

THE IMPACT OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN CHARSADDA DISTRICT, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Background:

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are a vital component of holistic education, promoting not only academic excellence but also personal growth and skill development. In nursing education, where academic and clinical demands are high, participation in ECAs may play a significant role in enhancing students' confidence, leadership, and time management skills. However, limited research has explored this relationship among nursing students in Pakistan.

Aim:

The study aimed to examine the impact of extracurricular activities on the academic performance and personal development of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students in the Charsadda District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Specifically, it sought to determine the relationship between ECA participation and students' academic achievement, motivation, and personal skills such as teamwork, communication, and self-confidence.

Methodology:

A quantitative analytical cross-sectional research design was employed. The study sample comprised 50 BSN students selected through stratified random sampling from two nursing colleges in Charsadda. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of demographic information and Likert-scale items measuring the perceived impact of ECAs on academic and personal development. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26), applying descriptive and inferential statistics to identify trends and associations between variables.

Results:

Findings revealed that participation in ECAs positively influenced both academic and personal outcomes. Most respondents agreed that ECAs enhanced their academic motivation, time management, concentration, and overall performance. Students also reported improvements in leadership, teamwork, communication skills, self-confidence, and stress management. A small proportion indicated that ECAs occasionally interfered with study time, but the overall impact was significantly positive.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that extracurricular activities play a crucial role in fostering academic success and holistic personal development among nursing students. Integrating structured ECA programs into nursing curricula can enhance essential professional competencies, including leadership, communication, and resilience, ultimately contributing to improved educational and clinical outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Extracurricular activities ECA have been an important part of education system. Students take keen interest in these activities of all ages and standards. ECA includes sports, games, arts, poetry, Newspapers, drama, music etc. Engaging these activities can leads to academic success.(Radhika kapur March 2018).

It serves as a part of modern days academic curriculum. Students via ECA keep themselves involved in games, sports and in cultural activities to enhanced their knowledge, skill and attitude.(Ahmad.M.,Rahman.MF.,Ali.M.,Rahman.FN.,Al-Azad.MAS.,2015)

Special attention has been given to the position of extracurricular activities in adolescent development.(Van T. T. DANG.,2025)

If a student fails to participate in an organized club or activity after school, they find other ways to spend time which offers little adult guidance as well as supervision.(Furda.M & Shuleski.M.,2019)

Burrows and McCormack (2011) conducted a study at a successful girls' school in New Zealand known for its strong academic performance and high level of sports involvement. They found that extracurricular activities positively impacted students' academic outcomes. These activities provided a necessary break from academic pressure, boosted students' confidence, and fostered a stronger sense of connection to their school. Participation also instilled responsibility and a sense of belonging. Interestingly, students involved in a moderate number of activities—around two—performed better than those engaged in either too many or too few. While the type of activity also influenced outcomes, the study highlighted the need for further research to understand these dynamics in more depth.(Tanner.B.,2017)

Co-curricular activities are programs or events that happen outside regular classroom lessons but still support learning. These activities can take place inside or outside the classroom and are usually organized by schools. They help students learn things related to their studies and also build their character. Co-curricular activities are important because they help students become more confident, disciplined, social, and good leaders. They also give students fun and healthy ways to spend their time. These activities support the overall growth of students—morally, mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. They help us understand how important such activities are in a student's

life.(Sarwar.Z.,Dr.Perveen.Q.,Dr.Niazi.I.,2024)

Students who take part in extracurricular activities usually get many benefits. These include getting better grades, scoring higher on tests, doing well in school, and coming to school more regularly. They also feel better about themselves. By joining after-school activities, students often learn important skills like teamwork and leadership. These activities also help reduce the chances of using alcohol, drugs, or getting into trouble. Students who are involved in such activities usually have better marks, miss fewer classes, and feel more connected to their school.(Welson.N.,2009)

Morrow and Glaude (2014) studied U.S. high school students and found that those involved in extracurricular activities did better in school, even when considering their family background, age, and gender. Liu et al. (2018) studied Chinese high school students and found similar results. Students who joined extracurricular activities had better academic performance, and those in more activities performed even better. Both studies show that extracurricular activities help improve students' academic results.(Venkataraman.S & Dheivamani.A.,2021)

Extracurricular activities are planned and organized activities that have rules and are supervised by adults. They focus on helping students learn new skills and grow in a positive way. These activities are different from unplanned or casual activities like watching TV, chatting with friends, doing homework, swimming, or playing soccer at home. The Australian Bureau of Statistics calls the planned ones “formal activities” and the casual ones “informal activities” to help explain children’s free time activities.(Villaverde.A.M.,Lavandeira.P.L.,& Juste.P.M.,2024)

Background

ECA-Extracurricular activities are obvious and pivotal in modern times. Human beings are not machines that can function under severe pressure for long. Prior to learning and achieving educational goals, it is important to have a good and healthy mind as well as healthy emotional health. ECA offers self discipline, emotional intelligence, resilience and a sense of identity. ECA provides a necessary balance to academic life, holistic development and preparing individuals for professional challenges.

