

The Role of Extracurricular Activities in Student Development

Kakungulu Samuel J.

Faculty of Education, Kampala International University, Uganda

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the critical role of extracurricular activities in the holistic development of students. It highlights how participation in such activities not only complements academic learning but also fosters the development of essential life skills such as leadership, time management, and social interaction. The study delves into the positive impacts of extracurricular involvement on academic performance, social skills, leadership abilities, and overall health and well-being. Additionally, the paper addresses potential challenges and criticisms, offering best practices for implementing effective extracurricular programs. The findings underscore the importance of a balanced approach to education, where extracurricular activities are integrated into the student experience to promote comprehensive development.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, Student Development, Academic Performance, Social Skills, Leadership, Time Management.

INTRODUCTION

Extracurricular activities are the activities performed by students apart from their academic sessions. School is a place for students to learn and gain basic knowledge. Apart from it, the cultural and the extracurricular activities are also performed by the students. The importance of these activities cannot be neglected. There is one famous quote: "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy." It is true that extracurricular activities are the unique and useful ones that can be helpful in more than one way. The educational or academic knowledge can never find a full stop, but it is necessary to improve the knowledge by carrying out practical practices. There are various types of these activities such as debate or declamation contests, writing articles, singing and dancing, organizing functions, and others. They can have mental, social, physical, and much other importance. The students can achieve their mental and physical improvements if they take part in these activities with much interest. These are equally helpful means in the overall scheme of development of the child and work as a necessary and useful complement to the general scheme of education [1]. Extracurricular activities are not in any way to be considered as an end in themselves but can be used as a means of achieving a better mind with creative power and more intelligence from the children. The importance of these activities among the students has warranted serious attention. The Educational Policy in the nation urges the introduction of these activities in all educational institutions. These activities develop the student's mind so as to adopt a new environment in the schools. In order to make a complete student in academics, politics, and society, it is needed to participate in extracurricular activities. These activities build the student's mind and they get innovative thoughts and improve their mind, courage, and character. These activities should be every student's priority. It's not just playing side by side academics, it is a way to learn with entertainment. It produces freedom and decreases stress from the students' mind [2].

BENEFITS OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Participation in extracurricular activities, whether at school or outside, plays a crucial role in the growth and development of any student. It has enumerable benefits such as improvement of academic performance, development of pertinent social skills and leadership qualities, stress relief, and establishment of an overall healthy and balanced life. Engaging in extracurricular activities is a great way to enhance student life and can significantly add to your professional development. These activities are an

important part of the university experience and offer an opportunity for students to gain exposure to vast and diverse experiences and improve an array of skills such as administrative, interpersonal, and social skills. Engaging in these activities enables us as students to understand the importance of participation and involvement, but it also encourages healthy connections with our peers, administrators, and communities as well [3]. Additionally, engaging in extracurricular activities helps in reducing stress, enhancing social orientations, and interpersonal skills of youth. Moreover, the children and youngsters involved in extracurricular activities exhibit positive, periodic, and progressive academic impact in domains like mathematics, language, and scholastic activities. In the pursuit of success, knowledge, and intelligence for future careers, most children are left behind in their physical and mental growth and development by ill-health habits and fiendish life. Because of the ill-health habits, the goal of the educational curriculum and training is adversely impacted by teenagers in particular. Therefore, the need for extracurricular activities is manifestly very critical for good health and for the holistic growth of the body, mind, and soul of children and teens in their normal program, Saturdays, weekends, and holidays, in the modern period. The aim of these activities is to splutter multiple individual talents, skills, and abilities in extracurricular activities that are in children from diverse intellectual and socioeconomic backgrounds, to render them a unique multifaceted identity [4].

