



THE INFLUENCE OF EXTRA CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES ON THE SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A HISTORICAL CASE OF UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the main purpose is to present the influence of extra curriculum activities toward the academic performance of secondary school students in Uganda. The extracurricular activities are normally not mandatory for the students but students are invited to different activities such as conferences, workshops, debates and some training courses. In accordance with this purpose, the following specific topics have been put under research in terms of their effect on the academic performance of secondary school students in Uganda: the sports, debates, cultural galas or celebrations. In all schools all over the world, co-curricular activities play a very vital role towards the academic performance of learners in schools. Many learners gain from co-curricular activities such as getting new information with the brain storming while others gain confidence through the debates which can help them to develop their thinking ways and careers.

Keywords: *Extra curriculum, extracurricular activities, academic performance, students*

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, men and women were the teachers of their children and this form of education was termed as informal education. Their children had no specific time for learning, no specific classrooms, but instead around fire places and everywhere human activities take place. (Ssekamwa 2002). However in ancient Greece philosophers came up like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle among others who were unhappy about the education in the world. Plato suggested that education should be conducted by qualified men and women, following a specific curriculum according to different sections of age groups. Plato further added that the government should be responsible for the development of education, building schools and also developing the curriculum. The extracurricular activities are normally not mandatory for the students but students are invited to different activities such as conferences, workshops, debates and some training courses. The hidden goal is to achieve some specific objectives. Such was the case in Uganda considering the cases in educational history in the country.

In 1875 H. M. Stanley visited Kabaka Muteesa 1 in Kampala at the palace and in their conversation; the Kabaka requested the government of England to send him foreign teachers through a letter which was published in the London newspapers "Daily Telegraph". This culminated into the coming of five church Missionary teachers in 1877. Among them the most vocal one was Alexander MacKay. They were followed by a group of French teachers in 1879 that belonged to the White Fathers society (Tiberondwa 2000). This resulted into the construction of missionary stations and schools where Africans were taught how to read and write. For example catechist schools, sub-grade schools, elementary schools and primary schools. This boosted formal education in Uganda.

In 1925, Uganda was visited by the Phelps Stokes Commission from New York USA. That commission had been invited by the British government to help in advising British governors in the British colonies on how they should participate in the development of education in their colonies. Among the recommendations which the Phelps Stokes Commission gave to the British colonial government in Uganda was to establish a department of Education. That department was opened in 1925 and it began to spear-head educational developments in the country. One of the subjects in the curriculum which the department of Education established was co-curricular activities. Those activities have remained in existence up to the present day. There is therefore need to find out the influence of co-curricular activities on the academic performance of secondary school students.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The design was conducted as a qualitative and analytical research design because the respondents were selected from different institutions. The Qualitative design was chosen because it was intended to use the interviews to collect first hand data from various respondents about the importance of co-curricular activities towards the performance of secondary school students.

Study group / Sample

The study group was mainly drawn from Ssabaggabo-Makindye, Wakiso district. Special attention was paid to the student's performance as well as the Ministry responsible for these institutions. The study population consisted of 276 respondents. One sub-county of Makindye-Ssabaggabo was studied and one parish was purposely selected to represent other parishes. One institution was selected randomly using simple random sampling, cluster and stratified sampling strategies. A sampling frame consisting of men and women was constructed with the help of 10 head teachers, 6 games' and sports' tutors, 20 boys and 15 girls. Purposive sampling was used to select 51 respondents.

The number of samples studied using simple random sampling was: 25 boys, 30 girls, 10 support staff and 5 faculty deans.

Table 1.Table of research design, selection, data collection methods and types of participants

Approach	Selection	Types of participants	Data collection methods	Data analysis
Qualitative	Purposive sampling	10 head teachers. 6 games and sports tutors, 20 boys, 15 girls	Key introduction interviews Structured questions	Analyzing data during and after collection
Quantitative	Cluster and systematic sampling	25 boys 30 girls 10 staff supporters 5 faculty deans	Structured interviews	Editing Coding Tabulation

Data collection

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview guides and this refers to the first hand information collected from respondents. The questionnaires and the interview guide were sectioned according to the objectives and themes of the study. Secondary data was collected by reviewing literature related to the study. Literature was reviewed from text books, research works, online sources and journals. All literature reviewed was quoted.

Data Collection Instruments

The researchers used the following instruments for collecting the data for the study from the sampled respondents:

Questionnaire: The researchers prepared and set standard questions related to the subject matter. The questions were both open ended and closed ended to guide the respondent and allow their opinion and suggestions to be shared by the researchers on the subject matter .The researchers used this because it is suitable to administer in a vast area and also gives the respondent ample time to respond. The advantages of the questionnaire method are: Tabulation of closed ended response is an easy and straightforward process, some people feel more comfortable responding to a survey than participating in an interview, and many people are familiar with the survey. The disadvantages are: good survey questionnaires are hard to write and they take considerable time to develop at home and given lack of contacts with the respondents, never know who really completed the survey.

