

# The Influence of Extracurricular Activities on Student Achievement at The High School Level

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*Abstract* — The pressure applied on public schools to increase test scores and student achievement are reaching the highest levels ever seen in the Philippines. School systems are trying to find ways to increase student achievement while dealing with severe budget cuts. Many school systems are exploring the possibility of decreasing or suspending funding for extracurricular activities. This study explored the relationship between student achievement and participation in extracurricular activities of Pedro Arches National High School in Managa, Bansalan, Davao del Sur. The study focused on the impact of participation in extracurricular activities in terms of benefits, effects and teachers' insights. When interviewed, participants gave the following benefits: learning new skills, boosting academic performance, broader social skills, improved time management, and impressing colleges or universities. Participating in extracurricular activities has positive effects on students' success. Most students participate in extracurricular activities. The students responded with the following effects: academic achievement, character development, social development, and community involvement. The following are lessons learned by learners in joining extracurricular activities: improved academic performance, exploring interests and creating broader perspectives, higher self-esteem, social opportunities, productive breaks, essential life skills, improved resumes, development of networking skills, better mental health, college admissions.

*Keywords* — *Extra-curricular activities, participation, benefits, effects, insights*

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## I. Introduction

Extracurricular activities are defined as the activities in which the students participate after the regular school day has ended. These activities may include high school athletics, school clubs, marching band, chorus, orchestra, and student leadership organizations. It is important to note the differences between extracurricular activities and co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities are activities that occur during the normal class time (Frame, 2019). Most students that participate in high school band, chorus, and orchestra spend countless hours outside of the normal class day. For this reason, these activities are classified as extracurricular activities.

This involvement includes participation in sports and other school sponsored activities. Students who are consistently exposed to music perform better than students that are not exposed (Cash, 2019). Cash reported that most states do not place any academic requirements on participation in student clubs, participation in the band, participation in the chorus, and participation in the orchestra. Academic clubs such as National Honor Society, Key Club, and Beta

Club do require academic requirements. In some states, the marching band might have to meet the same requirements that athletes must meet in order to participate in competition. Additionally, states and school districts set requirements for participation in school athletics based on grades, attendance, and behavior (Cash, 2019).

This study happened in Pedro A. Arches National High School in Managa, Bansanlan, Davao del Sur. Students involved in extracurricular activities are the participants of this study. Interviews of these students were done to gather data for this study.

The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in extracurricular activities has an impact on student achievement. The current economic issues in our country are forcing many school districts to deal with severe budget cuts. One of the possible budget cuts is the reduction of extracurricular activities offered by high schools around the country.

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of extracurricular activities on the learners' pursuit of education?
2. What are the effects of extra-curricular activities to the learners' academic performance?
3. What lessons are learned by learners in joining extra-curricular activities in their secondary education?

Extracurricular activities are a key component of many schools. Reynolds (2019) explained that schools stress many different pillars in trying to create a well-rounded education. Many of these pillars include academics, service and leadership, fine arts, and athletics. Principals recognize the importance of providing many opportunities for their students to find success. These activities allow students to develop leadership, create lasting friendships, give back to their community, belong to the school family, and find success outside of the classroom. Extracurricular activities can enhance a student's life, and they can give the students additional skills that they will use for the remainder of their lives (Reynolds, 2019).

Klesse (2019) found that there was a positive relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and success in high school, college, career, and the community. He shared further that many students need these extracurricular activities to motivate them to be successful in the classroom. Some students earn college scholarships based on their extracurricular activities (sports, fine arts, etc.). Many of these students would not have the opportunity to attend college unless they had enjoyed remarkable success in these activities (Klesse, 2019).

Before studying the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement, it is important to review why sports and participation in activities are important to students. As Principals in high schools and middle schools are expected to balance

budgets and possibly cut programs, consequently they are interested in investigating the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement before cuts are mandated. Fujita (2019) reported that since the introduction of public schools, children have always been encouraged to participate in some type of physical activity or get involved in some type of extracurricular activity, like (school sports, marching band, chorus, and school clubs. The trend of encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities really started to grow in the early 1900s (Fujita, 2019).