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Numerous studies have shown some ways that a student's interaction in extracurricular activities can soundly influence their academic performance, especially when their participation is in older, more independent academic and professional-based activities. The major reason for this is that when students participate in extracurricular activities, they appear to have a clear path that considers their future aspirations. When students know what they want to do at the college level and after college, then they have a clear focus for doing well and also understand the natural and real consequences of not doing as well as they may be asked [5]. There has been some noticeable evidence identified about the connection and confidence of a competent involvement in an extracurricular simulated experience and significantly enhanced relationships with the surrounding world. When students are engaged outside the regular academy, it is likely to predict that their test scores will be significantly higher than those who are not engaged in similar ways. Dedicated student habits are typically good academics for other beneficial reasons. Students involved in extracurricular activities talent show broad performance achievements in other ways too. This makes sense when recognizing that everything we do is academic in some kind of educational respect, and all education no matter the sphere can interact for improved educational and personal growth [6].

SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

As for the role of students' participation in the development of social life, particularly pupils' ability to interact with various social aspects of each person is essential. A student who is involved with various elements of interaction with the outside world has various social subsystems, such as families, schools, their respective communities, teachers, lecturers, peers or classmates, and other people. Lickona, in Allegree, relates social values as part of character education. He views it as valuing human relations, self-discipline, and responsibility. He also classified social values into two types, namely cooperation and communication. Individuals who have this social value are able to form interpersonal relationships, be responsive in communication, and also show solidarity to realize the ideals of the organization [7]. In relation to the above description, generally students who attend extracurricular activities can improve social skills through a learning environment that is desired, and this is supported by Ryan et al., who state that one of the benefits of joining extracurricular activities is that communicative skills of students develop better interpersonal relationships because they are accustomed to communicating and interacting with fellow friends, teachers, or mentors. According to Snyder, young people develop communication skills in informal face-to-face and mediated settings. Activities such as youth organizations, sports, clubs, religious programs, after-school care, and academic competitions can provide opportunities for young people to learn, share, and practice game playing. Development is received in addition to encouragement and education for development in various circles, schools, families, and communities [8].

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Yet there are several other skills that students often develop in extracurricular activities. Many extracurricular activities offer leadership roles for those who are interested. Members of student government and those who are interested in publications, band, drama, choir, athletics, and other activities have opportunities to lead their peers in a variety of activities. These students also have an opportunity to make decisions about the direction of their group, the focus of their publications, events their band, choir, or drama group will attend, and so on. Thus, students in extracurricular activities can also develop decision-making skills and the ability to take the initiative in organizing events and activities

[9]. Extracurricular activities help students learn to accept responsibility for their role in an activity and take responsibility for organizing and carrying out activities. These decisions help develop their ability to lead others and to work effectively with others. A leader needs to be able to organize people and events in order to accomplish specific goals. As importantly, extracurricular activities often emphasize goals that are consistent with a leader's charge to help develop the current crop of students on behalf of the school. Members of extracurricular activities often need to balance several objectives in order to be successful. The effective leader needs to be able to juggle several competing resources in order to achieve the goals of the group [8].

TIME MANAGEMENT

Extracurricular activities force students to develop time management skills. A student athlete may need to prioritize between an important practice and a big test. This requires foundational organizational skills. By becoming proficient at time management, students are able to cope with the tasks and stressors that extracurricular involvement may cause. They learn how to plan their weekly schedules according to their academic and extracurricular commitments, and they develop a better sense of what is feasible within the range of their busy lives. Extracurricular involvement encourages students to learn time management skills that are beneficial not only during the high school years, but also later in life [9]. Students at times must make choices, and some of an extracurricular nature could potentially interfere with academic studies if placed on the table at a particularly critical juncture. That being said, students who responsibly manage their time are able to balance diverse activities with their academic work. They recognize that they need grades, and that if such activities contribute to their overall success, then the application of time management skills is particularly pressing and relevant to their level of balance. The paper will ensure that extracurricular activities are manageable as long as a school's challenging academic environment can be discussed with the use of time management [10].

