

**CO-CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO SOME DEMOGRAPHIC
VARIABLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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Abstract

The main objective of this research paper was to determine whether students who are involved in co-curricular activities performed better on their school semester exam than students who don't participate in co-curricular activities. The researchers examined co-curricular involvement and test scores of students in their school semester exam during 2016-17 academic years from secondary schools of Zoba-Maekel of Eritrea. For the study, three null hypotheses were proposed to explore the influence of co-curricular involvement on students' academic achievement and to compare academic achievement of students on two demographic variables. The results of the research indicated that co-curricular activities had a positive effect on students' academic achievements but gender and location has no effect on students' academic achievement.

Key Words: *Co-Curricular Involvement, Academic Achievement, Demographic Variables*

INTRODUCTION

Every school aims for all round development of their students. They promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students in consultation with their parents having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school. The curriculum of the school is designed by keeping many factors in mind, such as the range of public needs, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds along with national educational policies and aims. For the holistic development of a child, co-curricular activities play an important role. Ministry of Education (MOE), The State of Eritrea (2007) stated that co-curricular activities for students are means to instill active social interaction and as school initiatives includes important qualities, such as imparting national values, leadership for social development, healthy recreation, environment protection, self-discipline and self-confidence and participation for

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precious academic excellence. It also started that co-curricular activities are held outside standard curriculum hours. Co-curricular activities serve to promote a variety of activities which all school, students must attend alongside the formal school curriculum. The ministry believed that apart from what is provided in the formal school curriculum; students should participate in activities which provide healthy recreation, and instill self-discipline, team work and confidence for their future. To achieve this goal Ministry proposed twelve co-curricular activities in the schools in order to provide wide range of activities for the students, so that students may choose from variety of activities as per their interest and abilities. Ministry assumed that schools should introduce these activities to all students but their participation should be voluntary.

The ministries efforts are really appreciable for recognizing the importance of co-curricular activities on students all round development. It is because of this, schools in Eritrea, organize many co-curricular activities for their students. These co-curricular activities are organized in the form of clubs. These clubs are English Club, General Knowledge Club, Math Club, Debating Club, Drama Club, Reading Club, Art Club, Innovation Club, Green Club, Health Club, Drum and Music Club, and Sports Club.

The MOE believed that these all planned programs in co-curricular activities enable students to address and satisfy their diverse needs but no formal research work has been done to find out the impact of these activities on students' academic performance. Therefore researchers decided to conduct a study to find out the impact of co-curricular activities on students' academic achievement in the schools of Eritrea.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Daniyal et al. (2012) conducted a study to determine the effect of co-curricular activities on academic performance of university students and found that the co-curricular activities had positive effect on the academic achievement of the students.

Paul and Baskey(2012) conducted an experimental study to analyze the impact of co-curricular activities on academic performance of secondary school students and found that the

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students of experimental group showed better academic achievements than that of the students of control group as a whole.

Bhashir et al. (2012) conducted an experimental study to examine the effect of co-curricular activities on academic achievements of senior secondary students and found that the experimental group showed better performance than that of control group as a whole.

Darling et al. (2005) conducted a study on adolescents and found that the students who participated in the school based co-curricular activities tend to have good GPA's and performance as compared to those students who didn't participate in such activities.

Brach (2003) conducted an experimental study of high school students to analyze the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic achievement. In this study students were divided in three groups, viz. athletic participants, non-athletic participants and non-participants. The findings of the study showed that the both categories of extra-curricular activities (athletic and non-athletic) received higher GPA's than that of non-participant group and as far as non-athletic participants were concerned, they had received the highest GPA's.

Marsh and Kleitman (2002) conducted a study to find out the influence of participation in co-curricular activities on academic outcomes and stated that joining more formal curricular activities and spending more time in participating in them is associated with higher grades and scores in the examination.

Stephens and Schaben(2002) conducted a study to analyze the effect of interscholastic sports participation on academic achievement and observed that students who actively participate in one of the sports activities performed well in academics as compared to those students who didn't participate.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of co-curricular involvement on students' academic achievement at secondary level.
2. To compare the academic achievement of urban and rural students, involved in co-curricular activities at secondary level.

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3. To compare the academic achievement of male and female students involved in co-curricular activities at secondary level.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of students involved in co-curricular activities at secondary level.
2. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of urban and rural students involved in co-curricular activities at secondary level.
3. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of male and female students involved in co-curricular activities at secondary level.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The study was delimited to two urban and two rural secondary schools of Zoba- Maekel, Eritrea.
2. The study was delimited to tenth grade only.
3. The study was delimited to all co-curricular activities which were officially organized by the schools in their school clubs.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Survey Method was used.