Interviews: The research involved the researchers interviewing having direct conversation and discussion with the respondent on the subject matter. The advantage is that the researcher uses this method because the researcher asks direct questions and receives immediate feedback from the respondent. The disadvantage is that this instrument does not give the real and enough information to the researcher because some respondents fear to air out their views in public.



Data analysis

In order to process the data collected by the researchers from the field, it was edited to ensure its completeness, accuracy, consistency and legibility compounded with comprehensiveness of the data. Coding of the data was done by arranging and summarizing data into similar categories with similar issues in order to establish meaning.

FINDINGS

According to the findings, there is a need to provide materials in the form of footballs, boots, jerseys, nets, poles, and shin guards to secondary schools students in Wakiso district. Secondary school stake holders should endeavor to facilitate participants in the co-curricular activities. For example, they should provide them with allowances in order to boost their efficiency and effectiveness during co-curricular period. Lubaga division, KCCA and DEO of Wakiso district should embrace co-curricular activities and programmes and learning systems that will involve them in the academic performance of secondary school students in Wakiso district.

The researchers also recommends that educational agencies such as the Ministry of Education and Sports, the National Council for Higher Education should sensitize secondary school administrators on the benefit and influence of co-curricular activities towards the academic performance of secondary school students .They should also inspect high schools to ensure that the students are motivated to participate in co-curricular activities.

DISCUSSION

Lexically, education means a process of teaching and learning to improve knowledge. The main purpose of education is to enlighten human beings, so that they differentiate what is right from what is wrong. The goal of true education is to combine intelligence with character. Complete education gives one both the power of concentration, and worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.

Generally, people get their first education when they are 3 or 4 years old. Thereafter, they manoeuvre through each level of education. Acquiring education often takes longer time than other activities. Some people consider education as a life-long must have, and they cannot live without it. There are many factors that affect the education system of a country including Culture, technology, and economic matters. The regulations made by the government also affect the operation of the education system of a country. Brown and White (2013) stressed the need for students since early childhood to become familiar with alternative practices in other countries. As time goes by, the education system changes dynamically for the better. There are many advantages and disadvantages of changes in the education system. Sometimes it works well and is appropriate for the citizens of a country, and sometimes it turns out negative. When the education system does not seem to go well, the government will propose a better one to improve it, with the help of some scientists and. The government sometimes adopts the education system from other countries which they consider the best option for the country.

Nowadays, most students tend to focus only on their goals, whether passing a test, graduating, or getting a job that they want. They do whatever it takes to achieve their goals quickly. However, they do not really learn what they are supposed to learn. When the students pass a test or graduate, they must have learned something that makes them succeed to achieve their goals. But, they did not really learn all the things that they should have really learned. Perhaps, they only learned how to memorize names, places, and dates, just because they wanted to pass a test, without really understanding what they were learning. Then, after the test, they will forget the materials that they have memorized, in order to clear their mind for the next test.

Right now, a school is a place for most people to determine that their goal is to get out as soon as possible. The students consider that the faster the finish the school, the better it will be. They will be proud of themselves when they get a good mark in a test, or graduate with a high GPA. But, they may be afraid of what will happen next after they graduate because they realize that they have not learned the important matters that are necessary and needed when they get a job and work. In fact, many companies out there do not consider a person from the weight of his or her GPA, but based on whether or not he is qualified enough to do the job for which he or she applies. Therefore, students should really learn what is important in relation their qualifications upon graduation. When students of English literature graduate from the university, they may apply for some jobs that are in relation with their area of specialty. They have to know that in order to get the job, they must be able to speak English well. No matter how high their knowledge about English is, or how high their GPAs are, there are only the students who are capable to speak English well who will likely be accepted for employment. Therefore knowing what is important is pertinent.

Speaking is the most important aspect of a language. If we cannot speak in English, we cannot communicate with the native speaker directly. There are some aspects of education that should be improved. For example, children should start going to



preschool, like kindergarten or playgroup to get their first education. The pupils are introduced to the education with the intention of making them interested to study before they go to the elementary school. Although it is not a must to go to a preschool, it is necessary for the children between the age of 2 and 5 to attend it. The parents send their children to the preschool so that their children can learn what is necessary to have when they study at elementary school. When they go to the first level of elementary school, they are faced with some lessons that if they do not have any prior knowledge about it, they will find it difficult to understand the lesson. Sometimes, the teachers of elementary school do not teach their students how to memorize the alphabet, how to read, and how to learn about numbers. On the contrary, the teachers just continue the lessons from pre-school, like counting numbers. So they have to learn it before they go to elementary school, because they have to be able to read in order to understand the lesson.

