

## PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE IMPACT OF EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMES ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated perceptions of secondary school teachers on the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in Taraba State, Nigeria. Three research objectives, three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. From a population of 4,857 subjects, a sample of 384 was chosen through multistage sampling procedure. The instrument used to generate data for the study was a questionnaire titled "Extracurricular Programmes and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (EPSAPQ)" which was adequately validated by experts, with a reliability coefficient of 0.81, obtained through split half method. Data generated from the study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while chi-square statistics*

*was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The study made the following findings: extracurricular activities available in Taraba State secondary schools include football sports, religious activities, drama club, debating societies and the Press Club while Music Clubs and JETS clubs were least functional; different types of extracurricular activities carried out in Taraba State secondary schools have relevance to students' academic work; and that extracurricular programmes carried out have significant impact on students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools. The study therefore recommended among others that while principals of schools should endeavour to implement ECAs in schools in order to give students a variety of choices to develop their abilities in line with the provisions of the National Policy on Education, government should also provide resources through the provision and maintenance of adequate school facilities to enable principals of secondary schools implement these ECAs effectively.*

**Keywords:** *Perceptions, Impact, Extracurricular programme, Academic Performance*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Extracurricular activities (ECA) such as drama, sports, volunteering, debate, music, press club, conservation clubs, among others, have been perceived and adopted as important constituents of students' school life. Extracurricular activities are a means of ensuring that all students, irrespective of individual circumstances such as socio-economic background, have the opportunity to succeed in school (Cazden, 2012). Anjum (2021) defined extracurricular activities as those activities which are not the components of the academic curriculum but an important part of the educational

environment. The author maintained that extracurricular activities comprise sports, singing, music, debate, dance, drama, social services, among others. Extracurricular activities are therefore those activities that students participate in outside of class or outside the regular curriculum.

In conformity with policy provisions, schools must innovate ways to achieve the goals of education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014). Section II of the NPE, which covers basic education, paragraph C (19) captures the goals of primary education to include the development in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment, and also to provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability. In addition to classroom instruction, extracurricular activities are very beneficial ways to offer varieties and guidance so that these goals can be realised. Further in the NPE (2014), Paragraph D (22) provides that the goals of junior secondary education will include to inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour; and also to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational development. With these elaborate provisions, extracurricular activities may find relevance in being used by educators to complement classroom and curricular work. Furthermore, Section 3 of the NPE (2014) also states the goals of Senior Secondary Education to include the provision of entrepreneurial,

technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. In other climes, Rees (2008) stated that participation in school based extracurricular activities has long been a fundamental part of adolescence, and some of these activities are in the form of athletics, band and orchestra, social clubs, academic clubs, music and theatre, and religious organizations. In places like America and the United Kingdom, parents often encourage participation in such activities so that their children will be more competitive applicants to quality colleges and universities. The rationale for such approaches may be founded on the assertion by Coulangeon (2018) that learning is not exclusively restricted to formal settings within classroom contexts. Extracurricular activities play an important role for developing the skills of the students. Thus, schools can play a significant role by transmitting the energy of both normal as well as physically challenged students into a positive direction of personality development through extra-curricular activities.

The debate about non-compulsory nature of extracurricular activities is proliferated and is still generating varied opinions. Annu and Sunita (2015) affirmed that generally, ECA is voluntary and are not a component of the academic grading system. This view is equally supported by Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008). However, Erhomosele (2021) espouses the view that the extent to which these activities are voluntary is school and education level specific. According to the author, ECA may be a mandatory requirement in some country wise or institution wise structures. Globally,

many education systems have embedded extracurricular Activities within their educational support structure for students. In the UK, ECA initiatives targeting high school students have included student adult mentoring (Mtika & Payne, 2014), and STEM (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics) clubs (Straw, Hart & Harland, 2011), among others.

