012). In order to reach at a structure that makes sense for the analysis, a researcher may adopt: open coding through reading the manuscript, categorizing distinct elements and compare for any similarity (Creswell, 2014), in vivo coding using interviewees own words to construct themes (Johnson, 2014) and deductive coding to generate the themes from theories or conceptual framework (Saldaña, 2013).

Thematic analysis deem appropriate in this study for the following reasons: (1) it is used to examine interview data (Creswell, 2014); (2) it leaves a room to combine inductive and deductive coding (Gay et al., 2012). Since the current study adopts a mixed methods strategy, there is a possibility to combine approaches of data analysis; (3) one of the objective of thematic analysis is to reveal patterns and meanings that were not clearly spelt out in previous studies (Saldaña, 2013). This study showed a departure at the conceptual and methodological level for the reason that its goal was to explain the relationship between CoCPs and IER of students by merging perspectives from learning theory and inter-group theory through a mixed-methods approach. Therefore, the potential to disclose patterns in a manner not addressed by previous researchers is anticipated.

In order to analyze legal frameworks on the other hand, content analysis technique was adopted. This approach helps to count terms and concepts pertinent to the research objective and looks at broad connections of patterns (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, terms that represent CoC and IER of students like were identified from the broader literature and detected within the legal documents selected for analysis.

On the other hand, diversity, democracy, inter-group interaction, IER, equality, equity, (Hurtado, 2007), perspective-taking (Hurtado, 2007, Pettigrew, 1998), having sympathy and empathy (Czepil et al., 2019), practice of other's culture (Dovidio, et al., 2011; Levin et al., 2003; Verkuyten, 2005), non-violence (Belford, 2017; Karnyshev et al., 2014) and standing for other's rights (Munywe, 2014; Vagaeva et al, 2020) are some of the manifestations of positive IER pointed out in the literature review. The fact that how CoCPs and IER of students are manifested in HEIs setting makes the text detection and drawing of patters and relationships across concepts plausible. Analysis of the legal documents in Ethiopian HES in a way that links CoCPs and IER of students is not a common trend in past scholarship, which makes this research to get some points.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS OF CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

4.1. Co-curricular Issues in the Legal Documents of High Education system

Alternative approaches to building positive IER of students is lively topic in the HES. Among others, non- academic programs commonly called CoCPs or CoCPs have a proven track record in reinforcing inter-ethnic harmony among students of difference across nations (Denson, 2009; Munywe, 2014; Savchits, et al., 2017) and received strong legal support in some countries like America (AACU, 2002), Vietnam (Nghia, 2017), Canada (Elias & Drea, 2013), South Africa (Hay & Marais, 2011) and Kenya (MOEST, 2014) among others. Yet, their impact on promoting IER of students is not thoroughly studied compared to that of curricular learning. Due to this, scholars advocate for a space for CoC learning in enhancing the capacity of HEIs to respond to growing challenges of negative IER of students (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; Kuh et al., 1994). How CoC issues are deliberated in legal documents of Ethiopian HES are presented below.

4.1.1. Education and Training Policy (ETP)

In post-1991 Ethiopia, the ETP (MoE, 1994) is the first comprehensive policy document that distinguishes education as a way to develop learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes through both classroom instruction and 'experience.' The opening statement of the policy reads "Education is a process by which man transmits his experiences, new findings, and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development, through generations" (MoE, 1994, p.1). One of the primary points of departure in the education system has been the shift from objective facts to allow for students' firsthand experiences, as mentioned by Bobbitt (1918) and Dewey (1902). Interaction and reflection up on the direct experience expand students' level of understanding beyond their 'small world' (Hedberg & Stevenson, 2014). Hence, the fact that ETP acknowledges 'experience' as a means of knowledge inquiry has implications on the place and ways of learning relevant to CoC learning. However the term co-curriculum is not explicitly mentioned within ETP.

Table 12

Co-curriculum in the Education and Training Policy

	Words, phrases or concepts related to CoC	Word, phrase or concept frequency	Contexts used
1	Experience	Three times	Education is conceptualized as a means of transferring experience (p.1)
			Field experience is a necessary exposure before graduation (p.25)
			Field experience is a necessary exposure for instructors and researchers (p.25)

Note. Adopted from MoE (1994). Summarized by the researcher

Since ESDPs are strategic tools of the policy, the fact that ECAs are mentioned as alternative tools of education in ESDPs (*see* section 4.2.2.) raises the possibility that the ‘non-formal’ approach mentioned in the ETP could be contextualized as a term that encompasses curricular approaches outside of the classroom. This assumption on the other hand is negated by ESDP II (MoE, 2002) assertion, non-formal education targets “out of school children and for very sparsely populated and remote communities” (p.5). The fourth ESDP (MoE, 2010) further affirm non-formal education targets adult literacy. Due to these, non-formal education is not equated with co-curricular learning.

4.1.2. Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs)

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) is a program of action introduced with the intention of translating the ETP in to action through short, medium and long term plans. Since 1997/98, the Ethiopian education system has passed through ESDPI (1997/98-2001/2), ESDPII (2002/3-2004/5), ESDPIII (2005/6-2010/11), ESDPIV (2010/11-2014/15) and ESDPV (2015/16-2019/20). In these program documents, CoC/ECAs are mentioned as a means to create conducive teaching and learning environment in primary education level and a means to create awareness on HIV/AIDS through clubs at all education levels (MoE, 1997, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2015).

Within the ESDP’s, CoC segment has received an increasing amount of consideration in imparting knowledge and skills regarding physical and psychological health, ethics, democracy and gender (see Table 13). Particularly, sports game (MoE, 2002), life skill trainings (MoE, 2015), gender related trainings (MoE, 2010) and peer-education (MoE, 2005, 2010) were the common co-curricular strategies to attain these for students in primary and secondary levels of education. The effectiveness of such strategies was proved in the studies of Jones (2018), Meier (2012), Juma (2019) and Ward (2017) among others in HEIs context.

Furthermore, ESDPV emphasize on the need for structural revision of CoC wing through mobilizing resources, merging similar club activities, developing new CoC programs and inclusion of technical experts in planning, organizing and monitoring CoC activities (MoE, 2015). Such revision is highly commended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CoC endeavors through customizing the programs to respond to institutional and student’s needs (Dalton & Crosby, 2013; Denson & Chang, 2015; Kuh et al., 1994).

Generally speaking, each ESDP document has at least three references relevant to CoC (see Table 12). Apart from HIV/AIDS clubs, the documents do not specifically highlight CoCPs in the context of HEIs. The use of the non-academic platform in primary and secondary education was therefore the main focus of CoCPs in ESDP texts.

Table 13

Co-curriculum in the ESDP Documents

ESDPs	Words, phrases or concepts related to CoC	Frequency (in number)	Contexts used
ESDP II	Co-curriculum	One time	To maintain mental and physical health (p.28)
	Extra-curricular activities	Two times	To establish favorable teaching and learning space (p.25)
			Raise health awareness (p.35)
Club	One time	Anti-HIV/AIDS clubs (p.35)	
ESDP III	CoCAs	One time	A means to reduce dropout and repetition rate (p.59)
	Girls club	Two times	Empower girl students at primary level (p.8)

			Organize Girls' day and experience sharing sessions (p.60)
	Civil and Ethical Education Club	One time	Help students practice democratic participation (p.25)
	Anti-HIV/AIDS club	Two times	Educate students about HIV/AIDS in all primary and secondary schools and 10 tertiary level institutions (p.27)
			Peer education can alleviate discrimination and fear (p.60)
	Anti-AIDS club	Two times	Employ training workshops to teach students (p.27)
			The need for a guideline of clubs' (p.27)
ESDPV	CoCAs	One time	A tool for school improvement program (p.23)
	Extra-curricular forum/ means/ activities	Three times	Promote positive attitude about special needs (p.76)
			An approach to teach about HIV/AIDS (p.78)
			An approach to educate about health and nutrition (p.85)
	Anti-HIV/AIDS club	One time	A means to create awareness on HIV/AIDS (p.78)
	Clubs	Two times	The more clubs that were formed in schools, the more they inform positive attitude of children with special needs (p.76)
			A platform to deliver health-informed life skill training (p.85)
	Peer education	Over three times	To educate about HIV/AIDS (p.77)
A detail guideline on peer education is required (p.77)			
Peer HIV/AIDS education will be organized at school and institution levels (p.78)			
ESDPV	CoCAs	Two times	The curriculum will be revised to include the CoCAs and structures (p.64)
			Tools to create safe and healthy educational space (p.68)
	CoCAs/ ECAs/ Clubs	One time	Strengthening of extra-class activities is crucial (p.69)
	Girls' Clubs	One time	A means to impart knowledge on gender (p.25)
	Female student associations	One time	A means to impart knowledge on gender in HEIs (p.25)
	HIV/AIDS clubs	One time	A means to educate about HIV/AIDS and health (p.27)
	Drug-free clubs	One time	Awareness on dangers of drugs and substance abuse (p.29)
	School reading clubs	Two times	To supplement literacy development (p.67/70)
Sport clubs	One time	A platform to deliver life skill trainings (p.68)	

Note. MoE (1996, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2015). Summarized by the researcher

4.1.3. Higher Education Proclamations

In the post-1991 period, three proclamations were issued by the Ethiopian federal government. These include Proclamation No.351/2003 (FDRE, 2003), Proclamation No.650/2009 (FDRE, 2009) and Proclamation No.1152/2019 (FDRE, 2019). The 2003 proclamation was issued during the second ESDP implementation phase, while the 2009 proclamation was declared and in effect from the time of the third ESDP's creation and implementation until the fifth ESDP. On the other hand, the 2019 proclamation was released in the final days of the ESDPV implementation phase. Hereunder, how the three proclamations entertain CoC issues is explained in relation to literatures.

The 2003 proclamation (FDRE, 2003) has been issued during the implementation phase of ESDPII. Even though no mention of CoC or ECA is recorded, the fact that curriculum of HEIs shall embrace reflection, participation, experience sharing and short-term trainings as learning tools tells the proclamation implicitly embrace CoC approach. Both the 2003 and 2009 proclamations consider short-term trainings as key educational tools in HEIs. However, for those pursuing a diploma, degree, second degree, or PhD, trainings are a supplement to education (FDRE, 2003), as is continuing or distance learning (FDRE, 2009). It is difficult to say in this situation whether trainings fit to co-curricular category.

Even though community service is among CoC strategies that meant to broaden students' knowledge base (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013; Ratanakarn, 2011) and strengthen institution-community partnership (Doghonadze & Zoranyan, 2018), the 2003 proclamation mentioned it as additional task to university instructors. In the subsequent proclamations though, community services are considered as alternative learning tools in Ethiopian HES (FDRE, 2019, 2009). They are also considered as a means to apply classroom instructions in HEIs context under ESDPV (MoE, 2015).

Student organizations refer to associations, clubs, and SUs. These organization seeks to foster an engaging campus culture where students can become involved, be inspired, and learn things unrelated to their immediate fields of study (Elias & Drea, 2013; Ou et al., 2018). These benefits are made possible by the 2009 and 2019 proclamations, which allow Ethiopian HEI students to

enroll at SU voluntarily and without discrimination, voice their opinions in SU-organized forums, and communicate with the university administration through its representatives.

Generally, it is possible to say that, the 2009 and 2019 proclamations openly acknowledge learning out-of-classroom as an alternative curriculum. For instance, the 2009 and 2019 proclamations grant students the right to “enjoy the freedom to learn with appropriate opportunities and conditions in classrooms, campuses and in the larger community” (p.5001, p.11474 respectively). Beyond the traditional methods of instruction, this freedom enables students to look for new ways to share and learn skills, and experiences (Freire & Shor, 1987; Hedberg & Stevenson, 2014).

Table 14
Co-curriculum in Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamations

S.N.	Proclamations	CoC related Terms	Frequency	Context used
1	2003	Experience	One time	Elements of HEIs curriculum (p.2238)
		Student participation	One time	
		Short-term trainings	Many times	Short term trainings are viable educational programs (p.2238)
				A means for students to reflect and share their experience (p.2238)
				Content-based assessment of trainings is necessary (p.2243)
2	2009	SU	Four times	Students have the right to join SU (p.5002)
				Free expression of opinions in open-discussion forums (p.5002)
				Access facilities through SU (p.5002)
				Take part in discussions with university administration through SU representatives (p.5002)
		Short-term training	Many times	Short term trainings are viable educational programs (p.4987)
				Tools of learning in continuous and distance education (p.4987)

		Out-of-classroom learning	One time	Students can learn in classroom and within and outside campus (p.5001)
3	2019	SU	Four times	Students have the right to join SU (p.11475)
				Free expression of opinions in open-discussion forums (p.11475)
				Access facilities through SU (p.11475)
				Take part in discussions with university administration through SU representatives (p.11475)
		Short-term training	Many times	Short term trainings are viable educational programs (p.11457)
				Tools of learning in regular continuous and distance education (p.11457)
Out-of-classroom learning	One time	Students can learn in classroom and within and outside campus (p.11474)		

Note. Adopted from FDRE proclamations (2003, 2009, and 2019). Summarized by the researcher

4.1.4. Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30)

The education development roadmap was drafted with the objective of reviewing policies, strategies, plans and practices of the education system and set improvement goals (Tirussew et al., 2018). Accordingly, HEIs performance was under review in different levels. The 2018 roadmap is the first policy document that comprehensively evaluate the status of CoC learning at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Ethiopia. By referring experiences form abroad, it attempted to loosely evaluate the contents, how it has been implemented and pinpointed the gaps.

The roadmap confirmed that the growth of HEIs has little to offer in terms of cultivating the quality of education in HEIs when it comes to the topic of higher education quality (section 7.5). Among other potential methods, the roadmap recommends reforming CoC learning as a means of moving forward. Accordingly, Tirussew et al. (2018) affirmed:

Students learn not only in classrooms. They are made to learn from their peers, the work place through placement and projects. Similarly, assessment is not restricted to classroom

paper based. Authentic assessment, which includes interview, observation, and report, is widely used. (p.53).

The above excerpt has good implications for co-curricular record policy. As highlighted in chapter two (*see* section 2.3.4.3.2.), CCR is an official record of the forms of CoC activities, the knowledge gained, the changes brought about by engagement, the application of the changes and their future use, the feedback received from CoC coordinators, and the certificates earned. The competencies acquired are checked through various mechanisms including oral interview, written report, feedback reports, and innovative project assignments (CACUSS, 2019). The record is also one way of affirming institutional commitment (Elias & Drea, 2013; Stirling & Kerr, 2015).

Higher learning institutions are responsible for designating a student affairs wing (O'Connor, 2012), creating a clear structure for the CoC wing (UNESCO, 2009), and enabling the designated office and professionals to operate effectively and efficiently. In this regard, the roadmap (Tirussew et al., 2018) elaborates:

The education policy should encourage universities to promote co-curricular and extra-curricular activities that help students to be involved in different clubs that fit their inclination The government needs to allocation [sic] earmarked budget for these activities and designate office that would coordinate such activities (p.52).

The above extract implies that, university students have not been encouraged to take part in CoC endeavors. Studies showed that, public HEIs in Ethiopia comprise different CoC clubs working on various issues (Abebe, 2015; Hailemariam, 2016; Mekonnen, 2013; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021). However, students level of involvement in clubs is not as expected due to students rare exposure to CoCAs in elementary and secondary schools (Panigrahi & Yadessa, 2012; Rahel, 2012), tight class schedule on campus and the wider perception that CoC is time consuming (Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021). Above all, it is the failure of Ethiopian HEIs management to systematically plan, implement and monitor CoCPs that contributed for students' lower rate of participation and fragmented implementation (Abebaw, 2014; Misrak & Addissu, 2011, MoE, 2018). It appears that the 2018 road map suggests that HEIs establish an office to coordinate CoCPs in order to close the gaps exemplified in previous scholarship.

Table 15

Co-curriculum in the Ethiopian Education Sector Development Roadmap

	Words, phrases or concepts related to CoC	Word, phrase or concept frequency	Contexts used
1	CoCAs/ECAs	Five times	Promotion of club engagement in HEIs (p.52)
			Adequate budget allocation for CoCAs (p.52)
			Office designation for CoCAs (p.52)
			A tool of attaining cognitive and non-cognitive competencies in HEIs (p.53)
			Assessment of CoC participation should be in place beyond paper and pencil approach (p.53)

Note. Extracted from Tirusew et al. (2018). Summarized by the researcher

4.1.5. University Senate’s Legislations

Hereunder, how the legislations of AAU (2019), AU (2019), and UoG (2013) entertain CoC issues are presented along with the context they were used and frequency of terms/words/concepts pertinent to co-curriculum. Since senate legislation is a detailed internal document of universities, some terms may appear more frequently than others. As a result, the researcher simply identifies the pertinent pages that explain the terms in relation to students, but highlight how frequently the terms appear in various sections of the legislation (*see* Table 16).

Student organizations (SOs) are associations or clubs are created to enrich students experience beyond the formal curriculum (Stellenbosch University, 2018). The fact that this issue is brought up more than five times in the three proclamations attests to the fact that SOs in the universities chosen for this study were established to educate students what is not covered in the official curriculum (*see* Table 15). The student organization wing which stands for students’ rights-SU is also available in all selected universities, expected to be representative of student population, and is represented in the senate in AU and HU, Cultural and Social Affairs Committee in UoG and discipline committee in AAU that gives it a chance to voice students concerns and interests.

Co-curricular outlets include but not limited to physical activities (e.g. sports game), literary works (e.g. storytelling, poetry), community service (e.g. voluntary and charity), art works (films), moral and civic development (trainings, panels, lectures on peace, ethics, tolerance, etc.), leisure activities (e.g. field visits for socialization) (Siddiky, 2019; Stellenbosch University, 2018; McFadden & Smeaton, 2017; Nghia, 2017; Ward, 2017; Denson, 2009). Selected universities in this study also list out panel discussions, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, and leisure events as platforms to achieve the objectives of student organization. This is fitting the literatures.

In another vein, community services received credit in senate legislations. Generally, community service in HEIs aim towards addressing the needs of the community through services and development programs by utilizing the expertise of academics, students and other campus members and resources outside campus (Stellenbosch University, 2018). However, the focus on community engagement topics within senate legislations is mostly on the contribution of academic staff (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; UoG, 2013). On the other hand, trainings/workshops can be integral to the formal curriculum or undertaken separately. However, there is no clear indication whether trainings are integral to classroom activities or given separately as CoC learning strategy in the senate legislations (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; UoG, 2013). Hence, it is difficult to know whether the trainings/workshops within public universities’ qualify the CoC category (*see* section 4.2.3.).

Table 16

Co-curriculum in Senate Legislations

CoC terms	AAU		AU		UoG	
	Context used	Frequency	Context used	Frequency	Context used	Frequency
SOs	Serve beyond curricula (p.160)	More than five times	Serve beyond curricula (p.248)	More than five times	Promotion of personal development (p.210)	More than five times
SU	SU is present (p.160)	>>	SU is present (p.9)	>>	SU is present (p.210)	>>
Training Workshop	Open for students (p.155)	>>	Open for students (p.242)	>>	Open for students (p.206)	>>

Community Service/Engagement	Commitment to serve the public (p.136)	>>	Unpaid engagement to serve the public (p.213)	>>	Commit to serve the public(p.162)	>>
Art/sport/field trip/debate/ etc.	panel, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, leisure events (p.161)	More than two times	panel, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, leisure events (p.249)	More than two times	panel, debates, trips, films, theatre, exhibition, leisure events (p.211)	More than two times

Note. Adopted from AAU (2019), AU (2019) and UoG (2013) Senate Legislations. Summarized by the researcher

4.2. Elements of Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Higher Education Legal Frameworks

Under this section, terms and concepts that signify positive IER of students extracted from the policy documents are presented and discussed.

4.2.1. Education and Training Policy (ETP)

Positive inter-ethnic relations in HEIs context incorporated credible knowledge of out-group fellows (Allport, 1954), acknowledging differences and commonalities (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Zúñiga et al., 2007); respecting difference (Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015); openness to discuss ethnic related issues (Hurtado et al., 1999); changing negative out-group attitudes (, 2018); advocating for the rights of out-groups and resolving conflicts amicably (Chang et al., 2004Karnyshev et. al, 2014). Such manifestations of harmonious cross-group relations are related to some of the objectives of ETP like enhancement of democratic culture, and shared understanding and cooperation among students from pre-school to HEIs (MoE, 1994).

Freire & Shor (1987) contend, the role of education is not mere transfer of knowledge to students but rather instilling indispensable cognitive qualities such as “...action, critical reflection, curiosity, demanding inquiry, uneasiness, uncertainty.” (p.8). It is only when education serve such purposes, educational establishments can produce citizens who can stand for superordinate goals like equity, equality, and social change (Kridel, 2010). For this reason, the 1994 ETP’s goal of producing students who are conscious of concepts like democracy, equity, and equality—words that appear more than twice in the document—is a recipe for realizing the real purpose of education.

Table 17

Elements of Students Inter-ethnic Relations in the Education and Training Policy

	Words, phrases or concepts related to positive IER	Word, phrase or concept frequency	Contexts used
1	Respect for human rights	Two times	The role of education (p.1, 7)
2	Democratic values/culture	More than three times	The role of education (p.1, 6, 7, 10)
3	Equity	More than two times	The role of education (p.1, 2, 10)
4	Mutual understanding	One time	The role of education (p.1)
5	Cooperation	One time	The role of education (p.2)
6	Equality	Three times	The role of education (p.1, 7, 10)
7	Peace/peaceful conflict resolution	Two times	The role of education (p.7, 10)
8	Discipline	One time	>>
9	Tolerance	One time	The role of education (p.10)
10	Unity	One time	>>
11	Dignity	One time	>>

Note. Adopted from MoE (1994). (Summarized by the researcher)

4.2.2. Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs)

Concepts that are frequently mentioned under the four ESDPs relevant to IER are democracy, respect, equity, human rights and peace (*see* Table 18). Producing graduates who adhere to such values seem to be among the main objectives of ESDPs. Particularly, the presence of peaceful and stable environment is one of the assumptions for the implementation of ESDPs particularly ESDP IV (MoE, 2010) and special emphasis was given to peace building within the implementation phase of ESDP V (MoE, 2015). However cross-group intolerance and peace-less situations have occurred before and after the issuance of ESDP IV and V in Ethiopian public HEIs (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010). However, these issues are not identified as significant challenges within the HES, and neither ESDP IV (MoE, 2010) nor ESDP V (MoE, 2015) offer any potential solutions.

Peace advocates non-violence, transformation of unpleasant relationships, and creation of a new reality through joint efforts of conflictants (Galtung, 2007). This can be achieved when individuals with different identities and interests treat one another fairly, respect and understand one another, act morally in an intergroup context, and deliberate before making decisions (Hurtado et al., 2015; Koriakina, 2019). Although the need for such a state of affairs in educational institutions is addressed in ESDP texts, there is a lack of information regarding how this can be implemented in the context of Ethiopian HEIs.

Equity is another crucial factor that pertains to students’ IER, as it is mentioned more than three times in each ESDP document. MoE (2002) defined equity as “significant improvements in access and coverage” (p.10). This goal, which the MoE called "geographical equity” in its 2002 article, is more pertinent to the equity study at hand (p. 3). According to Abebaw (2014), “eight new universities were established by merging and/or upgrading existing colleges and institutes” during the ESDP I and II implementation phase. After ten years, this number increased to 33 universities (MoE, 2015). This contributed for compositional diversity of learners, which is a minimum requirement for positive IER of students in multi-ethnic public campuses.

Table 18

Elements of Students Inter-ethnic Relations in the ESDP Documents

ESDPs	Words, phrases or concepts related to CoC	Frequency (in number)	Contexts used
ESDP II	Democratic values/democratization	More than three times	Producing students with basic knowledge of democratic values (p.12, 21, 28, 33)
	Human rights	Two times	Producing students who respect human rights (p.12, 21)
			Raise health awareness (p.35)
	Equity	More than three times	Ensuring gender equity and access to education (p.1, 3, 10, 35)
Respect	Two times	To produce students who respect democratic values, human rights and the constitution (p.12, 19)	

ESDP III	Democratic society/ values/governance/	More than three times	The need to produce students with democratic values and democratic governance in HEIs (p.7, 22, 25, 34, 61)
	Human rights	Two times	Education is a human rights issue (p.25, 26)
	Equity	More than five times	Ensuring access at all levels of education (p.2, 6, 8, 12, 31, 34, 40)
	Discipline	More than three times	The mission of education sector is to produce disciplined generation (p.6, 24, 30, 37)
	Respect	Two times	The role of civic and ethical education is to produce students who respect democratic values and human rights (p.25, 31)
ESDP IV	Democratic/democratic governance	More than three times	Ensure democratic governance at all levels of education and produce democratic work force (p.38, 86)
	Equity	More than five times	Reaching to marginalized and unreached (p.6, 10, 11, 12)
	Peace	Four times	Enabler to implement ESDP IV (p.104)
ESDP V	Democratic nation/values	Three times	Producing students with democratic values (p.611, 33, 102))
	Human right	One time	Produce students who respect human rights (p.33)
	Equity	More than five times	Expanding access to education (p.14, 17, 21, 24, 103)
	Peace building/peace education/	Four times	Curricular reform to insert peace values to create tolerant and cooperative citizenry (p.55, 60, 63, 64)

Note. MoE (1996, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2015). (Summarized by the researcher)

4.2.3. Higher Education Proclamations: The 2003, 2009 and 2019

Hereunder, how the three proclamations entertain IER issues is explained along with the context it was used. Terms that seem relevant to IER of students were peace, respect, democracy, fairness, ethnics, discrimination, and cultural diversity (*see* Table 19).

