

THE EFFECT OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES OF THE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF THE ISLAMIA UNIVERSITY OF BAHAWALPUR, PAKISTAN

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Abstract. The present study reveals the fact that involvement in the co-curricular activities produces its effect on academic performance of the students. Most of the studies have been carried out and they have revealed the fact that particular co-curricular activities certainly effects on the academic achievements of the students. The purpose of this research is to establish that co-curricular activities in which university students participate have a positive effect on their academic achievements. The study was conducted by using the questionnaire filling technique which was distributed among 500 students of the university. The study gave the fact that according to the students involved in any kind of sports, participating in dramatic and other literary activities positively affects their academic performance, while watching the television

has also some positive impact on academic performance. So, it can be deduced from the study that co-curricular activities affect academic achievements of the students and this impact also depends upon those activities in which the students are keenly involved.

Keywords: co-curricular activities, academic performance, GPA

Introduction

The involvement of the parents and co-curricular activities are the factors which have an important influence on students that how well they perform in their academics. There are different ways which can be chosen by the students to spend their free time and this will affect their studies positively or negatively depending upon the activity they choose. A research conducted by the education department of the United States of America discovered that the students who actively contribute in the co-curricular activities are more likely to have a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or more as compared to those who are not involved in co-curricular activities (Stephens & Schaben, 2002). Another study also revealed that regardless of the fact that students who belong to different areas, their achievements in past, the home participation, the involvement in positive activities etc, positively improve their GPA in the examination (Simon, 2001). Various studies and research have explored different factors which can influence students' academic performance, and many factors were found to have significant effect on their performance.

According to Bringing Up Girls in Science (BUGS), which is for young girls and their parents at the University of North Texas: "the upbringing and the environment of the home are the most important factors which influence the academic achievements of the students." ¹⁾ An association seems to exist between the activities chosen by students and their academic achievements. One of the main controversies that exist nowadays is the effect of tele-

vision watching on the academic achievements of the students. The amount of television viewing and parental involvement are not the only factors which can affect the achievements of the students but also the effects of community activities and sports have association with the performance of the students.

The administration of different schools are interested to find out whether there is association between student academic performance and the involvement in the co-curricular activities which shows that to some extent there does exist relationship between student performance and the involvement in co-curricular activities (Stephens & Schaben, 2002). These activities have influence on students' academic performance but on the other hand there also exists the debate that whether these activities effect positively or negatively. The growth of co-curricular activities was not so very fast in the beginning (Millard, 1930). Then gradually the educationist started realizing that these activities do have some influence on the behavior as well as on the performance of the students. In the beginning, the co-curricular activities were observed as recreational and were discouraged (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Recently the educationists and the administration of different educational institutions started realizing that the co-curricular activities have positive influence on the skills enhancement and the academic performance of the students (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Total extracurricular activity participation (TEAP) is associated with high CGPA's. It increases the attendance and reduces the absentees from the class (Broh, 2002). Researchers have found positive associations between participation in co-curricular activities and academic performance of the students (Guest & Schneider, 2003). Most of the co-curricular activities have found to be good in constructing and enhancing academic performance of the students although they do not have direct relationship with their academic subjects (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). The research explored this fact that the students who participate in co-curricular activities also perform well in their academics

as compared to those students who do not participate in such activities (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Darling et al. (2005) also conducted the study to find out the association between the involvement in co-curricular activities and the enhancement in the performance of the students in their academics. For this purpose they conducted a survey and the list of co-curricular activities was distributed among the students. Students were asked to choose those co-curricular activities in which they participated last year. In order to take account the social factors, different demographic questions were also asked like gender, area to which they belong and favorite activity etc. The performance of the students in their last examination and their GPA's were also asked in that survey. The conclusions of the study revealed the fact that the students who participated in the school based co-curricular activities tend to have good GPAs and performance as compared to those students who did not participate in such activities. Guest & Schneider (2003) carried out the study on different social factors which has association with the co-curricular activities and the student academic performance.

