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## Exploring the role of extracurricular activities on academic development among high school students

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study explored the role of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in the academic development of high school students, focusing on their lived experiences and perspectives, as well as those of parents, teachers, and school administrators. It examined how participation in ECAs influences academic performance, motivation, time management, and personal development, while identifying benefits, challenges, and differences in implementation between public and private schools.

**Methodology:** A qualitative phenomenological research design was employed. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with high school students, parents, teachers, and school administrators. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using in vivo coding to preserve participants' authentic expressions and cultural meanings, leading to the development of emerging themes.

**Results:** Four major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) *Redefining Success Beyond Grades*, where students perceived success as encompassing leadership, confidence, and discipline in addition to academic achievement; (2) *Managing Stress While Balancing Academics and ECAs*, highlighting that ECAs functioned both as stress relievers and additional demands depending on students' time management skills; (3) *Support and Mentoring*, emphasizing the crucial role of parental and institutional guidance in helping students balance academic and extracurricular responsibilities; and (4) *Differences in Implementation*, revealing that ECAs were more systematically integrated into the curriculum in private schools, whereas public schools relied on flexible scheduling outside regular class hours, affecting student engagement and participation.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that extracurricular activities positively contribute to students' academic development and acquisition of essential life skills despite challenges related to time constraints and unequal access. Effective integration of ECAs requires supportive school policies, structured scheduling, and strong mentoring systems to maximize their academic and developmental benefits for high school students.

**Keywords:** *extracurricular activities; academic development; high school students; phenomenological study*

### INTRODUCTION

Globally, extracurricular activities are recognized as essential components of student development, complementing traditional academic instruction. Research indicates that participation in sports, arts, school clubs, and community service promotes life skills, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving, while also enhancing academic performance (Saki & Hanane, 2023; Fredricks & Eccles, 2020). Despite these benefits, some countries have limited or eliminated ECAs to prioritize academic recovery. For example, in December 2024, Kobe, Japan, announced the discontinuation of school clubs in public middle schools, though students could still access facilities after class (Baseel, 2024).

In the Philippine context, policy changes have similarly affected ECAs. DepEd Order No. 034 (2022) followed the announcement by the Vice President and former Education Secretary to suspend extracurricular activities for the 2022-2023 school year, emphasizing academic recovery after pandemic-related learning gaps (Tuazon, 2022). While intended to enhance academic focus, this directive raised concerns about students' well-being. Educators and advocacy groups, like the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), emphasized the importance of balancing academic

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demands with opportunities for personal growth, citing potential risks of burnout and decreased motivation (Tuazon, 2022).

Research has demonstrated a strong relationship between ECAs and both academic and personal development. Studies show that students engaged in ECAs exhibit higher levels of attention, motivation, and communication-related skills (Zarazaga-Peláez et al., 2024). Meanwhile, practitioner-based reports, Honor Society (2023), indicate associations with higher grades and improved soft skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving. However, Philippine studies rarely explore students' perceptions, lived experiences, and the perspectives of parents, educators, and administrators, focusing instead on quantitative correlations. This leaves a gap in understanding how ECAs contribute to academic and personal growth in meaningful, context-specific ways.

Accordingly, this study investigates the role of ECAs in academic development among high school students, aiming to capture lived experiences, perceptions, and the broader implications for school programs and policy. By focusing on high school—a pivotal stage for college preparation and skill development—this research seeks to provide evidence that can guide educators and policymakers in designing balanced, effective, and student-centered extracurricular programs.

## Review of Related Literature and Studies

### Global Literature on Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance

ECAs are widely acknowledged as crucial components of student development in educational systems across the world. Participation in ECAs yields measurable academic gains, according to recent studies. For instance, engagement in extracurricular activities is associated with improvements in overall academic performance and cognitive-behavioral skills (Zarazaga-Peláez et al., 2024). Academic clubs, artistic programs, athletics, and community service are widely recognized for developing abilities that directly assist learning. Research indicates that participation in extracurricular activities supports the development of key competencies of students, such as creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, which are linked with improved academic performance and broader student development outcomes (e.g., Wu & Fernando, 2023). These studies collectively suggest that ECAs function not only as enrichment activities but as mechanisms through which academic-related competencies are cultivated. Similarly, the relevance of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in holistic academic development is further supported by research conducted in Asian educational environments, which found that involvement in ECAs enhances students' academic engagement as well as the development of social and leadership skills. (Penjor & Dorji, 2022).