Table 19

Elements of Students Inter-ethnic Relations in Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamations

Students IER related terms	2003 Proclamation		2009 Proclamation		2019 Proclamation	
	Context used	frequency	Context used	Frequency	Context used	frequency
Peace	-	-	Students should seek redress through peaceful means (p. 5003)	Two times	HEIs are responsible to instill knowledge of peace (p. 11448). Students are allowed to express their views and complaints peacefully (p.11474, 11476)	Four times
Respect	One objective of HEIs (p.2237). Students have the duty to respect ideas of fellows (p.2242)	Two times	Students should respect academic staff and management and the rights of others in or outside classroom (p.5001-5003)	More than three times	Respect academic staff and management process and constitutional rights of academic and support staff and other students (p.11475-11476)	More than two times
Democratic culture/process	Students should be cultivated by democratic culture (p.2241)	One time	One of the objectives of HEIs (p.4979)	One time	One of the objectives of HEIs (p.11448, 11451)	Two times
Fairness	-	-	Is among the guiding values of HEIs (p.4981). Students should be treated fairly in teacher-student relationship (p.5001)	More than three times	Is among the guiding values of HEIs (p.11450). Students deserve to be treated fairly in teacher-student relationship (p.11474)	More than two times

Pursuit of truth	-	-	Is among the guiding values of HEIs (p.4981). Students have the right to search for truth in the teaching-learning and research (p.4981)	Three times	Is among the guiding values of HEIs (p.11450). Search for truth in the teaching-learning and research processes (p.11474)	Three times
Ethical act	Students should refrain from unethical act (p.2242)	One time	Students should refrain from unethical act (p.5003)	More than three times	One of the guiding values of HEIs (p.11451)	More than two times
Discrimination/ Harassment	-	-	Students should be free from discrimination or harassment (p.5001)	One time	Students should be free from discrimination or harassment (p.11474)	Two times
Cultural diversity/multiculturalism	-	-	Upholding multicultural campus community is among the objectives of HEIs (p.4979). Multiculturalism is the guiding values of HEIs (p.4981).	More than two times	One of the guiding values of HEIs (p.11451)	One time

Note. FDRE HEIs Proclamations (2003, 2009, 2019). Summarized by the researcher

Positive expressions of opinions and grievances seem to facilitate effective and efficient implementations of HEIs academic, research, and community service missions. Respect, tolerance, democracy, multiculturalism, ethics, justice, fairness, and the lack of discrimination are essential for achieving this (Al Majali & Alkhaaldi, 2020; Czepil et al., 2019; Hay & Marais, 2011). The inputs for positive cross-group relations are stated differently in each proclamation: students are to seek redress through peaceful means (FDRE, 2019; 2009); acquire knowledge of peace, democracy and cultural diversity (FDRE, 2019); respect others regardless of their identity (FDRE, 2019; 2009; 2003); seek out and live by the truth (FDRE, 2019; 2009); and refrain from unethical

behavior (FDRE, 2009; 2003). Therefore, the proclamations emphasize students' rights and duties to understand and uphold the ideals necessary to survive in a diverse campus community. Research from US universities (Hurtado et al., 1999) also confirms that institutional legal frameworks promote inter-ethnic equality, assisting students in navigating diversity.

4.2.4. Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap

“*Unity in diversity*” is a manifestation of harmony among diversified individuals. This requires exposure of the youth in culturally diversified environment, deepening their knowledge about out-groups culture and the benefits to live in diverse settings which paves the way to positive interethnic and cultural dialogue (Gurin et al., 2002; Milem et al., 2005; Savchits et al., 2018). This will result in growing tolerance, which is integral to peaceful co-existence in diversified settings (Czepil et al., 2019; Koriakina, 2019; Lewis, 2016).

Unity in diversity, is however, a missing element among students within HEIs considering growing rate of antagonism among students from diversified ethnic backgrounds (Abera, 2010; Abebaw, 2014; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). It is cognizant of this fact, the roadmap (Tirussew et al., 2018) states, “while universities have exercised to promote diversity, none of the Ethiopian universities have activities to promote unity” (p.51). Thus, recognition of this fact in the roadmap is likely to indicate commitment towards promotion of approaches to harmony among diversified groups. On the other hand, the roadmap's failure to recognize the numerous violent incidents that have occurred on campus over the years and to only recognize gender-based violence (*see* Table 19, no. 7) appears to cast doubt on the government's pledge to achieving unity in diversity.

Table 20

Elements of Students Inter-ethnic Relations in the Education Sector Development Roadmap

	Words, phrases or concepts related to IER of students	Word, phrase or concept frequency	Contexts used
1	Peace	Two times	Grand objective of Ethiopia is attaining peace (p.3)
			Educational policy of Ethiopia should be revisited to envisage producing students who imbibe peace values (p.93)
2	Democratic system/commitment	More than three times	The role of education is to realize democracy through producing students' with democratic commitment (p.3, 34, 92)
3	Respect	One time	Learning activities that cultivate mutual respect is required (p.12)
4	Cooperation	More than three times	Learning activities that cultivate cooperation is required (p.12). Cooperation of universities with local and international stakeholders is critical (p.71, 78)
5	Ethics	More than three times	Learning activities that cultivate ethics is required (p.12).
6	Equity	More than three times	Expanding access and ensure inclusion (p.14, 30, 49)
7	Violence	One time	Gender based violence is a manifestation of unsafe educational environment (p.16)
8	Unity in diversity	More than five times	Promotion if diversity in the education system fail to promote unity (p.20, 32, 34)

Note. Extracted from Tirussew et al. (2018). Summarized by the researcher

4.2.5. Higher Education 10 Years Development Plan

One of the goals in the 10 year development plan was to ensure holistic student learning (MoSHE, 2021). Holistic student development acquires problem-solving ability, interpersonal competence, humanity sentiment, leadership capacity, ethics, civic virtues, and adaptability (Strydom et al., 2020) that result in understanding and positive interaction among diversified student population. Galtung (2007) argued that forsaking ‘we vs. them’ attitude, polarized behavior, hatred and aggression are required to transform violent situations and ensure harmony. One challenge in Ethiopian public HEIs is also failure of students’ to go beyond narrow and violent ways of thinking (Yonas, 2019a). Therefore, MoSHE’s goal of instilling in students a sense of humanity,

multicultural competency, ethics, and civic virtues shows hope for developing students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in a way that responds to cross-group relational challenges.

4.2.6. University Senate's Legislations

Senate legislations are drafted based on higher education proclamations and policies. Accordingly, terms related to IER of students- peace, respect, fairness, democracy, ethics, tolerance for diversity, freedom of expression of ideas, discrimination, harassment and defamation, ethno-centrism or ethnic clashes and inclusivity or exclusivity of club membership are identified in universities senate legislations. The legislations generally imply, universities have clearly put standards of knowledge, attitude and behavior for students to survive in a diversified environment.

For instance, with respect to defamation, UoG senate legislation (2013) defines the concept as “say or write things, which are untrue about another, or if true, are said or written with the sole intent of injuring his standing and reputation” (p.208). This prohibition is intended to encourage students to be critical of the data they may possess to and they will be able to acquire the ‘right knowledge about others through this process of inquiry, as Allport (1954) describes. The inclusion of defamation law in AAU, AU, and UoG legislations therefore allows students to be curious about information credibility and to respect the dignity of others, which is one of the main goals of ETP (1994). The law of defamation, if effectively enforced, can open the door to ‘equality of status and open communication’, because the sources of negative IER on public campuses are, among other things, superior view of own ethnic group and failure to connect with students from out-groups (Abebaw, 2019; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Zekarias, 2020).

A strong devotion to one's own ethnic group likely result in out-group hostility and cross-group violence (Habtamu, 1998). In order to prohibit occurrence of such incidents, HEIs are recommended to draft laws that limit competition and discrimination of any kind (Hurtado et al., 1999; Milem et al., 2005). The fact that AU and UoG legislations have designated ethnic clashes and ethnocentric sentiments as serious violations of ethical conduct is therefore a commendable effort. Moreover, prohibition on discrimination and hate speech based on identity as well as tolerance and seeking redress through non-violent means as expressed in the three universities legislations, respond to alleviation of any form of extreme views on campus. Verkuyten (2005)

also affirm, infrastructures that permeate equal opportunity of differing ethnic groups can alleviate violent form of ethnocentric expression.

Free expression of ideas is among the democratic rights of Ethiopian public university students (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; UoG, 2013). This includes the freedom to peacefully express their concerns to university administration through various channels and receive a suitable response. However, previous research revealed that Ethiopian public university administration lacks a democratic platform to meet with students in person and give them a chance to voice their opinions, as demonstrated by AAU (Yonas, 2019) and Bahirdar (Abebaw, 2014), among other institutions. Due to this, students will resort to unethnical means of addressing the challenges they face which has far reaching consequence on the education process (Miressa, 2018). Such actions make one wonder if including ‘free expression of ideas’ in senate legislation is merely a formality rather than a practical application.

The lack of discrimination against members based on ethnic identification is one of the keys to interethnic cooperation in an inter-group platform (Lewis, 2016; Pettigrew et al., 2011). The university administration discourages partiality (see Table 20), which is one of the pillars of maintaining equal status among students from different ethnic backgrounds, as evidenced by the senate legislation of AAU, AU, and UoG that specifically refers to membership in SOs regardless of any form of identity (*see* Table 21, last row). Tolerance, justice, and respect are reflected in such an inclusive approach.

Table 21

Elements of Students Inter-ethnic Relations in Senate Legislations

<i>Terms related to students IER</i>	AAU		AU		UoG	
	<i>Context used</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Context used</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Context used</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Peace	Students seek redress through peaceful means (p. 155)	One time	Students seek redress through peaceful means (p. 242)	One time	Integral to university’s operations (p.iv) and a duty of academic staff (p.33)	Three times

Respect	Respect for country's laws, university's laws and campus community (p.154, 156). SO has a duty to promote mutual respect (p.161)	More than four times	Respect for country's laws, university's laws and campus community is mandatory (p.242).	More than three times	Students (p.205), SOs (p.214) and academic staff (p.33) are responsible to respect the constitution and university laws.	More than three times
Fairness	Fair treatment in teacher-student relations (p.154)	One time	Students have the right for fair treatment in teacher-student relations (p.241)	One time	Duty of offices of Gender, HIV/AIDs and Special Needs (p.193)	More than three times
Democracy	SO is a space for students' to practice democracy (p.160-162)	More than two times	SO is a space for students' to practice democracy (p.248-252)	More than three times	Integral to university's operations (p.iv). Role of SOs. (p.210)	More than two times
Ethics	Instigation of violence, hate speech and theft is unethical (p.155)	More than two times	Instigation of violence, hate speech and theft is unethical (p.242)	More than two times	Code of Conducts Committee is available (p.10, 29-30). Instigation of violence, hate speech and theft is unethical (p.206)	More than two times
Tolerance for diversity	Underpinned campus system (p.8, p.17). Students are obliged to demonstrate it (p.156)	More than two times	Underpinned campus system (p.193). Students (p.240) and SOs (p.248) are obliged to demonstrate it	Three times	Underpinned campus system (p.6, 25, 103, 193).	Four times
Free expression of ideas	Underpinned campus system (p.1). Rights of students (p.154)	More than two times	Right of students' (p.252-253)	Two times	Underpinned campus system (p.iv). Right of students' (p.205)	More than two times
Discrimination and harassment	Discrimination, harassment, verbal and physical violence, are prohibited (p.154, 157)	More than two times	Are forbidden acts (p.241)	More than two times	Are forbidden acts (p.33, 80, 193)	More than two times

Defamation	A breach of ethical code (p.158)	More than two times	A breach of ethical code (p.244)	One time	A breach of ethical code (p.208)	One time
Ethno-centrism/ Ethnic clash	-	-	Ethnic clash is ethical code (p.91)	One time	Promotion of ethno-centrism is prohibited (p.33)	One time
Memberships in SOs	Memberships is irrespective of identity (p.162)	Two times	No restriction on identity basis (p.252)	One time	Memberships in SO shall be inclusive (p.210-211)	Two times

Note. Adopted from AAU (2019), AU (2019) and UoG (2013) Senate Legislations. Summarized by the researcher

4.3. Types of Co-curricular Programs Implied to Build IER of Students in Higher Education Legal Frameworks

The 1994 ETP of Ethiopia and the 2021 Development Plan have not incorporated CoCPs as implementation strategies to achieve the objectives stated within the documents (*see* sections 4.2.1. and 4.2.5. respectively). Even though ESDPs fairly discuss CoCPs, the focus was mainly using this alternative curriculum to teach about cross cutting uses, mostly HIV/AIDS, not necessarily to (re)build students relations. Hence, this sub-section discussed the three HES proclamations, the Education Development Roadmap and selected university senate legislations.

4.3.1. Higher Education Proclamations: The 2003, 2009 and 2019

The three proclamations list responsibilities, objectives, and guiding values that resonate with IER of students. To guarantee execution, however, different tools and programs shall be employed. As briefly discussed in chapter two, CoCPs can serve as one entry point to teach students about respect, tolerance, reasoning, democratic values, multiculturalism, ethics, and peaceful-co-existence (Denson, 2009; Dhanmeher, 2014; Savchits et al., 2017; Thornton et al., 2009; Ward, 2017). Hence, it is important to assess which strategies are identified as possible learning outlets to teach such virtues within the proclamations.

Student union, trainings/workshops and community services are identified under the proclamations to achieve the objective of HEIs directly or indirectly. Even though it is difficult to say these CoC platforms are explained in a way they contribute to positive IER of students, trainings/workshops are considered as tools to impart knowledge on specific issues associated with real societal problems within the legislations of AAU (2019), AU (2019) and UoG (2013). Since issues of intolerance and diversity are real concerns of HEIs (Abebaw, 2014, 2019; Yonas, 2019a; Zekarias, 2020), there might be a possibility to discuss these issues through such CoC outlets. On the other hand, the fact that whether trainings and workshops are presented as supplementary to attain academic objectives may put the viability of these strategies as CoC tools (*see* sections 4.2.3. and 4.2.6.).

4.3.2. Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30)

Diversity need to be linked with academic and civic mission of universities (Hurtado, 2007). Initially, it is important to have proportional representation of diverse student groups in universities (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado et al., 1999; Hurtado, 2001; Hurtado et al., 2008; Kuh et al., 1994; Milem et al., 2005) to achieve this. Ethiopian HEIs responded to this by expanding access to tertiary education through targeting regions as equity groups (Hailemariam, 2016; MoE, 2002, 2015). However, in order to create opportunity for enhanced inter-ethnic interaction among students of varying identity, intentionally established structures and programs are necessitated (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013). Co-curricular interaction fit to this category.

However, the roadmap revealed that “none of the Ethiopian universities have activities to promote unity” (Tirussew et al., 2018, p.51). And it is recommended that CoCPs are essential tools to promote unity among diverse students by enhancing their “cognitive and non-cognitive skills and having higher-order thinking skills such as critical, creative, and problem-solving thinking” that have a spillover effect in the learning environment of universities (Tirussew et al., 2018, p.53). This recommendation is in alignment with findings of past studies like that of Abebaw (2014), Abebe (2015), Miressa, (2018), and Zekarias (2020). However, the significance of each CoC program or activity is not equal (Rubin et al., 2002). Therefore, the roadmap was expected to show the kind of CoCPs that result unity.

4.3.3. University Senate's Legislations

Senate legislations of AAU, AU and UoG showed that, student organizations play a role in facilitating cross-group behavior through presenting students concerns in peaceful manner, promoting mutual respect present and involve in deliberations of students grievances and promote tolerance for diverse opinions, and stimulate democratic culture. These contributions agree with the argument of Elias & Drea (2013) which notes that students can learn more through their engagement in student-run groups. Engagement in rational discourse at national and global levels (AAU, 2019) are outlined as entry points to dismantle limited way of thinking, promote understanding and build peace.

The possibilities of teaching about peace through panel discussions, lectures, debates, films, art exhibitions, seminars, trips, etc. is further explained by student organization-related articles inside the senate legislations. These articles encourage development tolerance, respect, collaboration, and adherence to societal concerns. As stated by Stellenbosch University (2018), as diversity-related intolerance is a significant issue in public HEIs, it is possible to use these forums to avoid fixed viewpoints and become social change agents. However, the chosen university senate legislations, like the 2018 roadmap, do not expressly tie a certain type of CoC activity to positive inter-ethnic behaviors like rational behavior.

The discussions in the chapter generally indicate, the importance of CoCPs in imparting positive values in relation to peaceful co-existence among Ethiopian universities context has been acknowledged. However, it is less clear how such engagements may support students in developing positive interethnic relationships that will help them move beyond ethnocentric attitudes and behavior. This is exemplified by ethnic based membership (Hailemariam, 2016), inter-ethnic competition to get recognition in CoC platforms (Abera 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Yonas, 2019) and lack of budget to run CoCAs (Ayele, 2007; Abebaw, 2014; Hailemariam, 2016) in AAU and other universities.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. THE NATURE OF STUDENTS INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN ETHIOPIAN UNIVERSITIES

5.1. Ethnic Background of Respondents

As explained briefly under chapter two, compositional diversity is among the prerequisites to form positive IER among students on campus grounds. One way of checking the presence of such scenario is through analyzing the ethnic demographic data of students. As clearly depicted under Table 22, majority of the respondents (60.7%) have not mentioned to which ethnic group they belong to. However, among those who wrote their ethnicity, 12.3% were Oromos, 9.9% were Amharas, 3.6% were Tigre, 2.4% were Wolaita, and 2.1% were Somali. Keffa students, on the other hand, make up 1.8% of the total, as do Afar students. Students from Sidama account for 1.2%, as do Berta's. Although the quantitative data suggests that compositional diversity does exist, the fact that more than 60% of students were unable to identify their ethnic group does not adequately convey the extent of diversity in AAU, AU, and UoG.

Table 22

Ethnic Background of Respondents

S/N	Enthic group of respondents	Frequency	Percent
1	Amhara	33	9.9
2	Afar	6	1.8
3	Benishangul-Gumuz (Berta)	4	1.2
4	Gambella (Anuak)	5	1.5
5	Harari	5	1.5
6	No reposnse	202	60.7
7	Oromo	41	12.3
8	Somali	7	2.1
9	Sidama	4	1.2
10	SNNPR (Wolaita)	8	2.4

11	South West Ethiopia (Keffa)	6	1.8
12	Tigre	12	3.6
Total		333	100.0

Reluctance to mention one's ethnic group affiliation is not a new phenomenon among Ethiopian public university students (Abera, 2010; Ashebir & Belay, 2020; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013;). However, the reason behind the reluctance was not well exploited in previous research. In order to get to the bottom of this, the researcher extended the discussion with students when asking the first interview question- ‘how do you describe ethnicity and ethnic identity?’ (see Appendix III). As a result, it was revealed that there are students who have strong ethnic consciousness, those who have mixed views of ethnicity, and those who have neutral views of ethnicity.

Students with Fixed Views of Ethnicity

Students’ with strong ethnic consciousness are those who consider ethnic division as natural. AAS1 for instance specified, “Ethnicity is natural and ethnic groups share peculiar language, customs and territory.” This fits to Geertz’s 1973 definition. Moreover, these students have superior views of one’s own ethnic group and have strong devotion to in-group. For instance, AUS3 said “ethnic identity gives me a sense of security because my group members protect me.” Jenkins (2008) argued, own-group affection makes one believe in-groups as confidant and armor. Geertz (1973) adds, alike groups shared sentiment of safety. Hence, students’ emotional security due to ethnic identity seems to agree with the literature. The views of the two students were shared by AAS3, 5, AUS1, US1, 3 fit to primordial assertion of TGE (1992).

Another common character shared by students with fixed views is out-group loathing and readiness to take violatate action against out-group members. AUS3 from Amhara region for instance strongly mentioend, “We are betrayed especially by Oromo and Tigre”; AAS5 from Tigray said, “Everybody hated Tigray [with a countenance *sadness*] and people there are suffering”; AAS3 from Amhara region mentioned “I am my brother’s keeper” to show in-group devotion; and AUS1 claimed: “We are here to defend Oromo students.” Literatures suggest, strong ethnic consciousness is likely influenced by ethno-political and socio-political tension in the country (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Kuttig et al., 2020; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015). Past scholarship in Ethiopian HEIs context also affirm, politicization of ethnicity (Abebaw, 2019) and lack of equal footing of

diversified cultures (Yonas, 2019) significantly shaped students perceptions of ethnicity and the way they address ethnic related issues.

Strong ethnic consciousness is referred to as ethnic fanaticism or isolationism in the broader literature (Vagaeva et al., 2020). The natural characterization of ethnic identification and the belief that there are irreconcilable differences between various ethnic groups are typically characteristics of this (Verkuyten, 2005; Toft, 2003). Such students are typically referred to as ‘students with extreme views’ in local scholarship from the past (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013), and students from the current study call them ‘students with fixed views’ of ethnicity. These students typically display their ethnic affiliation with confidence.

Students with Mixed Views of Ethnicity

Students with mixed views of ethnicity are those who are troubled to assign one ethnic identity to themselves because their family structure and their living situation embrace mixed ethnicity. A fourth year Civil Engineering students from Oromia (US2) for instance remarked, “I am from Oromia but my father is Tigre and my mother is Amhara. I love the three cultures. I do not believe in ethnic purity.” AUS4 said, “I am Amhara but we lived with Oromo, Tigre and SNNP people. I am a mix of these cultures.” Such belief is shared by AAS2, 4, 8; AUS2, 5, 7 and U4, 7. Interaction makes ethnic boundaries blurred (Barth, 1969) and identity optional and multiple (Nagel, 1994; Waters, 1990). In Ethiopia, transmissibility of cultures contributed for mixed ethnic affiliation (Alemu, 2018; Habtamu et al, 1997; Taye, 2019). Hence, students’ enthusiasm for mixed ethnicity might be the reflection of socio-cultural reality on the ground.

For official purposes, Ethiopian public university students who identify as ‘mixed ethnicity’ typically prefer to use the term ‘*Ethiopian*,’ but they would like to have the option to select ‘mixed ethnic identity’ when filling out official forms. However, ‘mixed ethnicity’ is unpopular form of ethnic identification in legal terms in Ethiopia. Due to this, those who came from mixed families are confused on how to identify themselves or are obliged to choose one parent’s ethnic line. Related to this, AUS 7 mentioned, “students are obliged to choose one ethnic group from the mother or father side just for the sake of filling forms. This makes individuals to prefer one over

the other with unclear criterion and leads to frustration. The question of ethnicity is pointless.” Such perspectives are shared by AAS 4 and US 2 among others

Students with Neutral Views of Ethnicity

Students with neutral views of ethnicity are those who consciously choose not to affiliate themselves to any of the ethnic groups. This is mostly because they consider ethnicity as elite-driven and consider politicians use ethnicity as an instrument of advancing political and economic agenda (AAS 6, 7, AUS 6, 8 and US 6, 8). Some students have reflected, they prefer to write “Ethiopian” for official purposes but truly believe they are citizens of the world and their true identity is *humanity* (AAS6, 8; AUS6, 8; US5, 6, 8). AAS6 pronounced, “Politicians use ethnic identity to stay in power and I am sickened by them. Humanity should be our identification.” US8 concurs, “Ethnic identity is politician’s weapon. My identity is humanity!” says he. AAS7, AUS6, 8 and US6 supported elite-driven notion. It is widely argued, oppressor-oppressed discourse which create polarized views and conflicts in Ethiopia is the work of elites (Yonas, 2019). According to Almeu (2018), ‘ethnic switching’ is a reality in Ethiopian politics, where elites change their identities for political and economic gain. Hence, students’ elite-driven notion of ethnicity seems to agree with the literature.

Students with ‘neutral’ views claim, the issue of ethnicity is highly politicized and used as a primary identity marker in Ethiopia because elites knew this is a sensitive factor to mobilize the mass. Since political environment is dynamic, political entrepreneurs may choose to affiliate or refuse to affiliate to a certain ethnic identity depending on cost-benefit analysis (Bizumic, 2012; Yeghiazaryan, 2018). In such fluidity, students’ neutral stance about ethnic identity might make sense. Such indifferent view of ethnicity is not however a new phenomenon for HEIs in Ethiopia (Anteneh, 2012) and abroad (Hurtado, 2008). Vagaeva and colleagues (2020) refer such irrelevant view of ethnicity as “ethnic indifference” (p.325).

When asked about their ethnic identity, students who hold ‘mixed’ or ‘neutral’ views prefer to write their citizenship or completely avoid the question, according to the interview results. The fact that approximately 60.7% of study participants did not answer the question about their ethnic

identity suggests that the majority of students belong to the category of mixed or neutral ethnic views.

5.2. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students

As briefly discussed in chapter two, students meet and interact either positively or negatively in different settings including classrooms, students’ cafeteria, restrooms, cultural festivities, over social media, discussion sessions on sensitive topics and during violent incidents. Hence, the direction of interaction in these settings is analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively in the current study. Hence, results from Q-Aand interviews that complement or contradict each other are presented whenever appropriate. It is to be noted that, statistical mean results shall be scaled based on weighted mean Likert Scale under Table 11.

5.2.1. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Classrooms

In this sub-section, statistical results and qualitative findings with respect to students IER in classrooms are presented. Under this construct, three questions were forwarded (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). The mean value of IER of students in classrooms showed 3.45 (*see* Table 23), which implies majority of students agree that there is reservation to work in group projects with out-group members, in-group opinion dominate group discussions and intra-group friendship is prevalent in classrooms. This finding is consistent with previous literatures on Ethiopian public HEIs (Abebaw, 2023; Anteneh, 2012; Demewoz, 2012; Mekonnen, 2013).

Table 23

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ in Classrooms

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	3.4515	1.35847

Even though statistical findings largely portray working in group projects with students from varied ethnic background is less likely, qualitative research findings showed that, relations among students from varied ethnic background has positive and negative manifestations. Students from AAU, AU and UoG stated that there are fellows that usually emphasize ethnic singularity, purity,

superiority and solidarity and resent out-groups or consider them as threats. Such out-group rejection of out-groups and disrespecting others ideas in classrooms in multi-ethnic work group is against the objectives of HEIs (*see* section 4.3.3.). It is to address lack of collaboration among students of difference, Hurtado (2007) calls on universities to work to help students break free from “provincial” thinking and learn the worldviews of their peers from diverse backgrounds (p.189). In the current study, students with fixed ethnic views typically propagate a lack of collaboration in the classroom (AAS2, 8; AUS5, 7; US2, 4).

Interview results further showed that, lack of language proficiency in Amharic and English languages is another limiting factor for classroom group projects to hold mono-ethnic nature (AAS2, AUS6 and US8). AUI2 said “Majority is fluent in their ethnic language and some do not want to learn Amharic or refuse to speak. So, they aspire to work within their regions.” [Shared by AAS2, 4; AUS4, 7 and US2]. The fact that university students prefer to work with fellows from own ethnic group is due to ethnic language proficiency has been mentioned in previous studies in Bahir Dar (Abebaw, 2014), Addis Ababa (Abera, 2010), Jimma (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013) and Hawassa (Tesfaye, 2012) universities. In order to overcome such barriers, it is suggested to prepare language tutorial classes within capuses for students to learn the working language of universities and share similar vernaculars to facilitate communication (Nakamura, 2013; Taaliu, 2017).

On the positive side, there are students who are open to have conversation with fellows irrespective of their ethnic origin and form good classroom acquaintance. For these students, the most important thing is achievement and they associate with those who aspire to know more about the subject matter and earn good grades. US2 for instance remarked,

Students join universities to have wider knowledge on the area they aspire to excel. Hence, they should be open to work with anyone who has similar vision to them. Personally, I never thought of somebody’s place of origin for the last four years. My concern is to get the most out of classroom and non-classroom experience. And I am not the only one who thinks like this.

The viewpoints of US2 have been shared by AAS6, AUS6, US6 and AU2. Instructors from each university also mentioned, there are students who are sociable with everybody and persuade others

to work together and create a good classroom atmosphere. AUI2 for instance remarked that, “over the years I have met many students who are reserved to form association with others who came from a different region than theirs. On the contrary, I have taught students who are extraordinarily in organizing the class to focus on education and work in teams irrespective of one’s ethnic background. However, such students are not many.” Such goal-oriented coalition among students has been exhibited in Addis Ababa (Abera, 2010) and Jimma (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013) universities in the past. According to the interview results, the majority of students who overlook ethnic identification in classroom groupings came from mixed families and hold a neutral position on ethnicity. Ashebir & Belay (2020) argue students in these category are usually from urban areas.

