

UNVEILING THE EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS: A CASE STUDY IN UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the experiences of students' participation in extracurricular activities in the University of Cape Coast. We adopted the explanatory mixed method design with interview and questionnaire administration to examine the experiences of students' participation in extracurricular activities on campus. Using the purposive and simple random sampling techniques, 110 respondents constituting 100 students and 10 first, second and third year students were selected for an interview and in-depth study. The study found that the experiences associated with students' engagement in extracurricular activities are as a result of socialization, time management, high self-esteem, school bonding, releases stress etc. Again, time consuming, poor academic performance, less communication, money consuming, were some of the disadvantages associated with students' engagement in extracurricular activities. However, the findings of this study gave stakeholders in education new insights into emerging issues on extracurricular activities and influence the Ministry of Education on policy formulation.

Keywords: Student Experiences, Extracurricular Participation, Extracurricular activities Student Participation

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, many colleges and universities had a broad educational mission: to develop the student's cognitive, health and academics. On college campuses, extracurricular involvement is an important tool in this personal development. For the majority of college and university students, taking part in extracurricular activities plays an integral role in the collegiate experience. Students become involved in extracurricular activities not only for entertainment, social, and enjoyment purposes, but most important, to gain and improve skills. According to Fredricks & Eccles (1999), "*advantages gained from this involvement extend beyond academic grades and provide students with an additional set of skills for use in future endeavors*" Eccles (2003).

Evidence has proven that the creation of Massoni (2011) extracurricular activities in student learning has involved students into active participation in class that had helped their learning achievement (Barnett, 2007). It is quite evident that extracurricular activities have really helped

in students development in their fitness, psychological advancement. Moreover, the "*many important learning opportunities exist outside the realm of normal classroom*" (Fredrick & Eccles, 2005). Teachman (2008), asserted that, many struggle to see the direct benefits of extracurricular activities upon the lives of students, but often the benefits are manifested several years later as students enter the workforce or engage in other leadership activities.

Some types and examples of extracurricular activities Martin (2015) in University of Cape Coast may include: Inter-hall and inter-school football competition, hall week celebrations which embeds musical activities, leadership roles, where political issues are debated, and art and drama, where different plays are shown by the department of theater and film, to mention but a few. And these activities could further be classified into outdoor and indoor Roberts (2007) extracurricular activities. Examples of the outdoor activities are: yoga, football, basketball, cricket, athletics, bicycling, excursions, trips to places of geographical, historical, economical or cultural interest etc. and these could be mentioned of the indoor activities: music and dance, art and craft, dramatics, drawing and painting, tailoring, student self-government, decoration etc. These activities have helped in one way or the other to improve some aspects of the total being of the students that partake in them.

This research focuses on the students of the University of Cape Coast, which could be found in the Central Region of Ghana, West Africa. It was established in 1962, the institution is a non-profit public higher education located in the suburban setting of the large town of Cape Coast with a high population range of (50,000-249,999) inhabitants. The university is a very large coeducational higher education institution which offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees such as pre-bachelor degrees (i.e. certificates, diplomas, associate or foundation degrees), bachelor degrees, master degrees, doctorate degrees in several areas of study. The university does not restrict its students to Ghanaians alone, but is very much open to receiving students from different countries and with different religion and culture. It is not an institution founded on any religious notion; therefore, anybody irrespective of his or her religious background is welcomed to study in the school. Therefore we chose to unveil the positive and negative experiences of students who participate in these activities, (Alfred, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

It has always been something people keep saying, "*do not waste your time in sports and any other thing apart from your book*". Several students took this serious and never wanted to exercise at least half an hour for healthy living. Students of the University of Cape Coast think partaking in extracurricular activities would hinder their academic outcomes and might make them lazy or perhaps graduate with poor class. Fredricks et al. (2002) stressed the importance of extracurricular activities in relation to the experiences created by these programs and the impact this had in other areas of the students' lives. Campus culture plays an important role in the performance of students Richards (1999) in extracurricular activities and through standardized testing results (Stewart, 2008). This research sets out to unravel the experiences both positive and negative extracurricular activities have on the entire development and learning outcomes of the students who take part in them.

