

Survey Paper

Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Learners' Engagement: A Case Study of Secondary School Students in Urban West Zanzibar

Asia Ally Kimolo^{1*}, Hamad Said²

¹The state University Zanzibar –Tanzania, Department of Education Foundation, Instruction and Leadership

²Institute of Public Administration Zanzibar, Administration, Planning and Finance

*Corresponding Author: kimoloasia5@gmail.com

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Abstract— In-depth investigation of the significance and effects of extracurricular activities on learners' engagement was carried out in Zanzibar's Urban West Region. The study, which included teachers as respondents, sought to investigate both the beneficial and detrimental effects of extracurricular activities on students. Study employed qualitative approach among teachers where by Purposeful sampling technique used for choosing 48 teachers from secondary school in Urban West Region where included in answering interviews and focus group discussion. Results demonstrated that extracurricular activities benefit students' development, including the acquisition of skills, the formation of future successful occupations, the prevention of dropout, the decrease of academic anxiety, and the mitigation of societal difficulties. However, the study also showed that extracurricular activities might have unfavorable outcomes, such as the acquisition of undesirable behavior and the difficulty of being time-consuming. In addition, it was highlighted how crucial civic participation was in education and how diverse learning settings were necessary for it. According to the study's findings, improving extracurricular activity facilities, taking facilitators into account, and reintegrating extracurricular activities into the regular class schedule are all necessary. It was concluded that extracurricular activities are very important as they contribute significantly to students in learning. It was recommended for enhancing the benefits brought and mitigating the negative impact for sustained and academic practice in schools. The study concluded by providing managerial implications and the avenue for further study in the area. It recommends that the Government and other education stakeholders to emphasize the implementation of extracurricular activities in schools to boost learners' engagement and civic participation in Zanzibar by allocate resources strategically and systematically tracking progress and outcomes.

Keywords— Extracurricular activities, Civic Engagement, Learners Engagement

1. Introduction

The educational environment has significantly changed and requires students to have an open mind to learn and gain knowledge that impacts their societies and the world [1]. The attainment of such interventions needs devoted effort and willingness from the teachers because teachers' attitudes that lead to a particular perception are important in imparting knowledge and skills to students[2]. Eventually, schools are responsible for shaping their students into responsible citizens, which can be achieved through extracurricular activities [3]. The sense of being responsible is not only essential for the community to which students belong, but it is equally important for their personal development [4].

The paper is organized as follows: section one introduces the paper on the extracurricular issues. Section two analysis of the literature. Section three is about the methodology that was adopted to accomplish the work. Section four provides the results and discussion of the paper. Section five presents the

conclusion while section six is about the recommendations for improvement.

2. Related Works

Around the world, extracurricular school activities are plagued by severe financial problems [5]. However, teachers and school administrators must find a way to increase students' performance and decrease school absenteeism [6]. Extracurricular activities motivate students to attend school and intensively engage in their studies [7]. According to [5], students become dissatisfied with their school because it does not provide enough extracurricular activities.

Accordingly, students' participation in extracurricular activities enhances their confidence, resilience, and a positive relationship to achievement [8]; as such, the positive relationship improves students' engagement in their learning [9]. Students can learn how to manage their time, which is crucial for their development, instilling the spirit of

teamwork, which can raise their responsibility and eventually become accountable for their daily responsibilities [10]. Consistently, students' participation in extracurricular activities has shown many benefits, including high-grade achievement, fewer absences from school, an avenue of learning new skills, and an increasing sense of belonging [11].

There are countless advantages to extracurricular activities and student performance. Students get to know some disciplines they might not have chosen, like music and sports and can improve their character, which will help them during the rest of their lives [12]. According to [13], extracurricular activities provide benefits such as improved grades, increased consistent test scores, increased educational achievement, increased regular attendance, and enhanced self-esteem. Furthermore, Wilson [13] argues that extracurricular involvement among students improves their leadership and teamwork skills while reducing the risk of alcohol and drug usage and other negative behavior. It is concluded that students engagement in extracurricular activities improve performance, reduce reduced truancy, and greater relationships with their schools [13].