5.2.2. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Dormitories

Here, statistical results and qualitative findings regarding students IER in residence halls are presented. Under this construct, three questions were crafted (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). Descriptive statistics showed that, the mean value for IER of students in dormitories is 3.42. This implies, majority of respondents agree ethnic affiliation guide dormitory friendship; students are discriminated by out-group fellows for exercising ethnic culture and there is resistance to learn ethnic cultures of dorm-mates which blocks knowledge transfer.

Table 24

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ in Dormitories

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	3.4214	1.35311

Findings from previous studies also indicate students change dorm rooms to be with intra-group members, though the official dormitory placement approach is in favor of residence hall compositional diversity (Mustapha et al., 2009; Tey et al., 2009). Similar findings have been exhibited in Ethiopian HEIs (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). Such non-systematic dormitory placement strategy on the other hand negatively affects students’ cross-ethnic interaction and exchange of ideas and traditions amongst themselves (Allport, 1954; Vaughan, 2003). Even though qualitative findings supported mono-ethnic acquaintances are

common in student's dormitories, the number of students who like to socialize with fellows from ethnic groups different from theirs are not few. Responses of AUS5 clearly show this:

A number of students feel safer to stay with co-ethnics in dorm rooms. Some like to learn something new than what they already know. For instance, I prefer to stay with students from other regions than Tigray because I already know what is going on around there. Since the university rule is not strict on dormitory placement, you can be with anyone you like. I intentionally choose to be in dormitory with diversified group [both in ethnic affiliation and field of study) and I am learning a lot. My dorm mates also have similar interest like mine.

One of the mechanisms to ensure campus diversity and promote positive IGR of students is through promoting arbitrary placement of students in residence halls (Gurn et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2001). By staying together for longer period, no matter how rigid they are, students try to relinquish their limited views and communicate and share experiences and resources to survive campus life. Practically, bringing ethnically diverse students together for extended period of time in dormitories and other campus engagements has brought positive relations in US (Allport, 1954) and Australian (Belford, 2017) universities. However, such favorable outcomes are not solely dependent on student's free will but on deliberate and systematic decisions of university management (Allport, 1954; Lopez, 2004; Tian, 2019; Vaughan, 2003).

Even though the motivation of students like AUS5 to meet ethnically diverse students is commendable, such optimism cannot be sustained unless supported by university policy and procedures. Interview with management staff members from Student Dean's Office also confirm there are unofficial placement techniques that promote homogeneity in dormitories (AAM2, AUM2, UM2). These include, but are not limited to, changing dorm rooms because they are friends with proctors or are affiliated with them ethnically. This could be one of the numerous lines of evidence Yonas (2019) used to support his argument that Ethiopian public HEIs are homogeneous spaces. Despite all these, it is to be noted that, alphabet-based dormitory assignment is also practiced in universities to facilitate cross-ethnic contact in residence halls (Mesfin & Angela, 2021). Such practice is also apparent in AAU, AU and UoG.

5.2.3. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Students’ Cafeteria

Statistical results and qualitative findings regarding students IER in student’s cafeteria are summarized below. With regard to IER in cafeteria service, two questions were crafted (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). Accordingly, descriptive statistics results showed that, weighted mean for IER of students in Cafeteria account to 3.08 (*see* Table 25). This signifies, majority of students neither agree nor disagree IER in cafeteria service is overwhelmed by ethnic affiliation.

Table 25

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ in Cafeteria

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	3.0886	1.11417

Cafeteria service provision in Ethiopian public HEIs has been a source of dissatisfaction (Abebaw, 2014; Mesfin & Ford, 2021). Moreover, it is amongst the top five places where inter-personal conflicts occur on campus (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017) and students’ dinning hall seating arrangements have been ethnicized where students have meals within ethnic cliques (Abera, 2010; Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023). Some of the 2020 nation-wide campus violence also started in or around students’ cafeteria (CARD, 2020). Considering such reputation of cafeteria service, it seems surprising statistical results showed students are indifferent about IER of students in this setting.

Findings from interview sessions on the other hand showed, meal time companionship based on ethnic affiliation is vividly observed in students’ cafeteria especially among students with extreme views of ethnicity (AAS4, 7; AUS2, 5; US7, 8). In explaining why intra-group association is favored in cafeteria, AAS1 said, “we like to be together not only in cafeteria but everywhere. We have so much in common and we enjoy each other. Plus it is a means of keeping an eye on your in-group mate. If something bad happens, who is going to protect him or her?” A student from Amhara region in AAU (AAS3) further remarked, “I am my brother’s keeper wherever I go. Even in the cafeteria.” Similar assertions have been forwarded by AUS1, 3; US1, 3.

Even though meal time companionship with those whom we are closely familiar with is understandable, ‘from whom are they protecting in-group mates?’ is worrisome. Public higher education institutions in Ethiopia are established with the objective to “produce graduates who acknowledge and respect diversity, promote national harmony and unity, treasure nation’s history and culture” (FDRE, 2019, p.3). Such institutions therefore in turn are expected to provide safety and security to all learners irrespective of their cultural background. However, students with extreme views of ethnicity usually use the term *yegna sew* roughly translated as ‘ours’ to show in-group affection and ignore out-groups. Studies showed, such friend-enemy labeling among students is out of ethnic fear, which is a misconceived belief about out-group from seniors, politics and media (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Zekarias, 2020). Such fear strengthened intra-ethnic bond in different arenas where students meet including cafeteria service (Abera, 2010).

On the other hand, some student interviewees reported that, despite presence of co-ethnic cliques in cafeteria service, it is also a place where students start friendly conversation with whom they do not know closely. US8 for instance remarked, “You may come late and may not get the seat you are used to and share a seat with anyone and talk. Sometimes, such small talk grows to friendship.” In related manner, AAS7 said, “you may share a meal with your classmates whom you share projects for one day and the other day you may be with your regular friends. And other times, your regular friends bring other students from their classroom or dormitory. So it is hard to conclude meal time companionship is mono-ethnic.” Similar views were forwarded by AAS6, AUS3 and US7. Since not all students promote extreme notions of ethnicity, those who are not in this category may not mind sharing a meal with anyone who happens to be in the cafeteria and is sociable enough to start up a conversation.

5.2.4. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in Students’ Restrooms

Under this sub-section, descriptive statistical results and interview findings regarding students IER in student’s restrooms are briefly discussed. In relation to IER in restrooms, three questions were crafted (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). Descriptive results displayed that, mean value for IER of students in restrooms account to 3.05. Hence, majority of students neither agree nor disagree that students relations in restrooms are affected by ethnicity (*see* Table 26).

Table 26

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students' in Students' Restrooms

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.33	4.67	3.0561	.79502

Findings from previous studies showed that- graffiti on the walls and doors of restrooms has been a primary platform for students to voice their views of ethnicity. For instance, Abebaw (2014) considered graffiti in students' toilets as a major source of information to examine students' ethnic related prejudice. Accordingly, he listed statements and phrases that belittle out-groups and glorify own group in Bahirdar University. Such negative form of ethnocentrism was also exhibited in AAU (Mekonnen, 2013; Mulumebet, 2018). According to Missaye (2014), graffiti is used to express opinions in restrooms because students consider them "safe rooms" (p.23). There were also occasions where students were injured in restrooms due to ethnic related arguments (CARD, 2020).

Qualitative findings in this study also indicate that, the walls of both female and male student toilets reflect emotional and aggressive views on various ethnic groups in the country. Particularly, graffiti's on Amhara, Tigre and Oromo ethnic groups are either supporting or ridiculing either of the three (AAS4, AUS4 and US7). Some also indicate, there are times, when students exchange hateful words verbally and even physically fight, particularly in male restrooms. AUS2 said:

This happened usually among students who are from diversified ethnic groups with extreme views of ethnicity. They cannot stand each other and sometimes they insult each other when they meet in rest rooms. But, they are mediated by students who are in the restrooms and it may not excel to physical fight.

Because such incidents do not occur on a daily basis, the likelihood of witnessing one is reduced for each student, which may explain why many students are neutral about witnessing verbal or physical abuse in the restroom. Instructors on the other hand stated that, fights in restrooms have decreased primarily because students' methods of communication have shifted to online, which appears to be a free space for hate speech (AAI1 and 2, AUI1, UI1). The fact that students' modes of communication are not entirely face-to-face, but online communication is also taking up space,

as admitted by students themselves (*see* section 5.2.6). It is obvious that the number of physical fights in such settings will decrease. The fact that university students need to connect is shifted from face-to-face to online in recent years is also supported by Chelysheva & Mikhaleva’s (2020) and Russo et al. (2014) research in Russia and US respectively.

5.2.5. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students during Cultural Exchange Programs

In this sub-section, quantitative and qualitative findings with respect to students IER during cultural festivities are summarized. With respect to IER in cultural exchange programs, four questions were constructed (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). As shown in Table 27, the mean value of 3.5 indicates that the majority of respondents agreed that attendance and practice of out-group cultural ceremonies is disfavored by both intra-group members and out-groups.

Table 27

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ Outside Classroom

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	3.5323	1.41763

Inter-ethnic relation of students is not affected by out-group members but also by in-group members. This is why Pettigrew (1998) argue the need to have separate intra-group dialogue so that members can discuss on how they can alleviate their weaknesses that impede cross-group communication. Accordingly, how students’ interaction with respect to attending cultural festivities and practicing out-group’s traditions, are affected by in-groups and out-groups has been examined. Even though the quantitative data showed that, there is little optimism to embrace cultural ceremonies, interview findings disclosed that, this is not always the case.

Those students with strong views of ethnicity responded that, they prefer to embrace their own ethnic culture and it is up to each student to promote theirs. For instance, AAS1 stated, “We Oromo’s have profound culture and deserve recognition.” AAS4 from Amhara ethnic group further said, “Why do I care about other’s culture? They are trying to eradicate ours. I recommend my fellows to master their culture always.” Supporting this stance, AUS3 from Amhara added,

“We haven’t even finished learning our culture let alone getting to know others traditions.” Views from these students imply, some consider own culture as a center of everything and lose interest to learn from others. Supporting this, AAS6 remarked, “They worship their own and nullify others”. This is pure sickness!”

Having positive outlook for in-group traditions is harmless (Vagaeva et al., 2020). However, venerating own culture to the point it blocks cross-ethnic interaction consolidate prejudice (Bizumic, 2012). The 2018 Seminar on Peace and Global Civil Society (West, 2018) give the responsibility of “creating the next generation of peacebuilders” to HEIs (p.7). This calls for promotion of safe space for students to engage in cultural dialogues and discuss difficult topics and jointly map ways to create culturally sensitive community (Doghonadze & Zoranyan, 2018). To achieve such a climate, the last two Ethiopian higher education proclamations (FDRE, 2009, 2019) envisage that HEIs' daily routines be guided by cultural diversity. Ethiopian HEI students prefer to learn only about their own culture and discriminate against others, therefore contradicts what is expected of them by local and national standards.

On the other hand, students who came from mixed families love to know about others and celebrate and even engage in inter-cultural fun activities like learning traditional diet and dancing. For instance, US6 said, “My friends from Somali showed me how to eat Pasta with sugar (*laughter*) and I teach them how to rap.” A student from Somali in Gondar [US8] said, “My friends from Gondar and Wollo showed me how to do *eskista* [Amhara traditional dancing] and now I outdo them and they are jealous [*laughter*].” A third year Journalism student from AAU (AAS2) further added, “It is those with strong ethnic views that put pressure on others not to enjoy multicultural activities of any kind. The rest of us have no problem. But trust me, they are influential!” Similar experiences of adoption of traditions have been expressed by AUS4 and US2. This illustrates, students with flexible views of ethnicity are open to engage in and learn from cultural festivities.

Regarding intimidation from students with fixed views of ethnic identification, students mentioned that, they pressure those whom they are affiliated ethnically to join their ethnic clique and limit their communication and event attendance with out-groups. AAS4 said, “They lobby you and even construct stories on how you will be hurt by out-groups unless you are protected by in-group.” A student interviewee from Tigary in AU (AUS5) added, “They pressure those outside Addis. And

when you refuse, they call you *mehal safari* [middle roader] and intimidate you.” These remarks therefore indicate, students are pressured to join respective ethnic cliques with extreme views and are expected to think, talk and do as a group. This in turn blocks critical thinking, perspective taking, and empathy that are essential aspects of positive inter-ethnic relations (Czepil et al., 2019; Lopez, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Tamam & Krauss, 2017). It is therefore hard to learn others’ culture in such confined environment.

5.2.6. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students over Social Media

In this sub-section, quantitative and qualitative results with respect to students IER over social media are summarized. Three questions were developed in relation to students' IER via social media (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). A weighted mean value of 3.80 therefore illustrates (*see* Table 28), majority of respondents agreed friendship over social media took mono-ethnic form and message exchanges have discriminatory as well as violent nature.

Table 28

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ over Social media

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	3.8048	1.44821

Social media usage amongst youth generation in general and university students in particular has long been criticized for being less critical and aggressive (Bonderoff, 2017; Chelysheva & Mikhaleva, 2020). Similar results have been recorded in Ethiopia (Yonas, 2019a). Students with strong sights claim, they discuss what they hear and watch with peers usually through *secret* telegram groups [AAS1, 3, 5; AUS 1, 3, US1, 3]. Limited interaction with out-groups makes one’s imagination about them biased (Allport, 1954). Media strengthens such scenario (Russo et al., 2014). This is mostly true in violent contexts where media disseminate falsified and hateful messages as frequently exhibited in Ethiopia (Semir, 2019). Such biased media reports added to polarized view of students in public HEIs (Abebaw, 2019; Zekarias, 2020).

Some students also mentioned, students with extreme views use social media to persuade fellows from their ethnic groups to join ethnic cliques and block others who appreciate out-groups. For instance, AAS2 mentioned, “I am blocked from Oromo in-group telegram secret group because I write positive statement about out-groups....(Laughter).” Social media secret group is available in the three universities and the reason it is called a ‘secret group’ as AUS3 mentioned is because “we share confidential information about our ethnic communities and such information cannot be shared with out-groups. We cannot trust others.” Other students however disclosed that, they call it a secret group not because there is something mysterious about it but because they share hateful messages and have political affiliation (AAS2, 8, AUS5, 7 and US2, 4, 7). Such medium is preferred because it is safer to express overt hostility than face-to-face (Russo et al., 2014).

Student interviews further showed, ethnic-based secret social media groups serve not only dominant groups (Oromia, Amhara, Tigre, and others) but also sub-groups (Wellega, Shoa, Gondar, Gojam, and so on) in AAU, AU and UoG. While mentioning how smaller social circles became a subset of the larger social circle in HEIs, Hurtado et al. (1999) contend congruence of interest between the smaller social circle and larger social circle on campus give the upper hand to influence for the latter. This seems workable in HEIs. Student interviewees mentioned that, students in the smaller circle are also part of the larger group and they stand together when there is a need to defend their larger ethnic group. Standing together to defend the larger group has been demonstrated in previous episodes of ‘conflict’ in Debre Markos and Wolida (Yonas, 2019) and Dembi Dollo and Dire Dawa universities (CARD, 2020) among others.

On the other hand, there are students who use social media for constructive purposes. For instance, students with mixed-ethnic affiliation mentioned that, attending selective media programs that focus on intellectualism and humanity helped them to hold balanced view of ethnicity (AAS2, 4; AUS2, 4, 5, 7 and US2, 4, 5, 7). Being goal oriented, religion, exposure to varied cultures in their neighborhood and reading are also among the factors besides social media that helped these students to avoid fixed perception of ethnicity and embrace variation. These agree with the literature (Al Majali & Alkhaaldi, 2020; Chelysheva & Mikhaleva, 2019; Czepil et al, 2019).

5.2.7. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students during Discussions over Sensitive Topics

In this sub-section, quantitative and qualitative results with respect to students IER over sensitive issues are summarized. Accordingly, four questions were analyzed in quantitative analysis (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). As presented under Table 29, mean value 4.2 depicts, majority of respondents strongly agreed ethnic related discussions with out-groups are hostile, queries regarding own ethnic group are not positively viewed, intra-group romantic relations are favored and supporting out-group views are not welcomed positively. That is consistent with the findings of local studies in which it is reported that sensitivity to sensitivity to ethnic diversity, aversion towards out-groups view points and strong intra-group sentiment as long-standing traditions of Ethiopian public HEIs (Abebaw, 2014, 2019; Abera, 2010; Demewoz, 2012; Seid, 2021).

Table 29

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ over Sensitive Topics

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	4.2290	1.32000

In order to analyze responses on ‘ethnic related discussions, the researcher attempted to find out what kind of topics are entertained frequently related to ethnicity among students. Accordingly, students disclosed that, ‘How do you explain ethnicity?’, ‘what should be the national language of Ethiopia?’ and ‘for whom does Ethiopia belong?’ are the most sensitive and frequently discussed topics around campus. Since there are varied forms of understanding of ethnicity among students (*see* section 5.1. Discussion under ‘Ethnic Background of Respondents), conversations with respect to ethnicity between or among students from different ethnic background concluded with disagreement mostly, if not always.

Students with distinctive notion of ethnicity noted that- they enjoy being with ethnic neutral students if they come from Addis Ababa, SNNP and other developing regions. In justifying this stand, AAS3 from Gojjam said, “Students from Addis have no ethnic affiliation due to their upbringing. I do not blame them!” and AAS1 from Wollega added, “they celebrate all cultures equally and we don’t see them as threat.” In Ambo, AUS1 stated his positive view of students

from SNNP, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella because they have no prejudice towards Oromos. Also, AUS3 from Gondar asserted “they do not see us as enemy!” Similar view is shared by US3. Hence, students with higher levels of ethnic consciousness are more comfortable discussing ethnic issues with those who are labeled as lacking fixed notions of ethnicity by their standards. Such openness to discussion is evidenced in South African HEIs (Mulondo & Thomas, 2021).

A third year journalism student from AAU (AAS 2) on the other hand mentioned:

Ethnic related discussions are hostile because students with extreme views consider ethnicity as a sole identity marker and they expect you to agree with them. They cannot have a healthy and matured conversation with those of us who dare to believe ethnicity is mixed and challenge them with facts. They only have good relations with ethnically neutral students because these students do not even want to discuss the issue and extremists just say what they want without any criticism.

The above extract clearly shows, higher ethnic consciousness can also make students to be ethnocentric (Mustapha et al, 2009; Nakamura, 2013) to the point where sensitivity towards out-groups is eliminated in any form of discussions. Ethnic hostility and violence are therefore inevitable in such situation.

Interviews with students who self-identify as ethnic neutral or consider humanity as identity revealed that their relationships with students with singular views of ethnicity remain peaceful because they choose to let things go and not because they feel respected. AAS6 remarked “[They] think we are clueless of politics and they need us because they believe we have access to resources. But, we choose to see they are humans and let go of their flaws.” AAS8 stated, “[They] do not think those from developing regions have rights in ethno-politics because they are minority. Personally, I don’t care because I see myself as a humanity activist and I am tired of the constant feud among Oromo and Amhara.” AUS8 from Gambella added, “[They] consider ethnic minority students are voiceless!” Similar views shared by US8. Because people need recognition, the fact that ethnic neutral students recognize they are not valued may portend future conflict.

Generally, ethnic neutral students maintained good relations with those who embrace mixed-ethnic notion. However, they are not open for discussion about politics and ethnic related issues because

they believe ethnicity is in general pointless. They focus on ‘humanity’ and help students through tutoring English or Amharic language and computer skills and organize fund raising to help students from poor families [AAS6, 7; AUS6, 8; US6, 8]. These students also play arbitrator role when discussions among students take violent turn because their opinion is considered neutral and they are trusted by students with strong ethnic identification. Instructors remarked, it is the presence of such students that balance polarized discussions in and beyond classroom (AAI1 &2, AUI1&2 and USI1 &2).

On the other hand, students born from mixed-ethnic parents, lived in multi-ethnic setting and embrace mixed-ethnicity and are open for dialogue with anyone. These students’, according to Bizumic (2012) and Vagaeva et al. (2020), are typical examples of having ethnic affiliation with no out-group bias. Mostly they interact positively with ethnic neutral students because they share similar qualities like being non-judgmental, willingness to learn new things and pro-peace attitude. According to Habtamu et al. (1997) these show their psychological modernity.

However, students from mixed families or choose not to be within ethno-nationalist group are pressured to choose an ethnic group which affected their every move from having friendly conversation to forming romantic relations. For instance, AAS2 from Oromia region said:

If you are from Oromi or Amhara, you are expected to take sides. Not only had to have ethnic related discussions but even to take a walk with out-group members. One day, I was taking a walk with my friend from Wollo and another fellow from Oromia greeted both of us and told me in Oromiffa to watch out with whom I am making friends with. As soon as he left, my friend asked me what he said and I was ashamed to translate.

With respect to having discussions over inter-marriages and starting romantic relations, it is largely restricted within in-group which aim to minimize future conflicts in marriages due to ethnic variety (AUS3 and US1). Such restrictions affected students because they fear to have romantic relations with those who are different from them ethnically. AAS7 mentioned, “I have a friend from Oromia who liked a girl. She is my classmate and she is from Debre Tabor. He did not even think of her ethnicity and he was not extremist. But once they started a relationship, extremists from Amhara group intimidated him to stop seeing her. They both cried because they loved each other. Finally,

he decided to let her go due to out-group pressure.” Such challenges are common among students in diversified universities. However, a few students resist such pressures, even advocating for open discussions about inter-ethnic romance (AAS4 and US2).

Discussions about sensitive topics are tense not only among diverse groups, but also within the group. AUS8 further remarked, “Ethnic related discussions at intra-group level is also filled with suspicion because they constantly check if someone has frequent and friendly contact with out-group members. And if there is an opinion that challenges in-group position or positive opinion about out-groups, the discussion will turn hostile.” The fact that AAS2 reported he was blocked by in-group members due to his optimism towards out-groups is also an indicator of in-group tension with respect to ethnicity. Such lack of freedom of expression allows in-group members viewing their wrong doings positively, and prevents them from making corrections in cross-group relationships (Pettigrew, 1998). This eventually leads to what Vagaeva et al. (2020) refer to as ethno-isolationism. If this is the case, university atmosphere will become a replication of students’ home environment which is homogenized in terms of perspective and relations. Gurin et al. (2002) called such circumstance as utter failure of HEI objectives.

5.2.8. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students during Violent Episodes

In this sub-section, quantitative and qualitative results with respect to students IER during violent episodes are summarized. Seven research questions were developed to examine the IER of students during violent episodes (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). As presented under Table 30, mean value 4.3 depicts, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that ethnic related violence, defending in-group members, mono-ethnic association, and attacking out-group members are common during such incidents. Moreover, students strongly agreed that ethnic rumors are one source of violence and mediating intra-group and out-group members is hardly accepted by own group and such mediation has little impact in changing unfavorable attitude of students towards out-groups.

Table 30

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ during Violent Episodes

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	3.00	5.00	4.3771	.71672

Ethnic related violence in Ethiopian public campuses has become a major challenge to the teaching and learning process for the past few years. Especially after 2018, ethnocentrism and related violence resulted physical injuries, cost lives, damaged properties and cancellation of classes in many universities (CARD, 2020). While some incidents incepted within a single university, others follow a deadly event in a campus in another region as observed in Ambo (CARD, 2020) and Assosa, Debree Tabor, Mada Walabu, Mettu and Wollega universities (CARD, 2020). Even though the reason behind all these incidents cannot be directly linked to ethnicity, it has become a common phenomenon for even simple interpersonal conflicts between students escalate to a full scale ethnic violence in no time.

Such incidents generally created antagonism, distrust, unhealthy inter-cultural communication and destabilized unity of students. It also put their intelligence under question mark (Abera, 2010; Zekarias, 2020), negatively affected the image of universities especially in the past two years as some parents refuse to send their children to public universities in regions, but register them in private HEIs (Abebaw, 2019) or extension programs in AAU (Yonas, 2019). Even though not all conflicts are due to ethnicity, it is possible to say that politicization of ethnicity has become either primary or secondary factor to instigate inter-personal or inter-group conflicts on campus grounds (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; CARD, 2020). Violence of such nature have been Similar results have been exhibited in universities from abroad (Alrawwad & Alrfooh, 2014; Dawson & Cuevas, 2019; Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Koriakina, 2019; Maqbool et al., 2021; Nakamura, 2013).

In explaining how simple inter-personal conflicts grow to cross-group conflict, AAS8 said:

If the disagreement is between students who are ethnically indifferent or who embrace mixed ethnic notion or among the two groups, it is easily resolved because they try to talk about it and it will not go further. But, if the conflictants are from extreme groups, they seem to resolve the issue peacefully for a while and go and tell their in-group mates about

it. It is strange! Someone who quarrels with a fellow due to handout thinks he is insulted or denied access to it because he is from X or Y ethnic group. Then both students bring their groups and fight. Regrettably, these students will leverage the violence they produced themselves for future conflict once violent episodes with silly causes occur and things return to normal. It is so barbaric!

Cyclic violent incidents mentioned by AAS8 are prevalent in AU and UoS also (AUS6 and US8). Such cyclic violent incidents have been evidenced in a number of Ethiopian public universities in the past (Anteneh, 2012; CARD, 2020). Qualitative results however revealed that, physical or verbal violence is not frequent after COVID-19 because each group has secret social media platform and communication with out-groups is limited (AAS2 &7; AAI2, AUS4, 5 &8; AUI1&2; US1, 4 &6; UI1&2). The contributory factors for ethnic related violence on campus are many but students focus on ethnic fear, negative influence of senior students, language command, guest-host mentality, tendency to benefit intra-group members and discriminatory welcoming ceremonies underpinned by ethno-politicization of ethnicity, lack of democratic norm in HEIs and biased media reporting among others as briefly discussed under chapter two (*see* section 2.2.4.2.2.).

With respect to conflict management, ethnic neutral students play a role to mediate conflicts between students from Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups even if they don't succeed mostly. A student from Addis Ababa in Social Work department in AAU (AAS6) for instance explained

After a violent incident on campus in February 2022, students from Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups sit in two different corners and we-who were neutral, sat in the middle. It was like cold war! So, we tried to contribute some money and arrange lunch ceremony to resolve the issue in FBE lounge. Of course, we did not succeed because most of them did not show up. When I asked individuals from the two groups as to why they did not show up, both said 'our difference is irreconcilable.' I don't understand what they mean.

Fixed conceptualization of ethnicity propagates that ethnic related conflicts are inevitable as it originates from distinctiveness (Yeghiazaryan, 2018). In Ethiopia however, ethnic diversity is not the source of violence rather using ethnic nationalism as economic and political tool, absence of genuine federalism and socio-economic inequality among communities widen inter-ethnic

division and conflicts (Andargachew, 2005; Bekalu, 2018; Yonas, 2019a). The fact that students believe they have irreconcilable problems is likely to have emanated from contentious issues in political, economic and social environment in the country (Yonas, 2019). It is also commonplace for strained relations after violent incident in HEIs due to ‘blame game’ (Abera, 2010).

Students of mixed ethnicity also attempt to manage conflicts among students. However, due to their failure to take sides of one ethno-nationalist group, their involvement to mediate conflicts is not welcomed by students with strong ethnic consciousness (AAS2, AUS4 and US4). Even though students who are ethnically indifferent likely succeed in managing inter-group conflicts, their success rate is also insignificant (AAS6, 7; AUS8 and US6).

