THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Approaches to Conflict Management in Peace Clubs in Public Secondary Schools within Kisumu County, Kenya

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Abstract:
Globally, occurrence of secondary school student unrest has been on the rise since19th C. The situation has not been any different in Kenya where secondary schools have experienced increasingly high levels of student unrest. This has prompted the government to introduce Peace Clubs in Kenyan schools. The thesis of this study, therefore, was that despite these efforts, many schools in Kenya still experience student unrest hence the need to evaluate the approaches to conflict management in peace clubs in public secondary schools. The study used a conceptual framework informed by contingency theory and integrative negotiations and peer mediation theory. The study applied evaluation research design. The researcher used focus group discussion, interviews and questionnaires to collect primary data while review of publications and reports was done to obtain secondary data. The study found out that competition is the most commonly applied approach to conflict management in Peace Clubs in schools followed by collaboration and accommodation in that order while compromising and avoidance are the least applied approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs. It was concluded that Peace Clubs mostly apply competition approach to conflict management in schools. In competition, the losing party bears grudge hence the occurrence of student unrest witnessed in the Kenyan schools. It was recommended that schools should focus on exposing students to various Peace Club activities with the purpose of giving learners the capacity to grow varying and less assertive approaches to conflict management such as collaboration, compromising, avoidance.

Keywords: Approach, conflict management, peace club, public secondary school Kisumu County

1. Introduction

Conflict involves measures that one undertakes to show their feeling, articulates their perception with a view of getting their desires addressed through approaches that are capable of interfering with another person's capability of getting their desires addressed (Adada, 2016). This approach may include direct attempts to push things to happen in one's favour without minding the desires and feelings of the other party (United State Institute of Peace, 2011). Sometimes it may require the application of some amount of power, violence and destruction to have things done according to one's favour. Conversely, Ramani and Zhimin (2010) observe that such behaviours could also be friendly, constructive and conciliatory in nature. However, such conflict behaviours' sole purpose is expressing the conflicts and getting the needs met or both (Vogler, 2017). Conflicts' nature in a way adversely impacts on the perception of the members of the society. At times, a decrease in one dimension of a conflict leads to increase in the other dimensions of that particular conflict (Mayer, 2001). However, although each of the three dimensions of a conflict has an influence on the other dimensions, changes that occur in the levels of conflicts in a particular dimension have no significant ability to cause the same change in other dimensions (Abbas, 2015).People can quickly get into a conflict and rapidly move out of it depending on the nature, characteristics and strength of the conflict thus leading to a quick and frequent change in the conflict dimension (Adada, 2016). In accordance to Ramani and Zhimin (2010), communities where people condone conflict behaviours such as discrimination, social injustice and lack of respect for the rule of law may not know the meaning of peace. Such communities need a complete overhaul of mindset and perception on building the culture of peace; there is need to stand tall and put genuine efforts towards realization of peace (Abbas, 2013). For instance, in Indonesia, Peace Clubs stood out as the first clubs created to represent education for peace from an Islamic and Acehnese perspective; thus, leading the campaigns towards minimizing negative peace while maximizing positive peace among individuals and with their

surrounding as well as with God (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Peace Clubs work in harmony with Islamic educational approach which advocates for communal approach to peace and justice (Muhammad & Muhyiddin, 2000).