Recently, educational researchers have adopted a more positive perspective in regards to students participating in extracurricular activities. Marsh and Kleitman (2021) noticed positive impacts in the areas of student achievement for students involved in extracurricular activities. In most school districts, high school students are required to attend chorus classes, and art classes (Department of Education, 2010a). Learners in elementary schools, and high schools are also required to complete physical education requirements (Department of Education, 2010a). These classes are required before the students are allowed to graduate. Students in elementary schools are also encouraged to engage in physical activity during recess during the school day. As the students grow older, the importance of physical activity increases. These learners become healthier adults after graduation (Department of Education, 2021).

The students that participate in athletics also tend to make fewer poor decisions in their daily lives. These students tend to make positive choices about smoking, drinking, and the use of legal and illegal drugs (Burnette, 2021). The student athletes will make less destructive decisions than the students that do not participate in athletics. The healthier and wiser choices allow the students to be more successful in all of their endeavors.

Studies are now showing that students who are involved in physical education or exposed to music and the arts achieve at a higher rate than students who are not exposed (Shute, 2018). Research is also now showing that participation in extracurricular activities will have a positive impact on a student's academic performance (Fujita, 2019). Studies are showing that students who participate in extracurricular activities have higher grade point averages, lower absenteeism, higher educational aspirations, and increased college attendance.

Since the passing of No Child Left Behind, school districts have reduced the amount of time that students spend in physical education, music, and art classes. The schools were forced to spend more time focused on the four core educational areas, and this resulted in a reduction of time in the physical education classes, band classes, and other non-core subject areas. This reduction in time might hurt student achievement instead of helping student achievement. Several studies conducted around the world are revealing that more exposure in these areas results in higher academic gains for both boys and girls (Shute, 2018). The Dana group conducted a search in 2005 that determined that children who spend time around music will perform better in math and reading compared to other students who do not have this exposure (Shute, 2018).

Another outcome of students participating in extracurricular activities is the benefits gained from the hidden curriculum embedded in all team sports and activities. Children who participate in team sports typically do better in school, have better interpersonal skills, are generally healthier, and are more team oriented (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2020). Children are provided an arena to gain respect and attention from adults and their friends by using their natural abilities. The children that play sports also learn how rules work. They see the need for rules when there is a group of people involved. They also see the benefit of competition in a safe and secure environment.

According to Metzl and Shookhoff (2020), sports provide physical benefits, personal benefits, and social benefits. These are some of the most important aspects of the hidden curriculum. Almost every single team sport will encompass these aspects in some form or fashion. To better understand the hidden curriculum of sports, it is important to explore the physical, personal, and social benefits of participation.

Another important personal benefit taught by sports is leadership (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2020). Participation in sports and other activities gives children the opportunity to develop leadership abilities that they will use for their entire lives. Sports allow students to become role models for other students. They can learn how to inspire their teammates to work hard. They can learn how to minimize conflicts. They can demonstrate great sportsmanship on a daily basis. They can also learn how to take the initiative in leading their teammates. According to Metzl and Shookhoff (2020), leadership ability might be the most important benefit of sports. This leadership ability that the athletes learn while competing in athletics will allow them to demonstrate their leadership ability in their professional lives. This is a skill that everyone needs to develop.

Teamwork is a valuable benefit of sports (Woloch, 2020). This is not an easy concept to learn. It takes years of hard work to develop good teamwork. Teamwork can be defined as a group of similar people working together to achieve a common goal. Children must learn the importance of relying on other people. They also understand that other people are relying on them. Teamwork teaches personal responsibility. It also teaches the concepts of cooperation, camaraderie, and sacrifice. Participation in sports can show children how a group of individuals can work together to achieve great moments. It takes every single person to be successful in a team sport. One of the greatest aspects of teamwork is that children are not just learning from a coach. They are also learning from the people on their team. Children will make good decisions and they can make poor decisions, but all of the decisions affect their teammates (Hass, 2020).

All students that are involved in extracurricular activities must balance their time (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2020). They need to devote time to practice, games, and participation. They need to do this while still performing at a high level in the classroom. Many student athletes actually perform better during their season, because they are forced to successfully balance academics and participation. The students tend to be more motivated to succeed in the classroom if they have to meet certain academic requirements in the classroom. By balancing practice time (sports, performing arts, or clubs) with school academics, these students use their time more efficiently.