A student from Ambo [AUS2] added “some students say I am trying to protect the image of Ambo whenever I tried to mediate cross-group fights because I am from Ambo.” Students with mixed ethnic identification said that they felt confident even if they were outcasted since they think that such hostility is not typical of university students (AAS2, 4; AUS2, 4, 7, 8; US4, 7), and only a few said that they occasionally felt sad but continued to stand by their beliefs (AAS8, AUS5 and US2). Acts of exclusion against students who socialize with out-groups and mediate inter-ethnic tensions was also evident in past studies (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013).

Hence, it is possible to conclude that, mediatory role of students has little impact in changing the negative attitude of students towards out-groups. Furthermore, the fact that violent episodes can spread beyond campus and even into the community (CARD, 2020) and the failure to launch a systematic approach to alleviate potential future scenarios is alarming!

5.2.9. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students Outside Campus

In this sub-section, quantitative and qualitative results with respect to off-campus students IER are presented. Two research questions were developed to examine the IER of students outside campus (*see* Appendix I-A, section II). According to descriptive statistics results illustrated under Table 31, majority of respondents agree (mean value= 3.6) students off-campus relations is predominantly within intra-group and same goes to their relations with non-student groups outside campus.

Table 31

Descriptive Statistics of IER of Students’ outside campus

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
333	1.00	5.00	3.6299	1.36893

Intolerance to ‘difference’ and violence are against the aims of HEIs in general (UNESCO, 1998) and Ethiopian Constitution (FDRE, 1995) and Higher Education proclamations (FDRE, 2009, 2019) in particular. In spite of this, today’s Ethiopia is typified with inter-ethnic fissures and competing regional interests (ICG, 2019). The role of external actors in inducing ethnic-based violence was also implied in faraway universities such as Debre Markos and Woldia (Yonas, 2019), Bulle Hora and Debre Berhan (CARD, 2020) and Ambo (Seid, 2021) universities.

Interview findings revealed that, students have frequent exposure to out-side campus environment due to absence of sufficient in-door activities (before COVID-19) and almost no activities after COVID-19. Hence, students are forced to stay outside the campus, socialize with the surrounding community members whom they have similar vernacular, and discuss social and political issues. In this regard, AAS8 mentioned:

Since students have little motivation to cross check the information they receive from people and media, they usually believe what they are told. Moreover, many students have little money to cover their expenses and those whom they meet outside campus give them money or pay for their basic needs and manipulate them to think the way they want them to think. Especially, *Chat Houses* and the *bars* are dangerous places to target vulnerable students. I know students who are acquainted with political groups and receive incentives.

The fact that students’ off-campus relations with fellow students and non-student groups is largely ethnic-based and they are manipulated by views of political elites who use students to advance their political agenda on universities have been supported by AUS6, AUI1 and US4. Reports of CARD (2020) and empirical findings of Yonas (2019) and Mesfin & Ford (2021) also imply, external actors, likely with political agenda instigate ethnic fear among students. In such context,

it is hard to know who will use students who should be immersed in education for the wrong cause, threaten the existence of public universities, and derail the democratic transition of the country.

5.3. Addressing Students Inter-ethnic Relations Problems

Under Q-A, three short answer type questions were posed to students to briefly write about factors that influence IER of students, institutional mechanisms devised to minimize ethnic-related tension and alternative mechanisms they suggest to improve IER of students in sustainable manner. The responses given to these questions are presented hereunder. Interview data that complement or differ to the responses given under short-answer section are also summarized.

5.3.1. Institutional and Non-institutional Factors that Influence Students Inter-ethnic Relations

Students have mentioned that political structure of the country, biased treatment from instructors, administrative staff and the management leniency negatively affected IER of students in the three universities.

5.3.1.1. Political Structure

When the political environment is unstable, ‘inherited prejudices’ about out-groups that passed from one generation to another intensified and affected inter-group relations of students (Mulondo, 2018; Salmon-Letelier, 2019). Interview results also showed that, students with strong ethnic consciousness, bring real or imagined stories to substantiate one ethnic group oppressed the other. A Sport Science students from AU (AUS7) stated, “Some make you timorous of your shadows by fabricating stories. If you accidentally bumped into someone, you question his or her ethnicity” and AAS4 mentioned, “Revenge for past injustices is getting strong. Why do I be responsible for what some leader who was Amhara did many years ago? To be honest, we do not even know if that leader is purely from Amhara and the injustice has really occurred.” UI1 remarked, “Such blame game is common on campus because it has been played out in the political environment for long and they brainwash the youth in such a way.” Similar assertions has been forwarded by AAI1, 2; AUI1, 2 and UI2.

Attempts to bring historical narratives [real or yet to be verified], related stereotypes and brainwash in-group fellows to be watchful of out-group members has been exhibited among Bahirdar (Abebaw, 2014), Addis Ababa (Abera, 2010) and Jimma (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013) universities. Pressuring students from mixed ethnic families to choose one ethnic group and join the ethno-nationalist cliques in AAU, AU and UoG (see interview session with AAS4 and AUS5 under 5.2.5) is also sensitizing strategy to make them believe oppressor-oppressed narrative highly propagated among political elites. Supporting this, US2 remarked, “what some students do on campus is a replication of what elites do in the political field. Diversity is appreciated on paper and not on the ground.” This is the reason Yonas (2019) call for significant change in the political structure.

Others added that, some students have political affiliation and are funded to spread fear and instigate violence [AAS4, AAM1, AUS6, AUI1, AUM1 and UM1]. The fact that there are students in HEIs who had ties with political parties and the former EPRDF sister organizations like TPLF, OPDO and others already had strong base in public universities where they recruit members from student group was reported in past work (Abera, 2010). The role of such students in instigating violence was also exhibited in the recent wave of HEIs conflict in 2020 (CARD, 2020). Even though studies show nationalism education leads to out-groups loathing (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Kuttig et al., 2020), the type of teaching students received from elites in Ethiopian HEIs case cannot be verified. There is evidence however, some do associate with political parties for incentives (Yonas, 2019a).

Local researchers suggested that trust within public HEIs has become a luxury due to ethicized university space (Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Demewoz, 2012; Hailemariam, 2016; Mekonnen, 2013). This on the other hand paves the way for campus security to be compromised to the point individuals with fake university Identification Card take refuge to campuses and involved during violent incidents (CARD, 2020; Yonas, 2019b). Some interviewees further stated their suspicion that ‘unidentified actors’ provide students with extreme views, guns and other stuff (AAS4, AMI2; AUS2, AUI1; US8, UM2). A report on violent conflicts in public universities by CARD (2020) also testified, some students were firing weapons during violent episodes. So, questions like ‘who provided guns to these students?’ ‘What kind of teachings do these students receive from elites?’ and ‘what is the interest of actors behind the students group violence?’ are yet to be explored. To date, neither the government nor public HEIs have clearly explained these.

Politically motivated ethnic structures and perspectives affected students in various ways. Mainly, students outlined, the political structure created ethnic fear, radicalize senior students and make language a sole identity marker.

Inter-ethnic anxiety

It is to be noted that majority of student interviewees reported, students with extreme views give silent treatment or disdain look, refuse to join in group activities, belittle others and are belligerent towards out-groups [AAS2, 4, 8; AUS2, 5, 7; US2, 4]. They use the term *yegna sew* roughly translated as ‘ours’ to show in-group affection and ignore out-groups. Studies showed, such friend-enemy labeling among students is out of ethnic fear, which is a misconceived belief about out-groups obtained from seniors, politicians and media (Abebaw & Balsvik, 2018; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Zekarias, 2019). Such fear strengthens intra-ethnic bond (Abera, 2010). Also, external actors, likely with political agenda instigate ethnic fear (CARD, 2020; Yonas, 2019).

Inter-ethnic Competition

Students’ with extreme views also label others as *guests* in universities located in a region where their ethnic group is majority, particularly when there is violent episode. A female Civil Engineering student from AU (AUS2) remembered 2020 as:

I am from Oromia but I don’t speak the language. At that time, those from Oromo hold stick and roam around dormitory and intimidate out-groups to leave their region, particularly the Amharas. One day, a girl came to my dorm and asked me something in Oromiffa and I could not answer. She told me I am a disgrace and hit me.

A claim that the university belongs to students born in the region was also prevalent and intense in 2020 in UoG [US2, 4]. A tendency to show superiority and sense of belongingness by students from dominant ethnic group has also been manifested among campus students in the context of other countries (Karnyshev et al., 2014; Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Mulondo, 2018; Salmon-Letelier, 2019). At such times, students switch dormitories to be with in-groups as exhibited recently in 2022 February violence in AAU [AAS4, 8]. Violence has a tendency to strengthen intra-ethnic cooperation because there is a fear of attack by ‘others’ (Bizumic, 2012). Ethnic homogeneity is

also believed to ensure security (Geertz, 1973). Showing in-group affiliation in volatile situations is therefore for protection purposes as AUS3 emphasized in previous section. Previous studies in by Abera (2010), Aberbaw (2014) and Seid (2021) asserted this and link the underlying causes to regionalism approach of HEIs.

Then again, students with *extreme* outlook are criticized for using ethnicity to benefit in-group which creates conflict. A student from Civil Engineering department in Amist Kilo campus in AAU (AAS8) said, “It is like a war to join student council because *extremists* think this is a way to benefit their in-group. They even intimidate a nominee from out-group.” [Shared by AAS4, 6; AUS2 and US5]. One aspect of identity is recognition by others (Fukuyama, 2018). This can extend to establishing student associations based on tribal identity (Taaliu, 2017) in HEIs. Ethiopian politics is typified by groups fought for recognition through framing and reframing stories and structures (Yonas, 2019). According to Torres et al. (2009), in this situation, students utilize campus-wide opportunities as a means to advance their need of recognition.

Interview results further depict, extreme view, which is a major source of violence, is mainly observed among few students from Oromia and Amhara and to a lower degree Tigray region across the cases. In AAU and AU, it is boldly expressed by Oromia and Amhara students respectively. AAS7 said, “They are always in bellicose mood and exchange violent words that didn’t extend to physical violence” Alike idea is shared by AS6 and 8. However, in UoG, it is more visible on students from Amhara region, though it is not overt like in AAU and AU. While students and instructors argue this is due to post-COVID tense academic program and absence of violence in other HEIs (US2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), the management asserts that it is due to tightened security and the role of Gondar Family Project (UM1 and 2).

Inter-ethnic competition further reinforces fear of out-groups (Jenkins, 2008). In line with this argument, AAI1 remarked, “Look around! Every region is an independent country. How can you expect something different from students who are raised in such environment?” Though intra-group liking is normal, political instability and violence (Nakamura, 2013) or need for recognition (Torres et al., 2009) worsen the situation. Bizumic (2012) purports, ethnocentrism is not always harmful unless it is practiced in a system that overemphasizes ethnic difference and under-emphasizes inter-ethnic harmony. In Ethiopia, the political environment creates fertile ground for

negative ethnocentrism and ‘how to reap positive sides of ethnocentrism?’ is not intellectually debated (Demewoz, 2012). Hence, students have little know-how on how to balance devotion to intra-group and yet keep friendly attitude towards out-groups (AAI2, AAM1; AUM1; UI1, 2 and UM1). No wonder that the 2018 education road map’s strong suggestion to work toward unity in promoting diversity is consistent with these views.

Seniors’ Influence

Senior students also play a role in propagating ethnic distancing which is a recipe for ethnic related violence. AUS7 stated “some make you timorous of your shadows by fabricating stories. If you accidentally bumped into someone, you question his or her ethnicity.” AAS8 added, “The moment seniors learn you are from their ethnic group, they use various tactics to make you feel you will not survive campus life without in-group protection. This is deceiving and dangerous. We survived four years resisting any form of ethnocentric attitudes. But as a new entrant, they easily manipulate you.” However, such characterizations of senior students are not applied to all students, but rather to those who hold fixed views on ethnicity. Past studies also showed that, freshman year students turn to students whom they affiliate culturally to fit to the university environment easily (Belford, 2017; Mustapha et al., 2009). It is learned that, seniors plan welcoming ceremony based on ethnic affiliation in response to the insecurity of new entrants (AAS 8, AUS 5 and US 7).

In criticizing the reception of students based on ethnic affiliation AAS6 stated,

There is reception and induction program organized by the university. However, each ethnic cliques welcome students. Since some are not familiar or less fluent in Amharic languages, seniors take advantage of that and orient them on what to do and not to do prior to campus-wide induction session. So, a new student who meets such students have little chance to desist from ethnic extremism.

Since ethnic-based welcoming ceremony was also reported in previous studies like Bahirdar University (Abebaw, 2014), the researcher asked interviewees from management staff why such approach is allowed in HEIs. AAM2 responded, “in order to alleviate language barrier and to make students feel at home, we assign volunteer students and active club members from every ethnic

group to welcome students. These students are trained and are free from ethnocentric attitudes.” Even though similar assertions were reflected by AUM2 and UM2, questions ‘to what extent are students assigned by Students Dean’s Office are free from bias’ and ‘why does the university fail to take measures against ethnic-base welcoming ceremonies?’ are lightly answered by informants.

Conversely, AAS1 said, “Seniors’ taught us to keep our uniqueness and date within in-group. They upgrade my ethnic know-how.” [Shared by AAS5, AUS3, and US3]. Hence, seniors reinforce in-group dating, intra-group empathy, practicing ethnic customs, communication within ethnic networks and speaking in ethnic language as strong ethnic identity features (Isajiw, 1993) purports. Such intra-group favoritism stimulated by senior students was also evidenced at Bahirdar (Abebaw, 2014), Addis Ababa (Mekonnen, 2013; Missaye, 2014) and Jimma Universities (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2014).

Language related problems

Language is a critical factor that impedes positive IER of students. Students with *extreme* outlook use ethnic language as a major identity marker. Since students consider ethnic language proficiency as a major identity marker and a unique quality to be considered to X or Y ethnic group member, they try to ask or respond with an ethnic language to see if someone belong to their in-group or not. If that person fails to respond, some may try to talk in Amharic or others continue to talking the ethnic language to make the fellow student confused or irritated. In line with this, AUS2 said,

Even if they know Amharic, some students intentionally talk to you in Oromiffa and when you do not respond, they try to make fun of you and even insult you in a language you do not understand. Some students from other regions who are not familiar with the language now lose interest to learn the language because those who consider themselves as keepers of the Oromo tradition make them loose confidence.

Previous studies showed that some students felt that speaking the language of out-group undermined their own ethnic language (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). Ethiopian HEI students lose interest in Amharic due to the perception that it is a language of dominance (Tesfaye, 2012). Strong affiliation with ethnic language is widespread among people who run tribal fanaticism (Nakamura,

2013; Taaliu, 2017). Meeting diversified student-group help undergraduates develop inter-cultural skills (Hurtado, 2007). Lack of common vernacular however limit such benefits.

Few student interviewees who reflected ethnic neutrality also mentioned that, they start to have interest to learn international languages than ethnic languages in Ethiopia because knowing ethnic language has become a source of superiority or inferiority on campus. The views of these students have been summarized by what US6 elaborated:

I believe knowing any type of language is advantageous because I do not know where I will work or live in the future. But, now I start to dislike all Ethiopian languages because the vernaculars become a source of conflict. Knowing a certain language or not knowing it does not show intellectualism. I am good in commanding English language. Now I am planning to learn French and another language widely spoken in Africa to broaden my employability in other countries for the future. I have a plan to be a scientist in Sociology field. In order to do this, I have to know languages spoken in other countries.

Since universities are meant to produce educated citizenry with a potential to address societal problems with resilience and civility, students are supposed to be prepared in a way they can fit to local, national and global environment (West, 2018). Accordingly, the aspiration of US6 to prepare herself in acquiring skills that helped him adapt varied national contexts is admirable. On the other hand, a tendency to cling to ethnic language and discrimination of out-groups due to their inability to command the language make students develop hatred towards the languages spoken in their country. In the long run, such situations increase distancing among social groups which translates in to fragmented social fabric, lower economic growth and peacelessness as Savchits et al. (2018) argued.

5.3.1.2. Biased Treatment by Faculty and Administrative Staff

Some instructors and students argue that it is biased treatment from instructors and admin staff that makes students with *extreme* views believe that they are favored. This is expressed through talking to them with ethnic language in the presence of diversified group and preferential treatment in student services [AAS7, AAI1; AUS4, 8, AUS1; 8, US4]. Students in AAU particularly complain that security guards let students enter campus without ID card who talked to them in

Oromiffa (AAS4, 5, 8). A student from AAU shared his encounter with a guard in main campus (AAS2) as follows:

In February 2022, there was violence as a flyer that denounces Oromo was circulated. By then, I was about to wrestle with a student who put on T-shirt with picture of Haachalu [a famous Oromo singer killed in 2020] for personal reasons. A security officer came, hit me and ordered me to stop and let him go. He did not think I am Oromo. When a friend of mine who saw the fight came and talked to me in Oromiffa, the guard apologized and said ‘I did not know you were ours.’ I was furious and told him he is there to serve all of us.

AAM1 was asked what they have done so far on complaints by students on security guards. The informant responded, the university is aware of the issue and they revoked their contract with the agency that recruit the guards and now [by the time interview data was collected], they arranged an agreement with a new hiring agency. However, students still complained, the new security guards are not still bias-free (AAS2, 7, 8). Failure to address students’ complaints appropriately, particularly when the situation is related to inter-group violence has been a major source of resentment and a recipe for future disaster (Major & Mangope, 2014; Torres et al., 2009).

Students further mentioned, some aspire for favor because they know there are staff members from instructors, administration and management group who are keen to help them just because they affiliate with the student language wise (AAS7; AUS2, 4, 8; US2, 7). There is also a criticism the management in AAU and AU favor students from Oromia (AAS2, 5, 7; AUS2, 4, 8), while UoG favors those from Amhara region (US1, 7) which is denied by all management staff informants. In explaining the nature of favoritism, students mentioned that, talking in ethnic languages, facilitating administrative issues, correcting grades and even supporting students’ financial needs are common. Such nepotistic behavior of university staff has been observed in US (Hurtado et al., 1999), Pakistan (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014) and Kenyan (Nakamura, 2013; Taaliu, 2017) HEIs and furthered cross-ethnic distancing.

Such favoritism also extends to helping students to organize and undertake attack against students from out-groups during campus-wide violence. It is in response to such unprofessional conduct of instructors, administrative staff and management members, universities like Dire Dawa, Gondar,

Haromaya, Jimma, Woldia, and Wollo took extensive administrative measures from written reprimand and temporary suspension to complete dismissal (CARD, 2020). Out of the transgressions, wearing the same clothes students wear during campus protest to show support (Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021), forcible eviction of students was recorded in Haromaya and the hidden storage of weaponry was displayed in Gondar (CARD, 2020). In the 21st century, universities are meant to be assets for peace building (West, 2018). However, the actions exhibited by a few academic and non-academic staff in Ethiopian public universities defy the objective of HEIs stated in the legal frameworks (MoE, 1994, 2002, 2005, 2010, 2015, FDRE, 2003, 2009, 2019).

Complaints about instructors, on the other hand, must be investigated further before taking disciplinary action on instructors because it has become commonplace for students to complain about an instructor intentionally defiling their grade simply because the students do not belong to the ethnic group the instructor belongs to. (Desalegn & Seyoum, 2023; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021). Supporting this, Anteneh (2009) strongly argued:

The University administration has to take appropriate measures against those students who attempt to benefit from such cheap means of getting grades and fuelling conflicts. In addition, such students should be punished for their attempt to damage the integrity of responsible teachers. (p.78-79)

Instructor interviewees, on the other hand, mentioned that management sometimes has a tendency to believe students (AAI2 & AUS1). Some students also supported this (AAS6, AUS7 and US5). These findings substantiate the assertion of past studies that, the campus administration team is accused of favoritism besides inaction by taking the sides of students whom they affiliate ethnically (Arega & Mulugetea, 2017; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021; Seid, 2021). It is to address such partiality problems, merit-based appointment of HEI leaders is strongly suggested (Damtew & Altbach, 2004; Haskell et al., 2005; Naituli & Nasimiyu, 2019).

5.3.1.3. Failure to take Measures

Some students and instructors complain about management leniency in taking disciplinary measures makes students with singular views confident [AAS6, 7; AAI2; AUS2, 4, 5; AUI2]. AAS4 for instance said,

We need an answer for who disseminated anti-Oromo flyers in February. Those involved in violence were detained for few days and they are boasting around campus now. Amhara's were accused and many non-Oromo students were injured. There is no serious disciplinary measure.

Mesfin & Ford (2021) highlight campus administration's inaction against major conflict actors, which is similar to the case mentioned by AAS4. Abebaw (2022) on the other hand criticizes the reactive nature of measures to address campus violence rather than in action. Failure to address students' administrative queries in a timely and systematic manner has been reported in the works of Abera (2010), Tesfaye (2012), Yonas (2019), and CARD reports (2014). The senate legislations of AAU (2019), AU (2019), and UoG (2013), on the other hand, clearly include articles on 'codes of conduct' for students and staff, as well as relevant unlawful conduct and measures. Failures to implement plans in a way it facilitate IGR of students has been exhibited in previous studies of Ethiopia (Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021). Even though in action and reactive measures are not favorable responses for violence, inability to examine root causes of inter-ethnic tension and brining about sustainable constructive changes have been major challenges of 21 century universities (Kittig et al., 2020; Hurtado et al., 1999).

In relation to disciplinary measure, AAS7 added, "There was a student whom we knew in 4 kilo campus. He had a gun and students reported to the council and he was removed from campus for a few days. Now he returned and is boasting around as if no one can do anything about it. Students who reported him are now afraid because the university is not on their side rather on his side." A management staff in AAU (AM1) however responded, "I am aware of his case and it is reported to the police because it is no more a civil issue. So, the police are doing their investigation and they may build a case and put him in jail after they get all the facts."

The researcher asked AAM1 the reason for the absence of serious disciplinary measures as stated in the university legislation and he responded, “We believe in advising students to refrain from wrong and destructive doings. Most of the time, we succeed. We also take serious measures like expulsion when necessary but it is not educative. Regarding the student with the gun in 4kilo campus, he was reported to the police and the police has its own procedures to let him go. But, I am aware it followed the legal procedures necessary.” Some students in AU and UoG also reported, they hear stories about students who possess fire arms on campus but they have not witnessed it. The interviewed management members in AU and UoG also responded, such accusations are preposterous and the security is tight on campuses.

A study by Misrak & Addisu in 2011 also showed that, 80% of ethical cases reported to discipline committee were handled simply by advising students individually or in group in Hawassa, Dilla and Wolaita Sodo universities. Even though using soft tactics to discipline students seem to keep positive relations among students and the university management, the fact that it is applied to students who are involved in ethnic related violence created resentment among students in AAU and AU particularly (AAS2, 4, 7, 8; AUS2, 4, 5, 7, 8; US2, 4, 5, 7, 8).

Students’ with fixed outlook of ethnicity equally accuse management in respective campuses as it fails to organize forum to raise their concerns. AAS1 for instance said,

The management deliberately keeps silent or persuades us that they will arrange a meeting with us to discuss our concerns. However, no such arrangement was made. Even if they call us for a meeting, the discussion is not in a way it address our key problems.

The perspective of AAS1 is shared by AAS5, AUS1 and 3 and US1 and 3. These students label the management in their respective campuses as ‘coward’ mainly because it bans all ways of open communication with students and even among students like cultural celebration days. Interviewees from management staff on the other hand argue most communication avenues are closed due to COVID-19 pandemic and students use platforms like sports game to instigate conflicts amongst themselves. A study by Mesfin & Befekasu (221) also showed, graduation class football tournaments and Nations and Nationalities Day celebrations are banned in some universities due to fear of potential conflict among students of different ethnic affiliation. Some instructors,

however, argue that the ban is ineffective and should be replaced with alternative and long-term solutions to students' concerns and cross-group problems (AAI2, AUS2, and US1).

From the same university, AAS5 mentioned, “the management is ethnicized. They have preference. They try to ingratiate one group from X ethnic group and seriously punish the other.” Absence of open platform that give students the chance to raise their queries and make them be part of problem solving process has been a key failing of HEIs (Abera, 2010; Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). The reason behind Yonas’s (2019) call for “critical discussion and dialogue or what is known as deliberative democracy” in Ethiopian contested public universities is to respond to such failures.

5.3.2. Institutional Mechanisms to Improve Students Inter-ethnic Relations

Universities are advised to promote fair student services, community engagement, pro-peace seminars, and inter-cultural dialogues to help students’ relinquish hostile ethno-centric attitude and form healthy cross-group friendship (Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Al Majali & Alkhaaldi, 2020; Vagaeva et al., 2020). Efforts in this direction seem underway in AAU, AU and UoG. Students as well as instructors in the three universities reported that, the management is not doing anything to improve IER of students. Lack of proactive measures to strengthen IER of students also observed in past studies (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010 and Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013). In his 2019 piece, Yonas also accused public HEIs as being as frigid as cemeteries due to this lack of dialogue space and introducing creative mechanisms to address the inter-ethnic fissures.

On management part, approaches to improve IER are limited to induction programs, strengthening campus security, assigning block and floor masters in dormitories and supporting student union (AAM1, 2, 3; AUM1, 2, 3 and UM1, 2, 3). Even though management members disclosed that COVID pandemic restrain the arrangement of platforms for dialogue, students and instructors remarked that the management is using COVID as an excuse and the real reason is avoidance of assembly as it likely leads to violence and complaints.

In previous studies, students indicate forums that embrace multi-ethnic nationalities on campus grounds is a recipe for disaster as students are divided (Abera, 2010). There is a fear that students

may turn the discussion space in to a battle ground where differences are overemphasized (a breathing space) than having an intellectual and critical dialogue. Many students from AAU, AU and UoG argued that the university administration almost closed every possible way to entertain and communicate using COVID as an excuse but the real reason is their failure to systematically manage differences and nurture mutual trust because they believe student assembly leads to violence.

Experiences from other countries showed that, there is a tendency to neglect structural adjustment in students enrollment because such diversity creates impetus for students who came from minority or disadvantage groups to voice their concerns in educational space and sometimes violently (Hurtado et al., 1999). However, some argue for the need for such tension due to its potential to help universities re-examine their policies and practices regarding diversity. For instance, introduction of diversity informed programs and multicultural education are among the changes introduced in HEIs due to students compositional diversity and continual demands for equal footing with majority. Hence, even though the fear among university management of AAU, AU and UoG is reasonable, responding in a way that blocks dialogue among students and the management will further academic and social consequences.

Studies showed that, institutions that give due attention to ethnic-driven discrimination and resulting hostility through setting formal grievance reporting procedures experience lesser forms of discrimination and higher satisfaction with their social interaction on campus (Hurtado et al., 1999). Studies indicated that, expanding students socialization and exposure through creating links with faculty members, family and surrounding community makes them feel validated and boost their confidence (Hurtado et al., 1999, p.55). The fact that UoG attempted to create a link between students outside Amhara region to families in Gondar is therefore a great opportunity to make students feel at home. Even though the impact of the project is not evaluated comprehensively and such evaluation is beyond the scope of this project, some testimonies from interviewees showed it really helped some students to feel valued, overcome inter-group anxiety.

