Exploring How Extracurricular Activities Shape Diversity Management in Ethiopian Public Higher Education: Students' and Faculty Members' Views

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of co-curricular activities in managing diversity within Ethiopia's public higher education institutions (HEIs). It aims to identify the challenges these institutions face in promoting diversity through extracurricular initiatives while examining faculty and student perceptions regarding their effectiveness. A mixed-method research approach was employed, involving a quantitative survey of 350 respondents, evenly split between males and females, and a qualitative component featuring 10 purposefully selected participants. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The findings shed light on the perspectives of students and faculty on managing diversity through extracurricular activities, highlighting the challenges faced by Ethiopian HEIs in leveraging these initiatives for diversification. Additionally, the study identifies various settings within these institutions that can support diversity management through organized activities. This research contributes to the existing literature on the significance of extracurricular activities in diversity management in Ethiopian public HEIs. It offers insights into the attitudes, concerns, and potential of implementing diversity through out-of-class activities. The study concludes with recommendations for directing diversity-focused co-curricular activities, improving the environment for underrepresented groups, and creating facilities that facilitate their participation in extracurricular programs.

Keywords: Extracurricular, Diversity Management, Perceptions, Challenges Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Diversity and extracurricular activities have been established as effective ways of achieving increased cultural sensitivity and understanding and improved multicultural relations on the international level (Al-Musa, & Al-Qudah, 2021; Dumin, 2011; Clegg et al., 2009). As shown by Bodolica et al., (2021), Almeida et al., (2012) in the global universities including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the campus life cultural activities such as clubs, sports teams, cultural events, and awareness creating associations being among the most active co-curricular activities which offer opportunities for students to, engage, learn, and embrace different culture, learning and experience. These activities allow the learners of different origins to work together as a team they also help to enhance other important skills including; cultural relations, oral and improved teaming skills (Arranz, et al, 2017; Assefa, 2024, b). In particular, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of diversity management in HEIs (Assefa, & Adamu, 2024; Belikova, 2002). In its broadest terms, institutions that can successfully implement and encourage diversity as well as inclusion reduce discrimination in society and enhance the students' experience

since all are welcome (Bodolica, et al., 2021; Adamu, 2014; Adamu, A. Y., & Bejitual, 2007). These co-curricular activities act as a trigger for this process since they allow students to come out of the classroom, come out of books and interact with people from different groups (Assefa, 2024, a; Buckley, & Lee, 2021). By so doing, students can learn to be free from prejudice, expand their worldview and cultural capital, and be more diverse (Assefa, & Zenebe, 2024; Charles, 2012). Furthermore, students' activities help create a culture of acceptance to foster human student acceptance amidst their diverse character and identity (Alemayehu, 2022, a; Clegg et al., 2009). Hence when focusing on the experience of Ethiopia, a culturally diverse country with a highly diverse student population, issues of diversity management with specific reference to extracurricular activities in higher learning institutions becomes rather pertinent (Woldetsadik et al., 2023; Assefa, 2022; Mekonnen, 2007). Ethiopian public HEIs general challenge is the aftermath of ethnic strife and discord and aims at establishing a culture of ethnic Integration and coexistence in the interaction dynamics of these institutions (Tarekegne & Gelaneh, 2019). HEIs can play a role of help in promoting intercultural communication, as through participation in extra-curricular activities students promote intercultural understanding and appreciate the cultural diversity (Stuart, Moore and Bell, 2011). However, for boosting the extracurricular activities in diversity management it is necessary to investigate the country's context especially the perceptions, difficulties and prospects of Ethiopian HEIs (Assefa, & Adamu, 2023).

By encouraging student participation in the extracurricular activities, the prospective of managing diversity in Ethiopian HEIs could significantly be enhanced taking into consideration the following advantage: (Mengesha, 2017). These activities create an opportunity for one cultural student to meet the other from other ethnic, religious, or cultural groups, interact and do things together. (Assefa, 2023; Demissie, & Seneshaw, 2013). Students get a chance to teach and un-teach each other as well as unlearn some stereotypes prevailing in a given society and establish a holistic understanding of a diverse or multicultural society through embracing co-curricular activities (Díaz-Iso et al., 2019). These exposures to diversity can go a long way to improving the tolerance levels and acceptance of diversity in society by reducing bias (Alemayehu, 2022, b; Dumin, 2011).

Moreover, those co-curricular activities in Ethiopia also can help the students to embrace and promote the cultural aspects within the country (Assefa, 2016). Ethiopia is start for the presence of different culture, language and tradition in single country. Culture being an imperative part of peoples' lives, getting to mold cultural clubs, occasions, and performances as part of extra curriculum earns institutions the responsibility of offering students an occasion to embrace and flaunt their culture (Haydamo, & Amdemeskel, 2022). This not only enhance student pride and belonging but as well enlighten the general society of the diversity and cultural endowment of Ethiopia (Sefisa, & Yuya, 2021). In addition, creative curriculum incorporated into extra-curricular that addresses cultural value and extinguish indigenous knowledge, language and cultural practices to be revived at some later time by more young people (Stuart et al., 2011).

Despite the enormous prospects that Extracurricular Activities have especially in the management of diversity, the following are some of the difficulties HEIs in Ethiopia may face in advancing and applying their intendments (Tarekegne & Gelaneh, 2019). However, Wilson et al., 2013 notes that the implementation of such activities presents a major concern of synthesizing access to everyone. One way or the other, Tienda, 2013 puts it that it is the discretional undertaking of institutions to promote inclusiveness within the courses and programs they offer. Such practice may entail catering for the needs of students with disability requiring special consideration in terms

of access most of the organized activities, providing specific encouragement and facilities for those students who might find the cash inducement preventing them from taking part in specific activities, and creating culturally sensitive opportunities to offer dimensions of equity within the leadership and structure of co-curricular programs (Winstone et al., 2022).

Another factor that threatens HEIs is finances when they want to provide many opportunities for the student's extra activities. (Kim, & Bastedo, 2017). Resources are usually scarce and institutions are forced to prioritize funding in such a way that provides the equal benefits by placing an emphasis on the correct priority (Kelbiso, 2019). Funding sources may also need to be sourced externally through partnership or sponsorship to augment internal derived resources in order to increase the repertoire of activities (Hanh,2023). Moreover, there are wooden solutions for instances like the following: HEIs could try to offer virtual extra-curricular activities; or, institutions could seek cooperation with other organizations that would allow sharing of resources and knowledge (Griffiths et al 2021).

In addition, the support of faculties staff is instrumental in the success of the currently trending co-curricular activities that aspire to foster diversity management (Fakhretdinova, et al, 2020). HEIs should ensure that their teaching and non-teaching staff receives the training they require to effectively understand and manage cultural or inter-ethnic conflicts for a diverse institution (Ekechukwu et al,2014). This may entail a seminar on cultural sensitivity, the handling of interpersonal conflicts or cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, institutions can arrange volunteering or hire professionals to advice on the development of diverse extra-curricular activities (Fakhretdinova et al., 2021).

From the research findings, HEIs can plan for diversity management policies and strategic plans that are involved in extra curriculum activities (Theories by Eder, & Parker, 1987). All these plans should state goals, actions, and methods of evaluating the level of accomplishment. Same on Yemini & Addi-Raccah, (2013). It is more advisable for HEIs to create specific offices or committees for the top management and supervising of these plans and their effectiveness (Milem, 2003).

