

INFLUENCE OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS'
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA:
AN IMPLICATION FOR REBRANDING HIGHER EDUCATION
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Abstract

The study identified the various co-curricular activities common among undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; determined the perception of undergraduate students towards participation in co-curricular activities and finally examined the influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance. These were with a view to providing information on undergraduate students' academic performance through involvement in co-curricular activities in the study area. The study adopted the survey correlational research design. Population of the study comprised all undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study sample comprised 650 undergraduates as respondents across the thirteen Faculties in the University. A multi stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample size. From each Faculty, 50 students were selected using simple random sampling technique. From each Faculty, two Departments were selected using simple random sampling technique and from each selected Department, 25 students were randomly selected to take part in the study. In all, 650 undergraduates constituted the sample for the study. Two research instruments were used for data collection. They are: Students' Co-curricular Activities Questionnaire (SCAQ) and students' previous semester results. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, simple percentage and regression analysis. The results of the study showed that 63.28% of the respondents are actively involved in various co-curricular activities like athletics, drama, dance, literary and debating clubs, football, volleyball and the likes in the study area. The results further revealed that 83.83% of the respondents had good perception towards co-curricular activities and the results finally showed no significant influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance in the study area

($F=0.278$, $P>0.005$). The study concluded that co-curricular activities are not major factors that could influence undergraduate students' academic performance.

Keywords: Influence, Co-curricular, Undergraduates, Performance

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of any stable, functional and viable society. Frederick (2007) defined education as the systematic inculcation of values and skills that transform individuals into better personalities. Thomson (2013) defined education as a process that triggers learning and a change in behaviour. Olukoya (2001) asserted that the primary goal of education should not just be for the inculcation of numeracy and literacy skills, but also for comprehensive moral and social development. The education for change (2010) submitted that education, whether gotten formally or informally, is vital to the overall physical, social and mental development of individuals. The education of any individual has become more crucial than ever in the modern society. Kapur (2018) asserted that education is considered imperative for not only the progress of the individuals, but also for the development of community and the nation. Education, according to Easton (2011) is the systematic inculcation of values and skills in individuals in order to transform them into active, functional members of the society.

Co-curricular refers to activities, programmes, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students are learning in school. That is, experiences that are connected to or mirror the academic curriculum. Co-curricular activities are typically, but not always, defined by their separation from academic courses. Acar and Gundiiz (2017) defined co-curricular activities as including any kind of activities like sports, music, painting, theatre, literature which are outside the scope of lessons predetermined in the curriculum

and are compulsory for students. Students participate in these activities upon their own consent and preference. (Karatleik & Yetim, 2016).

They are also activities that take place outside the classroom but reinforce or supplement classroom curriculum in some way. They are ungraded and do not offer any form of academic credit, but they do provide complementary learning of some form. Examples of co-curricular activities might include National Honor Society, student council, school sports teams, math clubs, chess clubs, talent shows, spelling bees, writing competitions, debates, mock trials, school newspapers, and drama productions, footballs, volley balls and the likes. All of these activities take place outside the traditional classroom and offer no grade or academic credit, but they provide supplementary and complementary instruction and education for students. Co-curricular activities can provide students with a lot of interesting and important experiences outside the traditional classroom. There are many advantages to involvement in co-curricular activities, including: allowing students to explore strengths and talents outside of academics, helping students develop stronger time-management and organizational skills, teaching the importance of following through on commitments, giving students the opportunity to build friendships and participate in group activities outside of the tight circle of the regular classroom, helping to build confidence and self-esteem, and providing a way to keep students supervised outside of school hours

Participation in co-curricular activities, according to Bloomfield and Barber (2009) contributes to adolescent's career development. Lipscomb (2007) further observed that while many of the character-building skills common to co-curricular activities are needed in the workplace, they are not regularly practiced and evaluated in the classroom. Christison (2013) summarized the importance of co-curricular engagement across fostering academic, social, character and community development. It has been proposed by Hillary (2012) that academic performance is the sum total of a learner's academic achievement. Taiwo (2009) as cited in Ayeni (2012) submitted that the school system

cannot be said to have been adequately functional without adequate assessment tools for academic performance. Kobiowu (2007) then posited that academic performance level among students is always along three lines: the brilliant, the average and the below par.

The strength of one's imbibition of skills learned in the school system is what is termed academic performance. According to Grange (2015), academic performance explains the totality of all mental end products within the classroom. It describes the results of all classroom interactions between the teacher and the learner. Academic Performance is defined as the observable or measurable behaviour of a person or an animal in a particular situation, usually experimental (Weiner, 1989). Drever (2018) defined academic performance as the type of test which throws light on the ability to deal with things rather than symbols. Along with the developing technology and the changing times, expectations from children have increased and have come to the lives of children. In this regard, physical education lessons including many educative games have become obligatory for the development and education of children. Yusuf (2015) posited that there is a narrow distinction between the term academic performance, academic achievement and learning outcomes. Ajao (2010) then defined academic performance as the sum total of the feedback generated on what has been learned by a learner within the formal school setting. Kapur (2018) submitted that the determinants of the academic performance of students include mass participation, class assignments, tests, examinations and participation in competitions and other events. Previous studies (Taiwo, 2007; Simpson, 2010; James, 2016) have shown the interchange of the term achievement and performance. Hence, achievement is defined as measurable behaviour in a standardized series of tests (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). According to Bruce and Neville (2019), educational achievement is measured by standardized achievement test developed for school subjects.

