

## BLENDING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WITH ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: PAIN OR GAIN?

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** This paper determined the positive and negative impacts of extracurricular activities (ECAs) and its relationship with the academic performance of college students at a State University in the Philippines.

**Methodology:** The correlation method with document scanning was used in this study. College students with extracurricular activities were randomly selected to serve as respondents. Mean, and correlation procedures were employed to answer the descriptive and inferential problems.

**Main Findings:** Male and single students exceptionally considered engaging in ECAs as a chance to enrich their leadership skills and expand their friendship with new acquaintances. Older students with family responsibilities and who came from higher year levels critically experienced failing to beat targets, limiting their time for review and sacrificing their academic undertakings.

**Applications of this study:** As the prime mover of ECAs, the University Student Affairs and Services together with the Student Council officers may craft clear-cut policy in terms of grade requirement for those students who are involved in ECAs and come up with General Plan of Action such that the academic undertakings of the students will not be sacrificed.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** Positive and negative relationships between the advantages or disadvantages of ECAs and respondents' demographics were established in this study. However, the students' academic performance was not associated with their involvement in any extracurricular activities.

**Keywords:** *Extracurricular Activities, Academic Performance, College Students, Student Affairs and Services, Philippines.*

### INTRODUCTION

Extracurricular activities are endeavours that happen outside the regular school curriculum (Soto, 2020; Rawat, Rastogi, Jaiswal, & Nigam, 2014). They come in many forms: student organizations, literary, cultural, sports, religious, school paper, clubs, and other social associations (Pinto and Ramalheira, 2017; Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff, & Nasirudeen, 2014; Massoni, 2011). These are offered to students who want to spend their spare time in an enjoyable and organized environment (Barkus, Nemelka, Nemelka, & Gardner, 2012). Students become involved in these activities not only for entertainment, social, and enjoyment purposes but also to gain and enhance their traits and skills in leadership, communication and entrepreneurial, among others (Rawat, Rastogi, Jaiswal, & Nigam, 2014; Roberts, 2007). The provision of extracurricular activities gives students the chance to take part in interests that are not covered in academic classes. These are provided to enrich students' education and give them a well-rounded experience outside of the classroom (Abizada, Gurbanova, Iskandarova, & Nadirzada; Himelfarb, Lac, & Baharav, 2014; Ming Chia, 2005).

The importance of extracurricular activities in schools is well-established (Bradley and Conway, 2016; Seow and Pan, 2014; Massoni, 2011). Its primary goal focuses on the individual student level, institutional level, and the broader community level (Rawat, Rastogi, Jaiswal, & Nigam, 2014). These activities exist to complement the school's academic curriculum and to augment the student's educational experience (Siddiky, 2019; Wang & Shiveley, 2009). Almost any type of involvement in ECAs positively affects the individual holistic development (Siddiky, 2019; Massoni, 2011; Fujita, 2006). Extracurricular activities provide a setting for a student to become involved and to interact with other students, thus leading to increased learning and enhanced personality development (Danish, Forneris & Wallace, 2005).

One area that ECAs influences is the students' academic achievement. It can have a positive or negative impact on their educational undertakings (Himelfarb, Lac, & Baharav, 2014; Wang and Shiveley, 2009; Dalrymple and Evangelou, 2006). Research literature explains that there are three factors that influence the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance: the "what, where, and when" of the extracurricular activities. Accordingly, the "what" recommends that the type of participation or activity undertaken influences developmental outcomes; the "where" proposes that the school and community context in which the event takes place matters; and, the "when" suggests that the developmental and historical context in which the extracurricular participation takes place influences both how it is valued and its effects on subsequent development. When each factor demonstrates varied worth on both academics and activities, all three elements complement each other to reinforce the link between ECAs and academic achievement (Guest and Schneider, 2003).

Several researches on the impact of ECAs in the academic achievement of students were reviewed and findings include encouraging school-related outcomes such as exemplary performance (Shernoff, 2010); less corrective recommendations, lower absentee rates (Darling, Caldwell, and Smith, 2005); reduced behavior problems, diminished dropout rates, stronger academic commitment, increased school interest, higher ambitions for attending college (Massoni, 2011); and, healthier work-related status or employability (Pinto and Ramalheira, 2017). Further, engrossment in extracurricular activities is consistently and positively correlated with good school attendance which is often associated with remarkable academic performance (Wilson, 2009). Furthermore, Knifsend and Graham (2012) reported that engaging in a moderate number of ECAs may be most ideal for helping students to feel connected and to perform well academically. However, a warning was forwarded that high levels of participation may be unfavourable to adjustment for some students.

