

Extracurricular Activities and Student Performance at Jubail University College

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Abstract

Jubail University College organizes extracurricular activities (ECAs) each semester for their students. The activities range from clubs to competitions and student-oriented events. The goal of this research is to study the impact of extracurricular activities on student performance, social skills, and behavior and attitude at Jubail University College. A total of 100 female students from various majors and levels at Jubail University College participated in this study, and a questionnaire was distributed among them to investigate the effects of ECAs on student performance. The results of the research showed that participating in ECAs generally has a positive influence on the students' academic achievement.

Keywords: extracurricular activities, student performance, Jubail University College.

1. Introduction

Extracurricular activities are the activities that fall outside the field of the curriculum of university education. They include arts, athletics, clubs, plays, student council, employment, personal commitments, competitions and other social events. The traditional in-class instruction is not the only factor that influences the students' academic achievement. Activities such as music, arts and sports may have an impact on how college students perform academically. The way college students choose to spend their leisure time can affect their academic performance. Jubail University College's extracurricular activities range from weekly club meetings to monthly competitions and student-oriented events.

Extracurricular activities serve the same objectives and purposes as the required and elective courses in the curriculum. However, they offer skills that are not necessarily emphasized in the formal courses. They allow students to apply knowledge acquired in required courses and

to acquire concepts of autonomy, self-growth, and inventiveness. When managed correctly, the extracurricular activities program allows for a well-rounded, stable program by strengthening learning, accomplishing the required and elective curriculum (formal courses of study), consolidating knowledge, and carrying out the aims of democratic life (Barbieri, 2009; Hill, 2008; Jones, 2011 as cited in Lunenburg, 2010). However, the issue of whether students benefit or not is unspecified. (Fujita, 2006). Therefore, determining whether the extracurricular activities that university students participate in affect their academic performance, social skills and behavior is fundamental.

The development of skills while working in groups, the growing of hobbies and interests, the presentation of yearbooks, newspapers, and plays, and contribution in interscholastic athletics and intramural sports offer many chances to students for learning and improving talents that approximate life in the adult community (Larson, 2006 as cited in Lunenburg, 2010). Before 1900, tutors were doubtful of participation in extracurricular activities, and they saw them as a trend that would fade out of style with time. Therefore, expansion of extracurricular activities was slow (Fujita, 2006). Saudi Arabia's education system used to view extracurricular activities as mainly recreational and not necessarily detrimental to academic achievement. Consequently, they were neglected. Eventually, Saudi Arabia began to see the benefits of extracurricular activities. Recently, researchers have taken a huge step to a more affirmative perspectives arguing that extracurricular activities may have effects on social skills, behavior and may also enhance academic performance. As a result, it became obvious that extracurricular activities have an enormous influence on academic performance and education ever since their beginning.

Problem Statement

Nowadays, Many educators are keen on making extracurricular activities an essential part of the students' academic life as they aid the students in acquiring many skills in several academic and non-academic areas. However, the lack of participation and variety in extracurricular activities are some concerns which need to be addressed at Jubail University College. Therefore, this study is conducted to raise awareness and help the students engage in extracurricular activities and identify their impact.

Significance of the Study

Due to the growing interest in extracurricular activities and their role in student development, this research helps identify the impact of extracurricular activities on students' performance. The research will contribute to the growing body of research in this area.

Aims and Objectives

The research focuses on achieving the following aims and objectives:

- To measure and identify the impact of extracurricular activities
- To investigate the different extracurricular activities at Jubail University College
- To improve the extracurricular activities at Jubail University College

Methodology

Both primary and secondary data were collected in this research. First, the primary data was collected via a questionnaire that was distributed electronically among the students. The questionnaire had 10 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1anyRLGjkfe8MpfWQ0X-CD0pJRJP78_b1hjHkwJdB2bk/edit A total of 100 female students from various levels and majors at Jubail University College took the survey and answered the questions.

Limitations

The research had the following limitations:

- Due to time constraint, the research was limited to Jubail University College's extracurricular activities only.
- The research results were limited since only 100 students responded.
- Due to the cultural limitations of Saudi Arabia, the study focused on female students only.

