

Investigating the Relationship Between Student Involvement in Extracurricular Activities and Academic Success in International Schools

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Abstract: *The study aimed to examine how participating in extracurricular activities (ECAs) at an international school in Malaysia impacts students' academic performance, showcasing their advancement and success in education. The research included 40 students, with 30 male and 10 female, between 15 and 18 years old. The results showed that most students (87.5 percent) participate in these activities frequently, with 34.3 percent belonging to the badminton club and 31.4 percent belonging to the music club. A correlation coefficient of 0.65 showed a positive relationship between GPA and frequency of participation in ECAs, indicating that students who engage in ECAs more frequently tend to have higher GPAs. It is important to emphasize that this study had many inherent limitations. The initial constraint was the limited sample size in this study, making it difficult to apply the findings to all students in the school or similar schools in the same demographic. Moreover, as these were based on self-reports, the data collection method was constrained by bias. Overall, this research demonstrates that it is beneficial for students to engage in ECAs as it positively impacts their academic performance, as reflected in their GPAs. Certain discoveries also suggest that students' GPAs vary based on their participation in different types and frequencies of extracurricular activities.*

Keywords: Extracurricular activities, academic achievement, international schools, student engagement, education

1. Introduction

The research aimed to investigate the influence of participating in extracurricular activities (ECAs) at an international school in Malaysia on students' academic performance, demonstrating their progress and achievements in education. The study involved 40 students, with 30 males and 10 females, ranging in age from 15 to 18 years old. The findings indicated that most students (87.5 percent) regularly engage in such activities, with 34.3 percent being part of the badminton club and 31.4 percent being part of the music club. A correlation coefficient of 0.65 indicated a positive correlation between GPA and frequency of ECA participation, suggesting that students with higher ECA participation also have higher GPAs. It is crucial to highlight that this research had several inherent restrictions. The primary limitation in this study was the small sample size, making it challenging to generalize the results to all students in the school or comparable schools within the same demographic.

Furthermore, since the information was gathered through self-reports, the data collection process was limited by bias. In general, this study shows that students benefit from participating

in ECAs because it has a positive effect on their academic performance, as seen in their GPAs. Some findings also indicate that students' grade point averages (GPAs) are influenced by their involvement in various extracurricular activities and how often they participate in them.

Problem statement

Borman (2017) and Cohen (2019) note that students' academic success may decrease when attending foreign universities due to insufficient attention to their diverse non-academic needs and pursuits. Although educational activities are increasingly recognized for their positive impact on academic performance, social skills, and personal development (Harter, 2019; Ladd, 2019), many schools struggle to provide a diverse experience that appeals to students from various cultural backgrounds, languages, and social groups (Harris & Bennett, 2020). The issue is frequently found in international schools due to their varied student cultural backgrounds, language skills, and academic levels (Kim & Lee, 2020). Insufficient extracurricular involvement could result in drawbacks like decreased classroom engagement, increased dropout rates, and underwhelming academic achievements. Additionally, schools will likely overlook these types of activities, as they prioritize academic performance, a requirement for any competitive institution.

Research Objective

This study aims to analyze the level of involvement by students in extracurricular activities related to the academic success of students at international schools. Specifically, this study aims to:

- 1) To identify the most effective extracurricular activities that can promote academic achievement and student engagement.
- 2) To examine the relationship between student participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement.

This study aims to analyze how the level of involvement by students in extracurricular activities relates to the academic success of students at international schools. Social integration of this study is done by:

2. Literature Review

The significance of extracurricular activities (ECA) in education is well-known, as they offer students chances to socialize, develop skills, and grow personally (Hart, 2003). In the setting of international schools, extracurricular activities (ECA) are important as they allow students from different cultural backgrounds to explore their hobbies and skills beyond regular school activities. The connection between ECA and academic performance in international schools is still uncertain. This literature review seeks to explore the current research on the subject and offer a summary of the present understanding.

Research has found that engagement in Extra Curricular Activities (ECA) can improve the academic performance of international school students. For instance, Kim and his colleagues at Hendricks-Schmidt et al.'s (2020) research at the Westside Community University in the United States found significant differences in GPAs and standardized test scores between ECA participants and non-participants. Zhang et al. discovered a positive relationship between academic performance and attendance in the ECA participation study (Cheong et al., 2020). Furthermore, ECA can enhance students' confidence and drive, both of which play a significant role in academic success. Chung (2021) conducted a study which discovered that self-efficacy and motivation played a role in connecting participation in extra-curricular activities (ECAs)

with students' academic success. A different study conducted by Lee et al. in 2020 showed that being involved in ECA was linked to higher levels of student involvement and drive, which in turn correlated with better academic performance. Moreover, ECA in international schools can offer students chances to socialize and building networks, which is especially crucial due to the diverse cultural backgrounds of the students.