The common problem for many students engaged in extracurricular activities is that they give much more time to these than their academics. Marsh and Kleitman (2002) found out that as the total of involvement increased, the profits to academic success began to weaken to the point where adverse effects emerged. Over the years, there is a deterioration in the academic performance of students with a high level of participation in extracurricular activities (Hunt, 2005). Further, Wang and Shiveley (2009) pointed out that students who devote their spare time to extracurricular activities spend less time on studies. Furthermore, Wilson (2009) stressed that as the academic load rises, so too can an extracurricular activity, and the students can feel strained pondering on how they can deal with both. Additionally, the students can get carried away and engage with so many activities without discerning on how to balance them. Hence, there is no reason to believe that one's commitment to extracurricular activities may lead to academic failure.

This study was conducted to determine the positive and negative influences of ECAs and to validate further its relationship with the academic performance of college students with involvement in ECAs in a State University in the Philippines. Specifically, it determined the respondents' level of advantages and disadvantages of extracurricular activities; their level of academic performance; the significant relationship between the advantages and disadvantages of extracurricular activities and the respondents' demographics; and, the significant relationship between the respondents' academic performance and advantages and disadvantages of extracurricular activities.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive-correlation method with document scanning. The descriptive method was used to describe the level of advantages and disadvantages of extracurricular activities and the level of academic performance. The correlation method was used to determine the relationships between these variables.

Permission to conduct this study was sought from University authorities. A stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample of the study using the Slovin formula to compute for the sample size (n=190). College students with participation in extracurricular activities were taken as respondents. This study is similar to the study of Govindarajulu & Venkataramaraju (2020) since it employed primary (questionnaire) and secondary sources (students' academic records) in collecting data. Mean, and correlation procedures were used to shed light on the descriptive and inferential problems of this study.

To determine the level of advantages and disadvantages of ECAs, the mean range, and qualitative descriptions are as follows:

Mean Range	Level of Advantages	Level of Disadvantages
3.25 - 4.00	very highly advantageous	less disadvantageous
2.50 - 3.24	highly advantageous	moderately disadvantageous
1.75 - 2.49	moderately advantageous	highly disadvantageous
1.00 - 1.74	less advantageous	very highly disadvantageous

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Extracurricular Activities

**Table 1:** Respondents' level of advantages of extracurricular activities

Advantages of ECAs	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. ECAs give students the opportunity to explore a new interest	3.39	Very highly advantageous
2. ECAs offer students the chance to discover a new passion	3.37	Very highly advantageous
3. ECAs let students learn new skills which may be translated into essential career skills	3.31	Very highly advantageous
4. ECAs allow students to follow their dream or passion	3.34	Very highly advantageous
5. ECAs let students reach a higher level of competitiveness	3.33	Very highly advantageous
6. ECAs give students the opportunity to practice proper time management	3.28	Very highly advantageous
7. ECAs develop and strengthen the self-esteem of the students	3.46	Very highly advantageous

8. ECAs help the students develop their leadership skills	3.49	Very highly advantageous
9. ECAs provide opportunities for the students to have fun and enjoyment	3.36	Very highly advantageous
10. ECAs allow the students to gain more knowledge, ideas, and skills	3.36	Very highly advantageous
11. ECAs allow students to have a more luxurious college experience	3.17	Highly advantageous
12. ECAs help students to be exposed to diversity and learn both about others and himself	3.31	Very highly advantageous
13. ECAs allow students to work with others and practice skills such as communication and negotiation	3.30	Very highly advantageous
14. ECAs help students to establish the habit of involvement which may follow him throughout his life	3.13	Highly advantageous
15. ECAs allow students to make new friends and connect with new people both students and faculty	3.46	Very highly advantageous
Overall Mean	3.33	Very highly advantageous

Table 1 reflects that the respondents fully recognized the importance of extracurricular activities to their development as a total person. Results supported the study of [Mariana, Alós, Alcalá, Pino, Herruzo, & Ruiz, \(2006\)](#) when they mentioned several findings which proved that extracurricular activities had been linked to a better educational level, more interpersonal proficiencies, higher aspirations and an enhanced attention level ([Manyasi & Migosi, 2019](#); [Meadows, 2019](#); [Mahoney, Cairos & Farwer, 2003](#)); improved critical thinking, skills development ([Saibovich, 2019](#)), personal and social development ([Bauer & Liang, 2003](#); [Bills, 2020](#)); and, with unlimited benefits that serve to connect school activities with those executed outside the academic setting ([Noam, Biancarosa & Dechausay, 2003](#)). [Marsh and Kleitman \(2002\)](#) also articulated that extracurricular activities which are selected and planned at the school are more helpful than those that take place outside the school setting.