Yet, [11] argues that there is hesitant behavior among teachers to promote extracurricular activities to students. Furthermore, [5] emphasizes that some teachers only care about the grades of their students and not whether or not they are learning material that could be useful in future jobs. This paper explores teachers' perceptions of students' extracurricular activities concerning their learning engagement in Zanzibar. In order to fulfill the stated aim, this study uses data from eight (8) schools in the Unguja Urban region. This study is significant as it articulates the need and importance of school extracurricular activities. The evidence from extant literature and the study's findings show that school extracurricular activities are important.

3. Methodology

A qualitative research design was employed for this study, as outlined by [14]. This approach allows for exploring and understanding individuals' experiences, perspectives, and meanings in a naturalistic setting [15]. The research was carried out in the Urban West Region of Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago located in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Tanzania. The research was explicitly focused on the schools within the Urban West Region of Zanzibar and aimed to gather information and insights from the participants residing there. Depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives on the studied topic. The data collected from the individual interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis, as outlined by [16]. This involved coding the data and identifying patterns and themes in the responses. The goal of the research and the participants' rights as study subjects were explained to the participants, and their consent was obtained before conducting the interviews and focus group discussions. The confidentiality of the participant's responses was also maintained throughout the research process, following ethical guidelines outlined by [17].

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Significance of Extracurricular Activities for Students

Enhancing student engagement in their academic pursuits has been discussed among various stakeholders. The consensus among them is that extracurricular activities have a more positive than negative impact on students, so schools must provide opportunities for such activities. Teachers argue that extracurricular activities provide a crucial avenue for students' psychological and mental development. In contrast to the primarily theoretical learning in the classroom, extracurricular activities provide a hands-on learning experience that improves students' learning abilities. Furthermore, extracurricular activities allow students to showcase their talents and abilities by developing various skills. One of the respondents said, "*Extracurricular activities aid in student development by offering diverse learning experiences and opportunities to demonstrate talents.*"

One respondent emphasized the importance of extracurricular activities for learners by highlighting their role in facilitating communication and cooperation between teachers and students in the school's management. Furthermore, the respondent noted that extracurricular activities, such as student government, serve as a platform for students to cultivate and hone their leadership skills. For example, "*Extracurricular activities, such as student government, are necessary for schools to provide a platform for student representation and address their concerns.*"

The head of the Eco club posits that students who participate in the club would experience numerous advantages, including increased knowledge and understanding of the environment and the ability to address related issues. As environmental studies are covered in the academic curriculum, this will enhance the educational experience of the students. "*Extracurricular activities enhance student success by promoting environmental awareness and healthy living, as seen in the Eco club where practical experiences reinforce academic subjects.*"

4.2 Positive impact of Extracurricular Activities on Learner Engagement

During the discussion, most respondents held positive views toward the impact of extracurricular activities on learner engagement. In order to respond to the questions, various themes were given.

4.3 Developments of Skills

A similar finding was reported in the study of Ajoke et al. [18], which found that press clubs in Nigerian schools enhance students' writing and speaking skills. This conclusion was based on collected data and interviews with teachers about the effect of extracurricular activities on learning. Most teachers agreed that extracurricular activities, such as subjects, positively impact learners' engagement, as they allow students to engage in debates and improve their vocabulary, fluency in speaking, and teamwork skills through sports and games clubs. One respondent noted, "Extracurricular activities help students engage and learn

through peer collaboration. For example, *"Extracurricular activities can enhance students' academic abilities by imparting specific techniques and promoting engagement in learning....For instance, participating in an English club enables students to improve their vocabulary and grammar, which is beneficial for class essays and presentations.... Furthermore, peer interaction within clubs facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge through discussions."*

"However, other respondents emphasized the significance of extracurricular activities in fostering skills growth through hands-on experience and practical application, as they stated."*...Extracurricular activities enhance student engagement in learning as demonstrated through hands-on activities, such as making liquid soap in a club, which helps to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application..... For example, using chemicals in soap-making, such as sodium chloride, sodium carbonate, and sulphuric acid, teaches students the practical applications of Chemistry concepts learned in class."*