Invariably, the benefits which have been associated with extracurricular activities are inexhaustible and can never be underestimated. For instance, many opinions incline to the fact that it makes a student think critically, manage time well, and become competent in terms of intelligence. It is also believed to help the students achieve social goals and maturity. Having social maturity helps the student to interact and make better relationships with the people in the community (Himelfarb, Lac & Baharav, 2013). Swain (2021) holds that ECAs help students to learn about themselves and develop and use their skills and knowledge in different contexts. ECAs can support young people by providing them with necessary opportunities for academic and interpersonal development in preparation for post-secondary schooling and the world of work (Roulin & Bangerter, 2013; Fischer & Theis, 2014; Mtika & Payne, 2014). Widely accessible academically focused ECAs have the potential to help reduce the attainment gap caused by poor socio-economic backgrounds of learners (Sosu & Ellis, 2014). However, and in most cases, ECAs tend not to be free. ECAs are therefore beneficial and play positive role in the life of students in schools especially on their academic

performance which has been defined by Nwosu, Awu and Yusuf (2023) as a measure of how learners periodically progress academically. However, students' academic performance in this study is viewed through the perceptions of their teachers.

In Taraba State, education across all levels suffers from gross underfunding as can be seen from several months of unpaid salaries, high rate of out-of-school children, and a low ranking nationwide, which forced the present Dr. Agbu Kefas-led administration to declare free education at basic education level as well as 50% reduction of fees in tertiary schools. This situation may force school managers and administrators to completely remove funding of any other activities which are not related to classroom activities. For instance, extracurricular activities such as sports suffer from lack of sports facilities and kits of the lowest minimum standards. Most schools lack basketball, football, volleyball and handball pitches. There are no provisions for protective foot wears nor is there adequate provision for medical first-aid. Students are seen attending competitions such as track and field events on bare feet. Similarly, school JETS clubs have been observed to merely conduct quizzes and theoretical interactions without the use of appropriate science equipment for experiments. The drama units of the schools do not have any standard halls and costume with which to express their latent skills and potentials during drama presentations. In addition to all these issues, parents in Taraba State have perceived extracurricular activities as distractions and avenues for delinquent behaviour. These debacles are few

among the many deficiencies associated with schools' extra-curricular activities in Taraba State especially at primary and secondary schools.

Notwithstanding, there is a huge amount of research focused on studying extracurricular programmes, students' involvement and its impact. For instance, Mohamed and Osaki (2022) also carried out a study on types of ECAs in secondary schools of Lushoto, Tanzania. The study had two objectives. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach and a convergent design. A sample of 298 respondents was randomly selected. The research tools included questionnaires, an interview guide, a focus group discussion, and an observation guide. The data was analyzed through descriptive and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the kinds of extracurricular activities practiced in visited secondary schools can be grouped into four categories, namely: sports and games; academic; production-related activities, including beekeeping and gardening; and social clubs. Singh and Imam (2012) conducted a study which revealed that extra-curricular activities improve the behaviour and the academic performance of the students in school life. Anjum (2021), conducted a study in Multan city at the secondary level using three hundred students selected through a simple random sampling technique. 30 survey questions were developed based on 5-point modified Likert-scale type statement options. The study found that extracurricular activities have many positive impacts on education such as students' better behavior, good grades, and personality development, which makes the students more successful and socially strong

adults. Rees (2008) also conducted a study on the effects of participation in extracurricular activities on academic performance in secondary school students using a sample of 214 students, parents and teachers in Colorado, USA. The study found that students' academic progress is enhanced through extracurricular activities.

Similarly, Bakoban and Aljarallah (2015) studied extracurricular activities and their effect on the student's grade point average at King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. Four objectives were set, one of which include the identification of extracurricular activities carried out in the schools. The study sample included 239 students chosen via simple random sampling method. The study used inferential statistics to analyze data collected through a questionnaire comprising 19 questions. The results showed that extracurricular activities practiced in schools include, training courses, lectures and seminars, workshops, festivals, competitions, excursions and visits participation in ECA affects the students' GPA in a positive way. The study found that those who participated in ECA have higher GPA than those who did not. Wilson (2009) also found that extracurricular programmes enabled students to have better grades, higher standardized test scores and higher educational attainment. Mangino (2014) reported a study conducted in 24 Iowa schools, the author found varsity football participants to have a higher grade point average than non-participatory classmates. However, as in most studies, the results were not controlled for other intervening variables.