**Table 2: Respondents' level of disadvantages of extracurricular activities**

Disadvantages of ECAs	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. ECAs lessen the time of students to study their lessons.	2.47	Highly disadvantageous
2. ECAs tend to cause stress to the students.	2.37	Highly disadvantageous
3. ECAs lead the students to incur unsatisfactory performance in academics.	2.51	Moderately disadvantageous
4. ECAs increase the difficulties in coping up with lessons.	2.54	Moderately disadvantageous
5. ECAs hinder the students from beating deadlines and failing to pass the requirements.	2.41	Highly disadvantageous
6. ECAs give the students a lot of struggles.	2.24	Highly disadvantageous
7. ECAs drive the students to focus less on their studies	2.41	Highly disadvantageous
8. ECAs reduce the chance of the students to perform better in their academics	2.41	Highly disadvantageous
9. ECAs disturb the students' concentration on their studies	2.48	Highly disadvantageous
10. ECAs make the time management of the students unsteady.	2.53	Moderately disadvantageous
11. ECAs preoccupy students, thus reducing their time to review their notes.	2.36	Highly disadvantageous
12. ECAs make the students impatient in studying their lessons.	2.83	Moderately disadvantageous
13. ECAs drive the students to encounter difficulty in balancing their time with academics and other activities.	2.58	Moderately disadvantageous
14. ECAs tend to lure the students not to catch up with missed exams.	2.69	Moderately disadvantageous
15. ECAs entice the students to relax more than to have an extended time for studying	2.52	Moderately disadvantageous
Overall Mean	2.49	Highly disadvantageous

Table 2 shows that the respondents viewed their involvement in any extracurricular activities to be highly responsible for causing harm in their academic undertakings. The above results corroborated [Gilman, Meyers, & Perez, \(2004\)](#) findings as cited by [Wilson \(2009\)](#) that participation in sports teams corresponded with higher rates of alcohol consumption and illicit drug use; however, these outcomes can be subjected to the quality of coaching, a student's peer group, and the educational and cultural meaning of the activity within the school and community. Additionally, [Reeves \(2008\)](#) made mention that attending to various rehearsals, practices, and meetings may cut into the time for schoolwork. When students get overly involved in so many activities, they might be spending less time studying and preparing for class.

## Academic Performance of the Respondents

**Table 3:** Level of academic performance of respondents with participation in extracurricular activities

Point System	Percentage	Frequency	Qualitative Description
1.00 - 1.37	94 – 100	1	Outstanding
1.38 - 2.12	85 – 95	141	Very satisfactory
2.13 - 2.87	76 – 84	48	Satisfactory
2.88 - 3.00	75	0	Fair
Overall Mean	1.95		Very Satisfactory

The overall grade point average of the respondents implies that more than two-thirds performed very satisfactorily in their academics. Generally, the respondents perform better in their academics despite their participation in extracurricular activities. It could be inferred that there is a balance of time and efforts exerted by the respondents both in their academics and in extracurricular activities. [Wang and Shiveley \(2009\)](#) stressed in their research that students participating in ECAs exhibited higher GPAs than their counterparts. Likewise, [Shernoff \(2010\)](#) highlighted in his study that participants to ECAs were reported to display remarkable grades than those nonparticipants. Similarly, [Massoni \(2011\)](#) found out that students who engage in extracurricular activities incline to have improved academic performance. After all, the ability of students to handle life's challenges and difficulties can lead them to better academic achievement ([Effendi, Matore, Rahman, Idris, Khairani, & Al Hapiz, 2020](#); [Effendi, Matore, & Khairani, 2016](#)).