5.3.3. Alternative Mechanisms to Improve Students Inter-ethnic Relations

Many students responded that, the university management shall use the extra-class hours by organizing dialogues, conferences, workshops and trainings on situational and global issues that involve the management, lecturers and professionals outside the university and encourage students to take part in such sessions. Some also believe this will keep many students to minimize the time they spend off-campus which exposes them to unfruitful activities like drug and alcohol abuse and meeting individuals and groups with damaging political agenda (AAS8, AUS6, and US5). Similar view points were forwards by instructors (AAI1, 2; AUI1, 2; UI1, 2).

West (2018) posited that, “Understanding what creates sustainable peace cannot be found in the study of violence alone” (p.4). Hence, approaches that facilitate interaction and cooperation among students of difference in and out of classroom are the need of the hour. The suggestions made by some students and instructors also affirm promotion of extra-class engagements that facilitate shared learning and broaden intellectual base that seem to justify application of CoCPs in diversified universities as explained under chapter two. Hurtado (2005) call such initiatives ‘campus-facilitated interactions.’ Studies by Misrak & Addisu (2011), Yoseph (2019), Zekarias (2020) also supported such recommendation to improve IER of university students.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS AND INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

6.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The two demographic variables relevant to research question three were ethnic background of respondents and the level of inter-ethnic anxiety they used to have before joining the clubs (*see* Appendix I-B, section I).

Ethnic Background of Respondents

As clearly illustrated under Table 32, majority of the respondents (60.7%) have not mentioned to which ethnic group they belong to. The rest, 13.3% were Oromo, 9.3% were Amhara, 3.3% were Tigre, 2.7% were Somali, Gamo, and Dawro each. On the other hand, students from Afar account to 2.0% like those from Harari and students' from Nuer account to 1.3%.

Table 32

Ethnic background of Respondents

S/N	Enthic group of respondents	Frequency	Percent
1	Amhara	14	9.3
2	Afar	3	2.0
3	Gambella (Nuer)	2	1.3
4	Harari	3	2.0
5	No response	91	60.7
6	Oromo	20	13.3
7	Somali	4	2.7
8	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' (Gamo)	4	2.7
9	South West Ethiopia (Dawro)	4	2.7
10	Tigre	5	3.3
Total		150	150

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, students who have singular views, embrace mixed ethnicity, or choose humanity over ethnicity (*see* section 5.1.1.). Interview with peace club members disclosed that, ethnic neutrality and mixed ethnicity have more weight among members. In explaining why this works, AAS8 said, “It is hard to find commonality if one has too much focus on ethnic identity.” Differently, a Civil Engineering student from UoG (US2) remarked:

It is not fair to ask someone to choose his mothers or fathers ethnic origin to identify oneself. For some they are identified with one culture and they are happy to celebrate that. For us, this will not work because we are identified with two or more cultures. But, the rule of the game oblige us to identify ourselves with only one. The confusion forces us to be silent about ethnic issue.

Ethnicity is one form of identification and it is not essentially a tool of division. A number of studies on the topic also affirm that, ethnic diversity in a nation can be a source of development if all ethnic groups operate under a system of equality and justice (; Jenkins, 2008; Spencer, 2006; Verkuyten, 2005). Such utopic framework however is challenged by unbridled ethno-nationalist sentiment, a federal structure against federalism principles, injustice, oppressor-oppressed narrations and inter-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia (Alemu, 2018; Asebe, 2007; Taye, 2018). These in turn promoted preferential treatment of own-group by politicians which embrace ethnic homogeneity.

Findings in the current study also shows, students with singular views of ethnicity challenge students with mixed-ethnicity and students with neutral views of ethnicity feel they are not considered as ‘mature enough’ with regard to ethnic issue by students with fixed views of ethnicity. Even though diversity is propagated as a source of unity and prosperity under the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, in reality, it has become a tool of exclusion (Bekalu, 2018). Hence, the value placed up on mixed-ethnicity is minimized. Lack of recognition for alternative ethnic identification pathways open doors for discrimination of students from mixed families and neutral views by those with strong ethnic consciousness (Mulondo & Thomas, 2021; Vorobyova & Poleshchuk, 2015).

Inter-ethnic Anxiety

As depicted under Table 33, majority of club members (66.7%) mentioned, they do not have experience of inter-ethnic anxiety before joining the club while 33.3% stated they used to be stressed about inter-ethnic contact. Since universities are usually the biggest platform where students are exposed to diversity for the first time, it is acceptable to display unease feeling to form relations with out-group members (Belford, 2017; Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Mulondo, 2018). The anxiety will grow in situations where inter-ethnic fissure and violent conflict are apparent as exhibited in Ethiopia in recent years. However, most students will be free from such tension over time as they meet students from varied cultures (Hurtado, 2001; Lopez, 2004; Tey et al., 2009).

Table 33

Inter-ethnic Anxiety before Club Membership

Alternative responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
No I did not	100	66.7
Yes I did	50	33.3
Total	150	100.0

But for few, they stay anxious for a long period of time and prefer intra-group acquaintances (Alrawwad & Alrfooh, 2014; Kaukab & Saeed, 2014; Salmon-Letelier, 2019; Vagaeva et al., 2020). The wider literature remarked that, people with prejudiced attitude and behavior are likely to avoid inter-group contact in any situation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Students who participated in interviews claim that this type of behavior is very evident among fellows with strong opinions regarding ethnicity and out-groups (AAS2, 4, 6; AUS4, 7 and US2, 4, 8). Views of students with singular understanding of ethnicity also supported this. These students responded that, they are not members of Peace Club because it has little value in promoting their cultures and intra-group cohesion (AAS1, 3; AUS1, 3 and US1, 3). Hence, their prejudiced views of out-groups limit their chance of engaging in Peace Clubs.

In the context of the current study, inter-ethnic anxiety goes to the extent of forming ethnic clubs in universities. A management student in AAU for instance mentioned that, they have applied to the Student's Deans Office to form a club that aims to promote their ethnic cultures however they have denied access (AAS1). Interview with Student Dean's Office representative also confirmed such request have been made by students repeatedly but rejected because the university legislation clearly stated formation of club based on religion and ethnic membership is not allowed (AAM2).

Even though the university legislations of AAU (2019), AU (2019) and UoG (2013) plainly prohibit club formation based on religion and ethnic affiliation, the implementation is not always strict. For instance, the Gaadao club in AU is registered as a cultural club under Student's Dean's Office. However, the objective of the club is to promote Oromo culture, all the programs were held in Oromiffa language, and members are from Oromia region who are fluent in the ethnic vernacular (AUS1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8). Even though an active member of the club, AUS1 mentioned, their only motivation is to help students from Oromia to deeply know their culture, non-members are curious of what members are doing in Gadaoo club and suspect some of them are politically affiliated with the ruling party or opposition groups in Oromia region (AUS3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). In line with this, AUS2 remarked,

It is not a cultural club. That is a cover story. They are organized to consolidate intra-group sentiment. It is exclusionary! I rarely go and attend musical events because I partly identify myself as Oromo. Most of them do not like me because they think I am a traitor. Unless you join their smaller clique that discriminate others, you are an outsider. I do not even know why the university management allow club formation based on ethnicity.

Since formation of clubs based on ethno-lingual criteria is forbidden in public HEIs, the researcher asked the management staff as to why such practice is allowed. AUM1 responded:

The club gets accreditation because their proposal clearly states they will work to promote their cultures to students from other regions so as to create a multi-cultural space. Plus, we believed, since most students here are from Oromia, others will feel like an outsider coming here. Hence, the activities in such clubs create opportunities for students from places other

than Oromia to learn the culture, extend appreciation and form good inter-group relations with the majority students.

Even though the responses of AUM1 seem logical considering the university is located in Oromia region and knowing the culture of students who are majority on campus may facilitate cross-group interaction, it also creates frustration among students who came from other cultures. Due to this, some students reported that, the university management favor Oromo culture and disregard the interest of others (AUS3, 5, 7). Students in AAU also complain, the management seem to entertain the interest of students from Oromia (AAS, 2, 3, 4, 5), though the Student Dean's Office did not go to the extent of accrediting clubs formed based on ethnicity.

In general, the fact that students with extreme views of ethnicity fail to join Peace Club which at least explicitly invites students irrespective of their ethnic background for membership and are inclined to form their own club is due to inter-ethnic anxiety. Such form of stress is best explained through excessive favoritism of in-group interaction and avoidance of inter-group contact (Levin et al., 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Assertions propagated by students with fixed views of ethnicity like their culture is profound and they are there to defend intra-group members (*see* Chapter 5, sub-section 5.2.7) therefore explain their anxiety about spending time with out-group members.

As indicated under Table 33, most club members were not anxious about meeting students from out-groups. The fact that CoC participation is voluntary and learning approaches are experiential (Dhanmeher, 2014; Robbins & Williams, 1969; Stephen et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2019) will further their open-mindedness as they frequently encounter fellows from different ethnic groups. This might be the reason behind the assertion of Student Dean's Office representatives that students in Peace Clubs have relatively good inter-personal and inter-group communication skills than others from the start (AAM2, AUM2 and UM2).

6.2. Inter-group Contact through Co-curricular Programs (Peace Clubs) in Public Universities

Six question items were crafted to measure the suitability of peace club for inter-group contact (see Appendix I-B, section II). Hence, the mean value 3.4 indicated under Table 34 denotes, majority of respondents agreed peace club seem to be a suitable platform to establish inter-ethnic contact. This result generally denote the ideal six standards are met by large standards in Peace Clubs.

Table 34

Peace Club as Inter-ethnic Contact Platform

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.50	4.00	3.4056	.57748

In line with quantitative results, interview results showed positive sides of Peace Clubs. These include: absence of discrimination in membership, voluntary 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 and voluntary partaking in contact situation (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 for inter-ethnic contact. Besides, the fact that Amharic is an official language of the country and a working language of the club fulfills the condition common vernacular is employed to facilitate communication. However, students explained concerns over regularity of contact and suitability of settings for open discussions.

In line with what has been noted by a number of researchers (Gurin et al., 2002; Hurtado, 2001; Karnyshev et al., 2014) it looks that the minimum requirement for IER development is compositional diversity. Even though there is no restriction based on ethnic identification in Peace Clubs, students mentioned, no intentional effort is made by club leaders to make sure the crowd is indeed diversified. A female sociology student from UoG (US6) asserted this by stating, “Club leaders announce for an event and those who are willing and have the time will attend. Mostly,

students from different regions participate. But there were moments where friends from the same area come together and attend. The number of participants also vary.” Such practices are also prevalent in AAU (AAS2, 6) and AU (AUS2, 7). Hence, inter-ethnic contact through CoC suffered from ethnic diversity in a session. Lack of ethnic variety in HEIs paves the way for intra-group cohesion (Denson, 2009).

Regularity of cross-ethnic students is also the most debatable topic in Peace Clubs as many factors affect its realization. A student from AAU from Journalism stream (AAS2) said,

I have been a member since I joined campus. Within these three years, dialogue have 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 or formal meetings.

Supporting views of AAS2, AUS7 shared his experience within the club in AU. Accordingly, he mentioned, “Club leaders attempt to organize a training or a dialogue run by themselves or invited guests. The problem is, there is no enough facility to undertake such impactful activities. This affected the regularity of programs.” Differently, AUS5 said:

We should know club leaders are also students and they have no resource of their own except an office and few office equipment. So, I and my friends tried to understand them and try to learn as much as we can from the sessions organized. I came from Tigray and I learned a lot about other cultures from students I met through sessions.

Students who choose to overlook inconveniences and try to get the most out of the capacity building session and group activities are also present in AAU and UoG. A student from UoG for instance said, “I believe the club creates 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.” Even though such optimism seem to create a shared responsibility among all members, it is important to highlight effective CoCPs necessitate sound institutional framework (O’Connor, 2012).

As clearly mentioned under Chapter 2 (*see* sub section 2.3.2.2.), a designated work team that is responsible and accountable to plan, organize, direct and monitor CoCPs is critical to promote non-academic learning. Such team carefully plan learning programs in a way that fulfills the learning outcomes that are in alignment with the university objective and club guidelines (Stirling & Kerr, 2015). Moreover, the team is expected to secure funds (O’connor, 2012; Thompson et al, 2019) and properly schedule club activities in a way that do not clash with formal class schedule (Astin, 1999; Dhanmeher, 2014; Stephen et al., 2019).

Since regularity of contact determines the quality of contact, the nature of activities a student is expected to engage in as well as the frequency along with the rights and responsibilities should be clearly delineated in the learning agreement (Sterling & Kerr, 2015). Moreover, literatures suggest, well-structured CoCPs are suitable to plan activities ahead of time (Fretwell, 1931; Siddiky, 2019; Ward, 2017). Interviews on the other hand showed, that fact that Peace Club is structured in a way it is answerable to the university President Office and political and judiciary structure, make it difficult to plan activities proactively and loose integrity in the face of students. This affected the regularity of activities, contact and refrain from membership or taking active role.

Some members remarked, non-members think of them as ear of the government and they report every move of students (AAS4; AUS2, 6; US4). Trust is the most crucial aspect in promoting inter-ethnic relations (Vagaeva et al., 2020). Students in Ethiopian public HEIs are also politically divided which makes them suspicious of who is who (Abebaw, 2014; Abera, 2010; Yonas, 2019). The fact that Peace Clubs face credibility issue due to their structure raises the question of how membership in Peace Club in public HEIs might lead to the emergence of intergroup friendships in a situation where members refrain from having active role.

The negative view of non-members towards peace club can be understood in two ways. First, considering the involvement of few members of peace club in inter-ethnic conflict (Hailemariam, 2016), it likely less appetizing for non-members to join the club. Second, students with strong ethnic identification and with political motivation fail to understand the importance of dialogue and inter-ethnic harmony. If they involve in such platform where variety of perspectives and interests are negotiated and commonalities are emphasized over differences, they will face a serious challenge to stick to their fixed world views. In order to save themselves from such a

challenge, they brainwash fellow students not to join peace club and SD as exhibited in different universities in the past years (LPI & PDC, 2019). The reason non-members, particularly those with polarized views of ethnic identity tarnish the image of peace club may be attributed to fear of losing ‘followers’ if peace club is stronger (AAS2, AUS6, US7).

The objective of Peace Club as specified by the Ministry of Federal Affairs (2013) was to produce socially responsible graduates who acquired non-violent negotiation and problem solving skills, appreciate differences and display love for their country. Similar notions are reflected under Peace Club Guidelines of AAU (Student Dean’s Office, 2009), AU (Ministry of Peace & Ministry of Education, 2022) and UoG (University of Gondar Peace Club, 2021). In order to fulfill such superordinate goals, the clubs need to be free from any bias. Practices from foreign countries shows that, clubs that face pressure from the management of the university or the government became weak to improve inter-group behavior (Munywe, 2014). This in long run makes the club an association of like-minded individuals and groups with no fruitful discussions and dialogues to challenge preconceived perspective. The fact that students mentioned the structure is not consistent across universities and it is linked to the government put the club’s integrity in question.

Representatives from Student Dean’s Office within the three HEIs were also asked to forward their opinion as to how CoCP is organized in their respective campuses. Accordingly, AAM2 remarked,

Peace Club is the strongest club in our university. We even hire a professional who has Master’s degree in Social Anthropology who undertake his thesis related to peace. He solely supervises the activities of the club. We also have a club policy that guide club formation and management for all clubs. We encourage members to meet regularly and report their activities to our office. Peace Club members who took part in sustained dialogue project used to run by Life and Peace Institute already knew how the dialogue should be undertaken and coach others. However, we cannot claim that the activities are carried out in a systematic manner. Particularly, lack of budget is a bottleneck!

Even though representatives from Student Dean’s Office in AU and UoG provide similar response to AAM2, it was possible to learn that, a professional that oversees the work of Peace Club is not present in AU and UoG (AUM2 and UM2). Student Dean’s Office 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 of inter-ethnic contact situation 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 Peace Clubs. Similar findings were reported in the works of Abebaw (2014), Hailemariam (2016), Mekonnen (2013) and Yoseph (2019).

Some club members in AAU also complain- recognition of the club by the university management and assignment of a professional to monitor the club activities has insignificant contribution. Hence, occasions where members meet face-to-face regularly is not to the level expected by students. In an environment where inter-ethnic fissure is prevalent, people get hateful and false information easily (Bizumic, 2012; Semir, 2018; Yeghiazaryan, 2018). Hence, the likelihood of social distancing and prejudice is higher. It is to overcome such negative consequence that contact hypothesis proponents strongly recommend regularity of contact among cross-group members (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2008, 2011). The fact that such consistency is minimum within Peace Clubs in AAU, AU and UoG indicate, members from varied ethnic background do not meet in a way they learn about each other adequately.

Another concern raised by students was use of common language. Past scholarship in Ethiopian public HEIs disclosed that students lose interest in Amharic language due to strong nationalist sentiment propagated by elites despite its official usage (Melkamu & Ameyu, 2013; Tesfaye, 2012). However, it is still a language widely spoken in the country and within HEIs. Even though students who join Peace Club aimed at learning about co-existence, there are few students who still wish for ethnic cliques and advocate for usage of ethnic languages. A student from Oromia in UoG (US2) for instance mentioned, “Few students who are not Amharic speakers have a hidden propensity to push for the use of other ethnic languages in the club. But, for all of us to be on the same page, we need be able to speak in a single language.” Some argue such propensity is due to pressure from students with fixed views of ethnicity (AAS4; AUS4, 7; US7).

6.3. Processes within Co-curricular Programs (Peace Clubs) that Affect Inter-ethnic Relations of Students

The most common mediational variables between inter-ethnic contact and positive IER are learning about out-groups (cognitive aspects), developing emotional ties with out-groups (affective aspects) and changing behavior as a result of learning and development of affective features (behavioral aspects) (Levene et al., 2003; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006 2008). This does not mean the three mediational forces are sequential. However, knowledge about groups one is not familiar with usually precedes the behavior and emotions one may display to them. With this understanding, descriptive results of cognitive, affective and behavioral variables that lie between the independent and dependent variable are discussed sequentially. This section presents the descriptive statistics and interview results.

6.3.1. Cognitive Aspects

Contact hypothesis assumed, elongated exposure to out-groups helps people to gain extensive knowhow of their needs, emotions and aspirations and why they do what they do (Allport, 1954). Moreover, it enlighten in-groups to lean about conventional behaviors in inter-group environment (Pettigrew, 1998). Such learning in HEIs may take place in classrooms or beyond it including in CoC platforms (Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2015; Gurin et al., 2002; Savchits et al., 2017). This study therefore examined the ability of Peace Club, as a CoC platform, to contribute for students learning about other ethnic groups and acceptable ways of communication in inter-ethnic settings. Nine questions with respect to cognitive aspects were developed (*see* Appendix I-B, section III). The majority of respondents, as shown in Table 35 mean value of 3.44, agreed that club engagement help students learn about other groups.

Table 35

Cognitive Variables

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	2.00	4.67	3.4437	.49260

With regard to the nature of platforms used to impart balanced knowledge about ethnic variety, students mentioned, a sustained dialogue session run by moderators is notable. A Sustained Dialogue Project was introduced by PDC and LPI in Ethiopian public universities since 2009. Its main objective was to enhance positive IGR by promoting a culture of trust and collaboration among diverse identity lines in University campuses through a year-long dialogue process (PCD & LPI, 2019). Participants were trained to see their fellow as their own, share their perspective and they learn about each other through workshops, coffee ceremonies, peaceful marching and community services (LPI, 2014). During the project period and after its completion, Peace Club leaders and members were active participants (AAM1&2; AUM1&2 and UM1&2).

Students reported that such dialogue habit has been common in Peace Club, though this program is not regular. Usually, they select a certain topic related to peace and conflict, they divide members in different groups (eight students in each group) and assign moderators to guide discussions and experience sharing within each group (AAS4, AUS6 and US4). The positive impact of inter-ethnic dialogue in enhancing participant's knowledge of out-groups was also testified in previous years in AAU, AU and UoG (LPI & PDC, 2019). The testimonies underline most students altered their negative views of out-groups and learn about the dangers of intolerance and violence (LPI & PDC, 2019). Few members were even funded to share what they gain to their respective home-town communities (LPI & PDC, 2019).

Affirming the benefits of such session in creating different views of out-group members, some members complain on the irregularity and redundancy of topics (AAS2, 6; AUS2, 5; US2, 7, 8). A non-member from AAU (AAS1) also criticize, "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." What consolidates AAS1's complaint was the opinion of an active member (AAS7). She added, "More members attend when there is refreshment. It seems they are there for the refreshment and not for the lessons learned." During the dialogue session however, the group composition is mostly diversified, is not always.

Pettigrew (1998) strongly suggested the need of intra-group reappraisal to discuss inter-ethnic experiences, challenge out-group stereotypes and put forth directions for the future in a way that

foster inter-ethnic contact. Such session should not be arbitrary rather scheduled and formally recognized so that there is a separate time and space for intra-group interaction (Dovidio et al., 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Such practice is however non-existent in AAU, AU and UoG. The three club leaders (AAS4, AUS6 and US4) even highlighted the dangers of such practice. A remark that put emphasis on the matter was forwarded by US4:

We always encourage cross-group interaction. Even though in-group session seem beneficial if it is undertaken under the assumption to give positive criticism for a member regarding his wrong doings during inter-ethnic interaction, this is not how it will be understood by out-groups. Within student community, a clique based on ethnicity is perceived with suspicion. This may work in a civilized and stable environment. In a fragile context like ours, it is better to enforce inter-ethnic interactions at all times with all cost.

The Student Dean's Office representatives were also asked about their views on the role of separate intra-group sessions within the club. They believed such grouping may create suspicion in the eyes of out-groups. In this regard, a respondent from AU (AM2) stated,

It is better for students from different ethnic communities come together and share their personal experiences and concerns. In this process, a student who may be stereotyped about other groups will tell the story he heard to his in-group member in the dormitory or another setting. Such informal information sharing is also strong. We meet students who joined the Peace Club after they hear interesting stories about out-groups from their member friend or classmate. So, what matters is to work hard in strengthening inter-ethnic communication within the club. The impact is not only on members but students outside the club.

Even though the views of AM2 was shared by interviewees from Student Dean's Office in AAU and UoG as well as those in the Vice President Offices (AAM1, AM1 and UM1), it is formally institutionalized activity that receive acceptance and sustainability. Especially in a diversified university, the details in dialogue sessions or workshops should aim at reducing prejudice and promoting cross-ethnic interaction (Denson, 2009; Ward, 2017). When intra-group reappraisal is the norm of various prejudice reduction sessions organized by the university, with adequate

awareness on its benefits, it will get wider acceptance. Although its impact is evident, Student Dean's Office and Peace Club leaders' suggestions to rely on informal word-of-mouth promotion to reinforce IER among students are likely to have arbitrary effects.

Peace Clubs in AAU also share messages related to peace discovered during dialogue for members as well as non-members on its Telegram Channel (AAS2, 7, 8; AAM2). Through this channel, the club reached many students in 6 kilo and other campuses. Members also share interviews, workshops and motivational speeches regarding peace and non-violence amongst themselves through personal face book and telegram accounts (AAS2, 4, 6; AUS4, 8; US2, 7). The leader of the club in AAU (AAS4) asserted, "Such initiation is a result of positive influence created within the club." Students who are exposed to interactive and engaging activities with out-groups are stimulated to expand the exposure in different arenas (Savchits et al., 2017).

The lessons learned about non-violence during inter-ethnic dialogue also help students to mediate conflicts and teach students about the value of togetherness and collaboration on numerous occasions (AAS2, AUS6, US4). A representative from Student Dean's Office in AAU corroborate this by stating. "Peace Club also acts like a security wing. They monitor activities around dormitories and other places on campus. Not all conflicts are major. They mediate most conflicts by giving advice and teach them about the value of tolerance and mutual respect." The role of peace club in mediating conflicts has been reported in the works of Abebaw (2014) and Yoseph (2019) in the past.

Intergroup relations will improve when the dividing and conflictual national narrative that previously separated the two groups is replaced by a mutually agreed-upon, acceptable, and appropriate story (Hughes, 2007). However, the dialogue sessions seem to fail to address highly contentious topics particularly after 2020 due to traumatic experiences of recurrent violence in HEIs. Peace Club leaders are therefore of the opinion, allowing participants to examine their weak and strong sides about peaceful co-existence and find commonalities with other members. According to Zúñiga et al. (2007), effective IGD involves exploring one's own and others' identities, identifying similarities and differences among diverse groups, openly discussing sensitive topics, and determining next steps. The fact that IGDs are designed in such a way that

they discourage the exploration of out-groups, differences, and sensitive topics may jeopardize the very purpose of IGDs and limit students’ knowledge of out-groups in the long run.

6.3.2. Affective Aspects

The second mediational variables between inter-group contact and inter-group behavior are affective aspects. These facets comprise lowered inter-group anxiety, empathy, admiration, sympathy and trust (Levin et al., 2003; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew et al., 2011; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). According to Pettigrew & 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. Hence, significant mean value is expected from affective features than cognitive aspects.

In order to examine how affective aspects mediate inter-ethnic contact through CoC platform (Peace Club) and IER of students in AAU, AU and UoG, five questions were developed (*see* Appendix I-B, section III). The majority of respondents are undecided whether club activities encourage students to form positive emotions toward other groups, as seen by the mean value of 3.03 in Table 36.

Table 36

Affective Variables

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.00	5.00	3.0360	1.03576

While Allport’s (1954) original thesis seem to support changes at cognitive level serve as strong input for positive IGR, subsequent literatures suggest, it is when inter-group contact ensure lower level of anxiety and higher level of empathy, IGR can be positive in sustainable manner (Denson, 2009; Dovidio et al., 2011; Levin et al., 2003). However, the fact that the average score for cognitive variables (M=3.44) is higher than the average score for affective variables (M=3.03), further demonstrates that the knowledge members gained during dialogue sessions is not sufficient

to significantly change students' emotions. The reason for this are attributed to lack of sufficient time for dialogue, lack of variety of learning approaches and a failure to measure the impact of club activities (AAS2, 4, 6, 8; AAS4, 5, 6, 7; US2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

Interviewees from Student Dean's Office were also asked how the office design activities and programs in Peace Club in a way it can positively affect the knowledge, emotion and behavior of students towards out-groups. Accordingly, they genuinely responded, activities are not consciously planned in a way it can change the cognitive, emotional and behavioral development of students (AAM2, AUM2 and UM2). It is also highlighted that, there is lack of expertise and budget in Student Dean's Office on how to plan, organize, direct and monitor CoC activities in general and Peace Club activities in particular. For example, only in AAU is a professional hired to supervise Peace Club operations.

In explaining the level of recognition given to Peace Club operations, AAM2 remarked,

We also have a club policy that guide club formation and management for all clubs. We encourage members to meet regularly and report their activities to our office. Peace Club members who took part in sustained dialogue project used to run by Life and Peace Institute already knew how the dialogue should be undertaken and coach others. However, we cannot claim that the activities are carried out in a systematic manner. Particularly, lack of budget is a bottleneck!

