



The Importance of Co-curricular Activities to Primary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to study the importance of co-curricular activities of primary school students in Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. This research was conducted using the descriptive research. The result was interpreted in four elements of co-curricular activities. The perception towards the co-curricular activities is positive and the implementation of co-curricular activities help to enhance the skills of students.

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Introduction

Education effectiveness in Malaysia does not stand alone to high academic achievement only. Many other factors contribute to produce a multipurpose generation through the education system and many of the educationists believe that the co-curricular activities enhance the quality of social interaction, leadership quality, self-discipline and confident level and also obtain greater competitive in the jobs market as well as appear increasingly attractive.

Co-curricular activities are known as extension to teaching and learning process in classroom and outdoor activities that provides educational learning experience for students. This co-curricular activities and educational experience are implemented either outside or in the classroom (Nor Azah, 2007). Co-curricular activities give a lot of benefits to the implementers. They help to equip and strengthen the learning process in the classroom, as well as to show changes in behavior and personality traits influence students. In addition, students' participation in co-curricular activities could improve grade point average, higher education aspiration, increased attendance and reduced absenteeism (Broh, 2002).

Literature Review

Somehow, co-curricular activities are not considered important by some people. VanDuyne (2004) found people who are opponents towards co-curricular believe that participating in co-curricular activities will take time for academic activities. early as the 1960s, Lewis(2004) stated co-curricular activities cause students to place more social significance on activities than academics. Otherwise, co-curricular activities are seen as a way of offering academically gifted students a way of excelling within the school environment; to challenge students to achieve something in the school environment; a way of creating a sense of belonging and sharing in school setting (Darling et.al, 2005). Co-curricular activities also involve elements of involvement. Fredericks, et al. (2004) explains the involvement of students

are from the point of emotional, behavioral and cognitive. The participation of students in terms of emotions shows positive or negative reaction to the teacher classmates, academic and school. Yazzie-Mintz (2007) also explained that student involvement is seen from three aspects, namely, cognitive, or academic intellect.

Based on Astin's Theory of Involvement, there are five elements in determining the individual's involvement in an activity. The first element is the involvement of physical and psychological energy in a variety of objects. The second element is the involvement that happens all the time. The third element is the involvement involves qualitative and quantitative form. The fourth element is the involvement of individuals is linked to any education program. Meanwhile, the fifth element is the involvement of individuals closely linked to the capacity of policies and practices in the education system. Astin also relates that student participation in activities will determine the role of the individual in personal growth. In addition, Astin stated that participation in the activity will give effect to individual behavior (Astin, 1999).

Furthermore, he explains the dynamics of how students change or develop over time, relatively to their experiences in school. The elements that be the basis of the theory are inputs, environment and outcomes. The inputs dimension examines the constructs related to the students' demographics and their personal backgrounds while the environment examines the constructs related to the students' experiences which they immerse in during school and the impact on their development.

Lastly, the outcome examines the constructs related to the resulting characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values that emerge in the years after a student completes their school. This study will focus on the second core concept, looking at the environmental and social elements that affect student development and their inclination to be satisfied with college based on these complex interactions.

Referring to the Arthur W. Chickering Theory of Identity by Chickering & Reisser (1993), he claims that students go through a series of seven stages of development, including developing competence, managing emotions, and moving through autonomy towards independence. This theory suggests that involvement in institutional opportunities can help students realize their identity, and contribute to their growth and development.

Based on Vincent Tinto Retention Theory as cited by Lanjewar (2014), he argues that the more integrated the student with the institution the interaction with staff, faculty, and peers increased. Then, it will enhance a greater sense of belonging and inclusion, and raises awareness of the different supports and services available to students. Involvement within the institution can thus contribute to student satisfaction and retention.

Need for Cognition and Co-Curricular Involvement explains that expanding the outcome of cognitive growth to include student's disposition toward learning is important for educators wanting to graduate "intrinsically motivated, self-directed learners". It is not enough for students to have the skills necessary to handle complex problems; they must have the inclination to want to solve them. "Need for cognition," as defined by Cacioppo and Petty (1982) reflects a person's inclination and motivation to learn. At its most basic level, it represents how much people enjoy thinking about complicated topics and solving problems. Furthermore, Cacioppo and Petty (1996) believed that the need for cognition can grow or change over time, just like other learning constructs.

Problem Statement

Despite of the curriculum is so beneficial to the students, efforts should be made to promote awareness of the advantages of co-curricular activities for primary school students. Their awareness about the importance and usefulness of co-curricular activities have not yet been identified. Therefore, a survey has been conducted to understand the need and usefulness of co-curricular activities among primary school students besides to understand their perception towards it.

Objectives

1. To understand the need of co-curricular activities among primary school students.
2. To examine the usefulness of co-curricular activities among primary school students.
3. To understand the students' perception about co-curricular activities in school.

Methodology

Descriptive research is used for survey and fact finding enquiry. In this we try to find out state of affairs if they exist. State of affair is the ability of existence of research. For conducting this research we have selected students in the geographical area of Batu Pahat, Johor, Malaysia. The two most commonly types of descriptive research designs are observation and surveys. In this research, both of them had been implemented. The items used were adapted from Lanjewar (2014) study.