2. Literature Review

Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance

According to Marsh and Kleitman (2002) as cited in Fujita (2006), extracurricular activities have been confirmed to be helpful in forming and strengthening the students' academic performance even though they are not associated with academic courses. Despite not being related to the academic curriculum, extracurricular activities have benefits on student performance. These benefits can be seen in various areas which contribute to the students' overall achievement. For instance, extracurricular activities can be beneficial to the students' grade point average (GPA). As Massoni (2011) stated:

“It was revealed that students who participate in extracurricular activities are three times more likely to have a grade point average of a 3.0 or higher. This is higher than students who did not participate in extracurricular activities” (p.85).

Also, student participants in extracurricular activities had better grades, higher standardized test scores, higher educational attainment, attended school more regularly, and had higher self-concepts. (Brown (n.d.) as cited in Wilson (2009) this indicates that when students participate in extracurricular activities, they perform tasks and take on responsibilities which lead to maintaining a high GPA, attending classes and having less absence rate. However, along with these benefits, participating in extracurricular activities can have negative effects as well. Taking part in extracurricular activities can make the students overscheduled, and they might not concentrate on their studies as they should (Reeves, 2008, as cited in Wilson, 2009).

Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Social Skills

Extracurricular activities can play a huge role in developing the students' social skills. There is a notable number of researchers who believe that extracurricular activities have an

effect on the students' social life. As Massoni (2011) stated, when the students get involved in extracurricular activities, they meet many new people that might have the same backgrounds and the same interests as they do. Also, by participating in different activities, the students will have an opportunity to meet, befriend and interact with different students outside of their circle that they would never communicate with on a regular basis. The students will also learn about group work, and sometimes this will help them in connecting with others. All these benefits will happen by joining different clubs and activities. Wilson (2009) also suggested that participating in extracurricular activities gives the students the opportunity to engage with the community, develop friendships and social confidence. It can be concluded that participating in extracurricular activities makes a huge difference on how the students interact with others in different social contexts.

Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Behavior and Attitude

According to Massoni (2011), extracurricular activities affect the students' behaviors and attitudes. It has been reported that the students who took part in extracurricular activities experienced fewer behavioral issues. They became more disciplined and responsible as they performed different extracurricular tasks. Moreover, participating in extracurricular activities boosted their confidence and improved their self-esteem. Also, in a previous study about the effects of extracurricular activities, it was concluded that engaging in extracurricular activities had positive effects on how students perceived themselves (Daley & Leahy 2003, as cited in Wilson 2009). The main point of Daley and Leahy's study is that the students who achieve success in extracurricular activities are most likely to have a higher level of self-approval.

Another reported effect was that the students who were involved in extracurricular activities were less likely to commit crimes and take drugs (Cassell et al., 2000, as cited in Richter, 2002). These findings indicate that engaging in extracurricular activities prevents the students from committing corrupted acts because they become more disciplined.

This review of literature indicates that participating in extracurricular activities has many effects on the students. First, they have several positive effects on the students' academic performance, social skills, and behavior and attitude. They improve the student's grades, build their social confidence and boost their self-esteem. On the other hand, this participation can have a negative influence as well, such as making the students not able to manage their time and focus on their studies and classes since they are too busy participating in these activities. However, most of these studies were conducted on US high school and college students. Consequently, these findings may not be applicable in all contexts and situations. Therefore, this research will fill a gap in this area and investigate how extracurricular participation affects Arab female students' academic performance at Jubail University College.

3. Research Results

The students at Jubail University College were asked whether they have participated in any extracurricular activities or not. The survey results showed that 61% of the students have participated in extracurricular activities while 39% of the students have not participated.

This illustrates that there is a large number of students who are willing to take part in extracurricular activities. There could be a number of reasons for their participation as demonstrated in previous research, such as interest in the activity, new experience, learning something new and friends involved in the activity (Richter, 2002).

In fact, the majority of the students, which was 72%, responded that they participated in more than one extracurricular activity during the current semester. On the other hand, only 28% of them participated in one extracurricular activity or none during the semester. The students seem to be aware of the positive effects of extracurricular activities

When asked about their preference, 77% of the students agreed that they prefer extracurricular activities that focus on mental activities. Meanwhile, 23% of the students disagreed with this statement. Conversely, The Students at Jubail University College were asked if they prefer physical extracurricular activities. When asked about whether extracurricular activities improved their academic performance or not, about 55.6% of the respondents stated that their academic performance did not improve. On the other hand, 44.4% stated that extracurricular activities did improve their academic performance. This is worth contemplating as earlier a large number of students participated in these activities seemingly to get the most out of them and to improve in general. However, if these activities do not deliver their premise, it will definitely affect students' willingness to participate in the future.