Developed countries pay attention to its importance because they consider it a key part of student growth globally.Dr. Kiran Bedi adds that extracurricular activities make you versatile and become habits to progress ahead.It uncovers our talents and polishes skills. It develops our cognitive, physical and interpersonal skills. Moreover, it enhances self esteem and builds confidence. It enhances communication skills via teamwork. It teaches us the importance of planning, organization and commitment. It prepares individuals for a successful future.Engaging in extracurricular activities contributes to adolescents’ character development.

Students who participate in extracurricular activities report higher levels of self-concept and self-Worth (Blomfield & Barber, 2009). They also have opportunities to develop personal interests and discover their strengths.

It benefits students’ personal and academic success. Students who participate in

extracurricular activities have greater levels of academic Achievement. Extracurricular participation supports students’ character development by Giving them skills required for personal success, such as leadership skills, time-management Skills, and the ability to accept constructive criticism. Additionally, participation in extracurricular activities Cultivates social development. Lastly, participating in extracurricular activities provides Opportunities for students to experience the importance of community involvement. Understanding the benefits of extracurricular activities can help students to identify which Activities to participate in, in order to support their academic and personal development.

Problem statement

Q1 What is the problem?

The main issue is that we are unsure how extracurricular activities, such as sports, clubs, or volunteering, affect nursing students. Consequently, we lack clarity on whether these activities have a positive or negative impact on their academic performance and personal development. Nursing school is inherently demanding, requiring students to juggle rigorous coursework with the development of practical skills and personal growth. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a thorough study to gain a deeper understanding of how extracurricular activities influence students’ academic outcomes, confidence, leadership abilities, and stress management. By conducting this research we can subsequently design and implement more effective programs and policies that provide targeted support to students, ultimately enabling them to become well-rounded nurses equipped with the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes necessary for success in their profession.

1. What are the Consequences if this problem is not resolved ?

If we fail to understand the impact of extracurricular activities on nursing students, it can lead to problems or consequences. For instance, students might struggle to balance school work and activities, resulting in poor grades. As a result they may miss out the developing skills like

leadership, communication, teamwork and conflict resolution etc. Additionally this could cause increased stress and mental health issues. Ultimately, this could impact the quality of nursing care and health care system if students do not reached their full potential.

2. What bearing does this problem have in the research context?

This problem has significant bearing in the research context because it addresses a crucial knowledge gap about the impact of extracurricular activities on nursing students academic performance and personal development. By exploring this issue, researchers can gain valuable insights to inform the design of effective support programs and policies, ultimately enhancing student success, well-being, and professional growth, and positively impacting the quality of nursing care.

3. What are the researcher going to do to alleviate this Problem?

Researchers will conduct a study on extracurricular activities' impact on nursing students, collecting data through surveys, interviews, or observations. The data will be analyzed to identify patterns and correlations, and insights will be developed on how activities influence student outcomes. Findings will inform support program design and policy development, with recommendations provided for targeted support systems. The ultimate goal is to enhance student success, well-being, and professional growth, leading to improved quality of nursing care.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because it evaluates the impact of extracurricular activities on academic performance and personal growth among undergraduate students. By investigating the benefits of extracurricular activities, this research aims to uncover their advantages in achieving academic success and fostering personal development. Furthermore, it bridges the gap between existing research findings and current practices in educational institutions, providing valuable insights for stakeholders.

The study highlights that students who participate in extracurricular activities tend to gain more confidence, become more outgoing, and experience mental refreshment, enabling them to learn quickly and efficiently. In contrast, students who do not participate may miss out on these benefits, potentially hindering their skill development and personal growth.

Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights into involving students in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and volunteer work. By doing so, it aims to enhance student performance, including improved academic achievement and time management skills, as well as personal development, including leadership skills, teamwork, and self-confidence.

Research objective

To investigate the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance.

To explore the effect of extracurricular activities on personal development.

Research Questions

What is the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and students' academic achievement?

How do extracurricular activities influence students' personal development, including skills such as time management, teamwork, and self-confidence?