It has also been observed that present study exists on the importance of co-curricular activities on the overall academic, socio-emotional and

psychological performance of students across various strata of education. Reeves (2008) submitted that there is a strong association between students' involvement in co-curricular activities and improved attendance, behaviour, and academic performance. According to Shulruf, Tumen and Tolley (2007), they suggested that students who participate in co-curricular activities experience higher level of academic achievement. Students who participate frequently in co-curricular activities tend to have higher grades, better test scores and more positive educational experiences in general. Further studies (Lipscom, 2007; Shulruf, 2010; Metsapelto & Pulkkien, 2011) all suggested that co-curricular engagements help to boost students' performance. Christison (2013) posited that understanding how participation in a variety of different activities affects academic achievement can help educators to assist students in achieving their specific academic goals.

Statement of the Problem

There is a growing concern about the proper integration of co-curricular activities and academic performance in the school system. Recently, co-curricular activities such as football; volleyball; swimming; chess; scrabble; dance; theatre; music; painting and social clubbing have become more popular among students. This has helped to increase the perception that these activities have taken much of the time of students and has constituted a great distraction to academic seriousness, and ultimately, performance of most undergraduates. Consequently, it is observed that while an increasing number of students are actively participating in co-curricular activities of their choice, their interests are being met with disinterest and sometimes, outright opposition from parents, friends, guardians and even lecturers or teachers. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify the various co-curricular activities common among undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria;
- ii. determine the perception of undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife towards participation in co-curricular activities; and
- iii. examine the influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance in the study area.

Research Questions

In line with the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What are the various co-curricular activities common among undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University?
2. What is the perception of Obafemi Awolowo University undergraduates towards co-curricular activities in school?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀: There is no significant influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance.

Methodology

The study adopted the correlational survey research design. The population of the study comprised all undergraduate students in the thirteen Faculties of Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised 650 undergraduate students across the thirteen Faculties in the University. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study. Two Departments were selected from each Faculty using simple random sampling technique, from each selected Department, twenty-five students were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. Fifty students were selected from each Faculty through simple random sampling technique to take part in the study. Two research instruments were used for data collection. They

are: Students' Co-curricular Activities Questionnaire (SCAQ) and the Students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (SCGPA) for their previous semester. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, simple percentage and regression analysis. All these were achieved through Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS).

Results

The results of the data collected for the study are presented below and discussion of findings thereafter follows.

Descriptive Analysis of the Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of students by gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	290	44.6
Female	360	55.4
Total	650	100.0

Table 4.1 showed the distribution of the respondents that participated in the study by

gender. This distribution shows that 44.6% of the respondents are male while 55.4% are female.

Table 4.2: Distribution of students by age category

Age Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Less than 20yrs	163	25.1
20 - 30yrs	412	63.4
Above 30yrs	75	11.5
Total	650	100.0

Table 4.2 showed the distribution of the respondents that participated in the study by age. The distribution shows that 25.1% of the respondents are less than 20 years of age, 63.4%

are between the age range of 20 and 30 years while 11.5% are above 30 years of age. The majority of the respondents that participated in the study are of age range of 20-30 years.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Students by academic level

Academic Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
100	150	23.1
200	168	25.8
300	100	15.4
400	112	17.2
500	120	18.5
Total	650	100.0

Table 4.3 showed the distribution of the students that took part in the study by their respective academic level. The distribution shows that

23.1% of the respondents are in 100 levels, 25.8% are in 200 levels, 15.4% are in 300 levels, 17.2% in 400 level and 18.5% in 500 levels.

Research Question 1: What are the various co-curricular activities common among undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University?

Table 4.4: Co-curricular Activities Common among Undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University

S/N	Activity	Involved		Not Involved	
		f	%	f	%
1	Athletics	340	52.3	310	47.7
2	Drama	428	65.8	222	34.2
3	Dance	461	70.9	189	29.1
4	Literary and debating clubs	400	61.5	250	38.5
5	Football	333	51.2	317	48.8
6	Volleyball	435	66.9	215	33.1
7	Non-Governmental Organization Volunteering	385	59.2	265	40.8
8	Religious activities	397	61.1	253	38.9
9	Campus politics	490	75.4	160	24.6
10	Music	445	68.5	205	31.5
Average			63.28		36.72

The results in Table 4.4 show the various co-curricular activities common among undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University. 52.3% of the students were actively involved in athletics, 65.8% engaged in drama, 70.9% involved in dance, 61.5% in literary and debates, 51.2% in football activities, 66.9%

engaged in volley ball, 59.2% in non-governmental organizations, 61.1% in religious activities, 75.4% in campus politics and 68.5% also engaged in music. In all, 63.28% of the respondents are actively involved in various co-curricular activities in the study area.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of Obafemi Awolowo University undergraduates towards co-curricular activities in school?