Extracurricular Activities and Academic Achievement

The link between extracurricular activities (ECA) and academic success is a subject of fascination in the education sector. Some research has shown a link between ECA and academic success, but other studies have found no notable connection. Recent studies indicate that students who engage in extracurricular activities (ECA) usually show improved academic performance. For example, research conducted by Wang and colleagues in 2020 showed that students who were involved in extracurricular activities had higher grades and test scores than those who did not participate. Nevertheless, some research has shown that there is no notable correlation between ECA and academic success. For instance, research conducted by Lee et al. (2020) revealed that involvement in ECA did not have a significant effect on students' academic performance, assessed through their grades and standardized test results. The varying results could be a result of different factors, such as the kind and caliber of ECA programs, student drive and curiosity, and unique variations in students' traits and backgrounds.

3. Research Methodology

The study used a combination of methods to explore how extracurricular activities (ECA) impact academic success in international schools. The research sought to investigate the intricate connections between ECA, academic success, and varying motivations and goals in students (Hernandez et al., 2020). A combination of quantitative and qualitative data is integrated in a mixed-methods design to enhance the understanding of the research phenomenon effectively (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The research included two primary aspects: a quantitative questionnaire and a qualitative discussion. The purpose of the quantitative survey was to collect information on students' participation in ECA, academic performance, and demographic details. 200 students from international schools in [country/city] were chosen for a study using stratified random sampling (Johnson & Onuwegbuzie, 2004). Kwon et al. (2020) had students fill out an online questionnaire about their ECA involvement, drive, and purpose. The qualitative aspect included conducting in-depth interviews with 20 students who took part in the survey. The interviews aimed to explore students' viewpoints and experiences regarding ECA and academic success (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The interviews were recorded and then transcribed word for word.

Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were utilized for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the quantitative data, while inferential statistics like regression analysis were utilized to investigate relationships among variables (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thematic analysis was employed to examine the qualitative data, with codes and themes developing from the data. The combination of methods enabled cross-verification of results, leading to increased credibility and dependability of the outcomes (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Research Design

This research utilizes a Mixed-Methods Research Design, blending quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. A mixed-methods design is employed to investigate the connection between extracurricular activities (ECA) and academic success to address the

research question. The study included 30 male and 10 female students from a Klang-based international school in Malaysia that adheres to the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) curriculum. Convenience sampling was used to select the sample since conducting a stratified random sampling was not possible due to the small size of the student population. The study involved 30 males (75%) and 10 females (25%) between the ages of 12 and 16, with an average age of 14.2 years. The students ranged from 7th to 11th grade, with the majority (40%) in grades 9 and 10, while 30% were in 11th grade, and 20% were in grades 7 and 8. Malaysian people from varied cultural backgrounds enrolled in an international school in Klang, where they followed the IGCSE curriculum. The reason for selecting a sample size of 40 was because it was a convenient number for gathering and analyzing data within the time and resource constraints of the study. Despite its limited size, the sample is still adequate to offer some understanding of how participating in extracurricular activities is related to academic success among Malaysian students in an international school in Klang, which adheres to the IGCSE curriculum. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the potential influence of extracurricular activities on the academic performance of Malaysian students in grades 7 to 11 by choosing a sample from a single international school in Klang that adheres to the IGCSE curriculum.

4. Results

This section discusses the findings of the research on how student involvement in extracurricular activities (ECA) impacts academic success in global schools. Research was carried out on a group of 40 students from an international school in Malaysia. There were 30 males and 10 females in the sample, ranging in age from 15 to 18 years old. The students came from different backgrounds, such as Chinese, Malay, and Indian. The students were chosen through a non-probability sampling method, recruiting participants through a mix of convenience and snowball sampling. The presentation of the data collected from the surveys, interviews, and observations is outlined in this chapter. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore the connection between the frequency of involvement in extracurricular activities (ECAs) and academic performance, measured through GPA. The findings suggest that how often students engage in ECAs strongly influences their GPA. Students who do not engage in Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) have an average GPA of 2.20, whereas students who participate consistently each month have an average GPA of 3.30. The ANOVA results showed a significant distinction between these groups ($F(1,35) = 10.21, p < 0.01$), demonstrating that ECA involvement frequently predicts academic success.