The following recreation of figures indicate that apart from internal endeavors, external stakeholders are invaluable in diversity management through activity (Almeida, et al.,2012). Assistance and resources as well as consultation can be found in collaboration with local communities, non- governmental agencies, and businesses. It will be useful to recognize that many such collaborations are capable of increasing the efficiency and scope of extracurricular activities, mobilizing communities and offering students meaningful practical experience.

As the case shows, it is imperative to underscore the fact that for extracurricular activities diversity management does not sit solely in institutions' hands. The main subject involved in this process is students; they involve themselves in the process significantly (Haydamo, & Amdemeskel, 2022). Supporting the students to practice leadership and promoting student activity groups will make students feel more responsible since they will be ready to take charge (Al-Musa & Al-Qudah, 2021). HEIs can find a channel where students can be heard, including the student groups, student councils, committees or affairs, or student activities (Arranz et al., 2017). Their active participation in choice and enforcement of the diversity management efforts could go a long way in achieving useful and more enduring results (Belikova, 2002).

Although Ethiopian public HEIs have realized the value of extracurricular activities in diversity management, the literature review reveals a research gap in terms of elucidating the Perception, Challenge and Opportunity regarding these activities. Therefore, more research is required to find out how such activities enhance the HEI's ability to manage diversity and what challenges exist limiting the use of extracurricular activities as a tool for achieving this goal, together with the opportunities for increasing their effectiveness in this area. Therefore, the study's findings addressed the following three basic research questions:

1. In what ways do students and faculty perceive the participation of extra-curricular activities in the Diversity management in Ethiopian HEIs?

2. What difficulties stand in the way of Ethiopian HEIs when it comes to using the extracurricular activities for the purpose of diversity management?

3. What opportunities exist in Ethiopian HEIs to enhance diversity management through extracurricular activities?

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study was to gather extensive information regarding the status of extracurricular activities and diversity management in Ethiopian public HEIs students' and faculty's viewpoints, perceived obstacles, and available prospects for activity based on viable extracurricular initiatives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) aims for the view on the nature of intergroup bias is that people categorize themselves and others into different groups, gain their identities and self-esteem from belonging to those groups. According to this theory, each group affects personal factors such as attitudes, behavior, and perceptions as people work to mutually construct and sustain a favorable own-image and socio-psychological identity (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Given the current study on the part played by extracurricular activities in enhancing diversity management in Ethiopian public higher education institutions, Social Identity Theory help in explaining how the students and the staff within any institution perceive the role of extracurricular activities, the issues facing such institutions and the possibilities of improving on the aspect of diversity management (Spears, 2011). Hence, this study is expected to explain the role of social identity processes through the investigation of social identities, inter group relations and the effect of extra-curriculum activities on managing diversity with a view of viewing different perspectives, challenges and possible solutions towards addressing diversity and encouraging diversity in Ethiopian higher education institutions as pointed by Waruita (2018).

1. Perceptions of the Role of Extracurricular Activities: Based on Social Identity Theory, Kim et al., (2018), said that the perception of manager and employee with regard to the role of extracurricular activities in the process of diversity management is a result of social identification. Mainstream students and faculties who strongly identify with the diverse social categories may consider extracurricula activities as useful to promote cross-cultural relation and interaction (Fujita et al., 2018). In contrast, individuals with low social identity may deny the significance of diversity management by extracurricular activities (Nario-Redmond et al., 2004).

2. Challenges in Using Extracurricular Activities for Diversity Management: According to Social Identity Theory, the main concerns within the intergroup relations and the intergroup biases may become the issues when using the extracurricular activities to manage the diversity (Shwed et al., 2018). In this case, outlined difficulties caused by ingroup-outgroup differences, stereotypes and prejudice in Ethiopian higher education institutions as observed in the works of Saint (2004). These factors can hamper the utilisation of extracurricular activities as tools to advance equal opportunities for the diverse groups as such activities may actually reproduce intergroup boundaries and extra social injustice frameworks (Dixon et al., 2012).

3. Opportunities to Enhance Diversity Management: In light of these issues, Connector model derived from Social Identity Theory provides understanding of improvement in diversity management through extracurricular activities (Tran et al., 2011). Extracurricular activities can help the people belonging to different groups come together, have their common biochemical, psychological, and social objectives met and, therefore, have a way through which they can feel like they belong to a certain society (Dovidio et al., 2003). These activities can help to eradicate segregation, to embrace diversity and to establish mutual understanding of diversity between students in Ethiopian higher learning institutions (Gebreiyosus, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The current research adopted a mixed methods research strategy that utilizes both quantity and quality data in the investigation with the predisposition of capturing the entire picture of the research problem, in this particular the role of extracurricular activities in diversity management. The qualitative side in this study focused on exploring the participants' experiences, impression, and suggestions while the quantitative component offer a wider view of the respondents and enables researchers to perform statistical computation. According to the use of these two approaches in the study, it was expected that the study would enhance validity and reliability of the results through cross-verification.

In the qualitative stage, more specific and focused interviews were carried out with a reduced number of participants; both students and teachers. The interviews are structured to obtain detailed description on the part played by extracurricular activities in diversity management. Participants were asked a set of open-ended questions, aiming at ascertaining experiences, difficulties experienced, or observed, propositions for enhancing diversity management. All the conducted interviews were audio recorded and transcribed and reviewed based on thematic analysis to obtain themes and patterns.

The quantitative phase comprised completing a structured survey questionnaire by a larger group of students. All of them contained closed-ended Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions captured participants' experience, and perception of diversity management, participation in extra curriculum activities. These additional questions helped me to gain more understanding of participant's answers and allowed them to add more information. In this research, quantitative data was obtained from the survey through the use of questions that were established to gather the perceptions and experiences of the respondents. In this case, chi-square or regression analysis was used to describe relationships between variables. Completing this analysis allowed for finding out trends, patterns, and association concerning extracurricular activities, and management of diversity.

Participants

The quantitative participants of this study were 350 respondents: 87 male students and 88 faculty (N=175), and 87 female students and 88 faculty members (N=175) from the selected five Ethiopian public higher education institutions, namely Addis Ababa University, Kotebe University of Education, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, Debre Brehan University and Selale University. In Ethiopia, there are fifty (50) public higher education institutions. In addition, 10 participants were selected purposively for qualitative component of the study. The purposive sampling procedure was employed to make the participants' population diverse. The participants were selected in a way that they were from different gender, ethnic background and academic discipline as well as their activity level in co-curricular activities. The major advantage of the selection criteria was that only participants with experience and views that would otherwise assist in the achievement of the study goals were included. The participants were contacted through e-mail, posters and announcements within the different departments and in all the campuses. He/she was informed the full study objectives and aims, research methods and sources of information to be used, and concerns regarding their rights as individuals, and students, as well as the principles of voluntary and informed consent. All participants signed consent forms duly provided for before taking any part in the study.

Data Collection

Surveys and interviews were utilized to collect data for this study. Participants were given a specific time frame to complete the survey, which was conducted face-to-face. The survey included both closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions aimed to gather scaled ratings of participants' perceptions and experiences, while open-ended questions allowed them to provide additional details and examples related to organizational extracurricular activities and diversity management. The survey comprised 15 questions on the 5-point Likert scale, divided into three categories: 5 questions for perceptions, 5 for difficulties, and 5 for opportunities.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher himself who has expertise in diversity management and educational practices. The development involved multiple stages, including initial brainstorming sessions to identify key themes, followed by drafting questions that align with the study's objectives. Feedback was gathered from experts during the review phase, and the questionnaire underwent revisions based on their insights. This collaborative approach ensured that the final instrument was both relevant and comprehensive in addressing the research questions.