Another response argues that *"Extracurricular activities enhance knowledge acquisition by providing practical, real-world learning experiences, as students can observe and study the features of their surroundings. For instance, in geography, they can observe and study different types of rocks, soil, and beaches."*

The study by [19] supports the idea that extracurricular activities allow students to discover themselves and improve their abilities. An interview with the head of a science club highlighted the importance of students participating in various extracurricular activities to develop their skills and prepare them for real-life challenges. According to the head, these activities give students chance to reveal and apply acquired knowledge and skills gained. For example, *"Extracurricular activities aid in developing students' skills, such as inventing a frequency device to combat mosquitoes, as seen in a successful project by members of a young scientist club in a school, resulting in an award in 2017."*

During a focus group discussion, a club coordinator emphasized the role of extracurricular activities in promoting student skill and talent development by utilizing environmental resources and interdisciplinary knowledge. The respondent stated, *"The club oversees student projects where they come up with their own ideas using materials from their environment to create something related to their study area.as club leaders, we provide supervision to help their knowledge stay with them and foster a creative mindset."*



Plate 1: Aquarium Built by Student as Part of Extracurricular Activities

Plate 1 illustrates an aquarium designed and constructed by students in a secondary school as part of their extracurricular activities. The aquarium features a specialized filtration system that effectively removes waste from the water, promoting good hygiene for the aquatic inhabitants. This innovative project demonstrates the student's ability to apply their knowledge and skills acquired in various subjects to real-world situations and create practical solutions that benefit the environment and the animals they care for. By providing opportunities for hands-on learning experiences like this, extracurricular activities are essential in fostering creativity and critical thinking skills, helping students develop into well-rounded, confident learners.

4.4 Successful Development in Future Career

The survey's findings on the positive impact of extracurricular activities on students' engagement suggest that some respondents view the significance of such activities in shaping the students' future careers. Successful participation in extracurricular activities helps guide students in their academic pursuits and supports realizing their aspirations. One teacher provided the following insight. *"Extracurricular enhance student engagement by providing hands-on experience and boosting their knowledge and skills. Many of our Young Scientist Club members went on to university with high grades, and our female vice president at (UDOM) was a top petroleum student."*

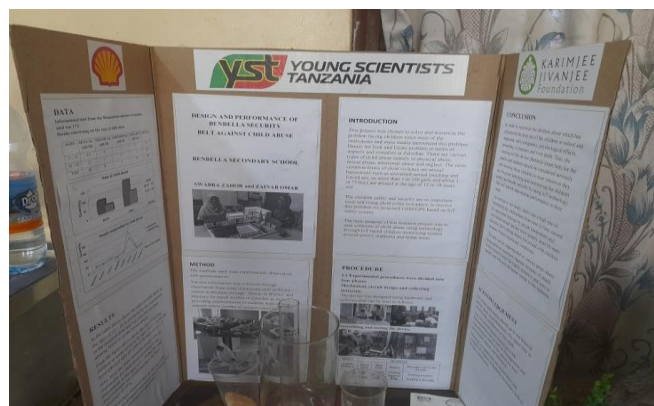


Plate 2: Active Clubs

Plate 2 presents evidence of the high level of engagement and success achieved by one of the active clubs operating in Zanzibar Secondary School. This club, which specializes in science and technology, was recognized for its outstanding performance when it won an award on the Tanzania mainland as a Young Scientist. This serves as a testament to the study and learning experiences by highlights importance of fostering these programs in educational institutions.

The findings of [20] enhances students' skills and sense of self support the idea that involvement in co-curricular activities. A study by [21] additionally discovered that students who engaged in extracurricular activities outperformed their peers academically and had higher self-concepts. This highlights the significance of extracurricular activities in helping students achieve their goals and providing a source of enjoyment that reduces academic stress.

