



Counter- Curricular Activities and Educational Achievements of Tertiary Education Students in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Idaka Peter Elias, Ido David Egwa and Enya Vincent Igbo.

Cross River State College of Nursing and Midwifery Sciences Itigidi

ABSTRACT

This study focused on counter-curricular activities and academic achievement of tertiary education students in Cross River State, Nigeria. Particular references were made to participation in the following counter-Curricular activities and their relationship with students' academic achievements; athletics, television viewing, music and volunteer work. Four null hypotheses were formulated to guide this research. A sample of 200 students was used for this study. A four-point Likert type questionnaire prepared by the researcher was distributed to the sample drawn from final year students in ten departments in both the Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa and Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) Calabar Campus. The questionnaire requested information on the frequency of their participation in the counter-curricular activities listed above and their achievement test. The data which was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 significant level indicated that athletics, music and volunteer work had positive correlations with students' academic achievements while television viewing had a negative correlation. It was therefore concluded that, participation in athletics, music and volunteer work contributed positively to the academic achievement of students while television viewing had a negative relationship. Recommendations were made especially to school counselors as well as suggestions for further studies.

Key words: Students' educational achievement, Athletics, Music, Television viewing, volunteer work

INTRODUCTION

Using terms like school failure or academic achievement continues to be problematic since both concepts are controversial. The relationship established between the two has led to numerous criticisms and to adopting different approvals to address the issue. On one hand, as assessment of school failure, even its very name has strong negative connotations and there are broad-based problems in drawing the borderline conceptually between failure and success (Marchesi and Hernandez, 2003). Additionally, the tendency to stigmatize the "failed" students and the absence of shared responsibility in factors such as family, the media, extra-curricular activities and the society itself make it really difficult to take on the study of this phenomenon. Different activities in which students participate, both inside and outside the school itself are among the multiple agents that can have an effect on students' educational achievement. Extra Scholastic activities have been associated with an improved educational level, more interpersonal competencies, higher aspiration and a better attention level (Mahoney, Cairns and Farwer, 2003). Increased critical thinking, personal and social maturity (Bauer and Liang, 2003), higher motivation, (Holloway, 2002) and generally speaking, with great benefits that serve to bridge school activities with those performed outside the academic setting. (Noam, Biancarosa and Dechausay, 2003). Music, parental involvement, sports all of these have an influence on how student perform academically. The way student spend their free time can affect their school achievements, it is not only the traditional in-class instruction that imparts educational achievement. A study of the U.S Department of Education revealed that students who participate in co-curricular activities are three times more likely to have a grade point average of 3.0 better than students who do not participate in co-curricular activities (Stephen and Schaben, 2002). In addition to counter-Curricular activities, analyses revealed that regardless of students' background and poor achievement, various parenting, volunteering and home learning activities positively influence students' grade (Simon, 2001). Numerous studies have examined the factors influencing students' academic achievement and many activities were found to have significant influence. According to BUGS (Bringing up Girls in science), a program for young girls and their parents at the University of North Texas, the home environment is among the most important influence on academic achievement (BUGS, 2003). A correlation appears to exist between the activities that students choose outside of the class room and their academic achievement. One of the main controversies is the effect of television viewing on the students' educational achievement. The relationship between cognitive development and television viewing has been the one mostly studied. Investigators disagree about the effects of this relationship, (Shin, 2004). The amount and quality of television viewing and family involvement are not the only influences of educational achievements. The effect of music and sports are also controversial in their relation to educational achievements. All of these activities have some sort of effect on students educational achievements, however, the issue of whether they benefit or hinder is not ascertained.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Undoubtedly, poor performance has been one of the indicators or predictors most used to say there is a problem with our educational system. This has been assessed along traditional lines and perhaps unfairly from a basically quantitative point of view based on poor Scores or marks obtained by students in different school courses. In addition to performance, numerous variables have also been related as predictors of either failure or success as a function of the tendency or importance they have in the student's scores or marks. But there are controversies not only in delimiting and relating concept of failure and academic success or in studying variable supposedly related to both. Many causes or agents have been studied as the etiological starting point for investigating the phenomena of students' academic achievement. Most notable among these are: the role of the family, family adaptability, social change and the media, the educational system, reform and policies and other Psychological aspects such as intellectual capacity, motivation, self-esteem and self-concept. Also, different activities in which students participate, both inside and outside the school itself are among the multiple situations or agents that can have an effect on students' academic achievement.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between counter-curricular activities and educational achievement of tertiary education students in Cross River State. Specifically, the study will seek to find out the following:

1. The relationship between participation in athletics and students' academic performance.
2. The relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance.
3. The relationship between participation in music and students' academic performance.
4. The relationship between participation in volunteering and students' academic performance.

THE OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The objective of this study is to document how being involved in counter-curricular activities can influence development in the academic achievements of tertiary education students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

- What effect does students' participation in athletics have on their academic performance?
- What effect does students' participation in television viewing have on their educational and academic performance?
- What effect does students' participation in music have on their academic performance?
- What effect does students' participation in volunteering have on their academic performance?

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses would guide this research work

- There is no significant relationship between participation in athletics and students' academic performance
- There is no significant relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance
- Students participation in music does not significantly affect their academic performance
- There is no significant relationship between participation in volunteering and students' academic performance

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

We are currently witnessing an increasing proliferation of activities be they academic (private classes, foreign language, music, sports etc), sports related or cultural. For this reason, the significance of this study cannot be over-emphasized. Firstly, it would help to establish a relationship between the counter-curricular activities and the academic performance of the students. Also it will go a long way to enable teachers have a wider view of the essence of students engaging in counter-curricular activities such as music and athletics, television viewing, volunteering and see how students can be encouraged to take part in them. More Over, it will help to strike a balance between students' participation in these activities and participation in academic work. It will also help educators and parents to better plan the students activities so that there is a developmental competence of each stage, adapted to the characteristics of each pupil. Advisory guidelines can be established that can aid educators at the schools with appropriate guidance to parents in planning for individual cases. Finally, this study would help students to be aware of the specific counter-curricular activities available to them and the effects that each specific activity has on academic performance. Parents as well would be cautious not to force their children into participating in activities for the sole aim of increasing their academic achievements.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

COUNTER-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

These are activities performed by students that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school or University education. They exist at all levels of education.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

These refer to the achievement of a student in education with reference to his/her performance.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Refers to the level of education that comes after Secondary School Education. It is normally called post -secondary education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study utilizes the Survey method of research/investigation. Samples were collected from the target population and examined. The result obtained was generalized to cover the entire population. Treece (1977) defined this research method as a non-experimental type of research in which the researcher investigates a group of people for the purpose of providing accurate quantitative descriptions. It is suitable for the research because it involves the survey of opinions from students selected at random across the area of study to examine the relationship that exists between participation in counter-curricular activities and students' academic achievements.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprises students in final year in both the Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa and Cross River University of Technology, Calabar Campus. This level of students were selected because they form the terminal point of the tertiary education system and to allow room for the right assessment. The Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa has 30 academic departments drawn from six different schools. Cross River University of Technology, Calabar Campus is made up of five faculties; communication technology, education, engineering, environmental sciences and last but not the least, science.

THE SAMPLE

A total of 200 final year students were selected for this study. A breakdown of the figure is as follows: 100 students from the school of Education, Cross River State College of Education comprising 20 students from each of the following departments; Early Child Care Education, Primary Education Science, Education Foundation, Curriculum and instruction as well as General Studies Education. The remaining 100 students were selected from the faculty of science, Cross River University of Technology

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The entire population of final year students in both institutions was very large. To ensure that a representative sample of the population is selected; stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the sample. The schools were first stratified into two areas; the areas are College of Education, Akamkpa Area and the CRUTECH area. The students in the target population were further stratified into schools and faculties respectively. The researcher then adopted the hat and draw method. The names of the various schools and faculties respectively were written on pieces of papers and folded. Through the process of hand picking, the school first picked as well as the faculty picked first were used which are the school of education and the faculty of science. Both the school of Education and the faculty of science have five departments each, giving a total of 10 departments all together. Within each department, 20 students were selected, giving a total of 200 students.

. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The geographical distance between the various schools in this research will serve as obstacles in terms of transportation. The study sample was selected from tertiary education students in College of Education, Akamkpa and Cross River State University of technology (CRUTECH), Calabar Campus from the different backgrounds and who engage in different counter-Curricular activities. The variable isolated for this study is counter-curricular activities; athletics, television viewing, music and volunteering in respect to educational achievements of students such as improved grade point average (G.P.A).

CONSTRUCTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instruments used for this study were a questionnaire and achievement test. The questionnaire measured the frequency at which students' participated in activities- athletics, music, television viewing and volunteer work. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A requested for the respondents personal data which includes names, date of birth, sex, name of school and department. Section B of the questionnaire sought information about the frequency of participation of student in counter-curricular activities. 20 items were generated from the 4 counter-curricular activities on which this study is anchored. That is five (5) items each measuring participation in music, television viewing

Athletics and volunteering. The achievement test was the semester exam written by the students. The results were collected from the various departments and analyzed. The essence of the two is to enable

the researcher examine the relationship between participation in Counter-curricular activities and the academic achievement of students.

VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Face and Content validity of the instruments were ascertained by experts in measurement and evaluation and especially as the item comprehensively reflect the variables in the research questions.

REALIBILITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS

To ensure that the instruments were reliable, a pilot test was conducted. A test retest interval was one week. The test instrument was further determined by subjecting the data obtained from the pilot test to statistical treatment.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Personal contacts were first made with the heads of departments in other to allow for the administration of the questionnaire to the students. The researcher visited the departments to administer the questionnaire directly. This direct method helped to minimize fear and provided assurance and confidence on the part of the students. The fact that the respondents were found in their various departmental classes enabled 100% retrieval of the questionnaire as was administered. The examination officers of the various departments involved in the study allowed the researcher access to the semester result of the students.

PROCEDURE FOR DATA ANALYSIS

To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, the dependent and independent variables were identified. The statistical analysis was also presented. Four hypotheses were tested using various testing procedures as shown below.

HYPOTHESIS ONE

There is no significant relationship between participation in athletics and students' academic performance.

Independent variable..... Athletics

Dependent variable..... Students' academic performance

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

Pearson product moment correlation.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

There is no significant relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance.

Independent variable.....Television viewing

Dependent variable.....Students academic performance

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

Pearson product moment correlation

HYPOTHESIS THREE

Students' participation in music does not significantly affect their academic performance

Independent variable.....Music

Dependent variable.....Students' academic perforance

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

Pearson product moment correlation.

HYPOTHESIS FOUR

There is no significant relationship between participation in Volunteering and students' academic performance.

Independent variable.....Volunteering

Dependent variable.....Students' academic correlation

RESULT

X represents the independent variable

Y represents the dependent variable

$\sum X$ represents summation of independent variable

$\sum Y$ represent summation of dependent variable

r represents Pearson Coefficient

α represents level of significance

df represents degree of freedom

$r_{critical}$ represents critical value.

HYPOTHESIS ONE

There is no significant relationship between participation in athletics and students' academic performance. To test this, Pearson product moment correlation was applied to the data. The result is shown in the table below

VARIABLES	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Athletics	2760	38120	38680	0.56
Students' academic performance	2800	39360		

$\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 198$, $r_{critical} = 0.195$

TABLE 1: Table showing the relationship between participation in athletics and students' academic performance.