The semi-structured interviews were face-to-face interviews or conducted in line with participants' preferences. The interviews were conducted with respondents' permission and recorded on tape, and the recorded interviews were transcribed exactly. The interview guide consisted of closed-ended 5 questions about the participants' experiences as well as the corresponding open-ended 5 questions as probes. The two interviews ranged between 15 to 30 minutes, which was sufficient enough as the participants accounted their experience, the challenges they encountered and even their recommendations. In this data collection process the researchers

focused on remaining open and thoughtful throughout the listening process, questioning when clarification was needed and paying careful attention to participant comfort.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

To establish the validity of the survey, the questions were crafted based on an extensive literature review and consultations with experts in the field. A pilot test was conducted to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the items, which allowed for necessary refinements. The internal consistency of the closed-ended questions was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding values of 0.79 for perceptions, 0.83 for difficulties, and 0.83 for opportunities, all indicating satisfactory reliability. These methodological steps confirm the questionnaire's dependability and ensure it accurately measures the constructs related to organizational extracurricular activities and diversity management.

Data Analysis

a. Quantitative Analysis: The results generated from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The respondents' perception, experience and participation level in co-curricular activities and their opinion about diversity management were also measured by calculating the frequencies and percentages. The current analysis offered an overall insight into the data and enabled contrasting of different group, by demographic variables. The research investigated if there were any significant differences in diversity management perception whereby respondents were categorized on the basis of the extent of their participation in co-curriculum activities. This quantitative research allowed to find out trends, patterns and relationships related to extracurricular activities and diversity management with more general viewpoint being created.

b. Qualitative Analysis: The data gathered from the interviews conducted with the larger portion of participants were transcribed in full, and thematically analyzed. Detailed analysis was made of the transcribed notes were reviewed, coded and sorted according to the themes and subthemes selected. First, the researchers performed open coding where they derived initial codes from looking at the important parts of the data from the research questions. Each of these codes was then connected to the other codes based on patterns within categories and themes to make variations and relationships. They then refined and finalized the themes through country-level iterations among the researchers, until they found that the themes captured the essence of participant experiences, emerging challenges, and perceived solutions. Examples and illustrations were also used to aid each of the identified themes in the study in order to generate a better understanding of how Diversity management was supported through extracurricular activities.

Integration of Findings

Qualitative and quantitative data were merged during analyzing stage of the present study. Convergence of sources was carried out at this stage following triangulation to get an enriched analysis of the information. The difference between the qualitative and quantitative data was determined by the researchers through analyzing how the data sources either complement or diverge. The integration process meant being able to make connections, search for similarity and coherency and for possible ways by which the qualitative and quantitative data could be cross-checked and support one another. In order to achieve the goal of the study, the researcher proposed to integrate the research findings so as to give a broad perspective on the role of extracurricular

activities in the diversity management in the Ethiopian public HEIs. The integration process also had the effect of establishing that the results of the study were not overly biased and therefore are valid and reliable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RQ1. In what ways do students and faculty perceive the participation of extra-curricular activities in the Diversity management in Ethiopian HEIs?

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	Extracurricular make young people appreciate and gain deeper perception of different cultures and origins.	350	4.01	0.75
2	Extracurricular activities improve social relations between students coming from different personal backgrounds.	350	3.92	0.83
3	It is perceived that through participation in extra-curricular activities those participating are free to discuss matters of diversity.	350	3.76	0.77
4	Co-curricular activities prevents/stigma as good ways.	350	4.05	0.88
5	Co-curricular activities are direct measures to enhancing practices that support belonging and inclusion.	350	3.86	0.97
	Overall Average	350	3.92	

Table 1: The Perceptions on extra-curricular activities in the Diversity management in Ethiopian HEIs

Cross Cultural Sensitization through Co-curricular activities

The finding derived from table 1 item number 1, (M=4.01, SD=0.75), suggests that extracurricular activities play a positive role in asserting intercultural competency and diversity awareness of the students in the higher learning institutes of Ethiopian in support of the theory of Social Identity. This study finding is in consonance with similar past research that have emphasized that students who participate in co-curricular activities are more sensitive to diversity and rain positive attitudes within social contexts. This implies that whenever learners participate in co-curricular activities where they are exposed to different cultures, they get to appreciate different ethnicities, culture and beliefs. This exposure may come in handy and contribute to enhanced appreciation levels to people's differences, patronizing of diversity and tolerance as essential components of the diversity management process. Engagement in cultural exchange outside classroom affects improves students understanding and efforts towards minimizing cultural precipitated bias by enabling them embrace and discover parts of the cultures that may otherwise seem unfamiliar to them. All in all, this result underlines the roles of the extracurricular activities in diversity management, according to the contact hypothesis and the idea of socially desired identity. For instance, one of the interviewees similarly stated:

> *The participation in co-curricular activities has been helpful in enhancing my ability to learn and embrace difference culture and backgrounds. For instance, I was in a dancing group made of people who danced traditional dancing from different parts of the world. Even in this activity, I not only learn the dance techniques but also equally explore historical and cultural backgrounds of those dances. It became my honor to interact with my teammates who had different ethnic backgrounds and contributed different cultural perceptions. We would tell our individual experiences, explain the message communicated by the gestures in the*

dance and occasionally encouraged formation of groups that would pass informational sessions to pass information to other people about the culture that was being preserved. Such experience helps strengthen the sense of compassion and improve the perception of the tremendous cultural diversity. It also helps to learn that everyone should be accepted and that people belong to different categories can help so much in our society. Inarguably, co- curricular activities have been the key to widen experiences and be more tolerant of the world and people around me.

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(Interviewee number 7, January 2021)

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The finding is in full support of the theory developed by Turner and colleagues; referred to as Social Identity Theory according to which people get part of their self –identity from the groups in which they find themselves. As in the theory under analysis, effective intergroup communication and the creation of a common social identity promotes the understanding and appreciation of difference. In this perspective, special interest clubs give an opportunity to the students to interact with other students from other diverse culture backgrounds and consequently feel that they belong to one social group.

Students' interaction based on teamwork, discussions and common activities in extracurricular activities enable students to enhance cross cultural communication. This process is in consonance with what Social Identity Theory postulates because it directs the formation of effective social relationship and the acknowledgement of similarities between people of different culture. These interactions play these vital roles of enhancing the formation of a favorable social environment at the higher learning institution as well as enhancing social inclusion.

The reason for the result is thus a call for intense sponsorship of various co-curricular activities that enhance multiculturalism and diversity. Through offering support in terms of resources, accommodation, and financial support to students' clubs and associations, which engage in diversity-based activities, campuses can encourage intergroup contact, and in the process foster social identity. To increase the overall effectiveness of the extracurricular activities, faculty members can include diversity issues as topic of discussions as well as properly interpret the principles of Social Identity Theory to the students in order to develop appreciation of different cultures.

Enhancing Social Cohesion through Extracurricular Activities

The finding from table 1 item number 2, (M=3.92, SD=0.83), self-organized learning activities is quite important to create sense of identify and belongingness among students with diversities in Ethiopian public HEIs. This is in consistent with Social Identity Theory that views part of an individual's identity is obtained from the group affiliations. During inter group activities a student is able to inter act, work together and understand each other hence there is a provision in the constitution on unity. The overall participation in multiple social identity groups ensures that equal respect, acceptance and encouragement of all students' participation in co-curricular activities is encouraged and supported in higher learning institutions as per the theory of Social Identity. For instance, one of the interviewees replied:

> *Based on my practice description, I have found that students should engage in other academic activities outside the classroom so that they develop social relations*

within school. By participating in the debate team in school I got to work with my fellow students of different culture and nationality. We talked with the purpose, argued with rationality, and developed good relations. These co-curricular activities enhance relation between students and eradication of discrimination thus enhancing unity among students hence a harmonized school.

