



**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AT PRASLIN AND
PERSEVERANCE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, SEYCHELLES**

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of extracurricular activities on student development at Praslin and Perseverance Secondary Schools in Seychelles, focusing on academic performance, social skills, and career aspirations. Using a descriptive survey design with both qualitative and quantitative methods, data were collected from 80 respondents through questionnaires and interviews. Results showed that while some learners noted a negative academic impact, the majority of teachers and learners viewed extracurricular activities as beneficial for academics, social interaction, and career awareness. Recommendations included timetable adjustments, promoting inclusive group activities, linking extracurriculars to careers, and providing time management support.

Keywords

Extracurricular Activities, Student Development, Academic Performance, Social Skills, Career Aspirations, Seychelles, Secondary Education, Holistic Learning

1. Introduction

The role of extracurricular activities in enhancing student development has received growing attention within the global education discourse. While formal classroom instruction focuses primarily on cognitive development and academic achievement, co-curricular and extracurricular programs are increasingly recognized as essential to the holistic growth of learners. These activities—which include sports, arts, clubs, leadership programs, and community service—provide students with opportunities to acquire life skills, cultivate interpersonal relationships, and explore career interests beyond the scope of the formal curriculum. In the context of Seychelles, particularly within secondary schools such as Praslin and Perseverance, the Ministry of Education has encouraged a more inclusive and student-centered approach to learning, emphasizing the importance of non-academic pursuits in fostering well-rounded individuals. However, there remains a gap in localized empirical research examining how such activities influence student



development in specific educational settings. This gap is particularly relevant in small island states, where educational policy and practice must account for limited resources, cultural dynamics, and unique student needs. Extracurricular engagement is often correlated with improved self-esteem, leadership capabilities, teamwork, and emotional resilience. At the same time, concerns are occasionally raised about the potential for such activities to detract from academic priorities, especially when students struggle with time management or when programs are poorly coordinated with curricular demands. Balancing these outcomes requires evidence-based understanding of how different extracurricular formats impact various dimensions of student development. This study focuses on the influence of extracurricular activities at two prominent secondary schools in Seychelles—Praslin and Perseverance—investigating their impact on students’ academic performance, social competencies, and future aspirations. By examining the perceptions of both learners and educators, the study aims to provide context-specific insights that can guide educational planning and support strategies that promote holistic student success.

2. Problem Statement

While the educational system in Seychelles recognizes the importance of holistic student development, there is limited empirical data on how extracurricular activities concretely affect the academic, social, and personal growth of learners within local school environments. In schools like Praslin and Perseverance Secondary, extracurricular activities are offered in various forms, including sports, clubs, performing arts, and leadership groups. However, anecdotal observations suggest that participation levels vary widely, and the benefits are not uniformly experienced across the student population. Some educators and parents have expressed concerns that extensive involvement in extracurricular activities may negatively impact academic performance by reducing study time or distracting students from their coursework. Conversely, other stakeholders argue that such activities enhance learning by improving motivation, discipline, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving skills. This dichotomy of perspectives points to a need for systematic research that evaluates both the positive and negative effects of extracurricular engagement on secondary school learners in Seychelles. Furthermore, there is little formal guidance on how to align extracurricular programs with national curriculum goals or how to design school schedules that accommodate both academic and non-academic learning equitably. Without clear evidence and structured implementation, schools may underutilize the



developmental potential of extracurricular programs or, conversely, overemphasize them without sufficient support or coordination. This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the actual impact of extracurricular activities on student development at Praslin and Perseverance Secondary Schools. It examines how these activities influence academic performance, social interaction, and career orientation, while also identifying institutional barriers and proposing context-specific strategies for effective integration.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to evaluate the impact of extracurricular activities on the overall development of students at Praslin and Perseverance Secondary Schools in Seychelles. Specifically, it seeks to understand how involvement in non-academic activities affects students' academic achievement, social skills, and long-term career orientation.