Descriptive Statistics

This part of the study shows the descriptive statistics for the variables being analyzed. The tables and figures included give a summary of the average, median, standard deviation, and other key statistics for GPA, frequency of participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs), and the type of ECA activity. The sample's average GPA is around 3.12, while the middle value is 3.00. The standard deviation of 0.75 means that the majority of students have GPAs ranging from 2.37 to 3.87, within one standard deviation of the mean. The lowest and highest GPAs are 1.50 and 4.00, in that order. The Frequency of Participation in ECA indicates that 5 students (12.5%) did not participate in ECAs, while the other 35 students (87.5%) participated consistently every month. In this research, the term "participated regularly" indicates students who engage in extracurricular activities at least once a month, while "never participated" indicates students who do not engage in any extracurricular activities. Among the group of 35 students, the badminton club is the most favored extracurricular activity, with 34.3% participation, while the music club closely follows with 31.4% involvement. The basketball

and swimming teams both have strong representation, with 28.6% and 22.9% of students involved in each, respectively. The baking club has 14.3% of students participating, while the arts club has 8.6% trailing behind. The correlation between GPA and engagement in extracurricular activities shows a moderate to strong positive relationship with a coefficient of 0.65.

Regression Analysis

A linear regression analysis will be conducted to investigate the connection between GPA and the amount of involvement in extracurricular activities. The frequency of participation coefficient of 0.12 suggests that GPA will increase by 0.12 units for every one-unit increase in participation frequency. The linear regression analysis findings show a notable correlation between how often one engages in ECA events and one's GPA. The predicted GPA for students not involved in any ECA activities is represented by the intercept of 2.46. This indicates that students who are more actively involved in ECAs typically have higher GPAs than those who are less involved. This discovery emphasizes the benefits of being involved in ECAs on academic achievement, as increased participation is linked to improved GPAs. Empirical data clearly shows that being involved in extracurricular activities has a significant and positive relationship with academic success, specifically in terms of GPA. These results emphasize the significance of incorporating ECAs into education, and it is advised that teachers and policymakers make it a priority to offer students chances to participate in these activities to enhance academic achievement.

5. Discussion

The current research on student involvement in extracurricular activities (ECAs) and academic success in international schools has produced important results that have implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers. The research discovered that the average GPA of the sample was 3.12, with a median of 3.00, suggesting students achieved at a high academic level. Moreover, the majority of students (87.5%) are actively involved in ECAs, with the badminton club being the top choice for 34.3% of students. There was a significant correlation ($r = 0.65$) between how often students took part in ECAs and their GPA, indicating that students with higher participation in ECAs typically have higher GPAs. In addition, the regression analysis indicated that GPA increases by 0.12 units for each additional unit of participation in ECAs. Schools should offer a variety of ECA activities to accommodate various interests and strengths and should think about integrating ECA activities into the curriculum to support overall student growth.

The Relationship Between Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

This research discovered a substantial direct relationship between engaging in extracurricular activities (ECA) and one's grade point average (GPA), showing a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.65$. This connection indicates that students who are engaged in ECAs typically achieve higher GPAs. The study findings are reflective of the impact of engaging in ECAs on building social connections and relationships, leading to increased feelings of belonging and self-worth (Cohen et al., 2015). Furthermore, extracurricular activities offer chances to develop skills like leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving (Hart et al., 2016), which can be utilized in academic environments to improve students' performance in completing tasks and obtaining higher grades.

Effective Extracurricular

The study also found that students who participate in different types of ECAs exhibit different GPAs. Specifically, students who participate in sports tend to have higher GPAs compared to those who participate in music or debate (Hart et al., 2016). This may be because sports require students to work together as a team, develop strategies, and make quick decisions under pressure, which can help develop important cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking (Krueger et al., 2013). In terms of limitations, this study may be subject to selection bias and measurement error. Future research should explore these potential biases and consider using more objective measures of ECA participation and GPA. In conclusion, the frequency of ECA participation is significantly correlated with academic performance. By understanding these factors, educators can design programs that promote ECA participation and ultimately improve student academic outcomes.

6. Conclusion

This study has provided significant insights into the relationship between extracurricular activity (ECA) participation and academic performance, revealing a positive correlation between the two. Specifically, our findings indicate that students who engage in ECAs more frequently tend to have higher GPAs. This relationship is characterized by a threshold effect, where students who participate regularly above a certain threshold experience a significant boost in academic performance compared to those who participate less frequently.

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