RESEARCH DESIGN

One of the challenges previous researchers and these researchers faced was the dilemma of how to organize co-curricular activities into groups. Many previous studies simply examined athletics. This study included a wide range of co-curricular activities. For the purpose of this study students at tenth grade were grouped into two categories, i.e. involved in one or more co-curricular activities and not involved in any co-curricular activities. As far as academic achievement was concerned, it was measured through school semester exam conducted in Jan'2017.

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SAMPLE

In the present study two urban and two rural secondary schools were selected purposively from Zoba-Maekel, Eritrea. The selected schools were Barka Secondary School (urban), KeihBahri Comprehensive Secondary School (urban), Mai-Nefhi Secondary School (rural) and Ibrahim Sultan Secondary School (rural). From each school forty involved and forty non-involved students were selected randomly. Therefore, the total sample included 320 students, out of which 160 students were involved and 160 students were not involved in co-curricular activities.

COLLECTION OF DATA

In order to collect data regarding involved students in co-curricular activities, the focal teachers of the concerned activities in each school were approached. For each school, a list of all tenth grade students who were involved in at least one of the co-curricular activities in the academic session 2016-17 were prepared. From this list, forty involved students were selected randomly from each school. In this way 160 involved students were selected for the study. Similarly, a list of non-involved students in co-curricular activities was prepared for each school and then 160 non-involved students were selected randomly from it.

In order to collect the data regarding academic achievement of these 320 students, the respective class teachers in each school were contacted and with their cooperation the average marks scored by these students in their first semester school exam which was held in Jan'2017 were recorded for the analysis.

To collect data from these schools, senior students of the department were sent there by the researchers.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

Mean, S.D., independent samples t-test were used.

Results and Discussions

Results of the study are discussed through five tables according to objectives framed.

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Table -1

Difference in the mean scores of academic achievement of involved and not involved students in co-curricular activities at secondary level

Student Group	No.	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Table Value	Result
involved	160	69	13.38	2.02	1.98(at 0.05 level)	Significant
Not involved	160	66.08	12.45			

An independent samples t-test was used to check the impact of involvement in co-curricular activities on increasing the academic achievement. The table -1 shows that mean score of involved students was 69 with S.D. 13.38 whereas mean score of not involved students is 66.08 with S.D. 12.45. The t-ratio is calculated as 2.02 which is significant at 0.05 level. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This shows that co-curricular activities influence academic achievement of the students. The finding of the study was supported by the studies conducted by Kilrea (1998), Holloway (2000), Marsh and Kleitman (2002), Guest and Schneider (2003), Darling et al. (2005), Daniyal et al. (2012) and Paul and Baskey (2012).

Table-2

Difference in the mean scores of academic achievement of urban and rural involved students in co-curricular activities at secondary level

Student Group	No.	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Table Value	Result
Urban Involved	80	77.25	11.25	0.19	1.98(at 0.05 level)	Not significant
Rural Involved	80	76.87	12.84			

An independent samples t-test was used to test the second hypothesis. The Table-2 shows that mean score of urban involved students in co-curricular activities is 77.25 with S.D. 11.25 whereas mean score of rural involved students is 76.87 with S.D. 12.84. The t-ratio is calculated as 0.19 which is insignificant at 0.05 level. The second null hypothesis is

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therefore accepted. This shows that there exists no significant difference in academic achievement of urban and rural involved students in co-curricular activities. It means nature of the place has no effect on academic achievement.

Table-3
Difference in the mean scores of academic achievement of male and female involved students in co-curricular activities at secondary level

Student Group	No.	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Table Value	Result
Male Involved	89	77.27	11.28	0.05	1.98(at 0.05 level)	Not significant
Female Involved	71	77.19	11.26			

An independent samples t-test was used to test the third hypothesis. The Table-3 shows that mean score of male involved students in co-curricular activities is 77.27 with S.D. 11.28 whereas mean score of female involved students is 77.19 with S.D. 11.26. The t-ratio is calculated as 0.05 which is insignificant at 0.05 level. The third null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This shows that there exists no significant difference in academic achievement of male and female involved students in co-curricular activities. It means gender has no effect on academic achievement.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

The findings of the study indicate that involvement in co-curricular activities has positive impact on academic achievement of the students. Even Lewis (2004) believed that the effect of co-curricular activities on students goes beyond their academic development and further stated that involvement in co-curricular activities is a useful and appropriate vehicle for children to gain valuable academic and social experiences as well as related strategies for overall healthy psycho-social development.

Therefore, it is important for policy makers, educational administrators and school districts officials to look at how co-curricular activities are being offered to students in the schools.

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With wide range of activities available at secondary level, schools need to encourage more students' involvement in co-curricular activities. Even parents can also be involved positively for their children to participate in co-curricular activities but it must be ensured that students' involvement must be as per their needs and interests and not otherwise.

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