From the table above, since the value of r {0.56} is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is a significant relationship between participation in athletics and students' academic performance.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

There is no significant relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance. To test this, Pearson product moment correlation was applied to the data. The result is shown in the table below.

VARIABLES	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Television viewing	2320	26960	32440	-0.456
Students' academic performance	2800	39360		

$\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 198$, $r_{critical} = 0.195$

TABLE 2: Table showing the relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance. The result in table 2 shown above calculated the absolute value of r to be negative but still higher than the critical value of 0.195. From this result, the null hypothesis is been rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance.

HYPOTHESIS THREE

Students; participation in music does not significantly affect their academic performance. To test this, Pearson product moment correlation was applied to the data. The result is presented in the table below

VARIABLES	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
music	3840	73840	53880	0.896
Students' academic performance	2800	39360		

$\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 198$, $r_{critical} = 0.195$

TABLE 3: Table showing the relationship between participation in Music. From the statistical analysis presented above, the value of r is greater than the critical value of 0.195. Hence. the null hypothesis

is rejected. The implication therefore is that participation in music has a significant relationship with students' academic performance.

HYPOTHESIS FOUR

There is no significant relationship between participation in volunteer work and students' academic performance. Pearson product moment correlation was applied in the treatment in the data as presented below.

VARIABLES	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Volunteer work	3560	636400	50040	0.96
Students' academic performance	2800	39360		

$\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 198$, $r_{critical} = 0.195$

TABLE 4: Table showing the relationship between participation in Volunteer work and students' academic performance. From the statistical above, the r value of 0.96 is greater than the critical value of 0.195 at 0.05 significant level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between participation in volunteer work and students' academic performance.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings of the research are summarized as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship (positive) between participation in athletics and academic performance of students.
2. There is a negative relationship between participation in television viewing and students' academic performance.
3. There is a positive relationship between participation in music and students' academic performance.
4. There is a significant positive relationship between participation in volunteer work and the academic performance of students

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the findings was discussed in accordance with the research questions

PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

From the analyzed result, there is a positive relationship academic between participation in athletics and students' performance. The findings agrees with Stephens and Schaben (2002) who found that students' who participated in at least one sport each year performed better than those who did not participate in terms of their grade point average (GPA).

PARTICIPATION IN TELEVISION VIEWING AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The result of the findings here shows a negative correlation between television viewing and academic performance of students. This deviates from Marsh and Kleitman (2002) who found that more time in television viewing is associated with high school grades but agrees with Baron (1999) whose findings show that high rate of television viewing leads to aggressive and violent behavior and lower academic performance

PARTICIPATION IN MUSIC AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The analyzed result shows a positive correlation between participation in music and students' academic performance. This agrees with Kelstrom's (1998) research which revealed that music students reach higher academic achievement levels in terms of their CGPA than no- music students.

PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTEER WORK AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The findings established a positive relationship between participation in volunteer work and students' academic performance. The findings agree with Hinck and Brandell (1999) who stated that service learning has proven to have a positive effect on the academic performance of students. Simon's (2001) research also correlates with this finding, reporting that students' grades, volunteering activities positively affect attendance, behaviour and school preparedness.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between participation in counter-curricular activities-athletics, television viewing, music and volunteering work and the academic performance of students. Four null hypotheses were posited for the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted and a total of 200 samples from 10 departments were used for the study. The questionnaire was designed by the research student and used for data collection

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides some information regarding the issue of counter-curricular activities and whether they benefit or hinder the academic performance of tertiary school students who participated in them. Therefore, the following recommendations are being made.

1. It is very important for school counselors to know the effects that involvement in counter-curricular activities can have on students' academic achievement.
2. Community partnerships are encouraged as working together to fund these activities is beneficial to all involved
3. School Counselors could work with students to determine a best fit for participation in activities that build on their academic abilities.
4. There is need to evaluate the effects of various counter curricula activities on the academic performance of students.

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