Peace Club members in AAU were therefore asked how having an expert who solely supervise club's programs is helping them. They mentioned, the expert is friendly and he try his best to make the club impactful. However, innovativeness is hampered by the management's decision to allow all clubs, including Peace Club, to raise money independently and the prohibition of interactive activities following COVID-19. During the time of data collection for this study, clubs were encouraged to contact NGOs and other stakeholders to secure funds to run club activities. AAM2 remarked, "This is to make students responsible and develop variety of skills in the process of securing funds." Though giving opportunities for students to take responsibilities on their own is commendable, different scholars suggested, initiatives to improve IER of students shall be primarily facilitated by campus administration (Hurtado, 2008; Hurtado et al., 1999).

Establishment of student affairs wing (Major & Mangope, 2014), empowerment of student affairs wing in terms of human and financial resources (Major & Mangope, 2014; Toress et al., 2009) and clear learning outcomes and monitoring (Ward, 2017) are highlighted as critical factors for the success of systematic CoCPs in diversified educational establishments. Fulfilling these criteria allow a club to reach out to a number of students systematically through devising innovative and impactful learning strategies that have positive impact on students emotions as evidenced in AAU, AU, Bahir Dar, Haromaya and UoG in the past (LPI, 2014; LPI & PDC, 2019). The fragmented approach in supervision of dialogue, recruitment of professionals, setting clear learning goals, funding, measuring achievements and feedback make Peace Clubs in AAU, AU and UoG after sustained dialogue project phase out contribute less than what is expected (AAS2, 4; AAM2; AUS7, 8; AUM2; US6, UM2).

Nonetheless, dialogue still fragmentally implemented, some students are able to form a positive emotional bond with their fellow out-group members. A student from Tigray in UoG (US5) for instance mentioned,

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*). Students with such attitude are plenty in the club. 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. I also know students who travel to see their friends' families who live in other regions after they met in Peace Club.

One of the indicators of affective ties in inter-group situation is friendship which is expressed through trust one another and confide in each other (Pettigrew, 1998). Strong friendship, irrespective of ethnic affiliation due to club engagement is also exhibited among members of Peace Club in AAU (AAS6, 8) and AU (AUS2, 4).

6.3.3. Behavioral Aspects

The third facet between inter-group contact and positive inter-group interaction is behavior. This is exhibited through actions like reduced or eliminated out-group discrimination and helping out-group members (Dovidio et al., 2011), cooperation with out-groups (Dovidio et al., 2005), non-violence towards members of other group and protecting out-groups (Fiske, 2005) among other things. Based on the literatures on behavioral mediators, the researcher crafted five questions that help to assess students’ views on behavioral modifications as a result of Peace Club participation (see Appendix I-B, section III). As illustrated under Table 37, mean value of 3.55 indicates, majority of respondents agreed behavioral changes towards out-groups are prevalent among students due to Peace Club engagement.

Table 37

Behavioral Variables

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

The mean value for behavioral features is greater than mean value for affective aspects (see Table 50). Some scholars report that behavioral change is merely a prelude to emotional changes. For instance, Pettigrew (1998, p.71) indicated, “Behavior change is often the precursor of attitude change.” Accordingly, the author argued, behavioral modification due to inter-group contact has a potential to alter affective queues. Although it is debatable whether how one behaves oneself precedes attitudinal change, Allport (1954) indicates that some persons may perform in an acceptable manner without changing their emotions. Affective adjustment is consequently commonly a result of extended contact (Dovidio et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1998).

Normally, behavioral facets have cognitive and emotional nature (Allport, 1954) though changing behavior serve as an input for affective queues. In this study also, students likely evaluate behavioral change than emotional ones. Since the mean value for cognitive aspects was within the range of ‘agree’ in the Likert scale (see Table 35), it probably contributed for higher mean value of behavioral aspects.

Interview with Peace Club members in AAU, AU and UoG generally signified that, it's uncommon to talk negatively about out-groups, discriminate them or manage conflicts violently after COVID-19. The assessment of LPI & PDC (2019) also showed, members of Peace club involved in inter-ethnic dialogue refrain from taking role in ethnic related violence rather extend assistance to vulnerable students and mediate conflicts among students. Moreover, cooperation and practicing cultural aspects of out-groups is more common among Peace Club members than non-members. However, it was highlighted that, forgiveness requires a conscious transformation of feelings and behavior and it is difficult to know whether students forgive out-group members who they claim wronged them. A remark from AAS7 is a good indicator of this:

Some students have strong negative view of out-groups. I have a friend within the club who positively socialize with all students from every ethnic group. But once he told me he still has a disgusting feeling towards X ethnic group members due to their unfair treatment of the ethnic group he belongs to in the past. I also met students in the club who transform their misconceived beliefs and attitudes about out-groups and now form strong relations with out-groups. However, such transformation is not just due to Peace Club activities but extra effort of students to emerge from the cycle of hatred.

Similar experiences were shared by AAS7, AUS6 and US4. This indicates, there are students with the club who act in a way that is acceptable by the mass and yet have untransformed attitude towards out-groups. Pettigrew (1998) strongly argued that, positive emotions towards out-groups due to extensive and reliable knowledge about them and extended contact are basis for sustainable positive IGR. This is mainly because knowledge is not necessarily translated in to attitudinal change (Dovidio et al., 2005, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2008) and behavioral modification can be deceiving as some try to conduct themselves to fit to the environment they are living (Allport, 1954). So, Peace Club on one hand succeeds in creating a platform for students from varied ethnic groups to meet and overcome their biases but also fails to transform deep rooted feelings on the other in AAU, AU and UoG.

Supporting the latter argument, non-member students label, Peace Club members, particularly those in leadership position as '*pretenders*' because they are there not to bring real change rather to get certificates and master's scholarship (AAS1, 3, 5; AUS1, 3 and US1, 3). A Student Dean's Office representative (AAM2) also commented such complaints reached to the office but the university give master's scholarship opportunity to encourage other students to join the club and contribute to the good of student community. Even while such an incentive is a commendable decision, complaints from non-members should not be overlooked. Furthermore, the lack of a system to monitor cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in Peace Club members as a result of their club involvement raises concerns about whether behavioral changes are genuinely visible.

The 2020 report of LPI and PDC put recommendations on how to address the inter-ethnic problem by the knowledge and skill students have acquired in dialogue sessions. Accordingly, members were advised to design a project that enable them to use the knowledge, skills and attitude they acquire through club engagement to resolve a certain pressing social issue. Designing a project that likely has impact on campus community or the larger local community calls for willingness, knowledge and commitment. However, such action-oriented peace project was not planned by Peace Club members after (AAS6; AUS7; US4).

Contrary to what is exhibited in the statistical results in this study, previous studies revealed that, peace club executives were involved in discriminatory and violent episodes of ethnic nature (Hailemariam, 2016; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021). In this study however, the researcher did not get exclusive evidence that executives of the club were involved in inter-ethnic conflict. Despite this evidence, Peace club leadership team is not trusted by many and are considered as 'ear' of the government, reporting every move of students. Hence, irrespective of the diversified nature of executive team ethnically, they are all judged as 'traitors' who pass any information that the Student Dean's Office or the university management would like to hear. The report of LPI & PDC (2019) also admit the issue of trust prevails on campus and it was mainly because, in the beginning, some of the peace club executives work closely with the government.

6.4. Conditions that Affect Inter-ethnic Relations of Students

Institutional will to promote diversity through systematic structural adjustment set the stage for ethnic prejudice reduction and positive IER. Less coordinated effort in such direction is costly in terms of maintaining peaceful IGR among students (Pettigrew, 1998). According to Allport (1954), such institutional determination is expressed through equality of status, common goal, inter-group cooperation and formal laws and procedures are considered as optimal conditions that enable IGR. However, consequent literatures on IGR highlighted that, wider situational forces like conflict also affect the direction of cross-group relations (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006). These five forces are therefore called moderating variables that are conditional (Pettigrew, 1998). Hereunder, the statistical results on each variable are presented.

6.4.1. Equality of Status

One of the basic conditions for positive IER is whether there is equality of status among members of varied racial or ethnic communities in contact situations. Three questions were constructed to measure whether there is equality of status among Peace Club members (*see* Appendix I-B, section IV). According to Table 38, the aggregate mean value of 3.31 indicates that the majority of respondents in AAU, AU, and UoG are ambivalent regarding the presence of equality of status among students in Peace Club.

Table 38

Equality of Status

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.00	5.00	3.3156	1.00021

Qualitative findings further supported that there is no visible discrimination of club members based on their ethnic affiliation and everyone can join and express their opinions within the club. However, they reported that, there is favoritism to join the leadership team based on ethnic membership particularly in AAU.

A student from Management department (AAS1) complained,

Most students join Peace Club or any other club and enter the leadership ladder to get master's scholarship. When the term of the President or Vice President of the club is ended, there is an election to overtake the leadership. In such times, the former leadership team conspire to bring their friend or whom they affiliate ethnically. In such manner, they are denying the chance of being in leadership for those whom they do not know really well. So, I do not believe there is level playing field for all students from diversified background.

The views of AAS1 were shared by AAS3 and AAS8. Since there is an election recognized by the Student Dean's Office to choose leadership team for any club including Peace Club, the researcher asked the office representative regarding the fairness of elections. Accordingly, AM2 responded, "Candidates will make a presentation on what they plan to contribute for the club and interviewed. It is believed these candidates came through recommendation of students and/or self-initiation. So, we try to judge their fitness to the position based on their performance." Though such approach seem to be merit-based, the complaints from students on the homogeneity of leadership team term after term should not be ignored. The tendency to favor fellows from own ethnic group within CoC clubs has been exhibited in the past in AAU, ASTU and Debreberhan University (Hailemariam, 2016). Mesfin & Befekadu (2021) also reported, Peace Club was dismantled in one of the public universities due to domination of members from one ethnic group. However, the executive team of Peace Clubs in the current study are ethnically diversified.

In Ambo University, non-members and few members complained that, the leadership team of Peace Club, though a bit diversified, attempted to benefit each other in capacity building opportunities and failed to benefit regular members. AUS5 for instance mentioned,

If all members are equal within the club, I believe we all should get opportunities of training and mentorship turn by turn. However, those in leadership are friends and they do not pass any opportunity to us. This created feelings of superiority and inferiority among leaders and regular members. However, the leadership ethnic composition is diverse.

A student within Peace Club leadership team (AUS6) on the other hand mentioned,

Almost all invitations for workshop or trainings came for those in leadership position. However, we try to disseminate the information and lessons learned from such encounters to members in different ways. Because the university administration has refused to provide financial support to the club, I admit that there is a gap in imparting the knowledge and skills we obtained to members.

In contrast to what AUS6 said, the university management explained, Peace Club is the most favored CoC platform in AU. However, its extended structure outside the university makes leaders of the club less accountable to the management. A management member (AUM1) specifically noted, “There are many clubs in the university but no special monetary support is provided for them. This is big weakness! Peace Club leaders get the opportunity to meet people from NGOs and government offices. This makes them believe they are privileged.” Hence, the challenge with respect to equality of status within AU is not necessarily due to ethnic affiliation rather the fact not members are not equally benefited from capacity building opportunities like leaders. Similar complaints were forwarded by club members and non-members from AAU (AAS2, 3, 7).

Even though capacity building privileges for leaders are apparent in UoG, members seem to be satisfied with it and there is no special complaint about it. This according to students and Student Dean’s Office representatives is due to positive impact of Gondar Family Project and art club called KIBAMA in Gondar. A student from Journalism department (US7) stated,

Students have the opportunity to live and learn what togetherness really means through direct participation in KIBAMA or a family at Gondar. Even if you are not the member of these two programs, you can share the experience of your friends and learn a lot. So, I believe such platforms helps students to overlook the weaknesses of Peace Club.

A remark from other students in UoG also affirm, most students enjoy KIBAMA’s programs which stimulate positive intra-personal, inter-personal and inter-group behavior on campus (US2, 4, 5, 6, 8). Instructors and management staff in UoG are also more aware of the activities of KIBAMA than any other club. This does not mean however, Peace Club is invisible in UoG.

6.4.2. Common Goal

Having shared goal helps people to focus on what is to be achieved and overlook their identity markers (Allport, 1954). Such practice has friendship potential because people go through varied negative and positive experiences together and achieve something that potentially benefit everyone (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). If inter-ethnic contact within clubs works in a situation where members work towards a common goal, the likelihood of alleviating ethnocentrism is higher.

The three questions meant to measure this attribute were; (1) All club members strive to achieve the club’s objectives irrespective of their ethnic affiliation, (2) All club members feel they need one another to achieve the club’s objectives and (3) members believe achieving club’s objective helps to improve their inter-group relations. Descriptive statistics under Table 53 showed that, mean value of 3.18 indicates, majority of students hold neutral position on whether members of Peace Club work towards common goal. The reason for this is similar to the concern of students raised under ‘equality of status.’ Since students, particularly in AAU and AU complained about self-serving intention of leadership team, it affects motivation for common goal.

Table 39
Common Goal

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.33	5.00	3.1889	.61720

6.4.3. Inter-group Cooperation

Basically, common goal is attained when there is team spirit among those in contact situation. Such interdependence minimizes competitive spirit and increase mutual cooperation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Integration in this study is therefore examined through three questions (see Appendix I-B, section III). As clearly shown under Table 40, mean value of 3.10 indicates, majority of respondents are neutral whether inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club is underpinned through inter-group cooperation. It should go without saying that the mean value for

inter-group cooperation indicated neutrality because the aggregate mean value for the latter attribute falls under the ‘neither agree nor disagree’ gauge.

Table 40

Inter-dependent Cooperation

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.33	4.67	3.1089	.58759

6.4.4. Institutional Support

Strong institutional laws and structures are mandatory for positive inter-ethnic interaction. Inter-ethnic contact in conditions where institutional laws support ethnic diversity and inhibit prejudice displayed positive IER compared to situations where institutional regulations are lacking (Allport, 1954). Some try to extend the institutional support from drafting enabling laws to rewarding positive inter-group behavior (Pettigrew, 1998). In order to examine whether such structure is in AAU, AU and UoG, the following six questions were crafted (see Appendix I-B, section III).

As stated in Chapter five it was indicated that, favoritism and failure to take proactive and reactive measures in amending IER of students and punishing wrong doings that compromise IER on campus are the major fault lines on university management part (*see* section 5.3 particularly). In line with this, descriptive results under Table 41 illustrated, mean value of 1.93 indicated majority of club members disagree on the presence of well-organized institutional support to realize positive IER on campus. Such quantitative data is also complimented by interview findings from student members.

Table 41

Institutional Support

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.50	2.33	1.9311	.18640

Most students disclosed that, they are aware of disciplinary guidelines that prohibit discrimination and violence based on ethnic identity of students through general induction programs during freshman year. However, they are not aware of legal documents that prohibit inter-ethnic competition or foster cooperation. A student from AAU (AAS7) said, “The university management is curious about ethnic diversity when there is open conflict because they will be blamed by the government and the public as to why they fail to contain the problem.” The researcher also got the impression, universities management is seem to lightly address the issue of cross-ethnic relations during the interview sessions. One member of the AAU management team (AM1), for example, stated that students at AAU value diversity and that he views the issues with IER as “imagined problems” that arise in students’ minds because they fear that what they hear at other universities might occur here. Interviews with AUM1 and UM1 attested claims of AAM1. Almost all student interviewees reject such claims.

Regarding legal arrangements that limit inter-ethnic feud and promote cross-ethnic cooperation, the management staff in AAU, AU and UoG remarked, induction programs are the main platform for informing students’ on such issues. However, all student interviewees complain the induction programs encourage one-way communication and there is no space for dialogue. Supporting this view, instructors add, the institutional policies and procedures also lack depth in terms of how ethnic diversity is managed in HEIs and who should be responsible (AAI1, 2; AUI1, 2; UM1, 2). The senate legislations of AAU (2019), AU (2019) and UoS (2013) have no separate article on how inter-ethnic relations should be managed. Rather, terms that explain positive IER are arbitrarily discussed (*see* section 4.3.6.). Lack of feasible policy frameworks on promotion of IER of students is highlighted in the works of Abebaw (2014, 2023) and Mesfin & Befekadu (2021). Students further underlined, failure to take measures against partakers in ethnic related violence is typical of university’s lack of commitment to promotion of students IER (AA2, AUS6, US8).

Promotion of democratic culture is among the objectives of Ethiopian HEIs (FDRE, 2009, 2019). This calls for freedom of expression of opinions and active participation in matters that affect students and their community. However, these rights are more of rhetoric than reality in AAU, AU and UoG particularly when students request a meeting with their respective campus administration (AAS3, 5; AUS1, 8; US3, 6). Students in the current study point out, inductions programs, special

holidays or discussions following violent conflicts are platforms for students to meet the management as stated in the works of Mesfin & Befekadu (2021). They also mentioned, the university management prefer tightening security than having a dialogue which verified the conclusion of Arega & Mulugeta (2017) and Missaye (2014) that public HEI leaders in Ethiopia employ avoidance strategy in addressing problems in general and ethnic issues in particular.

A culture of dialogue is not however a news to AAU, AU and UoG. A dialogue among students from different ethnic communities that call for inter-ethnic gathering and discussion on sensitive topics has been introduced and was acknowledged by the management of AAU, AU and UoG (LPI & PDC, 2019). However, this is not enough to recognize the need for positive IER of students. Studies showed that, diversified HEIs need to encourage dialogues among students and the management so as to have a shared understanding on matters that affect students (Belford, 217; Karafil & Olur, 2018; Mustapha et al., 2009; Ratanakarn, 2011). On the part of university management however, they are of the opinion students concerns reached to the management through Student Union (AAM1, AUM1, and UM1).

Even though SU is supposed to be a bridge between students and the management (AAU, 2019; AU, 2019; UoG, 2013), students in AAU, AU and UoG complained that, they have little knowhow of what the union is doing and its efforts in improving IER of students is not visible. Particularly in AAU, both Peace club and non-club members complained the Student Union is not truly representative of student body. In AU, Peace Club leaders and SU leaders are not looking eye to eye because the former accuse the latter as incompetent (AUS4) and the latter claim Peace Club leaders they outsmart everyone because they are privileged by the government (AUM2). Such dispute implies, the information exchange between the management and SU may not be entirely the concern of students. The feud between SU and Peace Club is not a new development. The report of LPI & PDC (2019) also state the question of who will coordinate a dialogue project resulted intense conflict between SU and Peace Club in Jimma University which delayed the launch of the project. Effective coordination among CoC coordinators, faculty, and management is also a good way to attract funders (Hurtado, 2007) so as to run CoC projects effectively.

Monitoring club activities and recognizing positive inter-ethnic behavior are also scarce in AAU, AU, and UoG. Despite the fact that all clubs, including the Peace Club, report their activities to the Student Dean's Office to determine whether they are active or not and if they use the university's funds correctly (if provided), there is no standardized measure of success for club review. Co-curricular Record (CCR) is among the contemporary CoC packages that document the CoC program a student attend, what he or she learned and how it affect one's cognition, emotion and behavior, how one plans to implement or is applying the lessons learned, and feedback forwarded from club coordinators (Elias & Drea, 2013). This helps to track how each CoC activity is contributing for each student's cognitive, emotional and behavioral growth in diversified HEIs (Ward, 2017). Absence of such record in AAU, AU and UoG makes it difficult to monitor and measure the effect of dialogue or other club activities in each member. According to the results of the interviews, neither the management staff nor the students are aware of CCR.

Regarding reward, AAU provides master's scholarship for club President and Vice President irrespective of their contribution for improved IER (*see* sections 6.3.3. and 6.4.1.). During the time of data collection, such opportunity is available only in AAU. Generally, interviews indicate there is no practice of rewarding the club or its members for their exceptional contribution in alleviating prejudiced inter-ethnic relations in AAU, AU or UoG. Studies revealed, structured reward system stimulate contribution of CoCPs (Astin, 1999; Stilring & Kerr, 2015; Ward, 2017) The 2013 document of MoFA also recommend on the need to reward students who are icons of peaceful cross-ethnic relations through building their capacity and giving them the chance to spread a message of tolerance and peace and engage in reconciliation activities on and beyond campus. Lack of such system in the three HEIs therefore shows violation of the Peace Club's establishment guideline and likely affect students initiation and sustainability of positive behavior and emotions.

6.4.5. Wider Situational Forces

Allport's four initial conditions for positive inter-ethnic relations were modified by subsequent researchers as empirical findings on essential and facilitative conditions for optimal contact start to emerge. One of the frequently mentioned conditions was presence of violent phenomena among societal members (Pettigrew, 1998). The assumption is that, inter-ethnic fissures at community level likely affect initiatives that aim to promote positive inter-group behavior. However, there is

research evidence university students exhibited positive inter-group behavior while the situation at community level is violent. In order to assess the effect of situational forces, three questions were developed (see Appendix I-B, section III). Statistical results under Table 42 indicated that (mean value of 3.21), majority of Peace Club members neither agree nor disagree whether wider conflicts at campus and societal level affect their IER.

Table 42

Wider Situational Forces

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	1.00	5.00	3.2133	.71239

A neutral statistical report as shown in Table 56 is hard to interpret. This is mainly because, past scholarship in Ethiopian public HEIs context reported, wider societal forces like ethno-politics, media influence (particularly Facebook), biased and hateful messages of activists and politicians and ethnic-based conflicts in different parts of the country contributed for ethnocentric attitude and behavior of students directly or indirectly (Abebaw, 2014; Mesfin & Befekadu, 2021; Zekarias, 2020). However, it at least shows Peace Club members behavior and attitude is not entirely dependent on wider conflict situations. The fact that over 60% of respondents’ likely hold mixed and neutral ethnic views also contributed for this (*see* Table 32).

Students and Student Dean’s Office representatives highlighted, the main reason for less extremist view of Peace Club members is because most members already have lowered inter-ethnic anxiety when they joined the club (AAM 2, AUM 2, UM 2). Studies also showed that, those who already have little or no bias towards members of out-groups can easily integrate and form positive relations (Pettigrew, 1998; Dovidio et al., 2005). Students who join Peace Club with mixed and neutral views on ethnicity also probably help members focus on things that make them common and productive in both their academic and social lives, while undervaluing the influence of outside forces (AAS6, AUS8, and US4). It might be the presence of such students that help those who join the club with prejudiced view to alter their attitude and behavior over time as AAS2, AUS4 and US5 explained.

6.5. Positive Inter-ethnic Relations

Positive IER is explained through enthusiasm to know out-group culture and interest, care for out-group members, inter-group cooperation, mutual respect, defending out-groups rights, solving inter-group problems amicably (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020; Karnyshev et al., 2014; Mulondo, 2018; Savchits et al., 2017). The presence of positive IER through club engagement is measured through six questions (*see* Appendix I-B, section IV).

Mean result 3.41 accordingly showed that (*see* Table 43), majority of students agreed participation of students from varied ethnic background in Peace Clubs resulted in positive IER. It was emphasized that the effectiveness of Peace Clubs in promoting peaceful IER was not as high as anticipated due to the involvement of certain club leaders in self-serving agendas, a lack of varied, well-thought-out programs and activities that facilitate empathy and perspective taking, and a lack of organized institutional support. Yet, most students and Student Dean’s Office representatives are optimistic about Peace Clubs have done a good job in creating awareness on peace values, non-violence, extending help irrespective of ethnic membership and the value of dialogue for functional IGR. Details on mediation and moderation effect is presented in subsequent sections.

Table 43

Positive Inter-ethnic Relations

<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
150	2.33	4.67	3.4156	.44527

6.6. Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis enables us to investigate the effect of independent variable (predictor) on a dependent variable (outcome) via a third variable called a mediator or commonly called intervening variable. In this study, the mediators are cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club platform (*see* Figure 2 in Chapter Two).

6.6.1. Direct Effect

The first research hypothesis for research question three aims to measure the relationship between students’ engagement in Peace Club and positive IER of students. Such mediation analysis without controlling the mediating variables is called direct effect. A linear regression model is considered significant when the p-value depicted is below 0.05 (see Table 44). In this study, the p-value is 0.029 which is below 0.05. This can be interpreted as, the model is significant and inter-group contact through Peace Club is a good predictor of Positive IER o students in AAU, AU and UoG. Therefore the first null hypothesis for research question three is rejected.

The statistical significance in other words menas, inter-group contact through Peace Club by itself can contribute for positive IER of students even without the presence of cognitive, affective and behavioral changes. This result negate the assumption of improved vontakt hypothesis theorists assumption that regular inter-group contact in a relaxed setting can result positive IER only when partakers cognitive, affective and behavioral processes are altered (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Pettigrew et al., 2011). Hence, it is possible to conclude that there is partial mediation.

Table 44

Inter-ethnic contact and Positive IER of Students

Model	Coefficients ^a		T	Sig.	
	Unstandardized Coefficients				Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error			Beta
(Constant)	1.108	.563	1.967	.000	
Inter-group contact through Peace Club	.306	.128	.514	.029	

a. Dependent Variable: Positive IER of Students

6.6.2. Total Effect

The second research hypothesis for research question three aims to measure the relationship between students’ engagement in Peace Club and positive IER of students considering changes at cognitive, affective and behavioural levels. In this case, both the independent and mediating variables were predictor variables. Simple regression analysis under Table 45 showed, inter-ethnic

contact in Peace Club significantly contributed for positive IER of students (p-value 0.029 is below 0.05). And this relationship is possible through changes at cognitive (p-value 0.019 is below 0.05) and behavioural (p-value 0.027 is below 0.05) levels. Hence, the second null hypothesis is rejected.

However, affective variables seem to have no significant mediation effect (p-value 0.685 is above 0.05). This does not mean affective cues are irrelevant to realize positive IER rather it may mean the learning activities (dialogue) in Peace Club fail to develop affective ties of members considering the complaints students raised regarding lack of variety of learning tools and limited time of contact. Even though students’ exposure to out-groups and learning on diversity and their tendency to display ‘acceptable’ behaviour seem to contribute for positive IER of students, it is critical not to ignore the vitality of empathy, sympathy in sustaining the positive cross-group relations. It is the true change in affective ties that makes positive IER sustainable.

Table 45

Simple Linear Regression: Independent, Mediation and Dependent Variables

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.108	.563		1.967	.000
Inter-group contact through Peace Club	.306	.128	.514	2.400	.029
Inter-group contact through Peace Club → Cognitive Variables...> Positive IER	1.036	.477	.440	1.465	.019
Inter-group contact through Peace Club → Affective Variables ...> Positive IER	.060	.147	.033	.408	.084
Inter-group contact through Peace Club → Behavioral Variables ...> Positive IER	1.068	.460	.369	1.139	.027

a. Dependent Variable: Positive Inter-ethnic relations

6.7. Moderation Analysis

In moderation analysis, certain steps need to be undertaken to standardize the independent and moderation variables. Accordingly, inter-ethnic contact through club, equality of status, common

goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support and wider situational forces will be changed to standardize Z score through descriptive statistics. Accordingly, the variables will be Z inter-ethnic contact, Z equality of status, Z common goal, Z inter-dependent cooperation, Z institutional support and Z wider situational forces. Then a variable that shows the interaction among independent and moderating variables is created through multiplying the Z independent variable with Z moderating variables through ‘transform-compute variables’ option in SPSS. Finally, simple linear regression run by making the independent variable and new interaction variable as predictors and the dependent variable as predicted variable.