Table 4.5: Students' Perception towards co-curricular Activities in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

S/N	Items on Perception	SA		SA		SA		SD	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	I do not participate in Co-curricular activities because I do not like them	75	11.54	45	6.92	178	27.39	352	54.15
2.	I do not participate in Co-curricular activities because they can be distracting	65	10.00	47	7.23	200	30.77	338	52.00
3.	Co-curricular activities divide my attention from classroom activities	68	10.46	55	8.46	125	19.23	402	61.85
4.	Co-curricular engagements limit my time of studying	52	8.00	59	9.08	224	34.46	315	48.46
5.	Co-curricular activities prevent me from doing my assignments and class projects promptly	56	8.62	46	7.08	290	44.62	258	39.69
6.	Co-curricular engagements make me miss a lot of classes	52	8.00	50	7.69	268	41.23	280	43.08

S/N	Items on Perception	SA		SA		SA		SD	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
7.	Co-curricular engagements reduce my passion for classwork	56	8.62	48	7.39	288	44.31	258	39.69
8.	Co-curricular activities reduce my examination scores	43	6.62	53	8.15	288	46.15	254	39.08
9.	Participating in Co-curricular activities has reduced my general academic performance	45	6.92	48	7.39	300	38.00	310	47.69
10.	Co-curricular activities has not made me have better academic performance in my course of study	38	5.85	50	7.69	247	37.54	318	48.92
		8.46	16.17	7.71	244	36.37	83.83	47.46	

The results in Table 4.5 above show the perception of undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife towards co-curricular activities. This result is interpreted in terms of the total percentage for both strongly agree and agree responses as against the total percentage of disagree and strongly disagree. The results therefore showed that 81.54% of the respondents do participate in co-curricular activities and only 18.46% do not. Also, 82.77% are of the respondents are of the opinion that co-curricular activities did not distract them from classroom activities whereas 17.23% indicated that co-curricular activities divide their attention from classroom activities. Furthermore, 84.31% of the subjects claimed that co-curricular activities did not stop them from completing their assignments promptly as against 15.69% who claimed that co-curricular activities prevent them from doing their assignments on time. Moreover, 85.23% of the respondents said that their involvement in co-curricular activities did not in any way reduce their general academic performance in schools and only 14.77% claimed that their involvement in the activities had

negative influence on their academic performance in school. Finally, the results indicated 83.83% of the respondents had good perception towards co-curricular activities and only 16.17% had negative perception towards co-curricular activities.

Testing Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance.

In order to test this hypothesis, students' responses to items on involvement in Co-curricular activities were scored. Students are then categorized into Not Involved (Those that do not participate in any of the listed extracurricular activities); Moderately Involved (Those that participate in 1 to 5 activities) and Highly Involved (Those that participate in more than 5 activities) and the students' CGPAs as supplied and these were then subjected to a multiple regression analysis and the results presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Multiple Regression Analysis of co-curricular activities on academic performance of undergraduate students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

R= 0.045	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
R ² = 0.002	Coefficients		Coefficients		
Adj. R ² = - 0.005					
F= 0.278	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.634	.065		48.431	.002
Co-curricular activities	.011	.020	.046	.541	.639

Dependent Variable: Academic performance score

Predictors: (Constant), Co-curricular activities

p>0.05 (p =0.639)

Table 4.6 shows the influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife which yielded a coefficient of regression (R) of .045 and a correlation square (R^2) of .002. These values are statistically not significant at 0.05 probability level. Co-curricular activities accounted for 0.2% of the observed variance in academic performance of undergraduates. Therefore, the result showed no significant influence of co-curricular activities on undergraduate students' academic performance in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria ($F=0.278$, $p>0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Results of the study had shown that university undergraduates participated very well in co-curricular activities. The results that corroborate with the findings of Acar and Gundiz (2017) when they found out that higher institutions in Asia participated actively in extracurricular activities in schools and that the various activities engaged upon did not affect their academic achievement in any way. The findings are also in line with the findings of Frederick, (2007), Christison, (2013), Gossman, (2014) and Tripper, (2015).

The study also found out that university undergraduates had a good perception towards co-curricular activities. The results which are in line with the findings of Maclellan, (2011), Olukoya, (2011), Meyer and Rowan, (2017) and kapur, (2018).

The findings of the study finally showed no influence of co-curricular activities on university undergraduates' academic performance in their various disciplines. These findings were supported with the findings of Frederick, (2007), Ajao, (2010), Brown, (2010), Moon, (2010) and Yusuf, (2015).

Conclusion

The study concluded that co-curricular activities engagements by students are not significant to their academic prowess.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Clubs and societies activities needs to be more intensified in our schools as this will help in stress reduction and development of moral skills in students,
2. Games and sports should be more intensified by school managements among students in order to help improve on their characters and which will eventually lead to team spirit and students' discipline is more effectively enhanced.
3. Curriculum experts should work more on making co-curricular activities a compulsory component of every academic programme in our higher institutions.
4. The government should increase school funding in order to allocate specific amounts for co-curricular activities in our schools.

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