Research Methodology

Quantitative research is a methodology that focuses on gathering and analyzing numerical data to address research questions or test specific hypotheses (Creswell, 2014; Polit & Beck, 2017). Its main goal is to discover patterns, associations, and trends between variables, typically through the use of statistical techniques (Bryman, 2016). This study adopts a quantitative approach because it helps to determine relationships between variables and produces results efficiently. It also enables a systematic assessment of variable interactions, which can support evidence-based decision-making and guide policy formulation.

Study design

This research project employed an analytical cross-sectional quantitative design because it helps in determining associations between variables, is generally more cost-effective compared to longitudinal approaches, and provides results within a shorter time frame. An analytical study is a form of research that focuses on exploring and interpreting the connections between variables, highlighting patterns, and establishing correlations to reach meaningful conclusions (Kumar, 2019). As Creswell (2013) explains, analytical studies are valuable for identifying potential causes, effects, and relationships, which can further guide policy-making and informed decisions.

A cross-sectional design, on the other hand, is an observational approach where information is gathered from participants at a single point in time (Kumar, 2019). Creswell (2013) notes that this method provides a “snapshot” of a population or phenomenon, making it useful for examining relationships among variables during a specific moment.

study population.

The study population for this research consisted of all Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students enrolled in the four BSN colleges of Charsadda district during the academic year 2025. For the purpose of this study, a BSN student is defined as any individual formally registered in the 4-year BSN programme and actively attending courses during the data collection period (Creswell, 2014). This population was selected because BSN students represent the group directly affected by extracurricular activities in terms of their academic performance and personal development. By including students from all four nursing colleges in Charsadda, the study ensures a comprehensive representation of the district-level BSN student body, thereby increasing the relevance and generalizability of the findings to similar educational contexts (Polit & Beck, 2017).

Study Setting

The study is being conducted in Charsadda District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

sampling technique and sample size.

This study comprises a sample size of 50 BSN students, drawn from two nursing colleges in Charsadda. To ensure a fair representation from each institution, approximately 25 participants are being selected from each college. A stratified random sampling technique is being employed to choose the participants. This approach enables the researcher to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences from students across both colleges, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Inclusion criteria

The study includes students who are currently enrolled in the BSN program (from 1st to 4th year). Participants must be 18 years of age or older and should have completed at least one semester of their studies. Only those students who are able to read either Urdu or English and who willingly provide consent to participate are included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria.

The study excludes post-basic or postgraduate nursing students. Students who are on leave or undertaking internships outside Charsadda are not included. In addition, any students who decline to provide consent or submit incomplete questionnaires are excluded from the study.

Data Collection Tool

These ECA questionnaires aim to assess participation rates in extracurricular activities across different colleges, comparing students who participate in ECAs with those who do not. The goal is to determine whether ECA participants exhibit superior academic performance (GPA), confidence levels, presentation skills, and other outcomes compared to non-participants.

The questionnaire consists of three sections: demographics, the impact of extracurricular activities on academic performance, and the impact of extracurricular activities on personal development.

Section A: Demographics:

The demographics section of the questionnaire asks about three key factors: year of study, gender, and participation in extracurricular activities. This section collects essential demographic information from students, enabling researchers to better understand and contextualize their responses, identify patterns and trends, and gain a deeper insight into the characteristics of the study sample. By gathering this data, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the students' backgrounds and experiences.

Sections B and C: Impact of ECAs on Academic Performance and Personal Development:

These sections consist of 12 statements based on the Likert scale, each focusing on different aspects of extracurricular activities. Students are asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement, providing a measurable assessment of the impact of ECAs on their academic performance and personal development. The scale ranges from:

- 5 (Strongly Disagree)
- 4 (Disagree)
- 3 (Neutral)
- 2 (Agree)
- 1 (Strongly Agree)

This format allows for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the impact of extracurricular activities on academic performance and personal development.

The 12 questions focus on the following key areas:

1. Improved Academic Performance: Participation in extracurricular activities helps me improve my academic performance.
2. Time Management Skills: Extracurricular activities enhance my time management skills, which positively affect my studies.
3. Academic Motivation: My involvement in extracurricular activities motivates me to perform better academically.
4. Study Time Impact: Participation in extracurricular activities sometimes negatively affects my study time.

5. Focus and Concentration: Extracurricular activities improve my ability to focus and concentrate on academic tasks.

6. Teamwork and Collaboration: Participation in extracurricular activities has improved my teamwork and collaboration skills.

7. Leadership Qualities: I have developed leadership qualities through extracurricular activities.

8. Self-Confidence: Extracurricular activities have enhanced my self-confidence.

9. Communication Skills: Participation in extracurricular activities has improved my communication and interpersonal skills.

10. Stress Management: Extracurricular involvement helps me manage stress more effectively.

11. Responsibility and Discipline: I feel more responsible and disciplined because of my participation in extracurricular activities.