The researchers who have carried out study on the co-curricular activities divide them into formal and non formal activities. The formal activities are those activities which include the involvement of students in sports, dramas or debates competition etc. On the other hand the activities such as listening music or watching television are classified as informal activities. Study has suggested that both formal and informal activities have different effects on academic performance (Guest & Schneider, 2003). One research observed that more you spend time in leisure activities the poorer academic performance and poorer working habits are developed while more time you spend in formal activities like sports, debate and dramatic activities, the more grades you get in studies (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

The impact of sports activities on the academic performance of students

The effect of the sports activities and athletics on the study has been debatable over the years. Few say it has positive effect while others say it has negative impact on the studies. Recent studies on the impact of the sports activities on the studies produced the results which seem to be inconsistent (Broh, 2002). We can also see the inconsistent studies in recent years but most of the research has shown the idea that the sports activities does effect positively on the academic performance of the students. The conclusions of one study stated that involvement in sports activities is generally not associated to the educational attainment of the students. Moreover this study also showed that participation in sports activities in high school level does not improve grades and performance in academics (Broh, 2002). Many other studies produced positive association between sports activities and academic performance as compared to this study which provided negative association between these two factors. Broh (2002) thinks that involvement in sports activities enhances students' development and social bond among them, their parents, and schools, and these are the factors which produce positive impact on their performance in their studies. "Longitudinal studies on school sports have suggested that such participation raises students' grades and test scores" (Broh, 2002). Research has shown that the involvement in sports activities does not guarantee good marks in the examination but it may be possible good students are involved in sports related activities. Recent studies have shown that there exists selection bias of good students who participate in the co-curricular activities as well as sports (Broh, 2002).

The impact of television viewing on the academic performance of students

Although television watching can not be considered as a co-curricular activity but as far as this study is concerned, television watching has been considered as co-curricular activity. Many studies have classified television watching as leisure activity. More time you spend on the co-curricular activities and other structured activities and less attention towards watching television results in good grades and scores in the examination (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002)

The studies have found the negative relationship between watching television and the performance of the students. Bar-on reported in 1999 that 4000 studies have been published on the effect of television watching. An education article observed that most of the studies have found insignificant relationship between watching TV and academic performance. However there exist studies which have observed rather weak but significant relationship (Thompson & Austin, 2003)

Shin (2004) in the research on watching television and its impact on grades of the students constructed three different kinds of hypothesis for its negative impact. The first hypothesis is the time displacement hypothesis which means that watching television distracts the viewer and students from the intellectual ideas and as a result the grades of the students are effected (Shin, 2004). Another hypothesis which was constructed is the mental-effect hypothesis in which watching television results in the laziness of the mind. Shin found some proof which shows that watching television requires less mental attention as compared to reading and writing which result that less mental and intellectual efforts are utilized during watching television as it is used during other activities (Shin, 2004). The third and final hypothesis is called arousal hypothesis which proposes that watching television encourages spontaneous behaviors and can decrease academic performance because tele-

vision uses continuous movements that can discourage sustained activities. This hypothesis also suggests that watching television leads to apparent intellectual processing which results that children can not concentrate in their studies during class (Shin, 2004)

The different effects on the performance of the students depend upon the amount of television they watch. The researchers have found that there does not exist negative relationship between watching TV and performance of the students until the student start watching television 10 or more hours in the week and strong negative relationship exists when they exceed this timing to 30 hours or more (Thompson & Austin, 2003). One research showed that television has positive impact on studies until certain level and then it has negative relationship if it exceeds certain limit (Thompson & Austin, 2003).

Although there is separate issue on the time students spend on television watching, there is also debate on the type and quality of the program they watch. If the students watch highly informative and intellectual programs and documentaries, in the long run they would definitely increase their knowledge and skills in their studies. On the other hand if they watch television programs like action movies, cartoons and music, definitely these would have a negative impact on their brains and results in low academic grades (Thompson & Austin, 2003).