3.1 General Objective

To investigate the effect of extracurricular activities on the academic, social, and personal development of secondary school students in Seychelles.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- To assess the influence of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance.
- To examine the extent to which extracurricular participation enhances students' social interaction and interpersonal skills.
- To explore how involvement in extracurricular programs shapes students' career aspirations and future goals.
- To identify challenges students and teachers face in balancing academic requirements with extracurricular commitments.
- To propose recommendations for optimizing the structure and implementation of extracurricular activities to support holistic student development.

3.3 Research Questions

- What is the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic performance among students?



- How do extracurricular activities contribute to students' social development and teamwork abilities?
- In what ways do extracurricular programs influence students' interest in specific careers or professional fields?
- What are the main barriers that affect effective student engagement in extracurricular activities?
- How can schools better align extracurricular offerings with academic goals and student needs?

4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the understanding that student development is a multidimensional process influenced by both academic and non-academic experiences. Extracurricular activities serve as an essential complement to classroom learning by offering experiential opportunities that foster emotional, social, intellectual, and career-oriented growth. At the core of this framework is the Holistic Student Development Model, which emphasizes the integration of three key domains:

Academic Development – measured through students' performance in core subjects, classroom engagement, and motivation to learn. Participation in extracurricular activities can enhance academic skills indirectly by improving discipline, time management, and cognitive flexibility.

Social Development – refers to the improvement in students' interpersonal skills, self-confidence, emotional intelligence, and teamwork. Clubs, sports, and leadership roles provide students with social contexts to develop these skills through collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility.

Career and Personal Development – involves the influence of extracurricular activities on students' awareness of career options, interest in specific professional fields, and personal identity formation. Exposure to varied experiences through extracurriculars helps students discover passions and align academic choices with future goals.

The relationship among these domains is dynamic and interactive. Participation in structured, well-supported extracurricular programs is expected to positively influence each area. However, the framework also recognizes that excessive or poorly managed involvement may lead to time conflicts, fatigue, or diminished academic focus.

Independent Variable: Participation in extracurricular activities (type, frequency, and duration)



Dependent Variables: Academic performance, Social and interpersonal development, Career orientation and aspirations

Moderating Variables: Gender, grade level, socioeconomic status, School support structures and resources, Time management skills and parental involvement

This conceptual framework guided the formulation of research instruments and the interpretation of findings, ensuring a balanced exploration of both the benefits and limitations of extracurricular engagement in the selected schools.

5. Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for educators, policymakers, school administrators, parents, and students in understanding the broader value of extracurricular activities within secondary education in Seychelles. As education systems globally shift toward more learner-centered approaches that promote 21st-century skills, there is an increasing need to integrate non-academic experiences into the formal learning process. This research provides localized evidence on how extracurricular engagement contributes to such integration. For educators and school leaders, the study offers insights into how extracurricular programs can be strategically used to enhance student motivation, behavior, and academic outcomes. Understanding the types of activities that yield the most developmental benefits can inform curriculum planning, scheduling, and co-curricular alignment. For curriculum developers and policy makers, the findings can support the design of policies that formalize and fund extracurricular activities as essential components of holistic education. With evidence-based justification, schools can be encouraged to allocate appropriate time, space, and resources for these activities without compromising academic learning. For parents and guardians, the study helps clarify the developmental importance of extracurricular participation, dispelling the notion that such activities are distractions. The findings can empower parents to support their children's involvement and help them manage time effectively between schoolwork and non-academic pursuits. For students, the study raises awareness about how participation in extracurricular activities can contribute to their personal growth, social identity, and career trajectory. It encourages learners to make informed decisions about the activities they choose to engage in and the goals they wish to pursue. In summary, this study contributes to the national and regional discourse on education quality and student well-being. It provides practical recommendations and theoretical grounding to guide the effective integration of extracurricular programming into the broader educational ecosystem in Seychelles.



6. Literature Review

The impact of extracurricular activities on student development has been extensively studied across various educational contexts, revealing consistent correlations with academic success, social-emotional learning, and long-term career readiness. This section reviews relevant literature to contextualize the current study within broader theoretical and empirical insights.