Against the backdrop of these issues globally and locally, understanding the relevance, theory and practice of extracurricular activities to academic performance may reveal some benefits which the affective and psychomotor aspects of learning through extracurricular activities can have on cognitive aspects of instruction taking place in the classroom especially at the basic and senior secondary levels of education. Erhomosele (2021) stated that, ECA activities in Nigeria are more pronounced at the lower levels of the educational ladder (primary and secondary school levels), and as students move higher, the system seems to constrain them into a sort of academic bottle. Questions may therefore arise about the efficacy of ECA as a measure to address the declining level of academic performance among students. This study therefore examined the perceptions of secondary school teachers on the impact of extracurricular programmes on students' academic performance in Taraba State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The practice of extracurricular activities in schools has been recently brought under scrutiny due to resources challenge in the funding of education. This has forced many school heads to allocate fewer and fewer resources towards extracurricular activities, thus raising concerns about the relevance and impact of extracurricular activities in the school system. Despite empirical evidence for and against extracurricular activities, there remains a dichotomy among educational school planners and counselors on the relevance or otherwise of student participation in extracurricular activities. Due to

resource shortages, many schools have curbed their expenses in this aspect of the educational programmes. The right fit and combinations of extracurricular activities for diverse interests of learners in Taraba State schools require investigation. In Taraba State, many of these activities are observed to be on the decline except for sports, which raises the question of whether they were jettisoned after a thorough assessment of their relevance. Poor extracurricular activities may reduce social interactions among students and may also engender truancy among students. There appears to be some unverified claims that, participation in these types of activities reduces the amount of time a student can devote to schoolwork and results in lower grades and fewer opportunities. Some of such activities may have been adjudged unrelated to the current syllabus of learners because, if the ECAs were related to the course work of students, it could be of benefit to the academic work. Therefore, there is the need to specifically assess the extracurricular activities in schools and its impact on students' academic performance. This study therefore explored this through the perceptions of secondary school teachers in Taraba State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study investigated perceptions of secondary school teachers on the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Find out the types of extracurricular activities available in secondary schools in Taraba State;
- ii. Determine the relevance of extracurricular activities carried out in Taraba State Secondary Schools to students' academic work.
- iii. Examine teachers' perceptions on the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided this study:

- i. What are the types of extracurricular activities available in secondary schools in Taraba State?
- ii. How do extracurricular activities carried out in Taraba State secondary schools relevant to students' academic work?
- iii. What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools?

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

The following null hypothesis was postulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance

H<sub>0</sub><sub>1</sub>: There is no significant impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance based on the perceptions of teachers in Taraba State secondary schools

## **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 4, 857 teachers, of all the 346 public secondary schools in Taraba State (Directorate of Planning, Research and Statistics; Taraba State MoE, 2023). A sample of 384 were selected for the study. The selection of respondents was carried out through multistage sampling procedure to select local governments, districts, schools and human subjects. At the first stage, the researcher used purposive sampling to select Jalingo, Wukari, and Karim Lamido, representing 3 out of the 10 Education Zones in the State. The use of this technique was because of time constraint, limited resources, and also on the rationale that the inclusion of schools closer to the administrative headquarters of the state provides an adequate representation of the general status of education in the state. Next, random sampling was used to select 8 public schools from each zone, bringing the number to 24. This was necessary to eliminate or reduce bias. Finally, 16 respondents (teachers) of the sampled schools were randomly sampled to arrive at a sample size of 384. The instrument used to generate data for the study was a questionnaire made by the researchers titled “Extracurricular Programmes and Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire (EPSAPQ)”. The instrument had two sections A and B. Section A elicited demographic details from respondents while section B contained the questionnaire items in clusters of A, B and C. Cluster A elicited information on types of extracurricular activities available in secondary schools in

Taraba State, cluster B was on relevance of extracurricular activities to students' academic work, while cluster C was on impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance. However, some items were adapted from the existing instruments of Mtika (2019), and Anjum (2021). The instrument was validated by two experts from the Faculty of Education, Taraba State University Jalingo, while the reliability was ascertained using the split-half method of determining reliability. A coefficient of 0.81 was obtained for the instrument, which was deemed a good index for reliability of survey instruments (Anikweze, Kurumeh, Azuka&Amuche, 2016). Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, a score of 2.49 and below was considered as negative response or disagreed, while a mean value 2.50 and above was considered as agreed or acceptance of the stated questionnaire item. For the hypothesis, a p-value greater than 0.05 was enough reason to reject a hypothesis.

## **Results**

### **Research Question 1**

What are the types of extracurricular activities available in secondary schools in Taraba State?