While they accomplish grade by grade, they are asked to learn and master many subjects. From the elementary school until senior high school, the students are not offered to choose their major specifically based on their interest. And after they graduated from senior high school, they may choose their major in which they are interested. Such a system of education is not effective and is time-wasting because they teach many subjects in which they are actually not interested. They waste their time by studying subjects that they do not like. For example, they are actually interested in learning English, but in school they also have to learn Physics, Biology, History, etc. Therefore they do not really concentrate on the subjects.

It will be much more effective if the students are directed to the field which they like. The students should be given an opportunity to choose their own major subjects, based on their passion. And, the parents should encourage their children to determine the major which they like by themselves. If the parents force their children to take some certain majors, the result will not be good, and sometimes they do not want to continue their studies just because they do not like them.

When the students are directed to choose their own major from the beginning, they may be able to master it quickly. For example, if they are interested in Mathematics, what they learn should be about Mathematics. So, they can become professionals in their major. The education system in Indonesia still uses the one-way communication. The teachers stand in front of in the class and explain all the materials, while the students just sit down on their seats and listen to the teachers. The students accept all the things that teachers say without any consideration. And they do anything which the teachers ask them to do. Because of that one-way communication, there is a miscommunication between the students and the teachers. As the result, although Indonesia has the fourth largest education system in the world, yet in a landmark education report of 50 nations Indonesia ranked last (Liquid Future 2013).

At the end of the class, the teachers usually ask the students whether or not there is any question regarding the materials that has been given on that day. Then, usually, nobody puts up his / her finger and asks a question. They are all staring at the teacher quietly. Because there are no students asking a question, the teacher will consider that all the students have understood all the materials clearly, while actually there are some students who do not really understand the lesson. They just do not have enough courage to ask a question. They are so afraid of making a mistake that their friends will laugh at them.

One-way communication has negative effects on the students. They become less confident to share their opinions or even ask a question. The government should improve this education to a better one. Two-way communication is considered as a better way in teaching method. Teacher should create a setting that will provide the students with intellectual capabilities that allow them to expand their minds instead of directing them (Goldson 2010).

Bastian (2013) stated that Indonesian youths need an education system that strongly emphasizes reasoning and allows the students to think critically, not simply to memorize. The students tend to be more creative and confident there. If they think that the teachers make a mistake they will point it out critically. And when they do not understand something, they will directly put up their fingers and ask the thing that they do not understand. They will keep asking until they understand everything. They do not feel embarrassed when they make some mistakes. They know that making some mistakes is a process of learning. In this way, they will understand the material more. Most of the schools in Indonesia divide the students into some classes based on their competencies on understanding the lesson. Those who have competencies above the average will be placed in the same class, while the students whose competencies are above the average are placed in the other class. So, in each class, the students have about the same level of competencies.

This method can increase the willingness of the students to compete with each other in a positive way because they tend to have a desire to be the number one in the class. If all of the students are placed in the same class and not divided based on their competencies, it can demotivate them. Some of them will not study hard to achieve the top rank because they know that no matter how hard they study, they will not be able to defeat the one who has the above level of intelligence. They become unconfident of themselves because of that.

If the students are placed based on their divisions, they will be more confident to study because of the same level of intelligence as the other students. It is also helpful to the teachers because they will use different methods in teaching each division. When the teachers teach in a class in which the student with low intelligence are placed, they should not teach



strictly, otherwise the students will blame themselves for their lack of understanding of the lesson, and also they will study passively without any interaction with the teachers.

The development of technology contributes much impact on the education. The use of technical gadgets has distracted the student generation from their book study and theory oriented study. Hence, educational institution should embrace technology to enhance their education pattern and teaching methods (Montoya, 2013). Technologies can be very useful for many people to get the education. It makes the process of obtaining knowledge easier. For example, the use of the Internet enables people to search and share anything, so we can obtain much information that we would like to have.

However, it somehow has disadvantages that can worsen the process of educating. For example, students nowadays are not used to writing the materials that they are learning in classroom. They become lazy to write because they are used to typing anything on their laptops that is considered much faster than writing it.

CONCLUSION

A study on the critical outlook at the influence of co-curricular activities on the academic performance of secondary school students is important. It is vividly indicated that multiplication of reasons are responsible for better performance in Wakiso district, basing on research objectives and questions.

First of all, students' performance relies heavily on co-curricular activities and this was established from the significant relationship that was shown in the variables that were tested and results indicated that co-curricular activities influence academic performance of secondary school students. It was recommended that stake holders should have more strategies of improving on academic performance of secondary school students.

It was also recommended that generation of self confidence among the students is necessary, and it was revealed that it can be achieved through the provision of enough materials for use by either the government or the schools, thereby enhancing students' performance. The study found out that schools with large numbers of students for example 700-1000 manage to engage many of their students in co-curricular activities through providing enough materials to the students.

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