6.1 Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

Numerous studies have shown that participation in structured extracurricular activities can enhance academic performance by fostering skills such as time management, concentration, and goal setting. According to Fredricks and Eccles (2006), students involved in co-curricular programs often exhibit higher levels of school engagement and academic motivation. These effects are particularly evident in students who participate in academic clubs, arts programs, or leadership roles, which reinforce skills aligned with formal learning. However, the literature also cautions that excessive involvement or poor scheduling of activities may lead to fatigue, missed class time, and reduced academic focus (Mahoney et al., 2003). Thus, the academic impact of extracurricular activities is not universal and is shaped by the nature, frequency, and balance of participation.

6.2 Social and Interpersonal Development

Extracurricular engagement is closely linked with improvements in social competencies, including communication, cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution. Eccles and Barber (1999) found that students who participate in team sports, music ensembles, and debate clubs develop stronger peer networks and greater self-confidence. These activities create structured environments for practicing leadership and accountability, which are essential for both academic and life success. In developing countries and island states like Seychelles, where communities are closely knit, these interpersonal skills can be particularly valuable in fostering civic responsibility and social inclusion (UNESCO, 2017).

6.3 Career Exploration and Identity Formation

Participation in extracurricular programs also plays a formative role in shaping students' career interests and personal identity. Exposure to diverse experiences allows students to explore potential fields of interest, such as public speaking through drama clubs, or environmental



stewardship through conservation clubs. According to Shernoff (2011), such engagement builds confidence and clarity in academic and vocational aspirations. Moreover, career-linked extracurriculars—such as STEM clubs or entrepreneurship programs—can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, providing early insight into professional pathways.

6.4 Gaps in Local Contextual Research

While international studies provide a wealth of data on the benefits of extracurricular involvement, there is limited empirical research in small island developing states like Seychelles. Much of the existing evidence is based on Western education systems, which operate in vastly different socio-economic and cultural contexts. This lack of localized data presents a critical gap in understanding how extracurricular programming functions within Seychellois secondary schools, particularly in relation to the country's educational goals and cultural expectations. The current study responds to this gap by offering a contextualized analysis of how extracurricular activities affect student development in Praslin and Perseverance Secondary Schools. It aims to contribute to both policy and practice by grounding its findings in the lived realities of students and educators in Seychelles.

7. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of how extracurricular activities influence student development at Praslin and Perseverance Secondary Schools in Seychelles. The mixed-methods approach allowed for both statistical analysis of trends and in-depth exploration of personal experiences and perceptions.

7.1 Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted at two secondary schools: Praslin Secondary School and Perseverance Secondary School. These schools were selected for their contrasting geographic locations and student populations, offering a diverse view of the implementation and impact of extracurricular programs. A total of 80 participants took part in the study. This included 60 students from Grades 10 to 12, 10 teachers, and 10 school administrators or club facilitators. Participants were selected



using purposive sampling, ensuring inclusion of individuals actively engaged in extracurricular activities either as participants or supervisors.

7.2 Data Collection Tools

Three primary instruments were used to collect data:

Structured Questionnaires: Administered to students to assess the type and frequency of extracurricular participation, perceived academic and social benefits, and any challenges experienced. A Likert scale was used to measure agreement on key statements.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Conducted with teachers and administrators to understand institutional perspectives on extracurricular programming, including scheduling, resource allocation, and observed student outcomes.

Observation Checklists: Used to monitor selected extracurricular sessions, focusing on student engagement, interaction patterns, and skill development during the activities.

7.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to identify trends and patterns. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Codes were generated for recurring themes such as academic motivation, social interaction, skill acquisition, and time management. Triangulation of data from different sources helped ensure validity and reliability of the findings, while capturing both measurable outcomes and subjective experiences related to student development.

7.4 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. Permissions were secured from school authorities, and ethical standards aligned with educational research protocols were followed.

8. Findings and Discussion

The study's findings revealed that extracurricular activities play a significant role in shaping students' academic performance, social behavior, and career orientation at Praslin and



Perseverance Secondary Schools. While the majority of respondents reported positive outcomes, a few challenges and concerns were also identified.