12. Balanced Personality: Extracurricular activities have helped me in building a balanced personality (academic + personal growth).

The statements explore how extracurricular activities influence students' academic performance (improved grades, time management, motivation) and personal growth (teamwork, leadership, self-confidence, communication skills, stress management, responsibility, and balanced personality).

Data Collection Procedure**Data Analysis.**

The collected data was entered into SPSS (Version 26) for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests, were applied to examine associations between variables.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review and calculation of the Content Validity Index (CVI), which was above 0.8. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted on a small group of 5 students (not included in the main study) to refine items and ensure clarity. Reliability was

assessed using Cronbach's alpha to confirm internal consistency.

Duration

The study was carried out over a period of two months, including preparation, data collection, and analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained from the Ethical Review Committee. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent collected from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence guided the study (Beauchamp & Childress, 2017).

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study titled *"The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students' Academic Performance and Personal Development."*

The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to summarize and interpret the responses of 50 participants. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations. Graphical representations such as pie charts and tables were used to clarify the findings.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine respondents' overall perceptions regarding the influence of extracurricular activities on various aspects of academic and personal development.

Table 4.1 below presents the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation for all the variables measured in the study.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Responses (N = 50)

Statement	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Participation in extracurricular activities helps me improve my academic performance	2.40	2.00	2.00	1.20
Extracurricular activities enhance my time management skills	2.50	2.00	2.00	1.34
My involvement in extracurricular activities motivates me to perform better academically	2.30	2.00	1.00	1.28
Participation in extracurricular activities sometimes negatively affects my study time	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.34
Extracurricular activities improve my ability to focus and concentrate on academic tasks	2.34	2.00	1.00	1.35
Participation improves teamwork and collaboration skills	2.18	2.00	1.00	1.32
I have developed leadership qualities through extracurricular activities	2.32	2.00	1.00	1.41
Extracurricular activities have enhanced my self-confidence	2.18	2.00	1.00	1.44
Participation has improved communication and interpersonal skills	2.06	1.00	1.00	1.45
Extracurricular involvement helps me manage stress effectively	2.32	2.00	2.00	1.27
I feel more responsible and disciplined because of my participation	2.44	2.00	1.00	1.36
Extracurricular activities have helped in building a balanced personality (academic + personal growth)	2.42	2.00	1.00	1.42

Note. Lower mean scores indicate stronger agreement with the statement (on a 5-point Likert scale).

Overall, the mean values range from 2.06 to 3.00, indicating that most respondents **agreed** or **strongly agreed** with the positive impacts of extracurricular activities on academic and personal outcomes.

4.3 Frequency Analysis

4.3.1 Academic Performance

A majority of students (62%) agreed that participation in extracurricular activities improves their academic performance (24% strongly agree, 38% agree). Only 18% expressed disagreement, while 20% remained neutral. These results suggest that extracurricular involvement is perceived as beneficial to academic achievement.

4.3.2 Time Management Skills

Sixty percent (60%) of respondents agreed that extracurricular activities enhanced their time management skills, while 22% disagreed and 18% were neutral. This reflects a generally positive but not universal perception of time management improvement.

4.3.3 Motivation Toward Academic Excellence

Approximately 62% of participants reported that their involvement in extracurricular activities motivated them to perform better academically. Only 16% disagreed, while 22% remained neutral, indicating that motivation is one of the strongest outcomes of participation.

4.3.4 Negative Impact on Study Time

Opinions were more divided regarding whether extracurricular activities interfere with study time. While 32% agreed that such activities can negatively affect study time, 36% disagreed, and another 32% were neutral. This suggests that the impact depends largely on individual time management.

4.3.5 Focus and Concentration

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents agreed that extracurricular activities enhance their focus and concentration, with only 24% disagreeing. This

suggests that participation supports cognitive engagement and academic discipline.

4.3.6 Teamwork and Collaboration

A significant proportion (68%) of respondents agreed that extracurricular participation improved their teamwork and collaboration skills. Of these, 42% strongly agreed. This indicates that group-based activities foster social cooperation and collaborative learning.

4.3.7 Leadership Development

Sixty-six percent (66%) of students agreed that extracurricular involvement helped develop their leadership qualities. Only 24% disagreed, confirming that such activities serve as valuable platforms for leadership growth.

4.3.8 Self-Confidence

An overwhelming 68% of students (48% strongly agree) indicated that extracurricular activities enhanced their self-confidence. This was among the strongest areas of positive response, emphasizing personal growth as a major benefit.