Most of the studies have found negative relationship between the television watching and academic performance but there are some cases where there exists the positive relationship between these two factors These cases are rare, therefore the common study suggests that there exists the negative relationship between these two.

Research hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not the activities that the university students choose have an effect on their academic perfor-

mance: (1) Do the co-curricular activities influence the academic performance of the university students? (2) How is the academic performance influenced by specific activities? (3) Is there an association between academic performance of the students and watching television?

Method of data collection

The information was gathered through the questionnaire. The sampling method used in this regard is the stratified random sampling. There are a total of six faculties in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur which were treated as stratas. Then from each faculty three departments were selected randomly and then from each department four classes were selected randomly. On the average there were 40 students in each of the selected class. Finally from each selected class 8 students were randomly picked and were asked to fill in the questionnaire. Out of 576 questionnaires, 500 questionnaires were treated as adequate and the remaining 76 questionnaires were either not filled properly or were rejected due to inconsistency in the responses. So the response rate of our survey was found to be 86.80 %.

Data analysis

The SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) of version 15 was employed to obtain the results. The Chi-square test was used to test the association between different factors because our data consisted of the frequencies that fall in each category. A significance level of 0.05 was used to test the significance of the results.

Research hypothesis No 1:

Does the co-curricular activities influence the academic performance of the university students (Table 1).

Table 1. Cross tabulation between hours spend co-curricular activities and percentage of the marks in the last examination

		How many hours daily you spend in your extra-curricular activities?				Total
		< 1 hour	1-2 hours	above 2 hours	zero	
What percentage of marks you got in last examination?	< 60 %	48	32	17	4	101
	61%-70%	49	88	47	6	190
	71%-80%	33	46	46	5	130
	above 80%	15	28	26	10	79
Total		145	194	136	25	500

Table 2. Chi-square test between hours spend co-curricular activities and percentage of the marks in the last examination

	Value	Degree of freedom	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square	40.334	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	36.523	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.784	1	.000
No of Valid Cases	500		

Since the P-value 0.000 is less than our level of significance 0.05 in Table 2, we can conclude that there is strong association between the involvement in co-curricular activities and the academic performance of the students. Our results are supported by the study of Guest & Schneider (2003) in which they reported that the researchers have found positive association between the co-curricular activities and the academic performance of the students. Marsh & Kleitman (2002) also supported our study that there are many co-curricular activities which have proved very productive in enhancing the academics of the students, although these activities are not directly related to the subjects of the students. Findings are also supported by the study of Dar-

ling et al. (2005), in which he showed that students who are actively involved in the co-curricular activities get good grades, develop better attitudes as compared to those who did not take part in any co-curricular activities. However the study which was conducted by Broh (2002) did not completely negate or accept this fact that co-curricular activities have some influence on academics of the students. He reported in his study that there are some co-curricular activities which improve academics of the students while some activities have negative influence on the performance of the students.

Research hypothesis No 2:

How is the academic performance influenced by specific activities (Table 3).

Table 3. Cross tabulation between extra curricular activities and percentage of the marks in the last examination

		What are your extra-curricular activities?						Total
		sports	internet	mobile	T.V	reading book	none	
What percentage of marks you got in last examination?	< 60 %	42	27	14	4	6	8	101
	61%-70%	48	71	27	9	20	15	190
	71%-80%	37	28	13	8	23	21	130
	above 80%	22	9	10	7	14	17	79
Total		149	135	64	28	63	61	500

Table 4. Chi square test between extra curricular activities and percentage of the marks in the last examination

	Value	Degree of freedom	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square	46.035	15	.000
Likelihood Ratio	46.625	15	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.957	1	.000
No of Valid Cases	500		

From the Table 4 we can see that the P-value 0.000 is less than our significance level 0.05. We can conclude that the academic performance is highly influenced by the selection of co-curricular activities such as sports, internet, mobile usage, TV watching and reading books. We can see from the table 3 in the cross tabulation that most of the students have preferred sports as their co-curricular activity.