Research Questions

The following questions will be used to guide the study:

1. What kind of experiences do students who engage in athletics activities encounter on UCC campus?

2. How do these experiences affect the students?

Significant of the Study

The study will be relevant to the stakeholders in education, the principals, the headmasters, and the teachers in knowing the reasons behind student's participation in these activities and why other students do not engage in extracurricular activities and then device means of addressing this issue.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The Participation-Identification Model: In 1989, Finn (1989) came up with a theoretical model which has been displayed in Figure 1 to describe the process of student identifying with the school. Finn made a difference between behavioral (participation) and emotional (identification) aspects. Participation consists of active behavior in the classroom, participation in extracurricular activities, or working on the school paper. To be absent from school is not a form of participation. Identification, in the model is made up of the feeling of belonging to a school and recognizing the value of education.

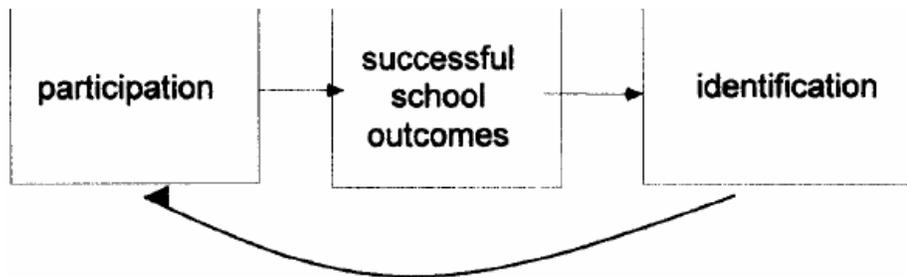


FIGURE 1
THE PARTICIPATION-IDENTIFICATION MODEL

Participation at s1 (i.e. measurement at step one) has an influence on school outcome at s1, and school outcome at s1 can then be seen having influence on identification with the school at s1. Identification at s1 also influences participation at s2, which then affects school outcome at s2, and so forth.