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The connection between extracurricular involvement and health and wellness was apparent in college-level studies conducted in the United States, which indicated that a greater level of participation in clubs and sports correlated with better physical health outcomes. Student societies and recreational sports provide a medium for exercise or participation in physical activity and may stimulate hobbies or habits of students by virtue of their activities. The health and well-being of individuals is paramount to broader personal and professional development. Notre Dame's Striking the Balance study reasoned that "students achieve much more than academic success" and that engagement is something "one 'does' for itself" regardless of the benefits it might have – in that sense being something that students and their institutions should value in its own right" [11]. Many studies concurred that participation in extracurriculars contributes to "the overall health of college students, influencing outcome variables such as activity, stress relief, and connections to others." They facilitate and often necessitate physical activity or participation, give students opportunities to take a break, and help fulfill the college students' human need for "connectedness and belonging." Gong et al. underline the value of community in discussing the mental health advantages of student athletes, arguing that university clubs should prioritize developing students' social skills by "deploying research on community psychology and by creating action-policies in collaboration with students, professors, and workers." Based on focus groups at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Mullen et al. discussed data showing that extracurricular enrollment was valued because it provided stress relief and a student's need to "get away" for a short time from math, science, or studying. They argued that their university "needs to support [participation] as an essential life skill, vital to human development" [12].

CHALLENGES AND CRITICISMS

Critics of extracurricular activities suggest that they can become too time-consuming for young people and that they might also lead to feelings of exclusion for those who are not involved or cannot become involved. For some, the idea of "enjoyment" in extracurricular activities is also problematic. One of the activities in the HEAR is "talking to friends," and enjoyment is widely taken to be an important role of sports and other leisure activities. Others disagree, arguing that enjoyment should not be given the same status as other forms of personal development in the formal certification regime. There are a number of other challenges or criticisms of activities in this domain that we might mention. Although participation in extracurricular activities can be valuable, there is a danger that it can also focus too much on personal achievements and thus encourage egoism [13]. In addition, the time and resources necessary to maintain a particular activity, or to practice and excel, may not be distributed evenly in society. Is it fair that middle-class children are more likely to be able to afford music lessons or join sports clubs, for example? Further, might the "time, effort, and energy" required to succeed at a talent or sport develop into a form of exploitation? Is the support of our "Dreams and Enjoyment" a cover for our desire to have the most

successful athletes and musicians in the country, where success is graded by the size of the market for our product? Educational practices should not, it is argued, encourage "runaway egoism." Similarly, it has been suggested that some kinds of sport are simply "intrinsically violent" and should not be encouraged, whereas others argue that anything goes in sport so long as the players choose to participate. A second overlap of this kind, between activities and action, arises in the domain of volunteering [14].

BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Building and maintaining a successful extracurricular activities program requires organization, participation, and leadership. Effective managing includes publicizing opportunities, developing a process for sponsor organization input and leadership, and creating a diverse program balance staged over time. Experiences show that the efficacy of this kind of program is best when all social groups on campus are represented in a program cast. When developing your program, take time to complete a successful gap analysis as some of the assumptions may not be reflected by participants. In creating and organizing an effective student organization, therefore, we hope the following guide will help. After we have decided these criteria and questions related to our specific program, we will then evaluate what activities already exist on campus and work with our faculty and organization sponsor base to plan, propose, and develop a much different extracurricular program [15]. To make a successful extracurricular activity, we must offer a diversity of programs. Our literature and experience show that a quality program must include a rapport with students and development with the instructor. Sharing curriculum, primary experiences of the activity with different participants can allow separate activities to be formed that do not compete for resources. Activities need to be diverse and offer program choices so most students can find one option that interests them. Upon this last decision, students are now ready to be invited to our program, and we are able – based on data – to limit the number of students to our program. If the teacher-to-student ratio is 1:5, we now know that it is permissible to invite 4 times the number of students needed to fill our program ranks to ensure a turn-away program. For the proposal, model school courses to imitate our group debates, discussion groups [16].

CONCLUSION

Extracurricular activities play an indispensable role in shaping well-rounded individuals, contributing significantly to both personal and academic growth. They offer students opportunities to develop critical life skills that are not typically nurtured in the classroom, such as leadership, social interaction, and time management. Moreover, involvement in these activities promotes better physical and mental health, leading to a more balanced and fulfilling educational experience. Despite potential challenges, such as time constraints and the risk of exclusion, the benefits of extracurricular participation far outweigh the drawbacks. Educational institutions should, therefore, prioritize the integration of diverse and inclusive extracurricular programs to foster a more comprehensive approach to student development.