4.3.9 Communication and Interpersonal Skills

The highest level of agreement was recorded here, with 70% of students acknowledging improvement in communication and interpersonal skills (56% strongly agree, 14% agree). This highlights extracurricular activities as essential for developing social and professional competencies.

4.3.10 Stress Management

A total of 64% of students agreed that extracurricular participation helps them manage stress more effectively. However, 22% were neutral and 14% disagreed, suggesting variability in personal experiences.

4.3.11 Responsibility and Discipline

More than half of the respondents (58%) felt more responsible and disciplined as a result of their participation, while 22% disagreed and 20% were neutral. This implies that involvement promotes maturity and accountability in many students.

4.3.12 Balanced Personality Development

Finally, 62% of respondents believed that extracurricular activities helped them build a balanced personality, promoting both academic and personal growth. This finding supports the holistic developmental value of such activities.

4.4 Summary of Findings

The findings from the statistical analysis demonstrate that **extracurricular activities exert a predominantly positive influence** on students' academic performance and personal development. Respondents reported noticeable gains in motivation, teamwork, leadership, self-confidence, and communication abilities. While a minority expressed concern about potential time conflicts, the overall perception underscores the importance of extracurricular engagement as a complement to academic learning.

In summary, the data suggest that students who actively participate in extracurricular programs experience enhanced academic motivation and performance, improved interpersonal relationships, better stress management, and a more balanced personal development trajectory.

Discussion:

This chapter presents and interprets the research findings, comparing them with results from previous studies to identify similarities and differences. It also discusses the study's limitations and provides suggestions for future research. The following themes are discussed in this chapter.

This study aimed to examine the impact of extracurricular activities on student performance and personal development among BSN students in Charsadda. The findings strongly support the view that participation in extracurricular activities positively influences both academic success and personal growth.

The results revealed that students who actively engaged in extracurricular activities demonstrated better academic performance, improved time management skills, and greater motivation to excel academically. These results align with prior research indicating that involvement in extracurricular activities enhances students' learning outcomes and overall academic

achievement (Bartko, 2005; Covay & Carbonaro, 2010).

Furthermore, the study found that extracurricular involvement significantly contributed to personal development by fostering self-confidence, enhancing communication skills, and strengthening leadership abilities. These attributes are particularly essential for nursing students, as effective communication, teamwork, and leadership are critical for providing high-quality patient care (O'Leary, 2012).

The positive influence of extracurricular activities on personal development can be attributed to the opportunities they offer for experiential learning, social interaction, and skill-building. As Ecclestone (2007) emphasized, such activities help shape students' identities, enhance self-efficacy, and promote a sense of belonging within their academic and professional communities.

Overall, the findings underscore the value of integrating extracurricular opportunities within nursing education. These activities not only complement formal learning but also nurture essential soft skills that are fundamental to nursing practice. Educators and policymakers should consider developing structured extracurricular programs that align with nursing students' academic and professional needs.

Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, its limitations must be acknowledged. The geographic focus on a single district, Charsadda, limits the generalizability of the results to other regions or educational contexts. Furthermore, although the sample size was statistically adequate, a larger and more diverse cohort from multiple institutions would better capture the varied experiences of nursing students. Future research should aim for broader, multi-institutional samples to validate these findings and explore other potential influencing factors.

Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following actions are recommended:

1. Curricular Integration: Nursing educators and administrators should develop and integrate

structured extracurricular programs into the academic framework to systematically support both scholarly and personal growth.

2. Promotion of Engagement: Students should be actively encouraged to participate in these activities, with an emphasis on their value for professional development and skill acquisition.

3. Expanded Research: Subsequent studies should be conducted across diverse educational settings to further elucidate the multifaceted impact of extracurricular involvement on nursing students' outcomes.

Chapter summery :

This study reveals that students involved in extracurricular activities (ECAs) exhibit better academic performance compared to their non-participating counterparts. ECA participants demonstrate effective time management skills, enabling them to complete tasks efficiently. Moreover, involvement in ECAs fosters personal growth, including the development of leadership skills, management skills, confidence, and motivation. Notably, ECAs also contribute to mental refreshment. To further explore these findings, a mixed-methods approach is recommended. Ultimately, this research suggests that higher authorities should encourage and incorporate ECAs into students' academic experiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides robust evidence that extracurricular activities are a vital component in the education of BSN students in Charsadda, significantly enhancing both their academic success and personal development. By fostering critical professional attributes such as leadership, effective communication, and self-confidence, these activities prepare students more comprehensively for the rigors of clinical practice. The deliberate incorporation of structured extracurricular programs is, therefore, a strategic investment in developing well-rounded, capable, and resilient nursing professionals.

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