Data Collection Method

Primary Data

Random sampling technique is used to conduct this research. This primary data consists of a set of questionnaires which was circulated among 100 students of different primary schools in Batu Pahat, Johor.

Analysis of Data

Data was analyzed on the basis of our research objectives.

1. To understand the need of co-curricular activities:

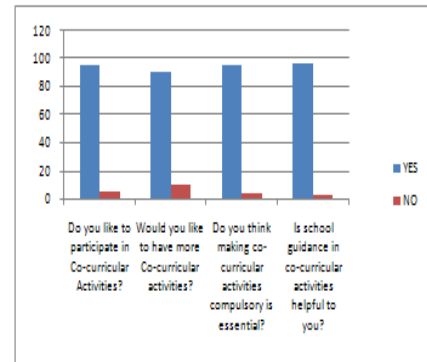


Figure 1. A diagram shows the need of co-curricular activities

2. To examine the usefulness of co-curricular activities:

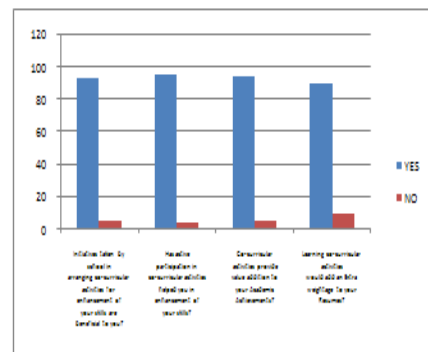


Figure 2. A diagram shows the usefulness of co-curricular activities

3. To understand the students perception about co-curricular activities

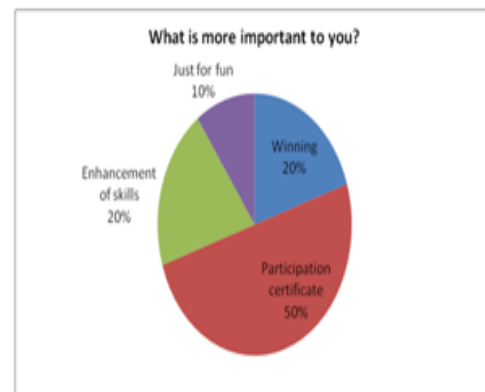


Figure 3. A diagram shows the students' perception about co-curricular activities regarding the importance to them.

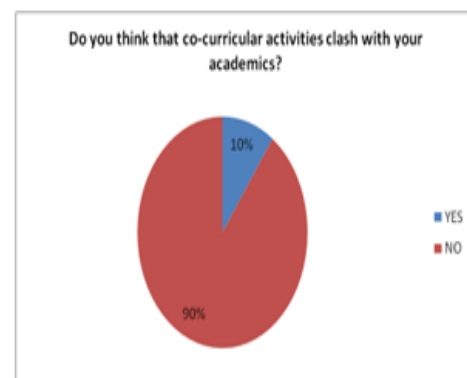


Figure 4. A diagram shows the students' perception about co-curricular activities regarding their academics.

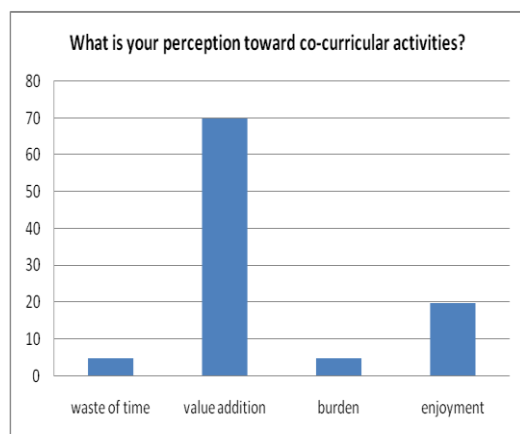


Figure 5. A diagram shows the students' perception about co-curricular activities.

Findings

The results showed that the respondents more to understand the needs of co-curricular activities to them. They also tend to realize the co-curricular usefulness to them. However, further results regarding their perception about co-curricular activities showed that half of them emphasized on get participation of certificate for their involvement in cocurricular activities rather than for enhancement skills, winning related competition and just for fun. Although ten percent of them thought that co-curricular activities clash with their academics, the rest still believed otherwise. Value addition is the highest rank when they had been asked about their perception towards co-curricular activities compared to enjoyment, waste the time and as a burden. Besides, the research found that the participation of students in the activities does depend on the reason of the participation and the students are enthusiastic in doing their co-curricular activities.

Conclusion

This study is to identify the perceptions of primary school students in Batu Pahat on the need and usefulness of co-curricular activities towards them. The findings are expected to help authorities such as Ministry of Education, teachers and parents to gain awareness of the importance of co-curricular to primary school students. Co-curricular activities provide a lot of benefits that they cannot find in the class. The involvement in co-curricular activities help to develop student mentally as well as physically and creates an ideal learning environment beside enhancing academic achievement (Lanjewar, 2014).

As the results of this study are examined and reflected upon, recommendations can be made for further research to

enhance the involvement of primary schools towards co-curricular activities. A study on demographic factors and extra-curricular activities can be carried out. Maybe there is a difference between extra-curricular activities that can be offered to suit the demographic background.

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