Our finding is supported by Stephens & Schaben (2002), who observed in their study that students who actively participated in one of the sports activities performed well as compared to those who did not participate in one or less. There is study of Broh (2002) in which he reported that there are some sports activities which can have good impact on the studies of the students while this finding is negated again by his own study that the sports which are not directly related to the subjects of the students will not help the students to improve their grades in the studies.

Research hypothesis No 3:

Is their association between academic performance of the students and watching television (Table5).

Table 5. Cross tabulation between hours spend on watching television and percentage of the marks in the last examination

		How many hours you spend on watching T.V?				Total
		zero	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	more than 3 hours	
What percentage of marks you got in last examination?	< 60 %	39	47	15	0	101
	61%-70%	71	88	28	3	190
	71%-80%	34	60	29	7	130
	above 80%	18	36	15	10	79
Total		162	231	87	20	500

Table 6. Chi-square test between hours spend on watching television and percentage of the marks in the last examination

	Value	Degree of freedom	P-value
Pearson Chi-Square	31.799	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.317	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.546	1	.000
No of Valid Cases	500		

From the Table 6 we can see that the P-value which is 0.000 is less than our significance level 0.05 therefore there exist strong association between watching television and the academic performance of the student. Students, who have obtained marks between 61% and 71%, watch television from 1 to 2 hours daily.

Our finding regarding watching television deviates from the study of Marsh & Kleitman (2002), who observed that more time you spend on sports and other structured activities and less time on television watching, more grades you will get in your studies. Bar-on (1999) also gave his study that

there is high correlation between watching television and the aggressive violence which results in the low grades of the students. However the study of Thompson & Austin (2003) did not completely accept or negate this finding. They reported that there are some studies who have not found any relationship between watching TV and performance of the students, a few have found very positive and significant relationship and there are also some studies who have found rather weak but significant relationship between these two. They gave this point of view that watching television may have positive influence up to certain level and then there exist negative impact when this limit exceeds to the threshold point. Our findings related to the taking part in community activities agrees with the study of Hinck & Brandell (1999), who gave their opinion that service learning and the community activities has shown positive impact on the performance of the students.

Conclusions

The results of our study with the help of Chi-square technique showed that participation in the co-curricular activities improve the academic performance of the students. Athletic and sports participation improves the performance of the students in their studies; watching television may improve the academic performance if it is limited to certain limit.

Recommendations

On the basis of our conclusions some recommendations can be made which would be helpful for both parents and teachers.

More often than not, the students who take part actively in co-curricular activities also take benefit in their studies. The students, teachers and parents should be aware of the fact that which co-curricular activity is beneficial. Every student performs in the studies at his best while taking part in other positive activities, so one should not expect extra ordinary perfor-

mance from every student because he or she is also taking part in other positive activities which is not only helpful for the development of his or her health but also it creates balance in his or her personality.

However parents should not enforce their children to take part in co-curricular activities to improve their grades. Different students have different likings and intentions. Parents should search out those activities in which their children can participate well according to his or her capabilities.

On the other hand parents should also not forbid their children to take part in sports and other co-curricula activities. The involvement in such activities helps them in number of ways. These activities develop social skills, sportsman spirit, ethics and discipline.

Co-curricular activities serve at a large for the development in the academic, social, mental, and character of students, and every students should be provided with the chance to take part in at least one healthy and positive activity. However the purpose of such activities should be to improve their mental and physical health. Watching television too much can not be regarded as healthy activity. Parents should allow their children to choose their co-curricular activity and they should have check on their activities. These are the parents who have the essential role in the development of the character and health of their children. They should provide their children with the best available facilities so that they become able to perform well in both academics and in ground.

NOTES

1. <http://www.coe.unt.edu/bugs/parents.index.html>

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