Peace Clubs in Kenyan schools, launched in 2014, were designed to aid in appreciating ethnic diversity amongst students, racial and religious communities. They were intended to cub youth involvement in violence of extremism and instead equipping them with citizenship skills, skills to resolve dispute (Amani Club, 2014). Peace Clubs are one of the initiatives the NCIC envisages to promote positive relationships, among learners, schools and the surrounding communities. Unlike adults who are highly opinionated and hold strong positions on most issues, young people are more flexible and easier to mold (Mulenya, 2014). Character and attitude transformation are a progressive and long-term process that cannot be realized overnight (Vogler, 2017). The establishment of Peace Clubs is expected to enhance good character and self-discipline among the young people. Peace Clubs actively provide opportunities for engagement and dialogue amongst students from diverse orientations. This creates a forum for honest, open and fruitful debates on diverse issues so that trust can be built and stereotypes forgotten. Peace Club members are expected to influence other youths, their communities and their parents thereby causing ripple effect in the promotion of national cohesion and integration (Amani Club, 2014). Malenya (2014) observes that in the modern-day world, young people are sometimes used as instruments of violence and injustice while at the same time falling victims of the same violence and injustice. Not exclusive to them but they need to be guarded against this in relevant ways. Therefore, Peace Clubs have a mandate to help young people realize their capacity to influence a positive change. Therefore, young people, at an early age, deserve to be advised and encouraged to join Peace Clubs so as to grow and develop the values of Peace Education, Conflict Resolution and Non-Violence. Peace Clubs provide a learning platform for students to acquire skills, share experiences and make use of the knowledge of peace in their environments to bring about the culture of peace (UHRC, 2014).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The wave of student unrest, at varying degrees, has hit various countries in different parts of the world including Kenya. This has captured the attention of the global leaders who, through various avenues such as UNESCO and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), have tried to bring it to an end. In Kenya, it has captured the attention of the national leaders and various stakeholders in the education sector who have made public statements condemning student unrest and malicious damaging of school possessions. As a result, the Kenyan government introduced Peace Education Programmes and subsequently Peace Clubs in schools with an aim of inculcating the culture of peace in learners at a tender age so that they grow up as peaceful citizens. However, despite all these efforts by the government, the student unrest is still on the rise. In an attempt to address this, studies have been conducted by Kibui *et.al.,* (2014), Kipyego (2013) and Vundi *et.al,* (2014) among others. However, the literature reviewed revealed that despite these efforts by researchers, not much research had been conducted to evaluate the approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs in public secondary schools. Therefore, this study sought to evaluate the approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs in public secondary schools within Kisumu County, Kenya.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Accommodating Goals of the Other Party in a Conflict

Accommodation happens when the objectives are perfect; however, the connections are not viewed as imperative to generally objective accomplishment (Wessells, 2016). The trouble in the routine utilization of the accommodative approach to conflict management is that it underscores protecting a benevolent relationship to the detriment of assessing issues fundamentally and dissenting individual rights (Kibui *et.al.,* 2014). Accommodation style, in this manner, includes penance and magnanimity. Here, one is happy to surrender everything so as to safeguard the association with the other party. It is surely sensible for somebody to utilize this technique when the current issue is something of little significance to them. According to Hughes (1994), as a principal, one needs to apply this conflict management strategy in the running and management of the school especially when dealing with their teachers and subordinate staffs. This will save them from embarrassment from their juniors especially when they are using competing as their preferred approach to conflict management (Campbell *et.al.,* 1983). Amason and Shweiger (1997) assert that pleasing individual serves numerous positive functions in connections and associations among learners. Individuals who like to protect others before themselves allow them to have things achieved while protecting concordance. In the midst of disharmony, the accommodation approach can be a source of distress to the two parties (Igbuzor, 2011). On the other hand, Antonioni (1999) cautions that it is significant for individuals who show this propensity to know about the upsides and downsides of this 'give and take' approach so that they can settle on decisions that will profit them just. Nobleman (1990) says that out of the five conflict management approaches, accommodation is seen as the 'peacekeeper' mode as it concentrates more on safeguarding connections than on accomplishing an individual objective or result (Campbell *et.al.,* 1983).

1.2.2. Avoiding the Problem

Alan *et.al.* (2000) state that when clashes are dealt with by shirking, the two sides of the contention attempt to disregard the contentious issue and do nothing to determine the difference. It is regularly ineffectual since the genuine cause of the contradiction has not been tended to (Igbuzor, 2011). Consequently, struggle is probably going to proceed as correspondence and collaboration are upset; none of the included parties is helping the other party to get to their objectives (Bodine & Crawford, 1999). Alan *et.al.* (2000) observe that this approach to conflict management is utilized when the two groups' concerns are overlooked by not tending to the issue; it's described by the acknowledgment that any

push to either examine or challenge the direct interests of another is frantic and less important. The individuals who utilize this approach have almost no worry for their very own wants; it isn't uncommon to discover these individuals deliberately expelling themselves from circumstances that could prompt potential differences; they are not prone to acting naturally, neglect to seek help from associates and are unequipped for taking a firm stance on clashing issues (Bodine& Crawford, 1999). Frequently people who utilize avoidance may decide not to build up a condition of ignorance. The radiologic science learners from Sportsman and Hamilton's examination use the avoidance peacemaking technique frequently (Wessells, 2016). A few examinations have discovered that medical caretakers will, in general, apply the avoidance as an approach of peace making. Avoiding can be an esteemed peacemaking procedure when the issues inciting the contention are of less important (Bodine& Crawford, 1999).