4.5 Prevention of Dropout

The topic of avoiding dropout was discussed among teachers and department heads, who concurred that participating in extracurricular activities can be crucial in preventing students from dropping out. They highlighted that engaging in physical activities, such as sports and games, through extracurricular not only fosters students' physical health and reduces the likelihood of illnesses, but also leads to improved academic performance and reduced dropout rates. *"Extracurricular activities motivate students to attend school and showcase their talents, improving their chances of finding a job by enhancing their soft skills."*

The teachers and department heads concurred on the significance of extracurricular activities in decreasing student absenteeism, promoting student engagement and motivation to attend school, and preventing dropouts. These activities impart valuable skills and foster a sense of community and friendship among students. By participating in various clubs, such as those focused on home economics, needlework, and artistic expression, students are equipped with experiences and abilities that can benefit them in their future endeavour, as one respondent noted. *"Extracurricular activities are important for student development as they enhance physical fitness and mental stimulation through sports and clubs...this also decreases absenteeism and builds life skills, such as in the art class where students are trained to become painters and create house decorations for potential income after school."*

Plate 3 illustrates the ingenuity of students who have used sticks to create decorative pieces for their extracurricular activities. This exercise is expected to foster entrepreneurial skills for their future endeavor.

4.6 Reduction of Academic Anxiety and Mitigation of Societal Issues for Students

The head of the club declared essential for students to take part in a variety activities, apart from their curriculum. As it helps to boost their self-confidence and alleviate the stress they may be experiencing within their familial or societal contexts, as expressed by one of the respondents. *"Extracurricular activities improve student mood and concentration, reducing stress from society and academic anxiety."*



Plate 3: Ingenuity of Students Made of Sticks

4.7 Negative Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Learners

The results of the focus group discussions revealed that some teachers believed that excessive involvement in extracurricular activities could negatively impact a student's academic performance by reducing their focus on their studies. Additionally, some parents expressed concerns that their children would lose interest in their subjects and fail if they become too involved in extracurricular activities. *"Involvement in too many extracurricular activities can lead to poor grades in academic subjects, as seen with a student who failed to succeed in university and had to retake exams."*

The perspective of some participants was that the primary focus should be on preparing for national exams and that excessive participation in extracurricular activities can detract from this goal by taking away valuable revision time. Additionally, some advanced secondary school students expressed reluctance towards extracurricular activities due to time constraints, particularly among girls, as well as psychological reasons, as noted by one respondent. *"Advanced students dislike extracurricular activities because they take up valuable revision time and don't want to miss class periods, particularly girls."*

"Contrary to that, other respondents said, *"Success in exams isn't affected by extracurricular activities; it depends on how students are guided to balance both."*

4.8 Adoption of Negative Behaviors

Parents concerned about the potential negative impact of peer pressure and poor behaviour on their children's academic performance reported avoiding involvement in extracurricular activities to protect their children from these negative influences, according to one of the respondents during focus group discussions. *"Parents fear failure and warn their children against participating in extracurricular activities, as seen in a case where a student was offered to be a school leader but declined due to parental restrictions."*

Another participant during the group discussion continues to hold their view that *"Extracurricular don't guarantee academic success, as evidenced by a former student who was active in extracurricular but still performed poorly in class and is now having to retake exams at a technical college, unlike her peers who have received bachelor's degrees."*

4.9 Issues of Extracurricular Activities Being Time-Consuming

Some participants expressed negative opinions regarding the impact of extracurricular activities on students. They noted that these activities are time-consuming and costly and that excessive involvement can lead to a lack of focus and decreased academic performance, as expressed by one respondent. *"Extracurricular activities are time-consuming and can take away time from students' self-studies, especially for those preparing for national exams."*

Furthermore, the time consumption aspect of extracurricular activities was also addressed in the studies of [22] and [23]. [22] found that extracurricular activities can be seen as a waste of time, especially when attending meetings or participating in events. [23] on the other hand, argued that while extracurricular activities can be used as a way for individuals to differentiate themselves, in the end, everyone's experiences and resumes will be similar. Hence, they suggest that people find alternative ways to stand out in the job market.

In conclusion, this highlights the significance of proper time management when conducting extracurricular activities. Time monitoring is crucial for club leaders to ensure a positive experience for club members.