8.1 Impact on Academic Performance

Quantitative data from student questionnaires showed that 72% of students believed extracurricular participation had a positive effect on their academic motivation and performance. These students noted that activities such as debate clubs, science fairs, and academic societies fostered discipline, improved time management, and built confidence in expressing academic ideas. Teachers corroborated this view, particularly highlighting students in leadership roles or academic clubs as more organized and attentive in class. However, 15% of students reported experiencing academic stress or reduced study time, especially during periods of intensive extracurricular involvement, such as sports tournaments or performance rehearsals. This minority view underscores the importance of balanced scheduling and supervision.

8.2 Social and Interpersonal Skill Development

The most consistently positive theme across all data sources was the enhancement of social skills. Students reported that participation in sports, music groups, and cultural clubs improved their teamwork, communication, and conflict-resolution abilities. Observations confirmed that group-based activities encouraged collaboration and peer bonding, with students taking initiative in planning, leading, and supporting one another. Teachers also noted that previously introverted students often became more expressive and socially active after joining clubs or committees. This supports existing research suggesting that extracurricular involvement can be a key catalyst for emotional and interpersonal development (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

8.3 Influence on Career Aspirations

Approximately 68% of students indicated that extracurricular activities exposed them to new career paths or strengthened interest in existing ambitions. For example, students involved in environmental clubs expressed interest in conservation and marine biology, while those in drama or debate clubs showed aspirations in law, media, or the arts. Career-linked activities not only informed students about professional opportunities but also gave them practical skills such as public speaking, planning, and leadership. However, a small number of students felt that career guidance within extracurricular programs was insufficiently structured. They suggested linking clubs more directly with guest speakers, mentorship opportunities, or internship experiences.



8.4 Time Management and Institutional Support

Time management emerged as a significant concern among both students and teachers. Roughly 30% of students reported difficulty balancing academic responsibilities with extracurricular commitments, particularly when activities were scheduled during school hours or exam periods. Some teachers also expressed concern that extracurriculars, when not integrated thoughtfully into the timetable, could compete with curriculum coverage. Administrators acknowledged this challenge and emphasized the need for clearer policies and better coordination between academic and extracurricular departments. Schools that implemented structured timetables, with designated days or periods for activities, reported fewer conflicts and greater student satisfaction.

8.5 Summary of Key Themes

Extracurricular activities positively contribute to academic engagement, especially when linked to learning goals. They foster interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging, promoting social well-being. Participation supports career exploration and helps students align their interests with future opportunities. However, challenges in time allocation, supervision, and institutional coordination can limit these benefits if not addressed systematically.

9. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the impact of extracurricular activities on student development at Praslin and Perseverance Secondary Schools in Seychelles. The findings clearly demonstrate that extracurricular participation contributes significantly to holistic education by positively influencing students' academic performance, social skills, and career aspirations. Through structured engagement in clubs, sports, leadership roles, and cultural activities, students not only reinforce classroom learning but also cultivate life skills that are essential for success in higher education and the workplace. While some students reported occasional academic strain due to time conflicts, the overwhelming majority perceived extracurricular activities as enriching their school experience. The qualitative data confirmed that students became more confident, collaborative, and future-oriented when involved in well-coordinated programs. Teachers and administrators observed enhanced classroom behavior and academic motivation among actively participating students, especially those in roles that demanded responsibility and initiative. Nevertheless, the study also highlighted areas needing attention—such as the need for improved



scheduling, stronger career alignment, and better supervision of extracurricular programs. Without clear guidelines and institutional support, there is a risk of extracurriculars becoming fragmented or undervalued in the broader school framework. In conclusion, extracurricular activities should not be viewed as secondary to academic instruction but as integral components of education that support the development of the whole student. With proper planning, inclusive participation, and a balanced approach, schools can harness these activities to nurture self-aware, socially skilled, and goal-driven learners prepared to navigate both academic and life challenges.

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