1.2.3. Collaborating with the Other Party in a Conflict

Thomas (1976) argues that this is a method for taking care of a contention whereby the conflicting groups involved attempt to fulfill their objectives without making concessions and rather, concoct an approach to determine their distinction that leaves the two gatherings happier. It endeavors to completely address the worries of the two gatherings since the purpose is to discover answers for the reason for the occurrence of the contentions and work closely to reach a solution that is acceptable to the two gatherings rather than to discover shortcoming and faults of the parties involved (Wessells, 2016). Nobleman (1990) sees this approach as the most appropriate way of managing conflicts. When it is utilized suitably, it has the most gainful impact on the conflicting groups in question. In this manner, community-oriented style of peace promotion perceives conflicts as issues to be explained and finding imaginative arrangements that fulfill every one of the parties' worries (Wessells, 2016). One doesn't surrender their personal circumstance, rather dives into the issue to distinguish the hidden concerns, test their own suspicions, and comprehend the perspectives on others (Baron, 1990). Cooperation requires significant investment and in the event that the relationship among the gatherings isn't significant, at that point it may not merit the time and vitality to make a success. In any case, joint effort cultivates regards, trust and enhances connections. To make a domain increasingly cooperative, one needs to address the existing contentions legitimately and in such a way that communicates a possibility of the two groups locked up in a conflict get what they need (Thomas, 1976).

As indicated by Mboya et.al., (2016), joint effort approaches uncover individuals' inclinations and limitations thus drawing in everybody in peace building arrangements that go a long way to promote peace. It expands productivity through participation yet it is the most bizarre on the grounds that it requires moving from one-sided control to common learning (Igbuzor, 2011). Productive coordinated efforts enable individuals to express and see each other's needs and make new arrangements; addresses the errand through consensual basic leadership, the connections through shared regard, and every individual's self-esteem through the thought of his needs and qualities (Mboya et.al., 2016). Thomas (1976) observes that in a coordinated effort, an individual ensures that the necessities of the two conflicting sides and both individuals engaged in the contention are fulfilled. It is a circumstance where the necessities of each individual included is considered before an official choice is made and is viewed as perhaps the best strategy for peace promotion (Igbuzor, 2011). In the event that that Peace Clubs and school network agree to this system everywhere, the unrest and fire related issues would be drastically reduced since the learners' needs would be realized well ahead of time and components for development of arrangements set up. The learners would have no reason to go on frenzy since they are equally engaged in decision making (Baron, 1990).

1.2.4. Compromising One's Own Goals During a Conflict

As indicated by Aldag and Kuzuhara (2002), this approach of conflict management happens when each party to a conflict isn't just worried about its own objective achievement but also the objective achievement of the other party and is eager to take part in a 'give and take' trade and make concessions until a sensible goal of the contention is attained. They require that there should be a need to 'settle on a truce' on certain focuses when the question appears to be obstinate and the truth that they won't have the option to thoroughly concur sets in (Igbuzor, 2011). Wessells (2016) concurs with Antonioni (1999) who asserts that settling on a truce is required more frequently when there is contradiction over qualities or standards instead of actualities or techniques; when the two sides can really understand and endeavor to deferentially comprehend the situation of the restricting party they can regularly come to acknowledge their differences henceforth the shared acknowledgment of contrasts improves the probability of a profitable goals to the debate.