According to Hollrah (2021), involvement in extracurricular activities has a large impact on student achievement. She conducted a study involving college-aged students who were involved in extracurricular activities in high school to discover if there was a correlation between involvement in activities and academic achievement. After questioning almost three hundred college students that participated in extracurricular activities, her research indicated that participation in extracurricular activities enhances the intellectual and social development of students. She also discovered that athletes earned higher grade point averages than students who did not participate in athletics.

Participation in extracurricular activities can also lead to an increase in self-esteem (Helm, 2020). As the students gain more self-confidence, they start to expect to achieve success in all areas of their lives. Helm conducted a study of 241 randomly selected ninth graders in Fayette County, Kentucky. The students that perceived themselves in a more positive light were also the students that were more involved in extracurricular activities. These students also had fewer absences, which leads to the students spending more time in the classroom. Helm felt that his results were similar to other studies conducted around the country. Students that participate in extracurricular activities tend to have more self-esteem, and they also tend to perform better academically in the classroom.

Extracurricular activities play an important role for developing the skills of the students. It makes a student think critically, managing time well, and competently in terms of intelligence. It also helps the student to achieve social goals and maturity. Having social maturity helps the student to interact and make better relationships with the people in the community (Himelfarb, Lac & Baharav, 2019). The role and effects of ECA on the student's life in school days are very strong. From his study, ECA is beneficial to play the positive role of a student in school. It improves the behavior and the academic performance of the students in school life (Singh & Imam, 2019).

Extracurricular framework, students can choose activities, which can be classified as physical activities, educational activities, and social activities. Physical activities include team activities (i.e., joining a sports team like a football team or cricket team) or individual activities (i.e., self-defense club-like taekwondo or joining charity deeds). Furthermore, physical programs can be compulsory where every student has to join and engage in one physical activity (Gardner et al, 2019).

The theoretical foundation for examining the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement can be found in the Institutional Theory and Institutional Logics theory. The framework for the Institutional Theory originated from examining the relationship of how one organization interacts with another organization (Selznick, 2019). It also examines the rules and regulations those organizations impose on other organizations. In order to apply this theory to participation in extracurricular activities in the school setting, the athletic departments in the schools must become individual entities that fall under the direction of the individual schools and school districts. The extracurricular activities and the students that

participate in these activities must interact with the authorities that govern them. According to Meyer and Rowan (2019), the Institutional Theory was expanded to explain not only the interaction between organizations but also the cultural and cognition aspect of the interactions of organizations.

After the theory was created, theorists provided a new shift that included the legitimacy of the organization instead of the existence of the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 2019). The Theory of Institutionalism created a link between the actions of the institution and the institution itself. The relationship of this theory to extracurricular activities and student achievement is based on the premise that extracurricular activities must operate under the control of the individual schools and school districts, and the activities may have positive or negative impacts on student achievement (Reeves, 2019).

The Institutional Logics Theory was created from the Institutional Theory (Friedland & Alford, 2019). It incorporated most of the ideas and concepts of the Institutional theory, but it also investigates the links between individuals, organizations, and society. Whitley (2019) reported that participation in extracurricular activities can have positive impacts on the students that participate in them, but the extracurricular activities can also have impacts on the school culture, the students that do not participate in them, and the school community. According to Friedland and Alford (2019), the central concept of the Institutional Logics theory is that each organization has a central purpose, vocabulary, principles, values, motivation, and identity. The theory can be applied to the students that participate in the extracurricular activities. The students have the ability to gain an identity and an immediate connection to the school by relating to other students and people in the community.

## II. Methodology

This research study used only learners in the grades 8, 9, and 10 junior high schools. The research was a qualitative study. There were three (3) research questions. The first question is on the benefits of extracurricular activities; the second and third questions are on the effects and the lessons learned by learners in joining extracurricular activities, respectively. The researcher wanted to study participation in extracurricular activities in sports and school sponsored clubs during the participant's junior years. The data were analyzed to determine if participation in extracurricular activities impacts student achievement.