**Table 1: Mean Ratings Teachers on Types of Extracurricular Activities Available in Secondary Schools in Taraba State.**

		Std.		
	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Dev.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	Drama/debating society is a very active club in my school	3.10	.765	<b>Agreed</b>
2	Football as a sport is the activity with the most participants in my school	2.53	.771	<b>Agreed</b>
3	Religious meeting and fellowships are compulsory for all students	3.03	.926	<b>Agreed</b>
4	JETS club is functional in my school	3.03	1.009	<b>Agreed</b>
5	Music club is active in my school	2.16	.926	<b>Disagreed</b>
6	Social club is one of the active clubs in my school	2.51	.737	<b>Agreed</b>
7	Press club is fully operational in my school	2.97	.924	<b>Agreed</b>
<b>Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation</b>		<b>2.76</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

*Researchers' Field Survey (2023)*

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation ratings of responses on types of extracurricular activities available in secondary schools in Taraba State Public secondary schools. With the exception of item 5 ( $x=2.16$ ), all other items have mean ratings in the region of 2.50 set as benchmark. This shows that respondents agreed to all but one of the items stated. The result further shows that an extracurricular activity in secondary schools in Taraba state is appreciably high, with a grand mean of 2.76 and standard deviation of 0.95. This shows that extracurricular activities are still being carried out in many schools across the study area.

## Research Question 2

To what extent do the extracurricular activities carried out in Taraba State secondary schools relevant to students' academic work?

**Table 2: Mean Ratings of Teachers on the Extent to which Extracurricular Activities Carried out in the Secondary Schools in Taraba State are Relevant to Students' Academic Work**

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1. Debating club helps students learn and practise English better	2.76	.772	Agreed
2. Students who participate in sports are more active in classroom interaction than those students who do not	2.18	.811	Disagreed
3. Students are able to set better goals due to ECA	2.66	.737	Agreed
4. ECA can provide positive thinking to the students	3.09	.850	Agreed
5. JETS club members are better contributors in a science lesson in my school	3.20	.886	Agreed
6. Religious societies help participants better understand their related religious and moral subjects	2.99	.963	Agreed
7. Students' participation in ECAs enhances the ability to make better career choices	2.50	.821	Agreed
<b>Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>.896</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

*Researchers' Field Survey (2023)*

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation ratings of responses on whether different types of extracurricular activities carried out in the secondary schools have relevance to students' academic work. Only one item has a mean rating below the acceptable decision rule (item 2) with mean score of 2.18. Six items have mean ratings in the region of 2.50 to 4.00 (items 1, 3,4,5,6, & 7). This shows that respondents agreed

to more of the items stated than they disagreed. The result further shows that the relevance of extracurricular activities to students' academic work is high in secondary schools with a grand mean of 2.77 and standard deviation of 0.896 as shown in the table above.

### Research Question 3

What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools?

**Table 3: Mean ratings of Teachers Perceptions on the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Taraba State.**

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.	Students who participate in religious activities in schools perform better in academic work than students who do not	3.10	.808	<b>Agreed</b>
2.	Students who are involved in sporting activities in schools perform better in academic work than students who do not	2.55	.863	<b>Agreed</b>
3.	Participating in politically-oriented extracurricular activities makes students improve more in academic performance	2.20	1.067	<b>Disagreed</b>
4.	Participation in social activities helps students perform better in academics	2.95	.891	<b>Agreed</b>
5.	Science related clubs and societies such as JETS club participation can lead to better academic performance among students	3.09	.846	<b>Agreed</b>
6.	Excursions and site visitations help students perform better in their academic work	2.74	.927	<b>Agreed</b>
7.		3.07	.875	<b>Agreed</b>



Participating in debates and drama can help  
improve students' academic performance

**Cluster Mean/Standard Deviation**

**2.81 0.95 Agreed**

*Researchers' Field Survey (2023)*

Table 3 shows the mean ratings and standard deviations of responses on how teachers perceive the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Taraba State, Nigeria. One item has mean rating in the region of 2.49 and below, which means that respondents disagreed with that item, while the remaining 6 items measuring impact of ECA on academic performance have a mean of 2.50 and above. This shows that respondents agreed more to the items stated. The result further shows that the impact of extracurricular activities on academic performance in public secondary schools is accepted as high, with the grand mean of 2.81 and standard deviation of 0.95.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

There is no significant impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance based on the perceptions of teachers in Taraba State secondary schools.