(Interviewee number 2, January 2021)

It will be seen that activities carried out outside the classroom help in strengthening unity, inclusion, and social togetherness of learners from various groups as supported by Social Identity Theory. These activities afford opportunities for learners to convene in interest, purpose and circumstance with other learners. Thus, extracurricular activities hinder barriers and help create bridges and enhance unity amongst students leading to a sense of measure among them.

Such activities give students a chance to establish friendly interactions, show understanding of the needs and status of people with disabilities and learn accepting them. Student involvement in cross cultural, ethnical, or social diversity situations with their peers will reduce bigotry and prejudice within and among the students leading to a fair campus environment.

Also, extra-curriculum activities play the stimulating role of fostering inter-cultural communication and overcoming division lines. Only in academic settings, students could have limited exposure to diverse people type and interaction patterns. But more specifically, together with other extracurricular activities, games make students interact with their peers for more than who they are, being united by other interests. Such interactions can prevent prejudice and prejudice stereotypes and promote understanding and appreciation of diversity among student cross section.

The value of the activities does not just rest on the specific extra curriculum activities being undertaken. The relationships developed for exercising these activate also overlap with other facets of the students' lives and thus broaden their social circle as well as support systems. People who are involved in a particular group, performing tasks together are likely to develop friendship bonds and sense of belongingness that goes with group membership despite cultural differences.

Creating Safe Spaces for Dialogue through Extracurricular Activities

The findings from Table 1, item number 3 (M = 3.76, SD = 0.77), support Social Identity Theory by indicating that extracurricular activities in Ethiopian public higher education institutions provide students with a shared social identity, allowing them to appreciate and engage with diversity. Such activities establish contexts in which people can speak, listen and share their ideas in relation to diversity. Through active involvement in these activities people define their common social role and take into consideration different perceptions of others. This gives the participants the feeling of psychological safety to tell, enshrine their life stories, treat topics that are sensitive, and look at issues from other perspectives. The positive environment makes it easy for people to feel that they belong and strengthens the social identification which results from these activities. Similar to the finding one interview respondent stated:

In my own experience working in a higher education institution, I can attest that clubs and organization afford a forum for open discussions and sharing of thoughts on issues to do with diversity. They include; The activities help students to be open in the classroom while discussing important issues such as race, ethnicity, religion, and other diversity issues. I believe it is in these contexts that real dialogues occur

and where processes towards building a more tolerant environment in the University is experienced.

(Interviewee number 4, January 2021)

This also shows that extra curriculum activities provide an environment for people to discuss ideas and share different opinions on race, ethnicities, sexes, religion and social justice, in support of the Social Identity Theory. These activities help participants to freely express themselves, in the process develop a critical thinking skill, learn tolerance, and unlearn prejudices. Students can share personal stories as well as get a wider perspective on how other people live, what their experiences are, and cultural, identity, and social diversity. This has an implication that extra curriculum is essential tool in diversity management as they offer education, a platform for reflection, and growth on inter-culturally thereby increasing inter-cultural competencies of the students, increasing talents for tolerances and respecting diverse opinions. Institutions should recommend and promote variety of courses, clubs, meetings, discussions, lectures, or performances in which people can freely address the issues of diversity and share their views. Policies relating to acceptable communication standards or etiquette should still be set fairly loose so that appropriateness finds its natural level in the context of an academic atmosphere but focuses on civility to prevent bullying and other negative cases of freedom of speech. It also necessary for institutions to support dialogues by offering adequate resources, implementing trainings and programming for diversity-oriented student clubs and organizations, working with faculties to provide both funding and consultation to encourage richness in dialogue about diversity topics and issues.

Challenging Stereotypes through Extracurricular Activities

The result obtained from table 1 item number 4, (M=4.05, SD=0.88), supports Social Identity Theory in light of the fact that extracurricular activities help eliminate stereotype and prejudice among students and faculties in Ethiopian public HEIs. These activities are seen as opportunities which provide critical perspectives, and help people to change their attitudes towards other people, ethnic groups or gender. The students and faculties get to experience and interact with the opposite gender and other people differ ents in extracurricular activates that make them to change their perception and attitude towards the gender stereotypes. This way participants can form their own opinion on how complex and diverse any given group, culture or identity is, rather than perceiving it by merely observing a bunch of shows and movies. Thus, the exposure plays a part in the demystification of stereotype and promotes critical thinking and thought process to death stereotype that meet the requirements of Social Identity Theory. Here is an identical response from an interviewee:

On the part of the students as well as the faculty, extracurricular activities are viewed as a way to break the cycle of stereotype. During my time on the extra-curricular activities, I have noticed the power of organization in eradicating barriers and preconceptions as well as prejudices. Students and faculties through various extracurricular activities should prove the stereotype wrong or even encourage other students and faculties to practice tolerance and equality on their campus environment.

This is an indication that the extra curriculum activities that are based on the Social Identity Theory create a platform where learners are able to learn from other and exchange ideas and have actual conversations. By working together and having common goals these everyday activities can help readers understand one another better, and change negative perceptions within the organization to become more accepting of others. The finding stresses on the need to promote and design a more positive focus and purpose for eradicating stereotype and bias with institutions supporting establishments of workshops, cultural interchange programs and diversity debates and discussion groups. These activities are carried out with the assistance of faculties as educators, advisors, and examples for the student, who leads essential discussions and offers academic help. They make improvements for the general outcome of after school activities and strengthen the participants' determination to eradicate stereotypes and biases in their interpersonal relationships and respective development throughout activities.

Fostering Belonging and Inclusivity through Extracurricular Activities

In relation to the finding resulting from table 1 item number 5, (M=3.86, SD=0.97), it can be concluded that the observation concurs with Social Identity Theory pointing to the fact that extracurricular activities is a significant factor towards the establishment of diversity in the Ethiopian Public HEIs. All these activities are accepted as ways of promoting social inclusion, affiliating with the campus, and feeling part of a given university. In joining the organizations, students get company, fellowship, and belong somewhere other than class. These activities create the platform where people with similar interest, passion or identity can associate, make friends and build networks. In so doing, the participants gain a feeling of acceptance and this has a positive impact to their total encounter in the institution. Extra curriculum activities provide avenues through which students can associate with their counterparts, teachers or other personnel who have similar hobbies or origins; feel accepted. These activities also facilitate emerging positive student interpersonal connections, social support, and personal identity. Hence, when the students are accepted, they will be more invigorated, they will spend more time in class, they will be more manipulated towards their academic endeavors, and hence their performance will improve as well as their general satisfaction with their academic programs. Similarly, one of the interviewees stated the following:

> *One of the greatest myths in pedagogy reportedly holds that co-curricular activities have a vast function in creating feelings of affiliation and acceptance in the institution. From such extra curriculum activities different activities are notable for providing equal opportunities for different students in different educational stands that makes them feel accepted in school. Every social network allows a person to set up a certain interest, find people with the same preferences, and even become friends with them. Students in their day-to-day activities get to fit in the school system and institutions making them feel like they belong to the institutions making the campus active and healthy.*

(Interviewee number 3, January 2021)

The finding stresses the need for institutions to ensure the encouragement and provision of diverse extra curricula activities in consonant with Social Identity Theory. Institutions make it possible for students of different nature, origin, culture and identity to engage in activities they

have interest in and thus be able to relate with their fellow students. There is a need to support students, their projects and initiatives including funding and providing opportunities for the setup of facilities for the clubs and organizations to run all through to their events. Furthermore, institutions can also promote the idea of crossing boundaries of the various department / program and social acknowledgment or identification with clubs and other organizations. When teachers make it a point to link content, research, or service-learning into activities outside the classroom it not only improves learning, but also transforms the extra curriculum activities, several students get to have purpose in school and feel wanted in the institution.