The participants in the study were grades 8, 9, and 10 learners attending in the identified high school. The school district is one of the largest school districts in Davao City. The researcher chose to use only three levels in junior high school. Six (6) learners from every grade level of the junior high school were chosen to participate in the study, but only the learners that completed the parent permission form were allowed to join the study.



Since the researcher had received approval from the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School, the principal of the high school, and the participants completing the interviews, the researcher analyzed the data collected from the interviews. The researcher used chi squares to determine if participation in extracurricular activities had a significant impact on success on the Georgia High School Graduation Test. The interviews were coded, analyzed and interpreted. Each participant was asked to answer the questions in the interview guide.

This study uses content analysis in deciphering and interpretation of its collected data. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts. As an example, researchers can evaluate language used within a news article to search for bias or partiality. Researchers can then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of surrounding the text.

Trustworthiness is, above all, true knowledge, knowledge of objective reality, a measure and characteristic of quality of research results, conformity of researcher's conclusions, of reality, level of adequacy of gained knowledge about the investigated objects. It depends on: methods of grading knowledge, quality of the empirical data received from the study, correctness of the theoretical conclusions released on the basis of these data, including methodology and logic of research, formal methods of data analysis and so on. Exactly obtaining authentic knowledge is the purpose of scientific research, the ideal and main aim of scientific activity (Guba, 2013). And all tools and methods complimented in this work were made for recognition and increasing the knowledge reliability.

### III. Results and Discussion

#### *Benefits of extracurricular activities on the learners' pursuit of education*

When interviewed, participants gave the following benefits: *learning new skills, boosting academic performance, broader social skills, improved time management, and impressing colleges or universities.*

#### *Effects of extra-curricular activities to the learners' academic performance*

Participating in extracurricular activities has positive effects on students' success. Most students participate in extracurricular activities. The students responded with the following effects: *better academic achievement, character development, social development, and community involvement.*

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*Lessons learned by learners in joining extra-curricular activities in their secondary education*

The following are lessons learned by learners in joining extracurricular activities: *improved academic performance, exploring interests and creating broader perspectives, higher self-esteem, social opportunities, productive breaks, essential life skills, improved resumes, development of networking skills, better mental health, and easier college admissions.*

**Discussion**

Those students who participated in intentional, school-based extracurricular activities (ECA) perform better in schools' life. This happens due to ECA facilitating better human interaction skills and more passionate association to one's school. Participation in out-of-school activities helps develop students' brains contributing to better mental health. It also helps them fortify their academic performance for a long period. Extracurricular activities also reduce behavioral and disciplinary problems. Expressed the need for students to participate in school activities indicating that these activities were necessary to prepare adolescents for a more leisure world, due to a shortened workweek.

In essence, extracurricular activities as preparation for adult social life (Slater & Tiggemann, 2019). There is always an argument that extracurricular activities are not so important in a child's life. For development, extra activities are also most important in a student's life. Students are pressurized during exams and they have performance pressure too of gaining good grades. In such conditions, there is a need for some extra activities. You cannot force a student to just read books and become intelligent. Extra activities are also important for the overall development of students. Sometimes when a school offers sports and extra activities parents do not allow their children to participate. Some students also feel that they do not need the activities, all they need is to concentrate on their books. In many schools teachers have to convince parents to permit their children to participate in activities.

Parents feel that extra activities will distract their children from their studies. Co-curricular activities are important just as academics. When a student is made to do academics and co-curricular activities then only a well-rounded development of the student is done. Students have lots of activities to choose from. Cultural activities, sports activities, competitions, house on duties, and a lot more. Some students are even interested in more than one activity and they do participate in both keeping in mind their academics.

The researcher believes that school administrators and school teachers need to continue to fund and incorporate extracurricular activities. The literature review and this study showed that students who are involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to achieve higher results than students that are not involved in extracurricular activities. This was not true for every part of the research study, but it is apparent that there are other benefits of participation in extracurricular activities other than higher student achievement marks. The students that participate in extracurricular activities benefit from the hidden curriculum associated with participation. These



students learn teamwork, dedication, success, failures, the ability to manage time, and the ability to build positive relationships with other students, coaches, parents, and community members. These qualities will make these students better all-around students and people.