4.10 Importance of Civic Engagement in Learning

Most respondents in the discussions about civic engagement as a buffer between extracurricular activities and student engagement agreed that they must participate in social issues for students to develop civic engagement. This provides motivation and drive towards learning, as one respondent noted. *"Participation in social issues enhances student learning by providing opportunities to think critically about challenges and opportunities in subjects and society, and finding solutions.....for example, blood donation can deepen knowledge of blood groups learned in biology and foster volunteerism and compassion for others."*

Students' engagement in various social initiatives within the educational setting has been noted to foster the development of self-assurance through social interaction and cultivating volunteerism tendencies, as articulated by one of the instructors. For example, *"Civic engagement improves learning through elements like compassion, belonging from clubs, and hands-on lessons, such as first aid from a scout club, or field trips to places like Kizimkazi and Jozani forest."*

One respondent noted that civic engagement has the potential to foster increased engagement among learners through various diverse learning experiences in schools, where students can be influenced and emulate positive behaviour demonstrated by their peers. *"Inter-school competition widens students' knowledge, as seen with the Young Scientist club from Zanzibar when they encountered other clubs and gained new challenges to improve their knowledge."*

4.11 Diversified Learning Environments for Civic Engagement Participation among Students

The respondents noted the presence of a diverse range of environments within schools that promote students' engagement in civic activities, including exposure to clubs such as blood donation and roots and shoots, as well as religious committees. These experiences allow students to practice helping, volunteering, and caring for others, skills they can apply in their studies. As one respondent stated, these activities significantly aid their academic pursuits. *"Participation in diverse extracurricular activities in school enhances civic engagement through volunteering, religious clubs, and subjects like civics and Kiswahili."*

Negative views expressed by some respondents during the discussion were *"Some respondents raised concerns about the unsuitable environment for games and sports at the school due to the lack of space for a proper playground or gardening environment, as neighbouring schools surround the school."*

5. Conclusion and Future Scope

The paper concluded that extracurricular activities have positive achievements for learners' engagement in learning although the majority of students have not yet benefited from improving and increasing engagement in learning.

The finding from the qualitative part shows that lack of enough knowledge concerning how extracurricular activities should be imparted and organized in school is what causes negative effect for the majority of students as well as quantitative part show that the mediation effect is not supported by the modal. Therefore, good mobilization of the delivery of extracurricular activities in schools should be restructured to ensure all students are benefited with programmed to ensure quality education as sustainable development goal no 4 stipulated and target goal 4.7 to ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed for sustainable development.

6. Recommendations

The study concluded by providing managerial implications and the avenue for further study in the area. It recommends that the Government and other education stakeholders should emphasize the implementation of extracurricular activities in schools to boost learners' engagement and civic participation in Zanzibar by allocate resources strategically like infrastructure, equipments, and training of facilitators to ensure that extracurricular programs are of high quality and accessible to all students, and systematically tracking progress and outcomes.

The researcher needed to gather recommendations from the respondents regarding resolving the negative impacts of extracurricular activities.

6.1 Enhancement of Extracurricular Activity Facilities

Several respondents emphasized the need for enhancing the infrastructure related to extracurricular activities to mitigate the adverse effects. For instance, the renovation and improvement of playground facilities were mentioned as an example: *"Lack of proper playground facilities due to the school's location surrounded by neighboring houses affects students' playing time and quality."*

Other respondents added, *"Management of shared school garden environments is challenging due to limited space and frequent disturbance from neighboring school students."*

6.2 Importance of Considering Facilitators for Extracurricular Activities

According to the respondents, there is a need for consideration from top leaders to create a supportive environment for those serving as club leaders or coordinators,

as these positions require significant levels of volunteerism. *"Weekend training sessions with students resulted in low motivation due to a lack of food and transportation, leading to low participation. If a special package could be provided for an extra work hour, facilitators and participants would be more energized."*

There is a shortage of facilitators in schools, with one teacher often having to rotate between one or two schools and having a heavy workload with students, as one teacher stated. *"The shortage of teachers in schools, particularly for sports, is a concern as the number of students has increased, and more teachers need to be recruited to meet the demand."*