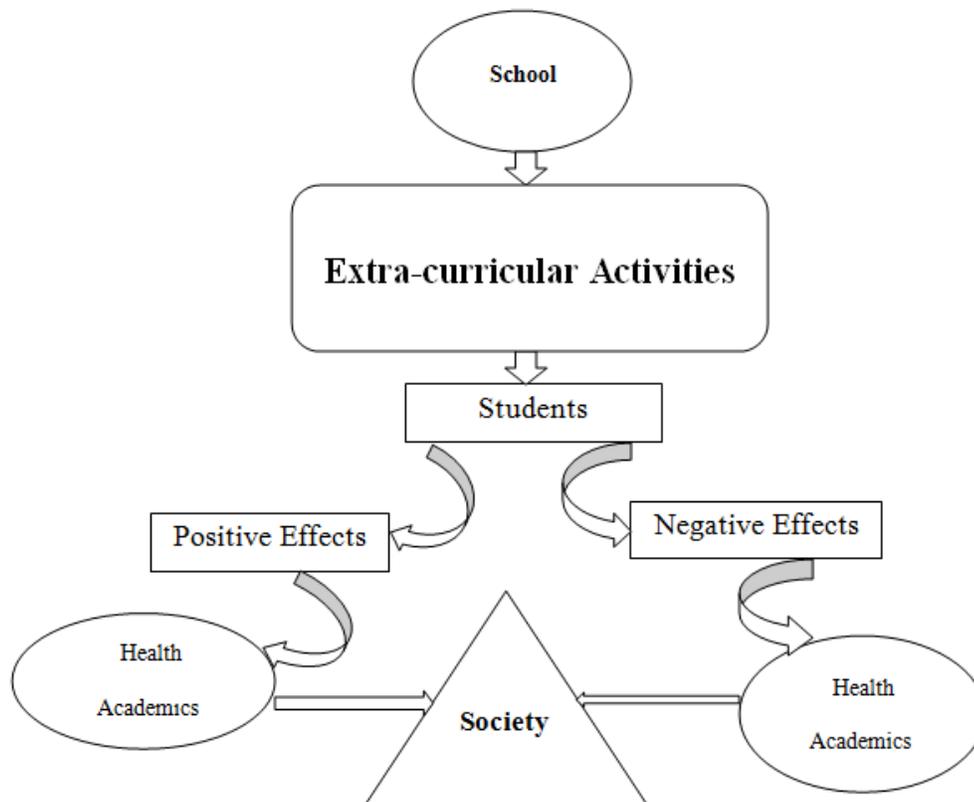


FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The extracurricular activities, which is the researcher's main focus is found in the school, and students are the most partakers in these activities. These extracurricular activities affect the participants both negatively and positively. The positive effects are seen on their health, academics and their relationship with the society. Same applies to the to the negative effects. When all these take place, it later comes back to affect the society at large.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Since the research focuses on the experiences of student's participation in extracurricular activities on campus, the mixed method is preferred. The qualitative portion of the study included a phenomenological narrative approach in which open-ended questions will allow the researcher to obtain written descriptions of the experience based on the participant's perceptions (Moustakas, 1994). According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2006), mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of the qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. The aim of this method is that the qualitative data will help describe or throw light on the initial quantitative results Creswell & Plano Clark (2006). Therefore, this study employs the mixed methods design, which is a two-phase mixed methods design in order to have a comprehensive data for the purpose of analysis.

Sampling and Participants

This study's population include the students of the University of Cape Coast, and the target population will be both male and female students who participate in extracurricular activities. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques will be used to identify and select the school and students on whom the study is focused. It will also be used because it provides the students with equal opportunity to be involved in the study (Cresswell, 2012; Leary, 2016). The purposive sampling technique ensures that only second, third and fourth year students will be selected for this study. The researcher selected these group of people because, they have stayed over one year in the school, hence have got many experience. The sample of the study will be one hundred and four (104) students from second, third and fourth year. Thirty (30) from second year, fifty (50) from third year and twenty four (24) from fourth year. The research excluded the first year students, because they are freshmen, have not gained any experience in the school.

Research Instruments

The research instruments which the researcher prefers for this study will be questionnaires and interviews. Leedy & Ormrod (2005) says that *"data from multiple-choice sources will be collected with the purpose that all will merge to form a particular theory or an opinion."*

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers visited the respondent's school to administer the questionnaires and have the interviews too or send the questionnaire via email to the selected participants. We sought the consent of the participants to partake in the study and that anyone will be free to withdraw at any given time. One month was spent to collect the necessary data. Ethical consideration, principles and various individual rights were adhered to. The researchers ensured that the anonymity, confidentiality, responses and privacy of the respondents would be secured. We again assure them that every information gathered would be strictly used for the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis Method

The data were collected through questionnaire administrated and interview will be transcribed into narratives and descriptive forms. To answer the research questions, descriptive statistics were are used, frequencies, percentages, and a pie chart to make the interpretation of the results more meaningful. Again, other descriptive statistics like the mean and standard deviation were also employed to give a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the study.

RESULTS

The summarized data from respondents are presented in a discreet form in respect with the findings of the study. Frequencies, percentages and a pie chart are used in presenting the results. The chapter includes socio demographic data of respondents, students' experiences in extracurricular activities and the effect of the experiences on students. Out of the 110 questionnaires administered 100 participants successfully responded to the questionnaires.