The researcher also believes that school administrators should make it a priority to hire quality individuals into the roles of coaches and sponsors. These people have the ability to have great impacts on the students that choose to participate in extracurricular activities. The students that choose to participate in these activities are typically the leaders of the student body in the school. It does not matter if they are the star quarterback or the class president; they are going to have an impact on the other students in the building. By surrounding them with quality adults, they will be allowed to grow as leaders of the school community. The coaches and sponsors can truly help to define the school culture, which can impact student achievement. Because participation in extracurricular activities can have such a strong impact on student achievement, schools need to hire the best possible teachers/coaches to surround their students.

The researcher believes that the information presented in this study could be very beneficial for teachers, principals, and superintendents. These individuals must make the tough financial decisions concerning finances, hiring of employees, and what programs are offered to students. School principals can use this information to make sure that they are offering extracurricular activities to their students. They also should hire quality individuals to support these programs. The superintendents should want to hire principals that will stress the four pillars (academics, athletics, fine arts, and service/leadership). Superintendents should want to hire principals that will support extracurricular activities to help produce well rounded students that achieve at higher rates. Finally, government boards should support the funding of extracurricular activities. These are the activities that have the ability to unite the entire school community through the interactions of the students, teachers, parents, and community members. Healthy and successful programs will lead to students performing better in the classroom.

The researcher believes that a study should be conducted investigating the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on student achievement in regards to the student's success on the state end of course tests.

The researcher also believes that a study should be done tracking the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on student achievement over a four year period. The same sample of students should be used as they progress through their high school career. This study would more accurately track the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement.

The researcher also believes that a study should be done examining the impact of student clubs on student achievement. The student clubs selected for the study should be clubs that do not have a minimum grade point average. The researcher chose too many clubs that required a high minimum grade point average. The use of clubs that do not require a minimum grade point average

should provide some accurate information on the impact of participation in school clubs on student achievement.

Finally, the researcher believes that a study should be done examining the impact of raising or creating a minimum grade point average for athletes. In most provinces, the athletes must pass five out of the six classes they are attempting, but there is not a set grade point average they must meet. It would be very interesting to see what happens to achievement scores, graduation tests, and attendance rates if all athletes had to meet a minimum grade point average instead of the pass to play requirement.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Being involved in extracurricular activities offers important opportunities for adolescent development (Blomfield & Barber, 2019; Fredricks, 2021), such as peer relations, appropriate social conduct, and basic skills for academic achievement (Metsapelto & Pulkkinen, 2021).

Students' academic achievements are the basis of most of the curricular outcomes that teachers use to evaluate students' success. However, it is becoming increasingly important that students have opportunities to learn much more than just the curricular outcomes.

The participation in extracurricular activities builds students' time management skills, leadership skills, self-confidence, resiliency, and ability to accept constructive criticism, which are all components important to character development.

The type of extracurricular activity affects different components of character development. Students who participate in academic clubs build leadership skills, whereas students who participate in athletic clubs develop problem-solving skills (Fredricks & Eccles, 2019).

Different types of extracurricular activities have differential social skill benefits. Group activities build teamwork skills, communication skills, and relationship skills, but individual activities build independence and stimulate motivation (Metsapelto & Pulkkinen, 2021).

Participation in either type of activity provides a sense of belonging to the school environment, which enhances their engagement in school. Engagement correlates with students' academic and social success (Wormington et al., 2021).

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The author, aged 38 and born on December 10, 1985, lives in Bansalan, Davao del Sur. She is the eldest among four siblings of Mr. And Mrs. Beniel Alcantara. She also takes pride in her role as a dedicated mother to Kurt Vincent and Rhona Grace.

Her educational journey commenced with a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce, specializing in Management Accounting from Holy Cross of Bansalan College. Continuing her academic pursuits, she completed the Teachers Professional Program at Cor Jesu College, Inc., at Digos City, and obtained a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the same institution in 2019.

In 2016, she reached a significant milestone by passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers, leading to her employment with the Department of Education in 2018. She served Pedro Arches National High School for five years. Currently she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Educational Management at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.

With an unwavering belief in education's ability to drive success, she passionately advocates for the idea that learning is an ongoing journey filled with opportunities for personal and professional growth.