



## Why A Good Environment Can Increase Student Involvement for Co-Curriculum Activities in Schools?

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discuss the good environment that enhance student engagement for co-curriculum activities in schools. This article was based on the author's reflection and interpretations on extended literature reviews. The author had a particular interest to discuss and relate the studies conducted with respect to a good school environment in enhancing student engagement for co-curriculum activities and the effectiveness of the co-curriculum environment.

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### Introduction

Co-curriculum activity can be defined as an outdoor activity or educational workout that provides students with learning experiences. It refers to exercises programs which indicates the correct phase to improve skill bland such as grouping the learner's attitudes, communication skills, critical thinking skills and other skills in training for education (Ahmad Esa et al., 2015). In addition, co-curriculum activity were also an extension of the instructing and learning processes implemented outside or in the classroom (Azman, 2007). Co-curricular activities were important in helping to equip and reinforce the learning process in the classroom, as well as demonstrating behavioural changes and influencing students' personality. Besides that, it could clearly add critical experiences and skills to students (Reaves, Hinson & Marchant, 2010). Human capital advancement resulted from co-curricular activities could enhanced student's ability and exposed to industrial needs that fulfil the industrial requirements (Ahmad Esa & Mohd Zaid, 2010).

Involvement in co-curriculum were an exercise that connects someone with activity (Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Russell, Ainley & Frydenberg, 2005; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). The stated involvement consists of three forms, namely behaviour, emotion and cognition. In particular, emotional involvement of students is that students were the state where students are either positive or negative towards teachers, classmates, academics and schools. Chapman (2003) explained that student participation was the willingness of students to take an interest in routine school exercises, where the involvement of cognitive, behavioural and effective guided the involvement of students in specific learning task.

Odogwu, Adeyemo, Jimoh & Yewonde (2011) states that the school environment acted as a social environment such as teacher-student relationships, relationships with other teachers and school principals. Meanwhile affective environment refers to nurturing, gender equality, teacher effectiveness and staff freedom.

Finally, academic environment refers to professional development of teachers, resources and equipment and working pressure. Tableman (2004) has identified four aspects of the school environment. Firstly, a friendly and conducive physical environment for learning. Secondly, social environment that promotes communication and interaction. Thirdly, effective environment that promotes sense of belonging and self-esteem. Last but not least were the academic environment that encourages learning and self-fulfilment.

A supportive school environment was essential to improve management level lead by advisory teachers as well as to increase number of student involvement in co-curricular activities. Some aspects of the school environment affect advisory teachers planning to guide and teaches, and their intentions to improve the effectiveness of co-curriculum implementation. Aspects of school environments such as school types, classrooms, and social orders affect the connection amongst educating and student development (Alsop, 2006). These statements were followed and agreed by Crowder (2010) where Chowder emphasized that studies abroad that were conducted regarding the school environment definitely influenced student engagement. From his study, he found that how teachers will benefit from certain facilities and conditions of the school area and features that enhance student engagement in learning which could lead to the decision of school and district leaders on the planning of educational facilities, design and usage. Therefore, different factors in the school condition, for example, the blend of instructors and expert interests, have been found to impact the act of educator instructing, which would impact student's demeanours and achievements (Webster and Fisher 2003).

Bahari (2008) found that structural factors such as lack of facilities, tools, time, money and information were the main factors that impeded the involvement of students in sports curriculum activities. He also found that there was no significant difference between structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors with gender.

While there were significant differences between interpersonal and intrapersonal barrier factors with the nation. Mansor (2008) examined the factors that influenced the involvement of school students in co-curricular activities were low for attitude and academic. Meanwhile economic and environmental factors were at a moderate level. His research also showed that among these four factors, there were no difference in influencing student involvement in co-curricular activities.

Based on the research done by Abdul Rahman & Buntat (2004) the active involvement of students in the co-curriculum affects the level of student achievement in the academic field and it were followed by Darling, Caldwell, & Smith (2005) regarding their study of co-curriculum activities and impact on various aspects of development including academic achievement. Both of the research view of certain aspects such as the level of involvement, attitude towards planned activities, time management, interests and responsibilities of co-curricular activities and students' academic achievement. Their findings showed that students participating in school-based co-curricular activities have higher values, aspirations and academic attitudes than students who are not involved in any co-curricular activities.

Jamalis and Fauze (2007) studied the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students and the benefits accruing to participating in co-curricular compulsory activities. The study also looked at the implications of their after-school activities towards students' academic performance. The results of the study showed that most students participate in post-school programs because of their interest in acquiring new knowledge as well as for self-improvement reasons, which students express from their own interests. It is also clear from this study even though co-curricular activities are compulsory, the major student involvement is due to the intrinsic importance of the students themselves.

### Conclusion

Understanding how the school environment is able to enhance students' involvement in co-curricular activities were an important factor in assisting administrators and teachers in schools, officials in the District Education Office, State Education Office, and certain specialists in the Ministry of Education Malaysia. The school environment needs to be addressed in several aspects such as student support and teacher support, teacher professional interests, teacher's freedom and teacher's participation in decision-making, teachers and school owners who are innovative, adequate resources or facilities, and the lack of work pressure associated with co-curriculum. In conclusion, the school environment was able to affect the involvement of students in co-curriculum activities. All parties should work together to improve the school environment to influence the involvement of students in the co-curriculum.

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