Table 1
SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Age	18-21	25	25.0
	22-25	55	55.0
	Over 25	20	20.0
Gender	Male	40	40.0
	Female	60	60.0
Marital status	Not married	93	93.0
	Married	6	6.0
	Divorced	1	1.0
Academic level	Level 100	3	3.0
	Level 200	15	15.0
	Level 300	27	27.0
	Level 400	55	55.0
Campus or off campus resident	On-campus	47	47.0
	Off-campus alone or with roommates	50	50.0
	Off-campus with family	3	3.0
GPA	Less than 2.0	8	8.0
	2.0-2.4	30	30.0
	2.5-2.9	31	31.0
	3.0-3.5	24	24.0
	3.6 greater	7	7.0
College of study	College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences	14	14.0
	College of Education Studies	37	37.0
	College of Humanities and Legal Studies	30	30.0
	College of Health and Allied Sciences	19	19.0
Hours spend studying	Less than 1	6	6.0
	1-3	30	30.0
	4-6	29	29.0
	7-9	14	14.0
	10-12	15	15.0
	13-15	3	3.0
	More than 15	3	3.0
Hours spent going out/spending time with friends	Less than 1	45	45.0
	1-3	28	28.0
	4-6	11	11.0
	7-9	8	8.0
	10-12	5	5.0
	13-15	2	2.0
	More than 15	1	1.0
Hours spend participating in extracurricular activities	Less than 1	56	56.0
	1-5	26	26.0
	6-10	4	4.0
	11-20	9	9.0
	21-30	3	3.0
	31-40	2	2.0

Source; Authors 2018

The socio-demographic data of respondents included age, gender, marital status, academic level, on-campus or off-campus resident, GPA, college of study, hours spend studying, hours spend going out/spending time with friends and hours spend participating in extracurricular activities. The ages of the respondents ranged from under 18, 18-21, 22-25 and over 25. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 22-25, followed by 18-21. The ages over 25 had the least frequency. In terms of gender, most of the participants were females. In relation to marital status, participants who are not married had the highest frequency, followed by participants who are married. Participants who had divorced had the least frequency. In terms of academic level, level 400 had the highest frequency, followed by level 300 and level 200. Level 100 had the least frequency. In regards to resident, off-campus alone or with roommates had the highest frequency followed by on-campus. Off-campus with family had the least frequency. In relation to GPA, 2.5-2.9 had the highest frequency followed by 2.0-2.4 and less than 2.0. 3.6 Greater had the least frequency. In terms of college of study, college of education studies had the highest frequency, followed by college of humanities and legal studies and college of health and allied sciences. The college of agriculture and natural sciences had the least frequency. On issues relating to hours spend studying; 1-3 had the highest frequency, followed by 4-6, 10-12, 7-9 and less than 1. 13-15 and more than 15 had the least frequency. In regards to hours spend going out/spending time with friends, less than 1 had the highest frequency, followed by 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12 and 13-15. More than 15 had the least frequency. On issues relating to hours spend participating in extracurricular activities, less than 1 had the highest frequency, followed by 1-5, 11-20, 6-10 and 21-30. 31-40 had the least frequency. This is presented in Table 1.

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Program of study
A	Female	22	B.ED Home Economics
B	Female	30	B.ED Home Economics
C	Female	21	B.ED Home Economics
D	Female	27	Bachelor of Commerce
E	Female	23	Bachelor of Commerce
F	Male	24	Engineering Physics
G	Female	20	Marketing
H	Male	24	Engineering Physics
I	Male	24	Information Technology
J	Male	25	Marketing

Source; Authors, 2018

Table 2 shows the profile of the interviewed participants. 10 students (six females and four males) from the University of Cape Coast were interviewed as a means to support the quantitative results to get a deeper understanding of the topic under study. The ages of the participants ranged from 20-30. In regards to the program of study, 3 students; 2 students; 2 students; 2 students and a student were pursuing Bachelor of Education (Home Economics), Bachelor of Commerce, Engineering Physics, Marketing and Information Technology respectively.

Students' Experiences

In relation to extracurricular activities that students' participated, training courses; seminars and workshops was the highest, followed by festivals. Competitions; journeys and visits had the least frequency. Results obtained from this study are shown in Table 3 below.

Item	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Training courses	36	26.7
Seminars and workshops	36	26.7
Festivals	25	18.5
Competitions	19	14.1
Journeys and visits	19	14.1

Source: Authors, 2018

Again, in regards to students' participation in extracurricular activities on campus, the majority of the respondents agreed they participate in extracurricular activities. This is shown in Figure 3 below.