2. What difficulties stand in the way of Ethiopian HEIs when it comes to using the extracurricular activities for the purpose of diversity management?

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	Extracurricular activities are not adequately supported by the institution for promoting diversity management.	350	3.99	0.87
2	Limited resources and funding hinder the implementation of diverse extracurricular activities.	350	4.02	0.75
3	There is a lack of awareness among students about the potential of extracurricular activities to promote diversity management.	350	3.76	0.88
4	Insufficient institutional policies and guidelines exist to support the integration of diversity management into extracurricular activities.	350	4.05	1.1
5	Students from marginalized backgrounds face barriers in accessing and participating in extracurricular activities for diversity management.	350	3.86	0.93
	Overall Average	350	3.94	

Table 2: Challenges Facing in Utilizing Extracurricular Activities for Diversity Management

Institutional Support Gap for Diversity-Oriented Extracurricular Activities

The table 2 item number 1, (M=3.99, SD=0.87), finding reveals a major weakness in the support offered by HEIs in using the extracurricular activities to enhance diversity management, according to the Social Identity Theory perspective. The findings reveal a sense that institutions are not sufficiently committed to or supporting extracurricular activity as positive approaches to promote diversity, inclusion, and intercultural competence. This means scarce resource, time and institutional concern in providing and encouraging co-curricular activities that focus on issues to do with diversity. Lack of support is evidenced by low funding, minor staff or faculty engagement, poor facilities or places, and absence of policies or standards promoting diversity in such activities. Similarly, one of the interviewees stated:

> *This is the belief that the institution fails to support extra-curricular activity to enhance the management of diversity. All in all, it appears that these activities lack support in terms of resources, funding and institutional support. These restraints their capacity to properly deal and advance diversity concerns in campus adequately. Thus, it is necessary for the institution to appreciate the importance of the multicultural and diversity management practices and related activities as being supported adequately through appropriate funding mechanisms and structures, as well as relevant infrastructural and administrative provisions. If the*

institution focuses and commits its resources to these activities, diversity and inclusion could easily become part of the institution's culture and life.

(Interviewee number 5, January 2021)

The cross-sectional study also raises questions about the chances to bolster the diversity management with extracurricular activities to conform to the principles laid down by Social Identity Theory. These activities may then include points for brainstorming, discussion, or even informal teaching on the topic of diversity. Financial shortfall of these activities will reduce potential fora for discussions, exercises and competencies in inter cultural understanding among students and faculties.

The finding also implies a need for re-orientation of institutional goals and commitment to funding and developing diversity and inclusion-related cocurricular activities. These activities should be supported by institutions through provision of sufficient funding, space and administrative assistance since they serve the useful purpose of creating culturally sensitive atmospheres in college campuses. The policies and guidelines made should clearly underline the aspects of diversity management and enforce use of diversity system in co-curricular activities.

Resource Constraints on Diverse Extracurricular Initiatives

From table 2 item number 2, (M=4.02, SD=0.75), in agreement with Social Identity Theory, there exists a number of concerns in the level of support and implementation of various opportunities for activities outside the class that embrace different diversity within institutions. One of the challenges that are associated with such programs is that they require both development and implementation and this mainly because of the following reasons; (i) Scarce funding: this is one of the biggest challenges that are faced by those who would want to develop programs that would help improve:-test the viability of the answers to the questions asked in the lesson:-identify the gaps that are likely to be left by such programs if they have been implemented. With regards to available support, the student character of the institution and absence of financial means, facilities, equipment and staff hinders the diversity of activities offered by the institution. This limitation has implications in the way that the opportunities for students in the extracurricular activities are limited and thus, the variety and representation of the diverse experiences and perceptive within the extracurricular environment of the institution is also limited. By the same token, the following respondent said:

> *They have identified lack of funds, budget requirement and scarce finances as invincible barriers to the delivery of multiple extracurricular activities. I have said this before that the student to resource ratio, coupled with poor funding hinders the capacity and ability to expand and intensify the activities that are offered. This limit has made it equally hard for my institution to offer a wide and rich variety of co-curricular activities to the learners. The institution must continue to invest in labor, time and other resources and finance to fund these activities. Thus, to my mind, more inclusive environment for all students, more diverse, and, in general, a more conducive context to our students' development can be achieved.*

(Interviewee number 8, January 2021)

What this means is that, on the basis of Social Identity Theory, scarce resources can negatively impact the delivery of quality and imaginative extra curricula activities that foster

diversity and inclusion. Lack of funding challenges the likelihood to attract guest speakers or enthusiasts for events and occasions and supply the needed apparatus. The result also highlights the rationale for more funding and resource mobilization from both internal and external sources. Extracurricular activities should receive funding from institutions and in a case that this is not possible, then the institutions should look for partnership or sponsorship. With relevant financial resources, institutions can improve the quality and the range of the students' club activities, satisfying diverse students' demands. Furthermore, efforts like making sustainable efficient use of resources, going for technology means to support virtual activities, or forming linkages, between a club or organization, among others should be sought to overcome the limitations posed by the lack of sufficient resources. Resource management entails stakeholder's leadership and planning within an institution to acknowledge diversity and inclusion by promoting extracurricular diversity programs funded sufficient enough, according to Social Identity Theory.

Student Awareness Gap on Diversity Promotion through Extracurricular Activities

The result reflected in table 2 item number 3, (M=3.76, SD=0.88), corresponds to Social Identity Theory: the students seem to lack much knowledge about the purpose and potential of extracurricular activities in terms of implementing diverse and inclusive approaches. This means there is need to increase more educative information and awareness to the students on the importance of participating more in different co-curricular activities. Some students may not understand that these activities are fostering cross cultural learning, introducing different points of view, and learning about diversity and accommodations. It is for this reason that there may be reduced involvement in various after school activities and hence a weak influence on the various cultural, identity and political activities that exist, thus they end up becoming ineffective as a way of focusing on and advocating for different cultures and political beliefs. Similarly, the following respondent stated:

> *Actually, I noticed that students seem to barely be aware of how extracurricular activities may help with diversity management. Talking to the students fellow and observing my peers I have realized that students lack a broader perception of how engaging in various co-curricular activities can help create inclusion and diversity in the society specifically in the institution. For instance, during a recent club fair, I encountered several students who did not realize that engagement in clubs/organizations addressing diversity and inclusion means you have an opportunity to engage in constructive confrontations, learning and discussion of diverse opinions. They failed to see that, by engaging in these activities, they were subverting existing stereotypical paradigms and expanding their lifeworld horizons while helping to contribute towards a social paradigm shift. For this reason, it is necessary to conduct focused informational campaigns to explain the need for stakeholders, primarily the students, to get engaged in the variety of extracurricular activities. These could be implemented by arranging workshops, orientation sessions or to incorporate these with other topics of orientation to let the students understand the importance of these activities in Diversity Management.*
>
> *(Interviewee number 10, January 2021)*

In line with Social Identity Theory, one may fail to consider the advantages of participating in a number of able outside the classroom, or in variety of co-curricular activities to improve on

diversity management. Those students who is not aware to these specific advantages may not search for it, which may cause these students to be deprived in experiencing different culture and ideas. As a result of this finding, Ethiopian public HEIs should focus on sensitization activities. Such endeavors should address the goal of raising awareness of the students about the given types of activities in terms of their potential to contribute towards the management of diversity, improvement of the education stakeholders' experiences, and development of intercultural competence. Observing orientation sessions, workshops, and information campaigns which focus on the link between the choice of extracurricular activities and their correlation with the richness of experience in managing diversity, students will search for effective extras curriculum activities themselves. Subsequently, cooperation with student clubs, organizations, and associations can enhance practical sample activities to design appropriate approach on how to engage specific clients with the identified interest and necessity for specific educational programs. Moreover, by introducing diversity management into the curriculum, students themselves will quickly realize that diversity is supported through extracurricular activities and will have an interest in such opportunities for personal and academic development based on Social Identity Theory.

