

DOES EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY IMPROVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

Fayzullayeva Parizoda

Ergasheva Sevinch

*UzSWLU First Faculty of English Language and
Literature 3rd-year students*

Academic adviser: Masharipov Yunus

Abstract: *This study analysis the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in secondary education systems. In this modern world, extracurricular involvement has become an important component of education, contributing not only to students' personal and professional development but also potentially influencing their academic success and results. The research aims to examine whether participation in activities such as sports, clubs, debates and volunteering improves students' academic outcomes.*

Overall, the results suggest that extracurricular activities have a positive impact on academic performance when balanced appropriately simultaneously. The study highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between academic responsibilities and extracurricular engagement to achieve optimal outcomes of studying.

Keywords: *Extracurricular activities, education, student development, academic performance, student motivation, time management, secondary, educational outcomes, school engagement*

Introduction. In this modern education systems, learning is no longer connected to classroom and textbook-based knowledge, but also extracurricular activities too. Schools and universities strongly emphasize the significance of personal development, which includes not only academic achievement but also personal, social, and emotional growth during extracurricular activities. One of the key components of this broader educational approach is completely extracurricular activities. These activities as well as sports, debate clubs, student leadership programs, public speaking projects, volunteering activities, and a wide range of informal learning experiences outside the classroom.

The role of extracurricular activities in education has been widely discussed among teachers, researchers, and policymakers. On one hand, many argue that these activities provide students with essential life skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, public speaking and time management. On the other hand, some critics believe that

participation in extracurricular activities may not only distract students from their academic responsibilities, but also reduce study time, and create unnecessary pressure and waste of time as well.

This discussion raises an important question: do extracurricular activities actually improve academic performance, or do they interfere with it? Academic performance, in this context, refers not only to grades but also to students' ability to understand concepts, critical thinking, responsibility, apply knowledge, and remain consistent in their learning process. The purpose of this study is to explore this relationship in depth and understand how extracurricular involvement influences students' academic outcomes in real educational settings.

Methods. This study was conducted using a mixed-method research design, combining both approaches in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the topic. A total of 120 secondary school students participated in the research. These students were selected from different academic backgrounds to ensure diversity in performance levels, interests, ability, performance and extracurricular involvement in studying process.

Participants were divided into two main groups in this process. Group A included students who actively participated in extracurricular activities for at least three hours per week. These activities included sports teams, academic clubs, public speaking projects, volunteering programs, and creative arts groups. Group B consisted of students who either did not participate in extracurricular activities or participated very rarely in studying process.

To collect data, several tools were used. First, a structured questionnaire was distributed to all participants. This questionnaire focused on students' study habits, leadership performance, motivation levels, stress management, and time organization skills. Second, students' academic performance was measured using their official semester grades, which provided an objective indicator of achievement in studying process. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten teachers who regularly observed the student ability and performance in classroom environments. These interviews aimed to collect deeper data into students' behavior, engagement, and learning attitudes. Finally, classroom observations were carried out to understand how students interacted during lessons and how active they were in academic discussions during learning process.

All collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods and approaches to identify patterns and differences between the two group of students. In addition, thematic analysis was used to interpret qualitative responses from interviews and open-ended questionnaire items as well.

Results. The findings of the study revealed several important patterns regarding the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance in learning process.

First, there was a noticeable difference in academic achievement between the two group of students. Students who participated in extracurricular activities (Group A) achieved a higher average academic score of 4.3 out of 5, although other students in Group B had an average score of 3.7 out of 5. This difference suggests a positive correlation between extracurricular involvement and academic success in studying process.

Second, the questionnaire results showed that extracurricular participants reported significantly higher levels of motivation, responsibility and discipline. Approximately 78% of students in Group A stated that participating in extracurricular activities not only helped them manage their time more effectively but simultaneously improve their networking and leadership. Many of them explained that balancing schoolwork with other activities forced them to become more organized and responsible, and disciplined in their daily routines.

In addition, 65% of students who participated extracurricular activities reported that these activities increased their interest in studying and researching. They explained that being involved in clubs, programs or sports made them feel more connected to their school life and future goals, which in turn encouraged them to perform better academically in studying process. Teachers also controlled this observation, noting that students participated in extracurricular activities were more confident, more engaged in classroom discussions and debates, and more practical to take initiative during group tasks.

However, the results also showed some challenges during researching process. Around 22% of students feeling stress or fatigue due to managing both academic and extracurricular responsibilities in studying process. Some students mentioned that they sometimes felt overwhelmed, stressful, especially during exam periods when both academic workload and extracurricular commitments were dramatically high. Additionally, 15% of students admitted that their study time was occasionally reduced due to training sessions, debates, or club meetings.

Discussion. The results of this study suggest that extracurricular activities generally have a positive impact not only on academic performance, but also this impact is complex and depends on several factors.

One of the most important explanations for the positive relationship is improved time management and leadership skills. Students who engage in extracurricular activities are required to balance multiple responsibilities between studying and doing extracurricular activities. This encourages them to manage their time more effectively, prioritize tasks, and avoid misunderstanding. Over time, these habits contribute to better academic performance because students become more disciplined, responsible and structured in their ability to learn.

Another important factor is definitely motivation. Extracurricular activities often create a more enjoyable and more meaningful school experience and performance. When students

participate in extracurriculars, they are passionate about, such as sports, music, or debate, public speaking, camps they tend to develop a stronger emotional connection to their school environment. This sense of belonging can increase their motivation to succeed academically in studying process.

Furthermore, extracurricular activities contribute significantly to the development of soft skills that are essential for academic and professional development. Skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving are not only valuable in real-life situations but also enhance students' ability to understand and apply academic content in real-life communications. For example, students participated in debate clubs often perform better in essay writing, problem solving and critical thinking tasks, while students involved in group sports tend to develop stronger cooperation and focus as well.

Despite these advantages, it is also essential to recognize the limitations. The findings demonstrated that actively participation in extracurricular activities can lead to stress and reduced study time and student performance. This indicates that the benefits of extracurricular participation depend on performance of students. Without exact time management and guidance, students may struggle to maintain both academic and extracurricular commitments effectively in learning process.

Therefore, the relationship between extracurricular activities and process should not be seen as positive or negative. Instead, it should be understood as conditional, depending on the intensity of participation, individual personality of students, and support from teachers and parents as well.

Conclusion. To sum up, this study shows that extracurricular activities can positively impact on academic performance when they are properly balanced with academic responsibilities. Students who participate in such activities tend to develop stronger time management and leadership skills, higher motivation levels, and essential life skills as well as problem-solving that contribute to better academic outcomes.

However, the study also shows that active participation can lead to stress and reduced academic efficiency during this period. Therefore, the key factor is not simply participation, but simultaneously balanced participation in working process.

Schools and teachers should encourage students to engage in extracurricular activities and national programs in order to providing guidance on how to manage their time productively. When time properly balanced, extracurricular activities can serve as a powerful tool for both academic and personal development of students.

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