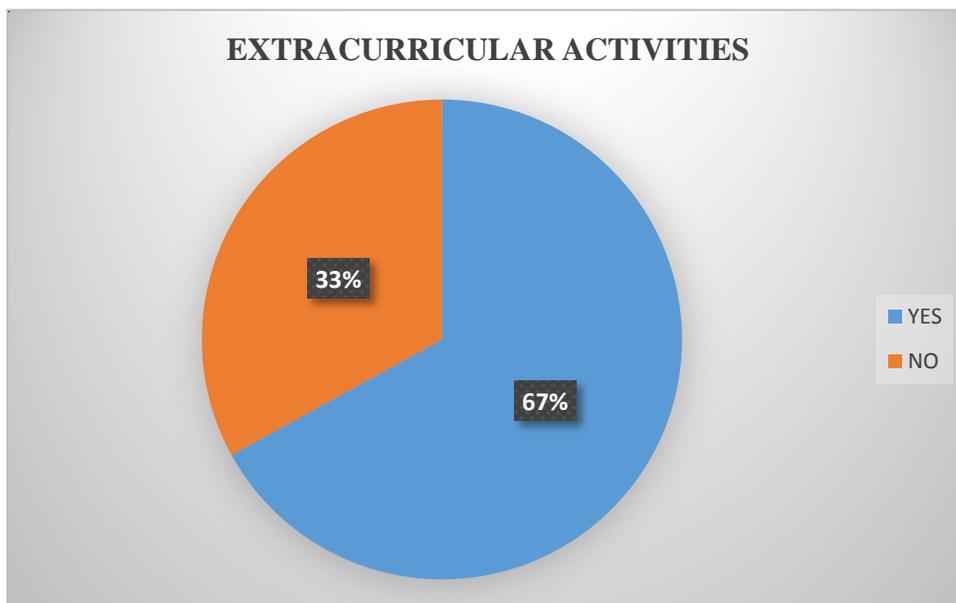


FIGURE 3
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Source: Authors, 2018

In order to ascertain students' participation in extracurricular activities on campus, all responses were summarized and compared to an expected response of three ("3" neutral) Table 4. The majority of the respondents agreed that students participate fully on class assignment, project or presentation with other students. A greater number of the participants indicated that students socialized with faculty members. More than half of the respondents pointed out that students went to an art exhibit/gallery or a play, dance or other theater performance, on or off the campus. The majority of the respondents agreed that students engaged in a cultural or social event on or off campus. Most of the participants indicated that students participate in a sporting activity or an exercise. More than half of the respondents confirmed that students are much involved in attending meeting of a campus club, organization or departmental activities.

Item	N	Mean(SD)	% Response					% at or below expected response "3"
			1	2	3	4	5	
Worked on a class assignment, project, or presentation with other students	100	1.49 (0.798)	66.0	22.0	10.0	1.0	1.0	98.0
Socialized with a faculty member outside of class (had a snack or soft drink, etc.)	100	2.22 (1.060)	23.0	51.0	12.0	9.0	5.0	86.0
Never went to an art exhibit/gallery or a play, dance, or other theater performance, on or off the campus	100	3.05 (1.250)	16.0	11.0	41.0	16.0	16.0	68.0
Attended a cultural or social event in the campus or other campus location	100	2.51 (1.243)	26.0	26.0	28.0	11.0	9.0	80.0
Followed a regular schedule of exercise or practice for some recreational sporting activity	100	2.62 (1.099)	13.0	38.0	32.0	8.0	9.0	83.0
Never attended a meeting of a campus club, organization, or departmental activities	100	3.23 (1.205)	7.0	21.0	35.0	16.0	21.0	63.0

NB: 1=strongly agree; 2=agree; 3=neutral; 4=disagree; 5=strongly disagree; sample size (n)=100.