Hellriegel et.al, (2001) caution that in spite of the fact that bargaining can be a viable strategy for overseeing strife and contrasts, it isn't generally the best decision; peace promotion avenues (avoiding, accommodation, competing or collaboration) usually progressively become suitable in conflict management hence the attainment of the peace agenda. As indicated by Antonioni (1999), for the accomplishment of this system, it is significant that essential issues or critical necessities are not lost during give and take situation; now and then other inventive arrangements should be considered; all distinctions and differences should be arranged and individual groups are required to understand when to apply this conflict management approach and when different ways to deal with critical thinking are required. Aldag and Kuzuhara (2002) observe that the utilization of this approach is a typical answer for settling contradictions in exchange and intercession forms. Although it might deliver an understanding, Aldag and Kuzuhara (2002) argue that this approach to conflict management doesn't generally resolve issues that contain basic relational or authoritative disagreements since every now and again it is seen as a 'settled' goal to an issue and not ordinarily the ideal arrangement expected by either party. It might create a practical or material arrangement. However, it may not resolve enthusiastic or social issues related

to such contradictions (Wessells, 2016). Thus, one or the two parties in question may keep on harboring sick sentiments or other disappointment that can surface again if the gatherings keep on having contact with one another (Thomas, 1976).

1.2.5. Competing with the Other Party in a Conflict

This happens when each side of the contention attempts to amplify its own interests and shows little enthusiasm for understanding the other party's position and landing at an answer that will enable the two gatherings to accomplish their objectives (Igbuzor, 2011). It is an endeavor to fulfill one's own needs to the detriment of the other person's and might be realized by utilizing formal power, physical dangers or by essentially overlooking the cases of the other party (Antonioni, 1999). McCready *et.al.* (1996) observe that contending peace promotion technique is usually applied when people pursue their own needs and objectives to the prohibition of others. People who utilize a contending technique attempt to build authority or impact by the utilization of open threatening vibes (Antonioni, 1999).

The contention could be incidentally diminished when contending strategies are utilized, yet no last goal is ever settled upon (Wessells, 2016). Competing strategy is based on 'win-lose' circumstance where one individual attempt to pull the other to change (McCready *et.al.*, 1996). These findings are in concurrence with Baron (1990) who maintains that people vie for status and position inside their social gatherings, once in a while being remunerated for their capacity to surpass others by being superior to their associates or outside contenders. Successful school principals exhibit a capacity to deliberately utilize their focused vitality and skills for individual and expert advantage (Igbuzor, 2011). In any case, while contending can be profitable, it can equally cause issues when utilized unreasonably or improperly; lead to abuse of trust, deceitful acts, and untrustworthy or criminal behavior (Hanson, 1991).

According to Hellriegel *et.al*, (2001), people who are reliable and focused will, in general, be trusted and those held with respect in the society. Females are more outlandish than males to have a dominatingly focused character style. In contrast with males, females are bound to have an inclination for a give and take way to deal with conflicts (Igbuzor, 2011). This is likely because of the socialization and customary positions of females in general public. Focused males are frequently described in positive terms, for example, 'enticing' or 'incredible' while similarly focused females might be seen adversely as 'forceful'. People whose main clash style is contending will in general observe contrasts among individuals in polarities - gifted/untalented, right/wrong, victor/washout, capable/clumsy, and so on; they accept that they are defended in their position and bolster the individuals who concur with them while contradicting the individuals who dissent (McCready *et.al.*, 1996).

1.3. Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned on Integrative Negotiations and Peer Mediation Theory. In accordance to this theory the underlying conflicting issues that may exist between two or more parties require a common approach where the two parties involved agree to settle their differences amicably by avoiding confrontations whatsoever. According to Johnson and Johnson (2012), the involved learners agree to walk together only after accepting to let go their demands and/or desires to draw from the conflict. Broadly, this takes two dimensions namely: integrative negotiation approach which focuses on arriving at a solution which is perceived by both parties as beneficial. Here, both groups of learners intertwined in the conflict consider it a win-win solution as each of the party's interests is taken care of (Wessells, 2016). The other approach is distributive negotiation which involves one party of the conflict trying to make the outcome of the conflict resolution to favour him/ her more than the other party to the conflict. When individual learners can't arrive at a solution to their contention, they may demand help from a mediator (a nonpartisan individual who helps at least two gatherings to determine their conflicts, for the most part by arranging an integrative understanding). One strategy for participating in integrative dealings is Teaching Students to be Peacemakers Program (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). In excess of 16 investigations were conducted on the adequacy of the Peacemaker Program in eight distinct schools in two unique nations (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Learners will in general gain proficiency with the arrangement and intercession methods, hold their insight all through the school year and into the next year, apply the strategies to their own and other individuals' contentions, and move the methodology to non-homeroom settings, for example, the play area and lounge (Wessells, 2016).