The vast majority, which represented 83% of the students, disagreed with the statement stating that extracurricular activities had a negative effect on their academic performance, but 17% of the subjects agreed with this statement. Since the positive impact on the students' performance is obviously one of the main motivations behind taking part in extracurricular activities, the percentage reflects that the extracurricular activities at JUC are impactful.

76.8% of the students expressed that extracurricular activities helped them socialize and create new friends. In contrast, 23.2% of the students disagree with the statement. This result further support Wilson (2009) and Massoni(2011) claims.

69% of the respondents disagreed that extracurricular activities waste their time while 31% of the subjects agreed that extracurricular activities waste their time, which indicates students' awareness of the benefits of these activities.

However, when it comes to developing certain skills, about 58.6% of the respondents, when asked about if extracurricular activities helped the students manage their time or not, stated that extracurricular activities did not help them manage their time. On the other hand, 41.4% stated that extracurricular activities did help them manage their time. This might indicate a lack of guidance on the activities supervisor's part or students' lack of attentiveness and poor time management.

The majority of the students, which was 89.9%, agreed on improving the extracurricular activities. On the other hand, only 10.1% of them responded that extracurricular activities did not need any improvement. This calls for a revision of the current extracurricular activities plan in the light of students' feedback.

Also, results revealed that ECAs which focus on either mental or physical activities were equally preferred by participants. This indicates that students are interested in both activities. In addition, more than half of the participants agreed that involving in ECA helped them improve their academic performance. This is in line with (Fujita, 2006) who investigated the effects of ECA on students' academic performance. The results indicated that according to the data surveyed, participants showed higher grades, more positive attitudes toward school, and higher academic aspirations. Additionally, results showed that 83% of the participants disagreed that participating in ECAs affected their academic performance negatively. Besides, Alansari et. al. (2015) found out that most students did not think that ECAs conflicted with their studies. A large number of participants expressed that ECAs helped them socialize and create new friendships. This indicates that ECAs play an important role in improving students social and communication skills. More than half of the participants indicated that involving in ECAs did not waste their time. However, 58% of the participants expressed that ECAs did not help them manage their time. These contradictory results revealed that students might have found ECAs helpful in managing their time; however, they also did not consider participating in ECAs as a waste of their time. This also indicates that the students who participated in ECAs were not distracted from their classes.

When asked about ways for improving the ECAs, participants provided several valuable suggestions. The majority of participants proposed providing more activities and competitions, and increasing the number and variety of clubs to cater for different interests and preferences. Participants also stressed the importance of including students in the decision making of ECAs according to their needs. For instance, some participants suggested activities that help improve students' academic skills as well as social and team-building skills. Other participants recommended adding physical activities such as Basketball to the ECAs. Moreover, participants encouraged having creative and new activities that include the community such as involving in volunteer work outside of college. They also suggested going on field trips, participating in public events and introducing students' work from different departments to companies. As for the advertisement, participants suggested that announcements for clubs and other activities should be made weeks in advance so that students have enough time to join. Other suggestions included offering students support, incentives and encouragements, especially those who dedicate their time and effort in contributing to these activities. Moreover, students suggested reducing the assignment load so they can have more free time and less stress about participating in ECAs.

Generally speaking, The responses ranged from restructuring the extracurricular activities, adding new activities like sports to the current extracurricular activities, and taking the students' feedback about them into consideration to reschedule the timing and improve the extracurricular activities' quality.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, findings revealed that the responses of female students of Jubail University College on the impact of ECAs on their academic performance were generally positive. Students showed willingness to participate in activities outside of the classroom and interest in the activities offered by JUC.

These findings suggest that ECAs may have a positive impact on students' academic performance and their overall learning experience. As Alansari et. Al. (2015), stated that ECAs are essential for students' well-being, and these activities are regarded as the most promising environment in education since they supply a healthy outlet for energy. Therefore, a further research should explore the role of ECAs in increasing students' motivation for learning, and how it could prepare them for their future careers.

JUC should continue to offer a variety of extracurricular activities as well as encourage the students to participate and grow as individuals.

Recommendations

A variety of ECAs should be well-organized throughout the year to increase students' academic and social development and enrich their learning experience. Diversity in activities is important as it attracts more students and creates more opportunities for improvement of different skills. In addition, students should be involved in selecting the types of activities they would like to have according to their needs and interests.

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