Effect of Students' Experiences

On issues regarding to as to why students do not involve in extracurricular activities, majority of the participants indicated that they prefer not to participate in extracurricular activities. Again, having to work too many hours was the highest, followed by the need to spend time studying. Having too many family responsibilities and commuting too far had the least frequency. Results obtained from this study are shown in Tables 5 & 6 below.

Item		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Prefer not to be involved	Yes	20	20.0
	No	80	80.0
Commute too far		1	3.8
Have too many family responsibilities		1	3.8
Have to work too many hours		13	50.0
Need to spend time studying		11	42.3

Source: Authors, 2018

In relation to the reasons students' participate in extracurricular activities, socialization was the highest, followed by school bonding, high self-esteem and self-identification. Self-assessment had the least frequency. Results obtained from this study are shown below.

Item	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Socialization	70	36.6
Self-identification	21	11.0
High self-esteem	24	12.6
Self-assessment	12	6.3
School bonding	64	33.5

Source: Authors, 2018

Item	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Improved Grade Point Average	67	35.1
Decreased Grade Point Average	25	13.1
Increased class/lecture attendance	29	15.2
Reduced absenteeism	27	14.1
Reduced laziness	43	22.5

Source: Authors, 2018

On issues regarding to the influence of extracurricular activities on academic development, improved grade point average was the highest, followed by reduced laziness, increased class/lecture attendance and reduced absenteeism. Decreased grade point average had the least frequency. This is shown in Table 7.

DISCUSSION

Students' Experiences

Extracurricular activities play a significant role in the development of students. Every university in Ghana offers some type of extracurricular activities, yet students are unaware of its benefits thereby allotting little time to participate. Students' sole aim in the university is to focus on studies, and get good grades while avoiding the extracurricular activities organized by the university. Students' have encountered several experiences as far as extracurricular activities Muscalu (2014) are concerned. Majority of the respondents indicated that they participate in extracurricular activities and some of these activities include training courses, seminars and workshops; festivals, competitions and journeys and visits (Table 3). This affirms what Bonnie L.B., Margaret S., & James H., (2003) postulated that students' participating in activities such as festivals, concerts, lectures, and discussion sponsored by schools promote multicultural awareness on campus.

Furthermore, in regards to students' participation in extracurricular activities on campus (Table 4), majority of the participants confirmed they attended an art exhibit/gallery or a play, dance or other theater performance, campus club or departmental activities, cultural or social event on or off the campus. This emphasizes what Eccles & Gootman (2008); Larson (2000) pointed out that participation in extracurricular activities, such as sports, the arts, and school clubs, are a very important means through which students spend their leisure time and can provide a very good opportunities for growth and development. Again, most of the respondents indicated they worked on a class assignment, project, or presentation with other students. This is in support to what Mahoney (2000); Mahoney & Cairns (1997) postulated, "*participating in an extracurricular activity connects students more deeply to the school, its faculty, a peer group,*

and school values". Also, Mahoney & Stattin (2000); Osgood et al., (1996) added that the more time adolescents engage in structured activities, the less time they have to engage in problematic behaviors.

Again, majority of the respondents suggested that they socialized with a faculty member outside of class; followed a regular schedule of exercise. This affirms what Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen (2003); Gould, Feltz, & Weiss (1985); Smith(2003) indicated that student's involved in extracurricular activities have the opportunity to develop mentoring or coaching relationships, develop personal relationships with peers who share similar interests, and possibly interact with other adults from the school or community who provide support for the activity.

In addition, participants **A, B, D, E, G,** and **I** suggested some of the experiences about their involvement in extracurricular activities. The following responses were given: *"I met lots of friends that help me out with some difficulties on campus"*, *"it has improve my confident level"*, *"I was able to meet new friends and I developed my interest"*, *"I had more opportunities from friends I met in extracurricular activities"*. Again, participants **C, F, H,** and **J** indicated the following responses: *"perfect and exciting"*, *"best days I have ever had"*, *"very fun packed"*. This is in support to what Hass (2004) suggested that the social benefits of extracurricular activities include the development of relationships with other students, relationships with adults, and teamwork.