REFERENCES

1. Pukkinen T, Hytti U, Heinonen J, Stenholm P. Curricular and extracurricular entrepreneurial activities supporting entrepreneurial self-efficacy and desirability of rural youth. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*. 2024 Jul 10;7(3):315-46. [sagepub.com](https://www.sagepub.com)
2. Marrone R, Taddeo V, Hill G. Creativity and artificial intelligence—A student perspective. *Journal of Intelligence*. 2022. [mdpi.com](https://www.mdpi.com)
3. Feraco T, Resnati D, Fregonese D, Spoto A, Meneghetti C. An integrated model of school students' academic achievement and life satisfaction. Linking soft skills, extracurricular activities, self-regulated learning, motivation, and emotions. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*. 2023 Mar;38(1):109-30. [springer.com](https://www.springer.com)
4. Ginosyan H, Tuzlukova V, Ahmed F. An investigation into the role of extracurricular activities in supporting and enhancing students' academic performance in tertiary foundation programs in Oman. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. 2020 Dec 1;10(12):1528-34. [academypublication.com](https://www.academypublication.com)
5. Ricker SJ. Effective Project-Based Learning Professional Development Strategies for Increasing Student Success and Building Teacher Capacity in 21st Century Skills. 2023. [proquest.com](https://www.proquest.com)
6. Kanar A, Bouckenoghe D. The role of extracurricular activities in shaping university students' employment self-efficacy perceptions. *Career Development International*. 2021. [researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net)
7. Fakhrruzi H, Minabari M, Saguni F, Marfiyanto T. ENHANCING THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF STUDENTS AT QURRATU A'YUN HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. *Paedagogia: Jurnal Pendidikan*. 2023 Mar 19;12(1):101-18. [core.ac.uk](https://www.core.ac.uk)
8. Buckley P, Lee P. The impact of extra-curricular activity on the student experience. *Active Learning in Higher Education*. 2021. [sagepub.com](https://www.sagepub.com)

9. Jackson D, Bridgstock R. What actually works to enhance graduate employability? The relative value of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular learning and paid work. Higher Education. 2021. [qut.edu.au](https://www.qut.edu.au)
10. Hjálmsdóttir A, Bjarnadóttir VS. "I have turned into a foreman here at home": Families and work–life balance in times of COVID-19 in a gender equality paradise. Gender. . [nih.gov](https://www.nih.gov)
11. Mutz M, Reimers AK, Demetriou Y. Leisure time sports activities and life satisfaction: Deeper insights based on a representative survey from Germany. Applied Research in Quality of Life. 2021. [springer.com](https://www.springer.com)
12. King AE, McQuarrie FA, Brigham SM. Exploring the relationship between student success and participation in extracurricular activities. SCHOLE: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education. 2021 Jul 3;36(1-2):42-58. [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu)
13. Kerrigan M, Manktelow A. Extra-curricular activities in higher education: enhancing the student experience. Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning. 2021 Jun 1;23(1):123-47. [\[HTML\]](#)
14. Schmitt A, Atencio M, Sempé G. "You're sitting on a hot soccer field drinking Gatorade... I'm sitting in a yacht club just enjoying the view, enjoying the drinks": Parental reproduction of social class through school sport sailing. European Physical Education Review. 2020 Nov;26(4):987-1005. [\[HTML\]](#)
15. Balaguer Á, Benítez E, Albertos A, Lara S. Not everything helps the same for everyone: relevance of extracurricular activities for academic achievement. Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. 2020 Sep 1;7(1):1-8. [nature.com](https://www.nature.com)
16. Munadi M, Annur F, Inderasari E, Alwiyah N, Umar A, Khuriyah K. Student soft skill development through extracurricular activities at Higher Education in Indonesia. Psychology and Education. 2021;58(5):4572-80. [iain-palangkaraya.ac.id](https://www.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id)

CITE AS: Kakungulu Samuel J. (2024). The Role of Extracurricular Activities in Student Development. EURASIAN EXPERIMENT JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, 5(2):26-30.