The coefficient results shown under Table 46 therefore shows, all variables (independent and moderating) have statistically significant relationship with IER of students in AAU, AU and UoG. However, the direction of the relationship is negative for institutional factors, wider institutional forces and interactional variable. This implies that, in the contexts of AAU, AU, and UoG, a lack of institutional support appears to impede the relationship between inter-group contact through peace clubs and positive IER among students.

Table 46

Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	3.412	.037		91.674	.000
Z score: Inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club	.004	.043	.010	.103	.029
Z score: Common Goal	.089	.125	.199	.706	.048
Z score: Equality of Status	.008	.041	.017	.182	.036
Z score: interdependent cooperation	.085	.122	.089	.658	.040
Z score: Institutional support	-.007	.038	-.016	-.192	.048
Z score: Wider Situational Forces	-.004	.039	.008	.098	.022
INT	-.014	.014	-.090	-.992	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Positive Inter-ethnic relations

On the model summary, it was revealed that around 40.1% of variance on positive IER of club member’s studnets is explained by students’ inter-group contact in peace club through moderating forces.

Table 47

Moderation Analysis

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

a. Predictors: (Constant), INT, Zscore: Wider Situational Forces, Zscore: Institutional Support, Zscore: Inter-dependent Cooperation, Zscore: Equality of Status, Zscore: Common Goal Inter-ethnic ocntact through CoCPs

This implies, within AAU, AU and UoG, the variance in positive IER of students would be greater than 40.1% if the moderating variables mentioned were improved. Even though the figure 40.1% seem a big achievement, it is important to consider, the results are confined to students who are active club members. It is critical to note, not-active members and non-members with diversified ethnic category are found on campus. As admitted by LPI and PDC in their 2020 report, the fact that many campuses across the country were riddled with ethnic-related conflicts after 2018 also indicates, the positive impact of club engagement on students cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects was not translated to the wider student community.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

7.1. Summary of Major Findings

The overarching objective of this study was to examine the contribution of Peace Club as an inter-ethnic contact CoC platform for positive IER of students in AAU, Au and UoG. To achieve this objective, three research questions were raised and two hypotheses were developed. They are summarized hereunder.

1. How are co-curricular programs (peace clubs) integrated in the Ethiopia's higher education system's legal frameworks in connection with IER of students?
2. How do students at Addis Ababa, Ambo, and Gondar universities exhibit interethnic relations, both positively and negatively?
3. How do inter-group contact through Peace Club contribute to positive IER of students at Addis Ababa, Ambo, and Gondar Universities?

Hypotheses

In accordance with research questions and the stated objectives, the study formulated the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

The direct relationship between independent variable and dependent variable

H₀: Students engagement in peace club has no effect on IER of students

H₁: Students engagement in peace club has a positive effect on IER of students

The relationship between independent and mediation variable with dependent variable

H₀: Students engagement in peace club as well as cognitive, affective ties and behavior changes has no effect on IER of students even when

H₁: Students engagement in peace club as well as cognitive, affective ties and behavior changes has a positive effect on IER of students

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Students engagement in peace club has no effect on positive IER of students even when moderated with equality of status, common goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support, and wider situational forces

H₁: Students engagement in peace club has an effect on positive IER of students even when moderated with equality of status, common goal, inter-dependent cooperation, institutional support, and wider situational forces

Of the total 3491 students, 346 samples (152 from AAU, 66 from AU and 128 from UoG) were taken. Out of these, 333 valid questionnaires (Q-A) were collected hence the return rate was 96.24%. For Q-B, 150 Peace Club members were asked to fill the questionnaires and the return rate was hundred percent. This questionnaire was aimed at responding research question three. Demographic questions were analyzed using frequency and percentages. Research question wise, research question two was analyzed using mean and an independent-samples *t*-test. Research question three was analyzed using descriptive statistics as well as linear and multiple regression. The qualitative study on the other hand employed interview with students, instructors and management staff and the sessions lasted between 45-60 minutes. Participants for interview were 24 students (eight from each university), six instructors (two from each university) and six management staff (two from each university). The quantitative and qualitative data collection took place between 1st June and 19th August 2022.

In chapter four, legal frameworks of Ethiopian HES were analyzed through content analysis. The major documents were the ETP, the ESDPs, the 2018 roadmap, the three higher education proclamations and senate legislations of AAU, AU and UoG. Results were displayed in tables through counting key important words related to CoC, IER and how these two concepts are presented in a way they complement each other. In chapter five and six, quantitative data were presented in tables with relevant descriptive and inferential statistical tools and analyzed in relation to literatures discussed under chapter two. Qualitative results were thematically analyzed and put in direct quotations when necessary. In this section, the findings from previous chapters are summarized.

7.1.1. Co-curricular Programs in Ethiopia Higher Education Legal Frameworks

It was identified that ETP has not employed CoC as key learning strategy. While ESDPs use CoC as a means to educate students about vulnerable and risky behaviors, the focus was mainly to create awareness on HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, the 2009 and 2019 proclamations duly acknowledge the importance of learning outside classroom and give recognition to voluntary and non-discriminatory participation in student organizations. Platforms like trainings and workshops, and community services are also identified as a means to discuss/respond to societal issues in the three proclamations. The contribution of CoCPs towards promoting diversity is also acknowledged under Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap. In selected universities senate legislations, the management regards SU and student organizations. Particularly, panels, debates, field trips, art works, exhibition and leisure activities are listed as viable CoC platforms to deepen students' campus experience. Though trainings and community services are discussed under senate legislations, the explanations are not in the form to enhance students' CoC experience. Among the 13 documents analyzed for this study, the roadmap and Senate legislations made a more encouraging attempt to address CoC issues.

7.1.2. Inter-ethnic Relations Issues in Ethiopian Higher Education Legal Frameworks

Generally, promotion of respect for human rights, democratic values, equity, mutual understanding, cooperation, equality, peaceful conflict resolution, tolerance, unity and discipline are regarded in the ETP and ESDPs. In addition to these, the three proclamations emphasize on

the need to uphold respect, tolerance, multiculturalism, ethics, fairness, reasoning and absence of discrimination with varied degree. Particularly, the need to respect and tolerate out-groups is set as acceptable behavior for students and due attention is given to solving conflicts peacefully among students and between students and university staff in the proclamations. The Education Development Roadmap (Tirussew et al., 2018), of the country states that, ‘unity-in-diversity’, which is a sustainable order of peace in a multicultural society like Ethiopia is identified as one aspect to evaluate HEIs effectiveness.

On the other hand, the 10 Years Development Plan’s objective towards building students’ humanism, ethical behavior, interpersonal skills, problem solving competence, and adaptableness are regarded to promote IER among students. Like the proclamations, the senate legislations further state, respecting peace values like communicating with students and other campus members with respect and refrain from unethical and violent behavior are major duties of students. These are likely to oblige students to give high regard to peace and non-violence.

Issues of equality, justice, tolerance, human rights and democracy that are integral to relationship building gain growing importance in attaining HEIs objectives (UNESCO, 1998; West, 2018). The legal frameworks of HES in Ethiopia generally indicate universities shall play a role in building peace through promoting values that makes relationships among students harmonious. However, the growing fear, resentment, mistrust, hostility and direct violence among students from varied ethnic background from time to time (Abebaw, 2014; Abebe, 2015, Abera, 2010; Arega & Mulugeta, 2017; Mekonnen, 2013; Yonas, 2019; Zekarias, 2020) imply public universities are didn’t live upto the legal expectations.

7.1.3. Types of Co-curricular Programs implied to build IER of Students in Ethiopian Higher Education Legal Frameworks

Out-of-classroom engagements received credit under proclamation 2019 and 2009 as viable means of learning, the objectives and guiding values of HEIs like multiculturalism, rational discourse and tolerance can be implemented through CoCPs. Student Union, trainings and community services are identified as possible CoC outlets within the proclamations and there might be a possibility to discuss or engage in peace related issues through them. However, the peculiar nature of activities

within the SU and community services or the topics of trainings linked to inter-ethnic relations are not clearly indicated. Similarly, the 2018-30 roadmap commend CoCPs suitability to achieve unity-in-diversity, however, CoC learning strategies to achieve such objective is (are) not discussed.

Intolerance to difference and violence are against the aims of HEIs in general (UNESCO, 1998) and in Ethiopian Higher Education proclamations (FDRE, 2019, 2009) in particular. When examining selected university senate legislations in reference to this, we see statements that encourage peaceful conflict resolution and tolerance for diversity and discourage violence, hate speech, or defamation. In order to achieve these, SOs support students to broaden their knowledge base through debate, discussions, lectures, films, art exhibition, seminars and trips with their fellows, instructors and experts and promote inter-group relationship of students and their relationship with the wider community. However, the senate legislations do not explicitly mention the purpose, nature of students' involvement and outcome of each CoC outlet in relation to (re)build IER of students. What is more, dialogue is not mentioned as a CoC learning platform in (re)building IER of students. In general, findings show that efforts to manage co-curricular activities in a way that contributes to students' IER are currently underway at AAU, AU, and UoG.

7.1.4. Students Perception on Ethnicity

The qualitative study revealed that students' perception on ethnic identification is generally classified into three. These are fixed views of ethnicity, mixed-views of ethnicity and neutral views of ethnicity. Students with fixed views usually consider their ethnic culture and values as standards and display higher level of in-group devotion thereby discriminate out-groups. Students with mixed views on the other hand came from families from different ethnic background and have positive outlook for difference. Those students with neutral views are different from the two groups because they believe ethnic identification is irrelevant and choose to have a supra identity which is 'humanity'. However, students are forced to either remain silent about the issue or write 'Ethiopian' when it is required to write ethnic membership as they are unable to express it using mixed or neutral identifications.

7.1.5. Inter-ethnic Relations of Students in AAU, AU and UoG: Positive and Negative Aspects

Students IER is examined in classrooms, dormitories, cafeteria, restrooms, outside classroom, over social media, during discussion over sensitive topics, during violent episodes and outside campus. For the most part, quantitative results showed, ethno-centric propensity is observed among students from different ethnic background as sufficiently discussed in past scholarship. However, qualitative findings elaborate the underlying causes for negative expressions and the nature of positive IER in the three HEIs.

Negative IER of students is usually expressed through contact and friendship within in-group in classroom and outside classroom. Findings revealed, such characters are manifested mostly by students with singular views of ethnicity. Avoidance of inter-ethnic contact, disrespecting ideas from out-groups, disdain look in inter-ethnic encounters, communicating with ethnic language only, posting and sharing hateful messages about out-groups over social media, little willingness to take part in inter-cultural discussions and attack out-group members are among the many manifestations of negative IER in AAU, AU and UoG. Students with fixed views have no interest in seeing or learning about 'others' cultures because they think their own ethnic culture is better. This is the reason their relation with mixed view of ethnicity is tension-based because they intimidate and out-cast them for not being identified with one culture.

The influence of media, senior students, partiality of few instructors, administrative and management staff and political instability and inter-ethnic conflicts in the community are identified as contributory factors for negative IER. Moreover, lack of proficiency in the national language of the country (Amharic) and official language of HEIs (English) further contributed for negative IER. Besides the lack of command of these languages, there is little willingness to learn Amharic among students with fixed views of ethnicity. Due to this, some even refuse to speak even if they are proficient in the language. Even though this problem has been known for a while in public HEIs of Ethiopia, no viable solution is in place with regard to language policy.

Positive IER on the other hand is manifested through engagement in group works in and beyond classroom with others and inter-cultural learning through voluntary activities and club activities. Such collaboration is highly manifested among students with mixed-ethnic views and those who claim their ethnic identity is humanity. With regard to having discussions over inter-ethnic

dynamics on campus and at communal levels however, students with mixed ethnic views are open to learn from others. However, students with neutral views of ethnicity try to avoid such discussions. This is likely to block room for dialogue. Even though students with fixed views prefer to have peaceful relations with ethnic-neutral students, the latter see the gesture as a sign of disrespect. Hence, it is difficult to say the relation among them is positive.

7.1.6. Peace Club as Inter-ethnic Contact Co-curricular Platform

The quantitative results showed, Peace Club as a CoCPs serve as a suitable platform to create inter-ethnic contact. This is largely facilitated by absence of any form of restriction on membership from diversified ethnic groups, voluntary participation, adoption of common language (Amharic) to communicate and most members already were open-minded when joining the clubs. However, regularity of face-to-face contact and meeting in a relaxed setting are compromised in Peace Clubs due to lack of budget, facilities, and planning of clubs' activities in a structured manner. Moreover, the way Peace Club is structured in a way external stakeholders like the government security sector has a say on the clubs operations compromised the integrity of the club. For instance, research showed, students with fixed views refrain from membership in Peace Club which undermine membership variety.

7.1.7. Processes of Contact

As briefly discussed in chapter two, mediating variables between contact platform and positive IER are changes at cognitive, affective and behavioral levels of club members due to their involvement in variety of activities in inter-group dialogue sessions. However, findings showed, the activities in dialogue like group discussions among ethnically different students, experience sharing and voluntary activities help members to learn about out-groups and display acceptable behavior in inter-group settings. However, learning activities in the club are not successful as expected in terms of promoting empathy and inter-ethnic anxiety. Pettigew and his colleagues (e.g. Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006, 2008) argue affective components are determinant factors in IGR. Hence, a lot is expected to be done in reforming Peace Clubs to reinforce changes at emotional level of students.

7.1.8. Contexts of Contact

The findings on moderating variables like equality of status, common goal, inter-group cooperation, and institutional support generally exhibited, lower to neutral mean results. High privileges in terms of capacity building programs for Peace Club leaders created grievance among members which makes it difficult for them to believe they have equal status in the group despite absence of discrimination upon joining the club. This in turn affected the likelihood of having inter-dependent cooperation and common goal at times. This does not, however, mean, the club lose its grand objective which is instilling peace values.

With regard to institutional support, policy frameworks at national and institutional level seem to entertain issues related to positive IER, if not adequately. However, club members are not enlightened enough on the policy frameworks except the code of conduct. Even so, strong measures against breach of ethical code of conduct due to ethnic related aggression is not addressed properly. Moreover, students and instructors accuse the management in AAU, AU and UoG due to its propensity to meet with students after violence and their belief that ethnic related threat is 'imagined' than reality. Additionally, there is lack of empowerment mechanisms for student affairs professionals who work with Peace Clubs and there is no reward system for students with improved inter-ethnic behavior.

On top of the gaps observed in Peace Clubs, members disclosed, reading on peaceful co-existence, jointly work with other clubs on community services (in the case of AAU and AU) and students membership in other clubs and relationship building projects (in UoG) helped students to be critical of information they receive without enough evidence, be sympathetic towards others, give the benefit of the doubt to others and stand for justice.

7.1.9. Mediation and Moderation Analysis

Simple linear regression results for direct effect implies, inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club contribute for positive IER of students without mediating variables. This seem to negate the arguments Pettigrew (1998) and Pettigrew and his colleagues (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006, 2008) who claim inter-ethnic contact by itself is not a guarantee for positive IER. Similar results were also exhibited while mediating variables are included in the mediation analysis. However,

the effectiveness of the Peace Club in fostering cooperative and trustworthy cross-group relationships is seriously called into question because its activities do not result in emotional changes and some of its members exhibit acceptable behaviors while harboring resentment toward out-groups. The multiple regression result on the other hand showed, 40.1% of the variance in Positive IER of students in AAU, AU and UoG is explained by inter-ethnic contact through Peace Club.

7.2. Conclusions

The qualitative content analysis revealed that the ETP, the three proclamations, the Education Development Road map, and the Higher Education 10 Years Development Plan include pro-peace elements in varying degree. This implies that, public HEIs have legal basis to plan, organize and direct resources at their disposal to promote peace. Since promotion of peace is among the emerging roles of HEIs globally, the fact that Ethiopian legal architecture of HES addresses the issue indicate its adherence to contemporary global order. However, the level of inter-group tension and violence and absence of viable means of addressing the issue so far suggest public universities are failing to live up to the expectation of legal arrangements locally as well as globally.

With respect to CoCPs, the proclamations, the road map and senate legislations indeed leave some room for CoCPs. However, these documents do not explicitly show the role of particular type of CoCPs to peace-building. Hence, the contribution of CoCPs under the legal frameworks of Ethiopian HES as alternative bottom-up peace-building mechanism is inferred. This basically implies, the legal arrangements leave limited space for CoCPs as alternative tool to build peace in public higher learning institutions.

The quantitative and qualitative data on students IER implied, both negative and positive cross-ethnic behaviors are demonstrated by students. While negative forms of inter-ethnic contact are exercised by students with fixed views of identity, their relations with mixed-ethnic students and ethnic neutral students are based on tension. The fact that students with fixed views of ethnic identification prefer intra-group friendship is not necessarily negative but it was supposed to be mediated with the right knowledge on inter-ethnic dynamics of Ethiopian nation in general and

HEIs in particular. Even though this group of students are usually blamed by students, instructors, the management and scholars, the researcher is of the opinion they are not helped in a way they can reframe their thinking, feeling, and behavior.

The research identified three perspectives of ethnicity among student population: fixed, mixed and neutral views. Even though students with neutral views advocate for supra-identity marker like humanity and try to establish good relations with others considering their ‘humanness’, they are not open to dialogue in issues related to ethnicity. Considering ethnic diversity is the reality of Ethiopian HEIs and the nation is ethnically plural, the view of these students to avoid discussions on the matter seems detachment to reality. While students with fixed views avoid discussion with out-groups, neutral students seem to avoid discussion with all students on issues of ‘diversity’. Even though believing in humanity is commendable and acceptable to all, it is possible to reach to a mutually agreeable state of cross-ethnic relationship through deliberate discussions that are planned, organized and monitored systematically. Otherwise, neutrality might be the new form of ‘extreme’ perspective in the near future.

Diversity has a place for everyone. However, the lack of recognition for variety of ethnic identifications besides the usual (being Amhara, Tigre, Oromo, Gurage, Hadiya and so on) is making students feel like an outsider in their own country and try to come up with new forms of identifications with unpopular acceptance at national levels. Findings from this study affirmed, students from mixed families and ethnic neutral categorization seem out of place and considered as ‘deviants’ or ‘no ethnic consciousness’ by students with strong ethnic consciousness which furthered distancing among the three groups. The question, then is, “does diversity in Ethiopia have a place for mixed-ethnic groups and those who choose to have neutral ethnic views?”

Peace Clubs as inter-ethnic contact platform seem to be a viable means of building positive IER among students of AAU, AU and UoG. With all the flaws in implementation of club’s objectives, 40.1% of positive manifestations of positive IER is explained by exposure to Peace Club. However, such contribution is attributed to mainly cognitive aspect, meaning learning about out-groups and inter-ethnic dynamics through club discussions, experience sharing programs, collaboration with other club members for common goal and reading. Hence, the figure 40.1% can

increase if the club works towards changing affective and behavioral aspects of its members. This can be realized through institutionalization of Peace Clubs.

Active deliberation is a manifestation of democratic culture. This calls for rigorous discussion and negotiation on sensitive topics among stakeholders on a phenomenon of interest. In Ethiopian public HEIs context, such culture is almost absent and avoidance is the main strategy in dealing with difficult issues. Interviewees with management staff representatives in AAU, AU, and UoG revealed that although ethnic-related hostility and violence have been the top priorities in HEIs, the management views the problem as ‘imagined’ rather than real. The efficacy of programs designed to encourage positive IER among students like Peace Club is therefore hampered by the university’s administration's disengagement from reality.

7.3. Implications of the Study

7.3.1. Policy Implications

- The Federal MoE need to prepare a national CoC policy that clearly align specific type of CoC activities that can combat diversity related violence issues in public HEIs. This policy shall put clear indicators to link each CoC activity to inter-ethnic relations so that universities, academicians, student dean professionals and students clearly know why, how and which non-formal platforms can serve as a cross-group relationship building tool. Moreover, the policy is expected to lay out standards on the the structure, planning, organizing, leading, monitoring and evaluation and stakeholder integration in CoCPs. And this shall be used to enhance the capacity of existing and newly formed clubs. Moreover, a CoC wing needs to be established within the Ministry to execute the policy effectively within public universities.
- The Federal MoE need to design an Inter-Ethnic Policy for HEIs that clearly delineate how multi-cultural competence can be cultivated and maintained among students, instructors, administrative staff and the management as well as set minimum standards of cognitive, affective and behavioral facets in multi-ethnic universities. The Ministry is also expected to set up an Inter-cultural wing that undertakes research and organize best practices on HEIs

intercultural practices locally, regionally and globally. This wing will design a framework to mainstream inter-cultural values within each public HEIs and monitor its execution. This wing collaborate with CoC wing on imparting positive inter-ethnic values on non-academic matters.

- In the Ethiopian context, ethnic identification appears to recognize membership in a particular ethnic group. Alternative forms of identification, such as those for citizens who are ethnically neutral or have mixed ethnicity, are therefore restricted. The Ministry of Education should take such matters seriously. The Ministry should conduct a nationwide study on the prevalence of alternative forms of identity among university students and how it affects inter-ethnic cooperation as well as the teaching and learning process within the higher education system, and how it will affect graduates' social and professional life beyond campus, and present the findings at the regular meeting of the House of People Representatives for further discussion and way forward on contemporary 'youth identity' issues.

7.3.2. Practical Implications

- The Federal MoE along with its local and international stakeholders is advised to undertake a national study on the status of CoCPs within public HEIs. Particularly, the potential contributions of each learning strategy within CoC platforms for inter-ethnic relationship building need to be thoroughly examined. Moreover, the Ministry, in collaboration with Ministry of Peace, other public universities and relevant stakeholders should undertake an in-depth national study on how the dynamism of political and socio-economic factors, institutional aspects, media, and contemporary issues at national, regional and macro level are contributing for students ethno-centric, mixed-ethnic and ethnic-neutral views. Findings therefore inform ethnic-sensitive HEIs legal and institutional reforms.
- The Federal MoE need to undertake a comprehensive research on the role of institutional leadership on students ethnocentrism through devising variety of data collection tools and inclusion of numerous data sources to come up with evidence-based understanding of the status of ethnic diversity management. Following that, a variety of administrative, capacity development, budget, and technical assistance can be provided to university leaders to help them lead 21st century multiethnic campuses.

- Public higher education institutions, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, should establish an inter-cultural center to teach local languages to undergraduate students. This will allow students to develop language proficiency and be able to communicate with out-groups in a variety of settings, which will facilitate students' IER.
- Public universities should assess the status of CoCPs, including Peace Clubs, in terms of planning, coordination, program scheduling, human resources, finance, documentation, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation. This will provide a clear roadmap for designing engaging co-curricular activities that will contribute for students IER.

7.3.3. Implications for future research

- The current study considers cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects as process of contact. However, findings from the field revealed, integration with students from other clubs on community service projects and campus wide initiatives to connect students with surrounding community like the Gondar Family project likely have a mediation effect in building students cognition. As research in IER and co-curricular learning continues to evolve, future researchers can unpack mediating and moderating variables further and develop better models that integrate inter-group and education theories for better IER in Ethiopian public HEIs. In the process, they can introduce conceptual as well as methodological departure from past scholarship.
- This study is a cross-sectional study. However, proponents of the improved version of the contact hypothesis suggest that conducting longitudinal studies will allow them to better understand how elongated inter-group contact in a specific platform can contribute to positive IER over time. As a result, future researchers can pursue this direction.

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Appendix I-A

Addis Ababa University
Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)
Questionnaire to be completed by Public University Students (Q-A)

Dear Students:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect the necessary data for a PhD study entitled “Inter-Group Contact through Peace Clubs in Shaping Positive Inter-Ethnic Relations: Ethiopian Public University Students in Focus” at Institute for Peace and Security Studies of Addis Ababa University. Hence, you are kindly requested to provide your genuine responses. The questionnaire comprises general as well as inter-ethnic relations related questions. Please complete them all. Thank you very much for the willingness to participate in this study.

Things to consider while filling out the questionnaire:

- No need to write your name
- Read each question carefully
- Respond by putting ‘√’ sign
- It is not allowed to give multiple response per question
- Respond with integrity
- Feel free to ask for any clarification you might need

I thank you again for your cooperation!

Messash Kassaye
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Section 1: Bio-Data

1. Ethnic background: _____

Section 2: The Nature of Inter-ethnic Relations

Hereunder, 31 statements that represent inter-ethnic relations of students are outlined. For each sentence, a five point Likert scale is provided. Please read carefully and put ‘√’ sign on the scale you choose.

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree

S.N	IER in classrooms	Measurement Scales				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Students are reserved to engage in 'group projects' with students from out-groups					
2	Opinions of in-group dominated group project discussions					
3	Classroom friendship has mono-ethnic nature					
	IER in dormitories	1	2	3	4	5
4	Dormitory friendship has mono-ethnic nature					
5	Students who exercise their ethnic language and traditions are discriminated by out-groups in dormitories					
6	There is reservation to learn dorm-mates ethnic cultures among students					
	IER in students Cafeteria	1	2	3	4	5
7	Meal time companionship has mono-ethnic nature					
8	There are different seating arrangements in students cafeteria based on students ethnic membership					
	IER in students restrooms	1	2	3	4	5
9	Graffiti that belittle or glorify a certain ethnic group is available on the walls of rest rooms					
10	There is ethnically motivated verbal abuse in restrooms					
11	There is physical abuse due to student's ethnic identity in rest rooms					
	IER outside Classroom	1	2	3	4	5
12	Students attend cultural ceremonies of out-group members are discriminated by in-group					
13	Students practicing out-group members' traditions (diet, music, clothes etc.) are discriminated by in-groups					
14	Students who would like to attend cultural ceremonies of out-group members are discriminated by out-group members					
15	Students who would like to practice out-group members' traditions (diet, music, clothes etc.) are discriminated by out-group members					
	IER over Social Media	1	2	3	4	5
16	Social media friendship has mono-ethnic nature					
17	Message exchanges over social media among students of varied ethnic background are discriminatory					
18	Information exchange over social media among students has violent nature					
	IER during Discussions over Sensitive Issues	1	2	3	4	5
19	Ethnic-related discussions with students from out-groups are hostile					
20	Questions from out-groups with regard to in-group are not welcomed positively					
21	Discussions over inter-ethnic dating are not welcomed positively					
22	Supporting out-group's views during ethnic related discussions is not appreciated by in-group members					
	IER during Violent Episodes	1	2	3	4	5
23	Ethnic related violence is common on campus					
24	Students defend in-group members at times of ethnic-related violence					
25	Students inter-group relations assume mono-ethnic nature during ethnic-related violence					
26	Out-group members are attacked at times of ethnic-related violence					
27	Ethnic rumors about out-groups resulted violence among students					
28	There is intimidation from in-group members due to mediation role of in-group member during ethnic related conflict					
29	Mediatory role of students has little impact in changing the negative attitude of students towards out-groups					
	IER of students outside campus	1	2	3	4	5
30	Students off-campus relations has mono-ethnic nature					
31	Students interactions with non-student groups outside campus has mono-ethnic nature					

Section 3: Addressing Students' Inter-ethnic Relation Problems

Hereunder, there are three open-ended questions that are related to problems and addressing inter-ethnic relational problems among public university students. Please write your opinion on the space provided.