In regards to the advantages of extracurricular activities, the participants indicated the following responses: *"it helps an individual to adjust to the new environment in which he/she finds him/herself in"*, *"getting to know other places apart from one's own hall of resident on campus"*, *for socialization"*, *"to manage your time well"*, *"educate you on job opportunities available after school"*, *"it is exciting"*, *"brings people close"*, *"learn field activities"*, *"made the individual active"*, *"releases stress"*, *"teaches life lessons"*, *"improved the confidence and self-esteem"*, *"personal growth and development"*. This emphasizes what Medline Plus (2010) postulated that individual needs at least an hour of physical activity (Rasberry et al., 2011) every single day and as such this exercise will allow the individual to feel less stressed, feel better about themselves as people, feel more ready to learn in school, keep a healthy weight, build healthy bodies, and sleep better at night.

Effect of Students' Experiences

Students' participation in extracurricular activities is noted to yield positive and negative outcomes in the academic development or achievement and social skills of the participants. Most students have the notion that engaging in extracurricular activities can negatively affect their academic performance. Hence, students must come to a realization that so as is academic work imperative, students' participation in extracurricular activities is equally important. Majority of the participants indicated that students' socialized more when involved in extracurricular activities (Table 6). This is in support to what Carnegie Corporation of New York (1992); Kahne et al., (2001); McNeal (1999); Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, (1992); Patrick et al., (1999) suggested that participation in extracurricular activities affords adolescents the opportunity to develop social capital in the form of extended supportive networks of friends and adults. Similarly, Andy postulated that extracurricular activities provide a setting to become involved and to interact with other students, thus leading to increased learning and enhanced development.

Again, majority of the respondents suggested that their involvement in extracurricular activities have had a positive outcome on their academic development (Table 7). This emphasizes what Broh (2002) pointed out, *"total extracurricular activity participation (TEAP),*

or participation in extracurricular activities in general, is associated with an improved grade point average, higher educational aspirations, increased college attendance, and reduced absenteeism". Similarly, Darling et al. (2005) postulated that, individuals who participated in extracurricular activities reported higher grades, more positive attitudes toward school, and higher academic aspirations.

In relation to the effect of extracurricular activities, the interviewed participants indicated the following responses: *"it is time consuming", "one's CGPA might reduce when an individual gets used to the extracurricular activities more than the academic work", "it is sometimes a waste of time", "some people take it as a means to rob people", "less communication", "unable to complete the syllabus", "a bit destructive", "spent a lot", "tiredness and frustration", "too many schedules in short time"*. This supports what Stewart (2008) opined that students could have lower grades when participating in extracurricular activities Massouni (2011) because of the time expended in these endeavors. Similarly, Al-Ansari & et al. (2016) stated that students tend to do away with ECA in order to be able to focus on their academic works.

Call (1974) in his study stated that *"It should be of interest to educators, that extracurricular involvement, regardless of its nature, (work, athletics, clubs, or whatever) seems to have no effect on academic achievement"* (p.10). Again, Marsh & Kleitman (2002) in their study concluded that students participating in extracurricular activities did better academically than students who did not participate. These are in line with the research findings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and results, we categorically states that the study has answered the research question one about students' experiences in participating in extracurricular activities and that suggests to me that the findings have confirmed the research questions postulated. The study revealed that socialization, time management, high self-esteem, school bonding, stress relief, improved confidence level, personal growth and development, makes students' active, reduced laziness and reduced absenteeism were the experiences associated with students' engagement in extracurricular activities. This confirmed that participating in extracurricular activities is very crucial in the personal development of students.

The following recommendations were made based on the research findings:

1. Students must be aware of the importance of extracurricular activities thereby participating fully. Teachers and parents should encourage their wards to participate in extracurricular activities, as it is an important way of keeping fit and been healthy.
2. School authority should as well give room for extra curriculum activities there by creating opportunity and allowing student to be fully participate.
3. School Management should also create motivational measures like competition, awards and sponsorship that will encourage more students to be fully involved in extra curriculum activities.

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