In addition, the students transfer the systems to non-school context, for example, home and participate in critical thinking instead of win–lose exchanges (Wessells, 2016). At the point when associated with clashes, prepared learners utilized more helpful systems, for example, integrative dealings than did untrained learners. At the point when students are associated with clashes, the learners utilized more productive techniques, for example, integrative dealings than did untrained learners. Learners' mentalities toward strife turned out to be increasingly positive. The quantity of order issues that educators needed to manage diminished by about 60%, and referrals to instructors dropped about 90%. Learners commonly prefer to take part in the systems. At long last, when coordinated into academic units, the peace initiatives will result into increased performance and longhaul maintenance of the scholarly material. As indicated by Johnson and Johnson (1996), subjects particularly in areas of knowledge, for example, writing and history, set fertile grounds where clashes can easily thrive, practice how to determine them, and use them to pick up understanding into the material being contemplated; it is, therefore, hard to determine clashes usefully when they happen in focused and personal settings (Igbuzor, 2011).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

The study was guided by evaluation research design. This design was appropriate in evaluating the approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs in public secondary schools because interviewing school principals, school sponsors and board of management representatives, conducting focus group discussions with students in schools and data analysis methods used were relevant to the qualitative inquiry for basic research purposes (Okoth, 2012). Evaluation research design would help in examining the information obtained about approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs in public secondary schools in a very critical manner. It enables the researcher to collect and analyze data, outcomes and key characteristics of approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs in public secondary schools with a purpose of making an informed judgment concerning the approaches to conflict management in Peace Clubs in public secondary schools. This design not only largely works in order to find out a solution to conflicts in peace clubs but also to organize the findings in a manner in which they can be easily interpreted. Evaluation research design comes in handy during pilot study as it helps the researcher to design response forms helpful in carrying out in-depth interviews as well as focus group discussions thereby helping the researcher to know which areas to adjust in order to come up with more reliable data during the actual study.

Respondents	Target Populatio	Sample Size	%
BOM Representatives	225	20	8.89
School Sponsors	225	20	8.89
Principals	225	20	8.89
Teachers	2,666	140	5.25
Students	88,493	384	0.43
Total	91,834	584	

Table 1: Sampling Frame (Respondents)

3.2. Data Collection

In data collection, the researcher made use of questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussion method. Having been granted permission by the respective school principals, the researcher issued questionnaires to the teachers and students before conducting a focus group discussion with another set of students. The researcher then wound it up by conducting interviews with the school principal and finally the sponsors and representative of the Board of Management. The researcher also used secondary sources of data for triangulation purposes by reviewing publications and reports from the County Director of Education office. This was done so as to heighten the dependability and credibility of the data obtained from respondents.

3.3. Data Analysis

The researcher examined quantitative data to ensure they were free of any omissions and errors. On the other hand, qualitative data-such as data from review of publications, transcripts and reports were put together and their sources marked. The researcher then read through these data to obtain in-depth understanding. Thereafter, the researcher created the first-time codes, reviewed them before combining them into themes. The duly completed quantitative data underwent coding, tabulation, analysis and computing into descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 24.0. Finally, the data was presented in terms of bar graphs, pie charts, frequency distribution tables and percentages (Saldana, 2009).

3.4. Ethical Consideration

First, the researcher obtained permission-in writing-from the relevant institutions and authorities to conduct research in the republic of Kenya. According to Grinyer (2002), in any research, the researcher needs to observe high levels of confidentiality of the data collected and anonymity of the respondents. In this research, the researcher acknowledged the sensitivity of some data sought for. Therefore, he was obliged to treat all the data provided with utmost propriety. For the respondents who were reluctant to divulge data regarded to be sensitive, the researcher assured them of the confidentiality of the data provided. Further, the researcher assured to treat them (respondents) with high levels of anonymity and that none of their information would be exposed to the public or any other institution under what circumstance. No respondent was put under pressure to participate but they did so on their own volition as a way of giving back to the society, the researcher understood the need to reciprocate to the key participants in the study: County Director of Education office and schools by sharing with them the findings of the study.