Institutional Policy Void on Integrating Diversity into Extracurricular Activities

In compliance with data acquired from table 2 item number 4, (M=4.05, SD=1.1), of the questionnaire, based on the Social Identity Theory, it can be concluded that there is a nugatory absence of definite structures and directions in the institutions that approach the implementation process of the diversity management principles in the activities of students' extracurricular activities. Of particular relevance to this assertion is the fact that the current study points to the missing or inadequate policy and procedural frameworks addressing diversity and inclusion in ASA/out-of-school hours activities. As it has been seen, without proper implemented policies and regulation it can be nebulous issues to address in relation to diversity within such institutions and activities and there can be inconsistencies and variations with which institutions approach and address diversity-related issues. Where there is no clear structural support given by a institution there may be loss of awareness, responsibility and monitoring and that hamper the prevention of discrimination negatively. There is a need for implementing rules, particularly to state goals and standards that require participants in organizing or heading extracurricular activities openly discuss concerns related to diversity and promote the principles of respect. Similarly, one of the interviewees stated:

> *Student involvement in diversity management is not highly supported by institutional policies and guidelines in extracurricular activities. Since my arrival here, I realized that as much as there are policies on participation in non-academic pursuits, there are no clear polices or regulations on diversity administration. Experience has highlighted how there are no specific policies and procedural frameworks to systematically integrate diversity and inclusion into additional curricular activities. For example, none of the affiliation conditions imposes specific obligations upon clubs or organizations to ensure diversity and inclusion of minorities in their activities or to devote resources for such purposes. Due to the lack of specific guidelines on how institutions should address diversity, it can be difficult for student organizations to respond to diversity issues appropriately or design more programs that will support the values of Diversity. In order to overcome this problem, the institution should create clear regulations and guidelines which state that diversity management should also be applied to school*

clubs and organizations. These policies should describe expectations, clarify support, and clearly define resources for Groups and Associations and clubs on diversity and inclusion.

(Interviewee number 1, January 2021)

A lack of programs and procedures in relation to extracurricular activities highlighted in item number 4 also accords with Social Identity Theory. Thus, this theory implies that due to the absence of clear guidelines numerous and sundry measures toward the accomplishment of diversity and inclusion are hampered and slowed down. This lack of stated policies, however, poses a risk of a lack of resources, support, or incentive for diversity and inclusion-centered clubs, organizations or any events. Consequently, variety and, thus, the extent to which intercultural understanding, dialogue, and acceptance can be encouraged through extra-curricular activities might be less diverse. In response to this research discovery, Ethiopian public higher education institutions should intensify efforts to establish strategic and comprehensive document and policy frameworks that proactively govern diversity management policies in co-curricular activities. Through logical measures, setting guidelines, providing for and supporting the multicultural approach in a respective educational institution, students of different backgrounds will follow the same motives and principles of Social Identity Theory. Additionally, the societal stakeholders can be engaged while offering diversity training can foster the management of diversity within extracurricular activities.

Barriers to Participation in Diversity-Focused Extracurricular Activities

As postulated by Social Identity Theory, the results obtained in table 2 item number 5, (M=3.86, SD=0.93), explains that there are always some forms of difficulties and barriers that limit the effective participation of disadvantaged learners in co-curricular activities dealing with diversity management. This indicates the need to further work on these factors and eliminate them, so as to enhance equity, access and participation of any student. Impacts with learners raised in or attended school with structural and systematic barriers for example financial barriers, or, absence of positive portrayal and imagery or positive black figure to emulate, restricted access to information, including discrimination or prejudice. As a result, there is a limit to their chances of addressing diversity issues as well as diversities activities than the students from privileged schools. As a result of this discovery, it is vital to work on initiating actions that contribute to eliminating these obstacles with regard to a lack of a diversity of students' extracurricular activities and promoting an environment of interaction in which all students are encouraged to become fully engaged in such circumstances. One of the interviewees stated the following,

I have also noticed that students from marginalized background like me for diversity management have major challenges in terms of participation in cocurricular activities. Such barriers include; lack of diversity and diversity representation, finances, culture and society. The lack of diverse participation in such activities results to retarded attendance and poor interest in the activities. They may become unavailable due to financial barriers, and cultural and social barriers can come in the way also. Publication of the above barriers requires that the institution to promote diversity, provide funding and relevant set programs that tackles the needs of diversity management for marginalized students' equal participation in co-curricular activities.

The result revealed in the data of item number 5 is consistencies with Social Identity Theory and the presence of barriers has potential implication. These barriers explain why the existing inequalities are reinforced and help to explain why juvenile activities are so restricted as to under-represent minorities. This lack of diversity means such activities have limited success in creating awareness and changing organizational culture in multicultural settings. Besides, the barriers reduce the chances of student's personal and professional growth of representatives of marginalized groups. Activities outside the classrooms offer experience, contacts, interpersonal, organizational and community involvement opportunities. Whenever such opportunities are not available to these students, it becomes a hindrance to their growth and limits them from performing similar to the abilities expected in classrooms or in workplaces. As a solution to this research finding, social identity theory calls for the deliberate eradications of the barriers and cultivation of positive practices that give every student elaborate access and opportunities for all the learners.

3. What opportunities exist in Ethiopian higher education institutions to enhance diversity management through extracurricular activities?

No	Items	N	Mean	SD
1	There are ample opportunities for students to engage in diverse extracurricular activities that promote inclusivity and intercultural understanding.	350	3.88	0.87
2	The institution actively supports the integration of diversity management principles into extracurricular activities.	350	3.97	0.69
3	Extracurricular activities provide a platform for students to develop cross-cultural communication skills.	350	4.03	1.1
4	There are collaborative initiatives between student clubs and organizations that promote diversity management through extracurricular activities.	350	4.5	0.82
5	Faculty members are encouraged to incorporate diversity-related topics into extracurricular activities.	350	3.86	0.77
	Overall Average	350	4.05	

Table 3: Opportunities for Enhancing Diversity through Extracurricular Activities

Opportunities for Diverse and Inclusive Extracurricular Activities

As expounded by Social Identity Theory from table 3 item number 1, (M=3.88, SD=0.87), Ethiopian public HEIs provide diverse avenues through which students can engage in extracurricular activities to support identity integration and social inclusion and cater for cultural Diversity. This study indicates that these institutions must have embarked on systematic efforts to foster a lively campus environment and stimulate students' involvement, as well as foster institutional identity. It suggests that the institutions value extra curricula activities for purposes of diversity and the understanding of other cultures. They have continuously encouraged and participated in the formation of numerous other co-curricular activities such as various clubs, societies, groups, and activities which interest students, embrace diversity and identity of the students. These activities provide ground and opportunities in which students can communicate

and share ideas among themselves, and as well as gain the enrollment of mutual cultural values. This is consistent with the objectives of Social Identity Theory that stresses underlying social processes as well as intergroup determinants that engender positive alterations of identity and inter group behavior. Similarly, one respondent said:

> *Looking at it from this perspective one can conclude that there are numerous opportunities for me to have extracurricular activities that support the elusive concept of diversity and interculturality. Here, we are offered a plethora of clubs, organizations, and activities that deal in diversity and the promotion of an egalitarian campus culture. Such activities have helped me to engage and communicate with individuals of different backgrounds with whom you have a possibility to discuss important things and broaden your view. All these make me learn and appreciate cultures of different people in the society differently. These opportunities have been made possible by the institution's effort to ensure that the above aspects are taken through and thus I have developed as a person as well as ensured that the fellow students embrace the need for diversity and globalization.*

> *(Interviewee number 4, January 2021)*

Several possible outcomes can be explained when there are many opportunities for learning and other activities offered in the course of a student's study. They feel it fosters a better student climate that allows students from all walks of life to interact and produce content together. Such Diversity may also have an added advantage in peer learning and Intellectual development since learners are exposed to a variety of ways of thinking and doing things. Such experiences can help develop aspects like knowing how to accomplish, communication, teamwork, leadership, and even intercultural sensitivity. Through extracurricular activities, the students get to practice meaningful social interactions that introduce them to other people's attitude and teach them to respect people with different opinions.

Institutional Support for Diversity Integration in Extracurricular Activities

The findings from table 3 item number 2, (M=3.97, SD=0.69), corroborate Social Identity Theory in pointing at the absence of adequate support and commitment from the institution in favor of diversity management within organized activities outside class. This finding suggests that partnerships offer a unique chance to jointly promote and facilitate diverse and culturally sensitive contexts within students. The application of Social Identity Theory posits institutions to be important entities in both forming a person's identity as well as enhancing favorable attitudes between different groups of people. Insufficient provision of support and recruitment, along with the underfunding, underemphasizing, and understaffing of diversity initiatives, resource provision, and encouragement for diversity management in the organization's extra-curricular activities may lead to low levels of consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. This also contributes to biases, stereotyping and exclusion, thus significantly minimizing chances for building intercultural competency, and in the process, limited cross cultural learning and learning. To mitigate this finding, the institution should consider and offers adequate support to diversity management in extra-curricular activities, as far as understands the significance of positive social identity, as well as developing multicultural sensitivity. Similarly, the following respondent stated:

> *If this teaches us something then, it would have to be the fact that in the institution in question there is little to no active encouragement of supplementing the*

principles of diversity management into co-curricular activities. Looking at all the activities that I have participated, I have observed that there is very little stress put on Diversity and Inclusion within these frameworks of the activities. There is therefore a lack of institutional support in helping students and clubs deal with diversity issues or developing programs that will enhance diversity. In a bid to promote diversity inclusion, the institution needs to pay attention and embrace support for the practice of diversity management strategies in co-curricular activities.

(Interviewee number 10, January 2021)

Most student clubs, organizations or bodies and initiatives for diversity management in extracurricular activities may lack support in terms of resources and funding, or access to mentorship if there is no active institutional support. This can prevent growth and stability of these activities and as a result a wider program choice for students.

To address this finding, Ethiopian public higher education institutions need to be proactive to establish the implementation of Diversity Management principles into the co-curricular dimensions. The institution can only show leadership and commitment of diversity management by initiating contact with student organizations, faculties, employers as well as administrators. This can include dialogue of providing space for Discourse, formation of diversity committees or task forces; and inclusion of diversity in the decision-making regarding activities that include co-curricular activities.

Developing Cross-Cultural Communication Skills through Extracurricular Activities

In accordance with Social Identity Theory the finding from table 3 item number 3, (M=4.03, SD=1.1), reveals that students managing to develop improved cross-cultural communication skills through participation in extra-curricular activities. This result indicates that such activities offer essential cadres through which learners can socialize with peers from the multicultural community and build adequate competencies to operate and meaningfully communicate in multicultural contexts. They are committed to the idea that learning intercultural communication is important for Ethiopian public higher education institutions and encourage its acquisition through student activities. As a result of grouping students in cultural, ethnic, and social groups, these activities foster a climate nurturing inter-student interaction. In these interactions students get to learn about worldviews, attitudes and opinions of others, and in the process learnt how to effectively engage others and reconcile cultural differences. This is in line with Social Identity Theory since the theory gives salience to matters touching on social interaction /contact with individuals from the other community. Similarly, the following respondent stated:

I find extracurricular activities very helpful in terms of offering a great avenue for the development of cross-cultural communication skills. Through these activities, one gets to understand several different backgrounds and perspectives, hence affording one the opportunity to work with and interact with other students from different cultures. All this has helped me to understand cultural diversity better, to become more empathetic, and to grasp better ways of communication. This has given me first-hand exposure, so vital in creating an inclusive approach toward others and a globally-minded outlook that equips me with cross-cultural communication skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

(Interviewee number 3, January 2021)

Such education can facilitate different kinds of possible positive consequences regarding the development of cross-cultural communication competence: it gives a profound idea about other cultures, helps to change stereotypes and widespread judgments, or at least be more tolerant. It helps to develop intercultural relations and brings intercultural understanding closer. A student can receive such knowledge through extracurricular activities and develop a greater awareness of their place in the world. Success in this increasingly small and diversified world depends on cross-cultural communication. Communication across cultures is crucial, both on academic and professional levels, as well as in personal contexts. This course provides students with a chance to practice and polish their communication skills through extracurricular activities that include active listening, empathy, flexibility, and intercultural understanding.

Collaborative Initiatives for Diversity Management in Extracurricular Activities

Table 3 item number 4, (M=4.5, SD=0.82), data stands in line with Social Identity Theory, revealing a shortage of collaborative efforts aimed at integrating the principles of managing diversity into extra-curricular activities. Such findings suggest that coordination and synergy among various student clubs and organizations within Ethiopian public higher education institutions are at a low ebb as far as the promotion of diversity within extra-curricular contexts is concerned. Therefore, Social Identity Theory postulates that such cooperation would allow the various groups to be coherent in grasping varied opinions and fostering intercultural experiences on campus. The discovery insinuates that opportunities could be missed for the collective efforts and resources of various student clubs and organizations to develop initiatives that are far-reaching in promoting diversity management. The impact of not having good collaboration among student groups toward the diversity management concept through extracurricular activities is very big. One might be stuck in a fragmented approach to individual clubs or organizations alone that deal with several aspects or communities, as opposed to broadening up and being holistic in the approach. This leads to lesser effectiveness in carrying out diversity management. Moreover, such lack of coordination will result in duplication of work and wastage of resources whereby student clubs and organizations may work in isolation from each other, organizing activities or events that could share a common purpose. Thus, given this result, it will be useful to establish a consensus and bring about coordination among the student clubs and organizations in formulating integrated and sustainable proposals regarding the management of diversity through extracurricular activities, as indicated by Social Identity Theory.