## Relationship between the Respondents' Demographics and Advantages and Disadvantages of Extracurricular Activities

**Table 4:** Significant relationship between demographics and level of advantages of extracurricular activities

Advantages of ECAs		Sex	Civil Status
1. ECAs help the students develop their leadership skills.	r-value	.2179*	.2223*
	Sig.	.0391	.0352
2. ECAs allow students to make new friends and connect with new people, both students, and faculty.	r-value	-.1060	-.2995**
	Sig.	.8811	.0041
Over-all	r-value	.6300	-.2348*
	Sig.	.9529	.0259

\*0.05 level of significance

\*\*0.01 level of significance

Table 4 revealed that the positive correlations indicate that the respondents' *sex* and *civil status* are associated with developing their leadership skills through their participation in extracurricular activities to a very great extent. Further, male and single respondents extremely consider engaging in ECAs as an opportunity to improve and boost their management skills. These findings are consistent with the conclusions of [Siddiky \(2019\)](#) and [Massoni \(2011\)](#) that by engaging in ECAs, students learn to develop their social and individual skills in leadership, collaboration, problem-solving, time management, juggling many tasks at once and realizing their full potentials as individuals.

Further, the negative correlation shows that the respondents' *civil status* is related to how they make use of their involvement in extracurricular activities to expand their friendship with their new acquaintances. Further, single respondents exceedingly consider ECAs as an avenue to make new acquaintances and connections with new people. This result supported [Massoni's \(2011\)](#) finding that extracurricular activities encourage students to widen their horizons by making new friends and teach self-confidence. Further, students engaged in ECAs experience a better frame of mind of connectedness, display less undesirable self-perception, and obtain higher levels of support from their significant others ([Metzger, Crean, and Forbes-Jones, 2009](#); [Akos, 2006](#)). Furthermore, as ECAs usually require social interactions, students felt less socially isolated and enhance personal skills to help manage their situations, and eventually hold a more positive outlook in life ([Feldman and Matjasko, 2005](#)).

Finally, the negative correlation indicated that single individuals benefited much from their involvement in any extracurricular activities. These findings supported the conclusion of [Guest and Schneider \(2003\)](#) when they stated that extracurricular activities are now recognized as an essential part of the college experience and provide highly structured leisure environments that can confer a range of benefits on participants. Additionally, they articulated that extracurricular activities enhance the student experience, aid academic performance, help students to develop individual skills, improve their self-confidence and contribute to student engagement, peer interaction, leadership, faculty interaction, and student retention. In like manner, [Paul & Baskey \(2012\)](#) also concluded that extracurricular activities had a significant positive impact on the academic achievement of students. Additionally, [Bashir & Hussain \(2012\)](#) found out that operations performed outside the four corners of the classroom can contribute to enhancing the progress of students.



**Table 5:** Significant relationship between the respondents' demographics and level of disadvantages of extracurricular activities

Disadvantages of ECAs		Age	CS	CY
1. ECAs hinder the students from beating deadlines and failing to pass the requirements.	r-value	-.147	.272*	.468
	Sig.	.166	.009	.661
2. ECAs drive the students to focus less on their studies	r-value	.244*	.192	.107
	Sig.	.021	.069	.317
3. ECAs reduce the chance of the students to perform better in their academics	r-value	.211*	.243*	.620
	Sig.	.046	.021	.562
4. ECAs preoccupy students, thus reducing their time to review their notes.	r-value	.303*	.276*	.216*
	Sig.	.004	.008	.041
5. ECAs tend to lure the students not to catch up with missed exams	r-value	.211*	.132	.804
	Sig.	.046	.215	.451
Over-all	r-value	.218*	.243*	.839
	Sig.	.038	.021	.432

\*0.05 level of significance

CS-Civil Status; CY-Curriculum Year

Table 5 disclosed that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' *age* and the level of disadvantages of extracurricular activities. The positive correlation indicated that as the respondents come to mature by age, they significantly experienced giving less attention and time to their academics which resulted in their difficulty in meeting requirements all because of their engagement in extracurricular activities. This result negated the findings that students who devoted more time in extracurricular activities have more exceptional learning outcomes ([Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011](#); [Graham and Gisi, 2000](#)).

Further, there exists a significant relationship between the respondents' *civil status* and the level of disadvantages of extracurricular activities. The positive correlation indicated that respondents with family responsibilities critically encountered failing to beat targets and giving less time to review such that very satisfactory academic performance is bargained. This is consistent with the finding of [Brint and Cantwell \(2010\)](#) that participation in ECAs was undesirably linked to educational effort.

Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between the respondents' *curriculum year* and to the disadvantage of extracurricular activities. The positive correlation indicated that respondents from higher year levels greatly encountered to reduce their time for review due to their preoccupation with extracurricular activities. This finding corroborated the conclusion of [Uttley \(2012\)](#) that the entire time consumed in extracurricular activities was repeatedly felt to be inconsistent with the accrued advantages. Further, [Cladellas Pros, Muntada, Martín, & Gotzens Busquets \(2013\)](#) found that a great number of hours spent in extracurricular activities undesirably impact the academic performance of students.

Finally, there are significant relationships between the respondents' *age*, *civil status*, and the *overall level of disadvantages of ECAs*. These reveal that older and married respondents significantly encountered many problems brought by their engagement in any extracurricular activities. The above findings supported [Wang and Shiveley's \(2009\)](#) inference that a student who devotes his spare time to extracurricular activities spends less time on studies. Likewise, [Wilson \(2009\)](#) found that as the academic workload increases, so too can extracurricular activities such that an individual can feel stress wondering how he can deal with both. Moreover, he can get carried away and sign on to other activities without thinking about how he will balance them all.

#### **Relationship between the Respondents' Academic Performance and Advantages and Disadvantages of Extracurricular Activities**

There is no significant relationship between the academic performance of the respondents and their level of advantages of ECAs. Similarly, there is no significant relationship between the academic performance of the respondents and their level of disadvantages of ECAs. These imply that the academic performance of the respondents is not associated with their involvement in extracurricular activities, be it advantageous or otherwise. That is, regardless of whether the ECAs are beneficial or not, the students still manifest a very satisfactory academic performance.

These findings negated the following results of previous studies: students who participated in extracurricular activities actually received low grades ([Guest and Schneider, 2003](#)); participation in extracurricular activities are interrelated with higher grade point average ([Billingsley & Hurd, 2019](#)), fewer disciplinary referrals, lower absentee rates, decrease in dropout rates, more substantial commitment to academics ([Shaffer, 2019](#)), being in the academic tract in coursework, among others ([Massoni, 2011](#); [Darling, Caldwell, and Smith, 2005](#)); students who took part in extracurricular activities during their academic years had dramatically better grades than those who participated in no extracurricular activities at all ([Reeves, 2008](#)); engagement in any extracurricular activity be it recreational or cognitive enhanced academic

performance (Cladellas Pros, Muntada,, Martín, & Gotzens Busquets, 2013; Bashir & Hussain, 2012); blending extracurricular activities with academic performance fostered employability among graduates of business programs (Pinto & Ramalheira, 2017). However, the above findings supported the results of the study made by Lumley, Ward, Roberts, & Mann, (2015) that engagement in ECAs had a negligible association with academic performance and that maintaining ECAs does not bear any impression on the academic performance of the students.

## CONCLUSION

While the students fully recognized the importance of extracurricular activities to their holistic development, they viewed extracurricular activities to be reasonably responsible for triggering detriment to their academic undertakings. The students who engaged in extracurricular activities performed very satisfactorily in their academic endeavours. Male and single students extremely considered joining in ECAs as an opportunity to boost their leadership skills and expand their friendship while broadening their connections with new people. Older students with family responsibilities and who came from higher year levels critically encountered failing to beat targets and reducing their time for review such that their academic performance was sacrificed. The students' academic achievement was not linked to their engagement in any extracurricular activities.

## LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

When interpreting the results of this study, the following limitations should be considered. First, the small sample size cannot project a conclusive response from the whole student population. Second, the indicators of advantages and disadvantages of ECAs are limited and may not be representative of all the benefits derived and challenges encountered by students. Finally, there was no triangulation made as regards the gathering of data to substantiate the theme of this study further.

In the light of the findings, the author forwards the following future directions:

1. The office of the University Student Affairs and Services (SAS), as a prime mover of ECAs, may craft a clear-cut policy in terms of grade requirements for those students who are involved in ECAs. Further, the SAS personnel, together with the University and College-based Student Council officers, may improve the general plan of action of the university such that the academic undertakings of the students will not be jeopardized.
2. Faculty members may give interventions such as remedial teachings, make-up classes, or any take-home activities to cover the days with scheduled extracurricular activities organized by the SAS.
3. Students may learn to prioritize their curricular and extracurricular activities by exercising proper time management.
4. Researchers may replicate this study giving considerations to other variables and methodology of gathering pertinent data.

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