4. Discussion

The summary of approaches to conflict management during Peace Club activities is provided in Figure 1.
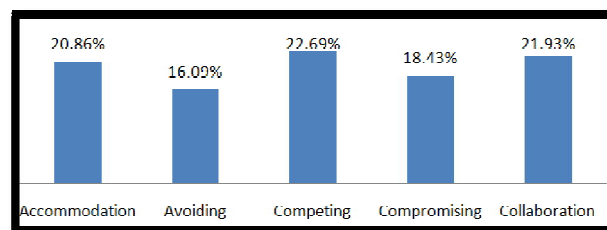
Figure 1: Bar Graph Showing Summary of Responses (In Percentage) on
Approaches to Conflict Management Used in Peace Club

Figure 1 shows that competition (22.69%) is the most commonly applied approach of managing disputes during Peace Club followed closely by collaboration (21.93%). The third most commonly applied conflict management strategy is accommodation (20.86%) while compromising (18.43%) the second last commonly applied conflict management strategy. The least commonly applied conflict management strategy is avoidance (16.09%).These findings concur with the views of a BOM Representative of one of the sampled schools who said:

> *Competition, as a conflict management strategy, is commonly applied role modeling for students. This can be associated with the fact that the students being modeled yearn to be like their role models in various spheres of life. As such, the students go into competition in an attempt to be the best in terms of emulating the attributes of their role models (Interview with the BOM Representative of a secondary school in Nyakach Sub-county on 15/05/2019).*

These findings concur with Antonioni (1999) who argues that during management of conflicts which occur during role modeling for students, all conflicting parties strive to maximize gains to their concerns while giving little consideration to other party's concerns and getting a solution that will be favorable to all parties. Similarly, Baron (1990) posits that use of competition to manage such conflicts is about satisfaction of one's at the expenses of the other person's need. Formal authority, physical threats and ignoring the other party's claims are some of the ways this is achieved. On the other hand, both Aldag and Kuzuhara (2002) and Antonioni (1999) that compromise approach applies when both parties are not only self-centered but also concerned about the interest of the other and are willing to in 'give and take' and discuss until they find a common ground. However, according to Hellriegel *et.al* (2001), compromise is likely to be an effective approach to dispute resolution and at times is greatest and most applicable option. Opting for compromise is considered a wise idea compared to other approaches to conflict management since these other approaches might give outcome that only leaves the situation worse. During an interview, a school principal echoed that:

> *The spirit of competition is not easy to tame among students. Even during cultural peace programmes, they tend to use competition strategy whereby they want to be associated with success of the day irrespective of the presentation of other groups. However, this is put under moderation and control by the teachers in charge so that it doesn't breed enmity among the participants (An interview with a school Principal in Kisumu East on 20/03/2019).*

These findings are in conformity with Antonioni (1999) who posits that competition conflict management strategy is used when one party strives to satisfy its own interest while ignoring the interest of the opposing party. Clearly stated decision making procedures, physical and emotional coercions are some of the tactics used in competition conflict management strategy (Kessels & Nemr (2016). People who go into disagreement which end up in conflicts with the only goal of winning are the ones who are likely to use this approach (McCready *et.al.,* 1996). This approach does not leave room for different perspectives to be floated as it is based on the ground that one party wins while the other loses; it works best in war and sports events. It is not the best approach for group conflict solution since one stands their ground without considering the desires of the other party; they are ready to do anything to ensure that they win the competition. Therefore, competing conflict management strategy only provides a short-term solution (Antonioni, 1999).

5. Conclusion

From the study it emerged that majority of the school principals indicated that competition approach to conflict management was mostly used in Peace Clubs in schools. Similarly, majority of the sponsors, BOM representatives and teachers indicated that competition approach to conflict management was mostly used in Peace Clubs in schools. Majority of the students also indicated that competing approach to conflict management was used during role modeling in schools. The overall conclusion is that competition is the most commonly applied conflict management strategy in Peace Clubs followed closely by collaboration. The third most commonly applied approach to conflict management in Peace Clubs is accommodation while compromising is the second last commonly applied conflict management strategy. The least commonly applied conflict management strategy is avoidance.

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