Encouraging Faculty Involvement in Diversity-Related Extracurricular Activities

Findings from table 3, item number 5 (M=3.86, SD=0.77), indicated that, in line with Social Identity Theory, there were no clear incentives or support for faculty to engage with diversity-related themes in extracurricular activities. It represents a lost opportunity to marshal the expertise and social influence of faculty to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion outside of the classroom. It suggests that limited institutional recognition of the perhaps key role that faculty could play in creating greater diversity and inclusion in extracurricular contexts may exist. Without explicit encouragement, the motivation of faculty is likely to be reduced to focus on topics or initiatives related to diversity in their work with extracurricular activities. Consequently, these events in such activities could be directed toward a more intense concentration on matters of subjects or otherwise unrelated toward the understanding and appreciating diversity; therefore, students are remaining unprepared or unaware of the problems rising from the issues of diversity.

According to Social Identity Theory, the faculty members are a considerable role model and social identity development facilitator. By being fully engaged and supportive in enhancing the likelihood of diversities within extracurricular activities, this could foster a more inclusive campus community and improve students' intergroup relations. Thus, institutions have to communicate that they support faculty for an inclusion of diversity-related topics during extracurricular activities; it also secures a basis upon which the principles underlying Social Identity Theory can be extended to greater inclusivity and diversity within campus life. Here is similar response from one interviewee:

> *Apparently, faculties are not adequately motivated to include the issue of diversity in co-curricular activities. Either institutional support or incentive to include the issue of diversity and inclusion in extra-curricular settings is lacking. This could be a loss of great opportunities for meaningful discussion and learning centered on diversity-related concerns. Because of this, there is a need to realize the possible effects incorporating diversity into extracurricular activities may have and provide needed support and encouragement to the faculty members to do so. This will lead to a more inclusive campus environment and provide unique educational experiences for the students.*

> *(Interviewee number 2, January 2021)*

The results can be colossal, where even in extracurricular activities, the faculty is less motivated to include diversity-related topics. Limiting their exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives of students can also keep them bound within a fixed point inside the classroom. Extracurricular activities expose them to diversity in a much freer way, helping students to develop much more nuanced understandings about cultures, identities, and social issues than what is learned in a lecture hall. In the absence of such engagement by faculties, many learning opportunities will get lost on the students.

Second, if faculty members are made to feel unwelcome, excluded, or unsupported in making diversity-related issues a part of their work, then inclusive campus cultures will not be developed. Faculties are role models and mentors for students, and their active involvement in dealing with the challenges of diversity tends to signal the importance of inclusivity for the rest of the campus community. In participating in extracurricular activities that address issues of diversity, faculty members help students create space that is inviting and safe to discuss these issues.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that extracurricular activities play a significant role in promoting diversity management among students in Ethiopian public HEIs. Participants expressed a strong appreciation for extracurricular activities as avenues for cultural understanding and social relations, with mean scores ranging from 3.76 to 4.05. These results are consistent with existing empirical studies that highlight the positive impact of extracurricular involvement on fostering inclusivity and intercultural dialogue (Sirca, et al., 2024).

For instance, a study by Nguyen et al. (2025) found that students who engage in diverse extracurricular activities reported enhanced cultural awareness and improved social relationships with peers from different backgrounds. Similarly, the current study supports the notion that

extracurricular activities facilitate discussions about diversity, as indicated by a mean score of 3.76 for the perception that participation allows for open dialogues on diversity-related issues.

However, the findings also revealed critical challenges regarding institutional support and resources. A significant number of respondents perceived that the institution does not adequately support extracurricular activities aimed at promoting diversity management, with a mean score of 3.99. This aligns with research by Rana, (2024), which highlighted that inadequate funding and lack of institutional policies often hinder the implementation of effective diversity initiatives in educational settings. Furthermore, the current study echoes the sentiments expressed in Craft's (2023) work, where students from marginalized backgrounds reported barriers to accessing extracurricular opportunities, reflecting persistent inequalities in participation.

Interestingly, the current study also identified opportunities for improvement, such as the presence of collaborative initiatives between student organizations that promote diversity management, which scored a mean of 4.5. This finding is in line with Dicks, (2022), who emphasized the importance of peer-led initiatives in enhancing diversity and inclusion within educational institutions. The active support from faculty to incorporate diversity topics into extracurricular activities, despite a lower mean score of 3.86, suggests a positive inclination towards integrating diversity management into the educational framework.

In conclusion, while the findings of this study align with existing literature on the benefits of extracurricular activities in promoting diversity, they also illuminate significant challenges that need addressing. The contrasting perspectives on institutional support and resource allocation highlight the need for a strategic approach to enhance the role of extracurricular activities in fostering an inclusive educational environment in Ethiopian public higher education institutions. Future research should focus on developing effective strategies to overcome these barriers and leverage the existing opportunities for promoting diversity management through extracurricular engagement.

CONCLUSION

The extracurricular activities in Ethiopian public HEIs were examined to understand their role in promoting diversity management, focusing on the perceptions, challenges, and opportunities identified among students and faculty members. Using Social Identity Theory underpinning, this study had as its goal the need to present inclusiveness, intercultural awareness, and an ensemble of measures to change diversity management in extra curriculum activities.

Results of this study showed that both students and faculty members identified the potential for extracurricular activities in managing diversity. Students found these activities good avenues that help develop cross-cultural communication skills and a means to interact with other students of diverse backgrounds. Faculty members also appreciated their role in encouraging diversity and inclusiveness outside classrooms. Nonetheless, the study also mentioned several challenges of Ethiopian HEIs in leveraging extra-curriculum activities toward managing diversity, including a lack of proactive support from institutions, limited coordination among student clubs and organizations, and explicit encouragement given to faculty members to integrate diversity-related issues into extracurricular activities.

Nevertheless, the study also discovered some opportunities for extracurricular activities to enhance diversity management in Ethiopian HEIs. These included commitment and support by the

institution to ensure the assurance of diversity initiatives, collaboration among student clubs and organizations with regard to issues that might enhance diversity, and open encouragement of faculty members to pay priority attention to enhancing diversity in their engagement with extracurricular activities. By applying the principles of Social Identity Theory, institutions will be in a position to offer inclusive experiences that foster intercultural understanding while developing students' intergroup relations skills through meaningful and impactful co-curricular experiences.

However, various limitations of the current study are identified: since the current research has employed a descriptive statistic and qualitative interpretation, future studies are recommended to incorporate powerful statistical tests in order to allow proper analysis and interpretation of quantitative data. In this regard, a future researcher will be in a better position to test the above-mentioned relationship between extracurricular activities and the outcomes of diversity management through using the appropriate statistical tests, which will improve the validity and reliability of the findings of any similar study.

Such limitations will be addressed in future research, which also can include strong statistical tests to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of extracurricular activities in promoting diversity management and inform strategies and interventions at Ethiopian public HEIs Further exploration and enhancement by researchers will add to the knowledge base and support the creation of an inclusive campus environment that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the findings of this study are multifaceted in practice and policy. That is, in essence, this research pointed to the great potential of extracurricular activities in Ethiopian public HEIs as a means to promote diversity management. Indeed, the findings showed that by creating opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities, there is increased intercultural understanding, inclusiveness, and social cohesiveness in students. For this reason, institutions are encouraged to create an enabling environment by supporting extracurricular activities through resource allocation, facilities, and opportunities for students to engage in various activities. The study has also pointed out various challenges and barriers to the effective management of diversity through extracurricular activities: narrow access, shortage of information, and lack of support. Each of these challenges has to be met at the institutional level with focused interventions in the form of awareness campaigns, capacity-building programs, and financial support for students from the marginalized sections. Collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders/students, faculty, and administration were also identified as key ingredients in successful diversity management.

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