**Table 4. Chi Square Test on the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Students' Academic Performance Based on the Perceptions of Teachers in Taraba State Secondary Schools.**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	165.723 <sup>a</sup>	382	.000
Likelihood Ratio	127.778	382	.000
Linear-by-Linear	45.372	1	.002

*Researchers' Field Survey (2023)*

From the table above on the significant impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance based on the perceptions of teachers in Taraba State secondary schools, the chi-square statistic shows a value of 165.723 at degree of freedom 382. The decision rule further states that p-values greater than 0.05 is enough evidence to accept null hypothesis and reject the alternate. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance based on the perceptions of teachers in Taraba State secondary schools is rejected.

**Discussion of Findings**

Findings on assessment of different types of extracurricular activities available in secondary schools revealed that some ECAs are still available in secondary schools in Taraba State. Some of the major ones include football sports, religious activities, and drama club, debating societies and the Press Club while Music Clubs and JETS Clubs were least functional. This finding aligns with that of Rees (2008) whose study shows that extracurricular activities are in the form of athletics, band and orchestra, social clubs, academic clubs, music and theater, and religious organizations. The study findings also resonate with that of Bakoban and Aljarallah (2015) in King Abdulaziz University (KAU), in

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia who identified extracurricular activities practiced in schools to include, training courses, lectures and seminars, workshops, festivals, competitions, excursions and visits. It equally agrees with the findings of Mohamed and Osaki (2022) in Lushoto, Tanzania whose findings revealed that the kinds of extracurricular activities practiced in secondary schools can be grouped into four categories, namely: sports and games; academic; production-related activities, including beekeeping and gardening; and social clubs.

Findings on whether different types of extracurricular activities carried out in the secondary schools have relevance to students' academic work revealed also that most of the activities are adjudged to be of relevance to the academic pursuit of the students. Specifically, respondents agreed that Debating Club helps students learn and practice English better; students are able to set better goals due to ECA; ECA can provide positive thinking to the students; JETS club members are better contributors in a science lesson; and religious societies help participants better understand their related religious and moral subjects. The findings are similar with the findings of Anjum (2021) who concluded that extracurricular activities have many positive impacts on education such as students' better behavior, good grades, and personality development, which makes the students more successful and socially strong adults.

Likewise, the finding on the perceptions of teachers on the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance in Taraba state secondary schools revealed that participation in science related clubs, religious societies, and social clubs is associated with a better academic performance among secondary school students as shown by the grand mean ( $\bar{x}=2.71$ ;  $SD=0.95$ ). The hypothesis tested further revealed significant impact of ECA on students' academic performance. These findings are in tandem with those of Singh & Imam (2012) who conducted a study which revealed that extracurricular activities improve the behaviour and the academic performance of the students in school life. It further aligns with the finding of Wilson (2009) that extracurricular programmes enabled students to have better grades, higher standardized test scores and higher educational attainment. It also agrees with the submissions of Mangino (2014) who reported that varsity football participants in 24 Iowa schools, United States of America, were found to have a higher grade point average than non-participatory classmates.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that extracurricular activities are still being practiced in secondary schools in Taraba State but, many of the more relevant ones which could be beneficial to students' academic and moral development were no longer in practice. Meanwhile, where extracurricular activities are being carried out,

there are found to be tailored towards the relevant academic activities of students. This implies that such activities are not randomly chosen but carefully geared towards the enrichment of students' learning experience in schools. It is also true that ECA enhances academic performance of students to a noticeable level which cannot be ignored. Finally, the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance did not differ when private schools were compared with public schools.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations

- i. Principals of schools should endeavour to implement ECAs in schools in order to give students a variety of choices to develop their abilities in line with the provisions of the National Policy on Education. Government should also provide resources through the provision and maintenance of adequate school facilities to enable principals of secondary schools implement these ECAs effectively.
- ii. Government, through the quality assurance or inspectorate unit of the ministry of education, should adequately monitor the types of ECAs being operated in secondary schools in Taraba State. This will go a long way to ensuring that the right fit of activities are directed towards complementing the classroom experience of learners in secondary schools.

- iii. Principals of schools should pass the message to parents and guardians during PTA meetings and other contacts that ECAs were designed to help learners stay fit and practise what they learn in order to help them perform better in the academic work.

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