32. What institutional and non-institutional factors are there that influence inter-ethnic relations of students?

33. What institutional mechanisms are there in your university to minimize ethnic-related tension among students and improve inter-ethnic relationship in sustainable manner?

34. What alternative mechanisms do you suggest to minimize the ethnic-related tension among students and improve inter-ethnic relationship in sustainable manner?

Thank you again!

Appendix I-B
Addis Ababa University
Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)
Questionnaire to be completed by Peace Club Members (Q-B)

Dear Students:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect the necessary data for a PhD study entitled “Inter-Group Contact through Peace Clubs in Shaping Positive Inter-Ethnic Relations: Ethiopian Public University Students in Focus” at Institute for Peace and Security Studies of Addis Ababa University. Hence, you are kindly requested to provide your genuine responses. The questionnaire comprises general as well as inter-group relations related questions. Please complete them all. Thank you very much for the willingness to participate in this study.

Things to consider while filling out the questionnaire:

- No need to write your name
- Read each question carefully
- Respond by putting ‘√’ sign
- There is no right or wrong choice
- It is not allowed to give multiple responses per question
- Respond with integrity
- Feel free to ask for any clarification you might need

I thank you again for your cooperation!

Messash Kassaye

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Email: messashkassaye@gmail.com

Section 1: Bio-Data

1. Ethnic background: _____
2. Did you experience inter-ethnic anxiety before joining peace club? _____

Section II: Inter-ethnic Contact through Co-curricular Platform

Hereunder, six statements that indicate inter-ethnic contact situation through co-curricular program are outlined. For each sentence, a five point Likert scale is provided. Please read carefully and put ‘√’ sign on the scale you choose.

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree

Inter-ethnic contact through co-curricular Platform		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Students from diversified ethnic groups participate in the club					
2	Club participation allows members from diversified ethnic group meet regularly					
3	Club activities call for face-to-face inter-ethnic interaction					
4	Club participation for students from varied ethnic background is voluntary					
5	Club members have common language to communicate					
6	The club creates less formal setting for students from different ethnic groups meet to engage in enjoyable dialogue.					

Section III: Processes in Club Activities

Hereunder, 20 statements that aim to examine the processes of inter-ethnic contact through co-curricular program are outlined. For each sentence, a five point Likert scale is provided. Please read carefully and put ‘√’ sign on the scale you choose.

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree

Learning about Out-groups: Cognitive Variables		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Club activities allowed members to know about the rich cultures of varied ethnic communities					
2	Members discovered their commonalities to out-groups through club activities.					
3	Club participation allowed members to consider the perspective of out-groups members in discussions					
4	Club activities made members realize negative long standing belief about out-group members was wrong					
5	Club activities made members understand the benefits of respecting differences					
6	Club members from different ethnic groups share their experiences related to inter-ethnic encounters					
7	There are separate intra-group assemblies in club activities for discussing interethnic encounters.					
8	Separate intra-group sessions help members to question their prejudiced views towards out-groups					
9	Club activities assisted students in understanding the benefits of non-violent problem solving during inter-ethnic encounters					
Generating Emotional Attachment: Affective Variables		SD	D	N	A	SA
10	Club activities helped members to minimize anxiety towards inter-ethnic relations					
11	Club activities allowed members to put themselves in out-group members’ shoes and understand their situation					
12	Club activities help members to convey admiration to out-groups cultures					
13	Through club activities, members were able to develop sympathy when the rights of out-groups are violated.					
14	Due to involvement in clubs, students were able to confide in an out-group member comfortably					
15	Due to club participation, members started to cease speaking negatively about out-groups.					
16	Due to club participation, members started forgiving a student from out-group who did wrong to them					

17	Club participation allowed members to start practicing cultural aspects of out-groups (dietary habit, music, language, cultural wears etc.).					
18	Club activities allowed members to minimize out-group discrimination					
19	Club participation inspired students to extend help for out-groups					
20	Club participation inspired students to avoid physical violence against out-groups					

Section IV: Conditions in Students Inter-ethnic Relations

Hereunder, 18 statements that aim to examine the possible effect of conditional factors on students’ inter-ethnic relations in co-curricular program are outlined. For each sentence, a five point Likert scale is provided. Please read carefully and put ‘√’ sign on the scale you choose.

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree

Equality of status		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	All club members are equally treated despite their ethnic affiliation					
2	There is no feeling of superiority or inferiority among members from varied ethnic group in the club					
3	Students from different ethnic communities have equal chance to share perspectives in the club					
Common goal		SD	D	N	A	SA
4	All club members strive to achieve the club’s objectives					
5	Club members feel they need one another to achieve the club’s objectives					
6	Members believe achieving club’s objective helps to improve their inter-group relations					
Inter-dependent cooperation		SD	D	N	A	SA
7	Members exert an inter-dependent effort in performing club activities					
8	Club members from different ethnic groups do not compete with one another					
9	Group contribution is favored over individual contribution within the club					
Institutional Support		SD	D	N	A	SA
10	There are laws in the university that prohibit inter-ethnic competition					
11	There are laws in the university that promote inter-ethnic cooperation					
12	Dialogue is at the core of institutional problem solving					
13	The club guideline aim to foster inter-ethnic cooperation of members					
14	Club’s activities are regularly monitored whether it fosters inter-ethnic cooperation					
15	There is a reward scheme for members who have a favorable view of out-groups					
Wider situational factors		SD	D	N	A	SA
16	The conflictual nature of interethnic contact on campus had little effect on interethnic engagement among club members					
17	The conflictual nature of interethnic contact in the community had little effect on interethnic engagement among club members					
18	Hateful messages bout ethnic groups had minimal effect on club members’ interethnic participation.					

Section V: Positive Inter-ethnic Relations:

Hereunder, six statements that aim to examine possible features of positive inter-ethnic relations due to inter-ethnic contact through co-curricular program are outlined. For each sentence, a five point Likert scale is provided. Please read carefully and put ‘√’ sign on the scale you choose.

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree

Aspects of positive IER of students		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Club engagement raises awareness of positive out-group practices					
2	Club engagement reduced preconceived negative generalizations about out-groups					
3	Club participation boosted out-group members’ inclusion in the own group.					
4	Due to club participation, defending the rights of the out-group has grown					
5	Participation in clubs maximizes inter-ethnic collaboration regardless of inter-ethnic antagonism outside the club					
6	Participation in club assisted students to address inter-ethnic tension non-violently					

Thank you again!

Appendix II

Reliability Test

A. Inter-item Reliability for Q-A

Reliability Statistics (IER in classroom)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.867	.758	3

Reliability Statistics (IER in dormitories)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.879	.862	3

Reliability Statistics (IER in cafeteria)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.792	.787	2

Reliability Statistics (IER of students restroom)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.854	.841	4

Reliability Statistics (IER of students outside classroom)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.801	.796	4

Reliability Statistics (IER over social media)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.777	.765	3

Reliability Statistics (IER in discussion over sensitive issues)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.791	.783	4

Reliability Statistics (IER during violent episodes)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.897	.885	6

Reliability Statistics (IER outside campus)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.788	.779	2

B. Item-total Reliability for Q-A

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Students are reserved to engage in 'group projects' with students from out-groups	.859
Opinions of in-group dominated group project discussions	.849
Classroom friendship has mono-ethnic nature	.799

Item-total (IER in classroom)

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Dormitory friendship has mono-ethnic nature	.867
There is reservation to learn dorm-mates ethnic cultures among students	.861
Students who exercise their ethnic language and traditions are discriminated by out-groups in dormitories	.850

Item-total (IER in dormitories)

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Meal time companionship has mono-ethnic nature	.789
There are separate seating arrangements in students cafeteria	.779

Item-total (IER in cafeteria)

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Graffiti that discriminate a certain ethnic group is not available on the walls of rest rooms	.848
There is no verbal abuse due to student's ethnic identity in rest rooms	.797
There is no physical abuse due to student's ethnic identity in rest rooms	.791

Item-total (IER in restroom)

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Students attend cultural ceremonies of out-group members are discriminated by in-group	.793
Students practicing out-group members' traditions (diet, music, clothes etc.) are discriminated by in-groups	.783
Students who would like to attend cultural ceremonies of out-group members are discriminated by out-group members	.787
Students who would like to practice out-group members' traditions (diet, music, clothes etc.) are discriminated by out-group members	.781

Item-total (IER outside classroom)

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Social media friendship has mono-ethnic nature	.770
Message exchanges over social media among students of varied ethnic background are discriminatory	.765
Information exchange over social media among students has violent nature	.769

Item-total (IER over social media)

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation		Corrected Item-Total Correlation		Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Ethnic-related discussions with students from out-groups are hostile	.788	Ethnic related violence is common on campus	.787	Students off-campus relations has mono-ethnic nature	.781
Questions from out-groups with regard to own group are not welcomed positively	.781	Students defend in-group members at times of ethnic-related violence	.879		
Romantic relations among students has mono-ethnic nature	.779	Students inter-group relations assume mono-ethnic nature during ethnic-related violence	.887	Students interactions with non-student groups outside campus are mono-ethnic	.775
Ethnic diversity is considered as a threat by student group	.775	Out-group members are attacked at times of ethnic-related violence	.891		
		Ethnic rumors about out-groups resulted violence among students	.888		
		There is intimidation from in-group members due to mediation role of in-group member during ethnic related conflict	.776		
		Mediatory role of students has little impact in changing the negative attitude of students towards out-groups	.875		

Item-total (IER on sensitive issues)

Item-total (IER -violent episode)

Item-total (IER outside campus)

C. Inter-item Reliability for Q-B

Reliability Statistics (Nature of contact platform)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.801	.754	6

Reliability Statistics (behavioral processes)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.845	.831	5

Reliability Statistics (inter-dependent cooperation)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.823	.809	3

Reliability Statistics (aspects of positive IER)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.879	.841	6

Reliability Statistics (equality of status)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.801	.796	3

Reliability Statistics (institutional support)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.835	.830	6

Reliability Statistics (affective process)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.831	.820	5

Reliability Statistics (common goal)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.799	.793	3

Reliability Statistics (wider situational forces)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.791	.787	3

D. Item-total Reliability for Q-B

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation		Corrected Item-Total Correlation
		Club activities allowed members to know about the rich cultures of varied ethnic communities	.726
Club participation allows members from diversified ethnic group meet regularly	.810	Members discovered their commonalities to out-groups through club activities.	.736
Club activities call for face-to-face inter-ethnic interaction	.837	Club participation allowed members to consider the perspective of out-groups members in discussions	.730
Club participation for students from varied ethnic background is voluntary	.809	Club activities made members realize negative long standing belief about out-group members was wrong	.742
Club members have common language to communicate	.810	Club activities made members understand the benefits of respecting differences	.790
The club creates less formal setting for students from different ethnic groups meet in enjoyable dialogue.	.850	Club members from different ethnic groups share their experiences related to inter-ethnic encounters	.739
Students from diversified ethnic groups participate in the club	.847	There are separate intra-group assemblies in club activities for discussing interethnic encounters.	.733
		Separate intra-group sessions help members to question their prejudiced views towards out-groups	.794
Item-total for nature of contact platform		Club activities assisted students in understanding the benefits of non-violent problem solving during inter-ethnic encounters	.736

Item total for cognitive process

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation		Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Club activities help members to convey admiration to out-groups cultures	.862	Due to club participation, members started to minimize speaking negatively about out-groups.	.832
Club activities helped members to minimize anxiety towards inter-ethnic relations	.868	Due to club participation, members started forgiving a student from out-group who did wrong to them	.882
Club activities allowed members to put themselves in out-group members' shoes and understand their situation	.864	Club participation allowed members to start practicing cultural aspects of out-groups (dietary habit, music, language, cultural wears etc.).	.898
Through club activities, members were able to develop sympathy when the rights of out-groups are violated.	.865	Club activities allowed members to minimize out-group discrimination	.842
Due to involvement in clubs, students were able to confide in an out-group member comfortably	.850	Club participation inspired students to extend help for out-groups.	.870

Item total for affective process

Item total for behavioral process

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
All club members are equally treated despite their ethnic affiliation	.796
There is no feeling of superiority or inferiority among members from varied ethnic group in the club	.840
Students from different ethnic communities have equal chance to share perspectives in the club	.867

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
All club members strive to achieve the club's objectives irrespective of their ethnic affiliation	.724
Club members feel they need one another to achieve the club's objectives irrespective of their ethnic affiliation	.807
Members believe achieving club's objective helps to improve their inter-group relations	.801

Item-total for equality of status

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Members exert an inter-dependent effort in performing club activities	.727
Club members from different ethnic groups do not compete with one another	.721
Group contribution is favored over individual contribution within the club	.714

Item-total for interdependent cooperation

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
The conflictual nature of interethnic contact on campus had little effect on interethnic engagement among club members	.739
The conflictual nature of interethnic contact in the community had little effect on interethnic engagement among club members	.750
Hateful messages and incorrect information about ethnic groups had minimal effect on club members' interethnic participation.	.813

Item-total for situational forces

Item-total for common goal

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
There are laws in the university that prohibit inter-ethnic competition	.721
Dialogue is at the core of institutional problem solving	.782
The club guideline aim to foster inter-ethnic cooperation of members	.728
There are laws in the university that promote inter-ethnic cooperation	.827
There is a reward scheme for members who have a favorable view of out-groups	.732
Club's activities are regularly monitored whether it fosters inter-ethnic cooperation	.727

Item-total for institutional support

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Club engagement raises awareness of positive out-group practices	.749
Club engagement reduced preconceived negative generalizations about out-groups	.722
Club participation boosted out-group members' inclusion in the own group.	.730
Due to club participation, defending the rights of the out-group has grown	.764
Participation in clubs maximizes inter-ethnic collaboration regardless of inter-ethnic antagonism outside the club	.721
Participation in club assisted students to address inter-ethnic tension non-violently	.747

Item-total for positive IER

Appendix III

Interview Guide for Public University Students

1. How do you describe ethnicity and ethnic identity?
2. What is the nature of student's IER on campus?
3. What do you recommend to improve students' IER for the future?
4. How do you describe peace club?
5. What are the reasons for students to join or not to join Peace Club?
6. What competencies do you believe Peace Club members acquire that could have contributed to improve their IER?
7. What kind of learning mechanisms are employed in Peace Club to build members competencies for positive IER?
8. What factors facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of Peace Club in promoting students' IER?
9. Do you have additional information on the issues we have raised?

Interview Guide for Public University Instructors

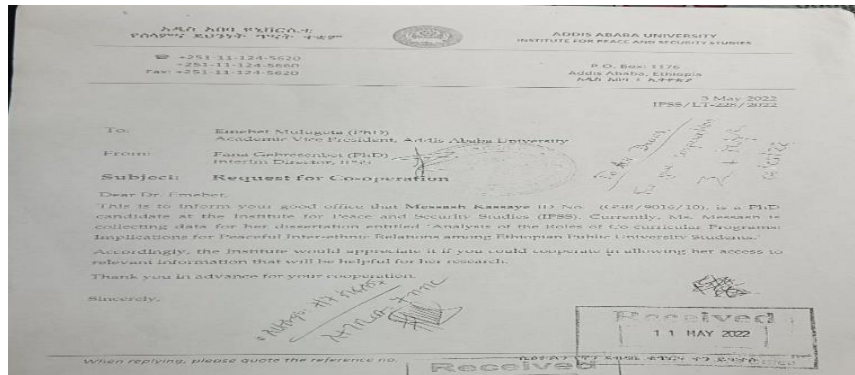
1. How do you describe the nature of students IER in the university in general and in your classroom in particular?
2. What is the role of instructors in determining the nature of students IER in this university?
3. What approaches the university management adopt to improve IER among students so far?
4. What do you think should be done to improve students' IER on campus at different levels?
5. How do you describe the role of CoCPs (like peace clubs) in relation to students IER in your university?
6. What do you think should be done to enhance the performance of CoCPs (like peace club) so that they can contribute for positive IER of students?
7. Do you have additional information on the issues we have raised?

Interview Guide for Management Staff

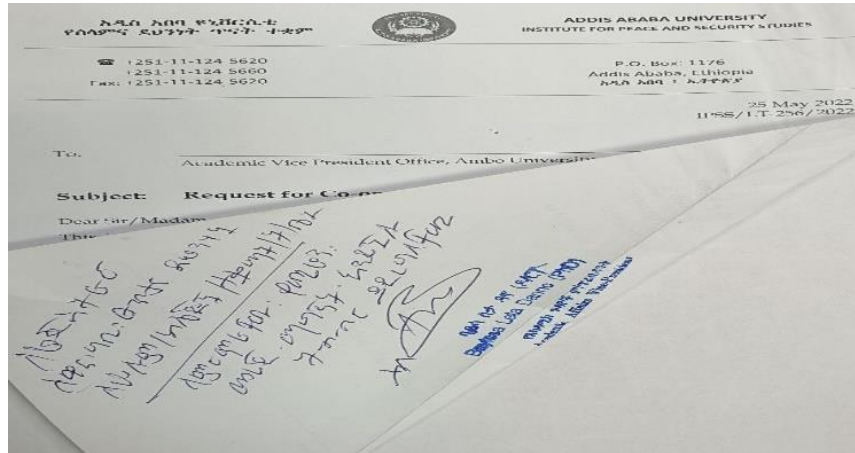
1. How do you describe the nature of students IER in your university?
2. What is the role of university top leadership and student affairs/student dean's office in determining the nature of students IER on campus and beyond?
3. Is there a forum where students and the university's administration can meet, discuss, and work jointly to improve students' IER?
4. What approaches the university management adopt to improve IER among students so far?
5. What do you think should be done to improve students' IER on campus at different levels?
6. How do you describe the role of CoCPs (like Peace Club) in relation to students IER in your university?
7. Do you believe CoCPs (particularly Peace Club) receive the necessary support to contribute for positive IER of students in this university? If yes, in what ways?? If no, why not?
8. What do you think should be done to enhance the performance of CoCPs (particularly Peace Club) so that they can contribute for positive IER of students?
9. Do you have additional information on the issues we have raised?

Appendix IV

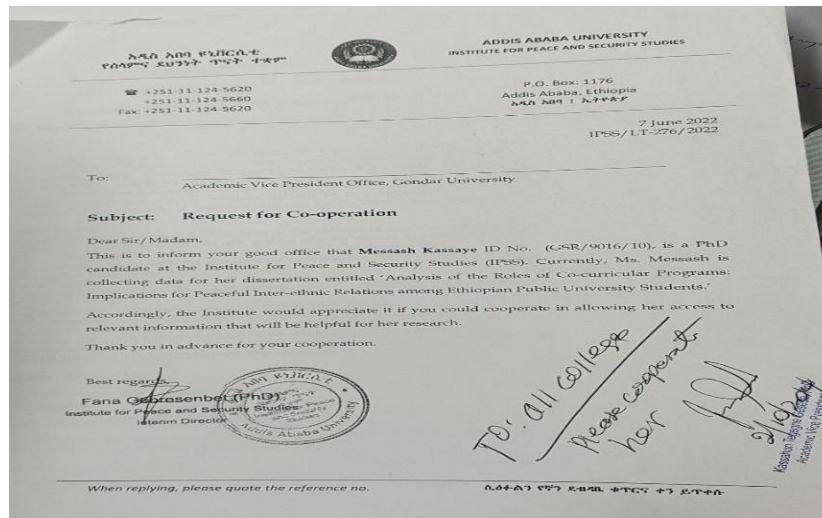
Approved Letter for Data Collection in Addis Ababa University



Approved Letter for Data Collection in Ambo University



Approved Letter for Data Collection in Gondar University



Appendix V

Data Classification and Codebook

A. Respondents Profiles

Variable	SPSS Variable Name	Coding instruction
Identification number	ID	Number assigned to each questionnaire
Name of university	Univ	A= Addis Ababa University, AB= Ambo University, G= University of Gondar
College or School	CorS	CBE= College of Business and Economics, CEBS= College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, CoE= College of Education, IEBS= Institute of Education and Behavioral Sciences, CHLJC= College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication, CNCS= College of Natural and Computational Sciences, CSS= College of Social Sciences, CSSH= College of Social Sciences and Humanities, IoT= Institute of Technology, SoL= School of Law
Department	Dept	AaF= Accounting and Finance, Bio=Biology, CVE=Civil Engineering, Ch= Chemistry, EDPM= Department of Educational Planning and Management, ELCE= Electrical and Computer Engineering, Eco= Economics, IS=Information Science, JoC= Journalism and Communication, L=Law, ME= Mechanical Engineering, MGT= Management, Math= Mathematics, PADM= Public Administration and Development Management, Phy=Physics, Psyc= Psychology, SoW= Social Work, Socio=Sociology, SpS= Sport Science, Stat=Statistics.
Ethnic background	Ethn	A=Amhara, AF=Afar, B=Benishangul Gumuz, G=Gambella, H=Harari, O=Oromo, S=Somali, SNNP=Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, SWE=South West Ethiopia, Si=Sidama, T=Tigre, N=No response
Peace club member or non-member	PeaceC	M= Yes I am a member of Peace club, NM= No I am not a member of Peace Club

B. Nature of Students Inter-ethnic Relations (Q-A)

Variable	SPSS Variable Name	Coding instruction
IIEER in classrooms	IIEERClassroom (items 1-3)	1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree
IER in dormitories	IERDorm (items 4-6)	>>
IER in students' cafeteria	IERCaft (items 7-8)	>>
IER in students rest room	IERRestroom(items 9-11)	>>
IER outside classroom	IEROutside (items 12-15)	>>
IER over social media	IERSocialmedia (items 16-18)	>>
IER during discussions over sensitive issues	IERsensitive (items 19-22)	>>
IER during violent episodes	IERviolence (items 23-29)	>>
IER outside campus	IERoffcampus(items 30-31)	>>

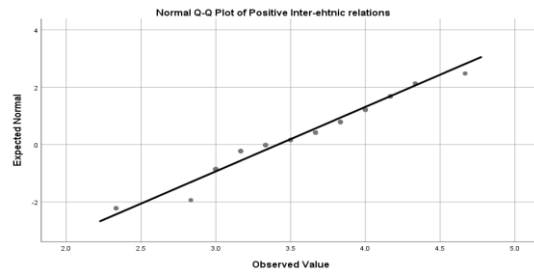
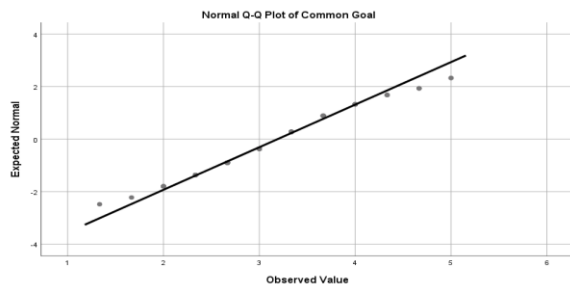
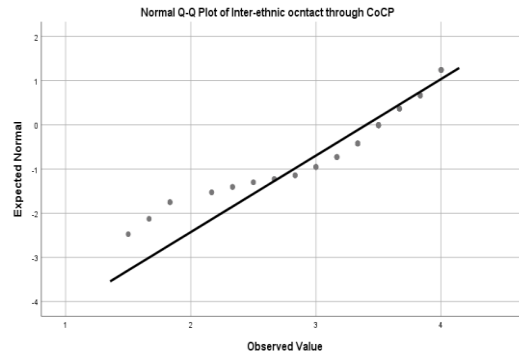
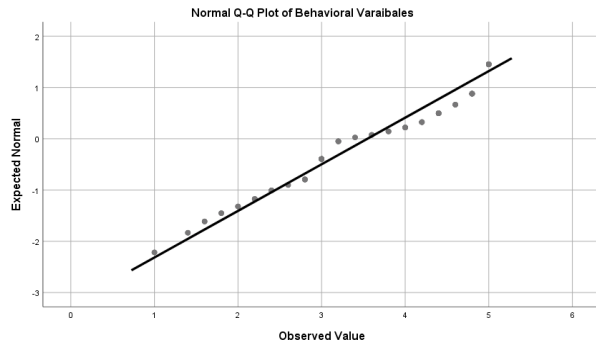
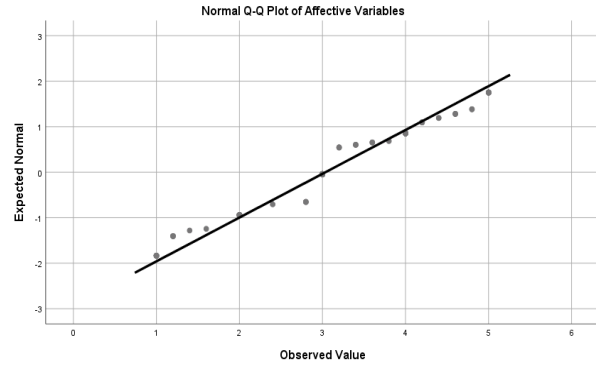
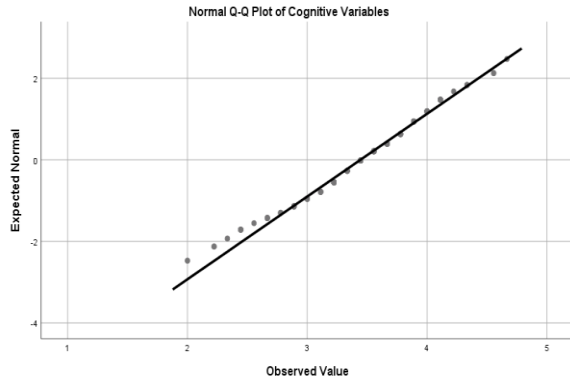
C. The Link between CoCPs and IER of Students (Q-B)

Variable	SPSS Variable Name	Coding instruction
Contact platform	IECCoP (items 1-6)	1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= agree 5=strongly agree
Cognitive processes	CogVariab (items 1-9)	>>
Affective processes	AffV (items 10-14)	>>
Behavioral processes	BehV(items 15-19)	>>
Equality of Status	EQStatus(items 1-3)	>>
Common Goal	CG (items 4-6)	>>
Inter-dependent Cooperation	IGC (items 7-9)	>>
Institutional Support	IS (items 10-15)	>>
Wider situational forces	WSF (items 16-18)	>>
Aspects of positive IER	PIER (items 1-6)	>>

Appendix VI

Normality and Non-multicollinearity Test for Selected Variables

A. Normality Test



B. Non-multicollinearity test

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	3.452	.321		10.747	.000		
	Inter-group contact through CoCP	.001	.065	.001	.017	.986	.956	1.046
	Cognitive Variables	.036	.077	.040	.465	.642	.941	1.063
	Affective Variables	.026	.063	.060	.408	.684	.317	3.154
	Behavioral Variables	-.068	.060	-.169	-1.139	.256	.312	3.204

a. Dependent Variable: Positive Inter-ethnic relations

Usually, multicollinearity is believed to be present when the VIF is higher than 5 to 10. In this model, VIF for independent and mediating variables are below 5. Hence, no variables are redundant and it is possible to undertake regression.