6.3 The Reintegration of Extracurricular Activities into the Normal Class Schedule

The participants emphasized that it is challenging to conduct extracurricular activities during weekends or outside of normal class time as some teachers and students may ignore it as it is not part of the normal school timetable and may seem like voluntary work that takes away from their time. *"Extracurricular activities conducted after school hours lead to students wanting to rush home and a decline in club membership. Proper scheduling within school hours would improve student motivation."*

Various studies on extracurricular activities highlight the importance of extracurricular activities for students and their beneficial effects on learner engagement. Gaining skills and advancing one's career effectively are major benefits of extracurricular activity participation. These programs may also help students avoid dropping out of school, lessen academic anxiety, and deal with societal challenges. However, extracurricular activities can also have unfavourable consequences on students, such as adopting bad habits or the impression that they take up too much time. Civic engagement is a significant component of extracurricular activities, and research highlights the necessity for various learning contexts to support this engagement. Enhancing facilities for extracurricular activities and considering facilitators are essential for fostering a learning environment. To help with the issue of time-consuming activities and to encourage students to engage, the reintegration of extracurricular activities into the regular class timetable is also recommended.

Data Availability

None.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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Authors' Contributions

Author one participated in proposal development, data collection and designing of the paper. Author two involved in guidance of the overall research process and paper.

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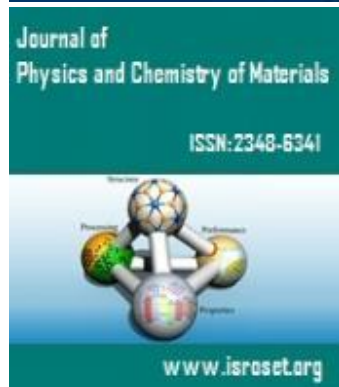
AUTHORS PROFILE

Asia Ally Kimolo earned is a Graduate student in Education at the State University of Zanzibar. She earned a Bachelor degree in education of the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. She is currently an education officer in the government of United Republic of Tanzania.



Hamad Said earned his BA PA, MBA (Marketing), and Ph.D. in Business Administration from ZU Zanzibar in 2006, GSM UPM Malaysia 2010, and EMU Cyprus in 2022. He is currently Deputy Principal - Administration, Planning and Finance at the Institute of Public Administration Zanzibar, He served as a lecturer at the State University of Zanzibar in the School of Business for more than ten years. He has published several research papers in reputed international journals including Elsevier (SSCI & Web of Science). His main research work focuses on Tourism. He has more than 10 years of teaching experience.



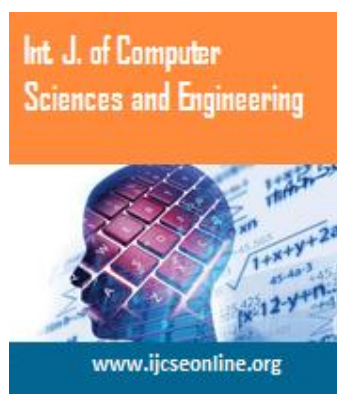
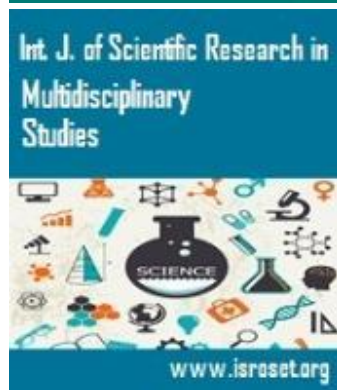
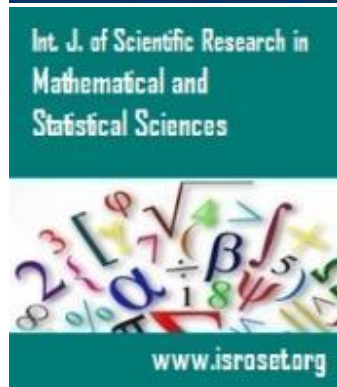


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