### Local Studies in the Philippine Context

In the Philippines, research regularly demonstrates positive correlations between academic success and ECA involvement. In research conducted at Zamboanga National High School, Vispo (2024) discovered a strong, beneficial relationship between high school students' participation in ECAs and their academic success. To optimize developmental benefits, the research advises school staff to assist students in selecting activities aligned with their interests and abilities.

Boy et al. (2022) examined ECAs at De La Salle University and found that involvement improves dedication, academic competence, and compassion, while also cautioning against over-involvement that may negatively affect academic performance. Similarly, Vargas et al. (2020) reported that senior high school students who participate in ECAs demonstrate increased academic engagement and positive learning attitudes. While these studies establish consistent positive associations, they primarily rely on outcome-based or correlational data, offering limited insight into how students and stakeholders experience and interpret these benefits.

Despite these advantages, access inequities remain evident. Socioeconomic factors continue to influence student participation and academic outcomes, underscoring the need for inclusive and supportive school policies in the Philippine context.

### Synthesis

Extracurricular activities are consistently identified as significant contributors to students' academic and personal development in both global and local literature. Studies demonstrate that ECAs enhance academic performance by strengthening cognitive, social, and leadership skills (Hayat et al., 2020; Zarazaga-Peláez et al., 2024), while also fostering motivation, resilience, and engagement. However, existing literature—particularly in the Philippine context—largely emphasizes measurable outcomes and correlations, with limited attention to how students, parents, teachers, and school leaders make meaning of their ECA experiences.



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Moreover, while international and local studies acknowledge challenges such as overcommitment, stress, and unequal access, they rarely explore how students navigate these tensions within their specific school environments. This gap highlights the need for qualitative inquiry that moves beyond statistical relationships to examine lived experiences, interpretations, and contextual factors shaping academic development through ECAs.

Accordingly, the present study extends existing research by providing an in-depth, qualitative examination of how high school students and key stakeholders understand the role of extracurricular activities in academic success, thereby contributing nuanced insights to inform educational practice and policy.

### Theoretical Framework

This research explains how ECAs enhance students' academic growth using Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978).

According to Vygotsky, social contact, cultural resources, and guidance from more experienced individuals all influence learning. By offering cooperative settings where students learn via collaboration, coaching, and peer mentorship, ECAs naturally mirror these ideals. With the support of advisors and knowledgeable peers, students can develop new skills that improve their academic and personal competence through the Zone of Proximal Development. Peer cooperation in ECAs also improves leadership, problem-solving, and communication abilities, all of which contribute to better academic achievement.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides further insight into how ECAs impact learning by meeting students' esteem, social, and emotional needs—all of which are necessary for reaching self-actualization. Engaging in sports, the arts, leadership positions, and volunteer work fosters self-assurance, a sense of purpose, and belonging, all of which boost motivation for learning. ECAs enable students to participate more fully in their academic obligations by fostering affirming social networks that reduce feelings of loneliness and enhance emotional well-being. Huang (2024) affirms that Maslow's framework remains relevant in contemporary educational and motivational research, demonstrating that fulfillment of psychosocial and esteem needs continues to support engagement, persistence, and holistic development.

Collectively, these ideas demonstrate how ECAs support holistic development by meeting higher-order psychological demands necessary for academic achievement and offering enriched social learning opportunities.

### Statement of the Problem

This study investigated how ECAs influence the academic development of high school students by examining their lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to their participation. Although extracurricular activities are widely recognized for fostering leadership, discipline, confidence, and social skills, there remains a lack of qualitative evidence—particularly in the Philippine context—exploring how these activities shape students' academic performance, motivation, time management, and personal growth. Moreover, ongoing concerns related to academic burnout, competing academic demands, and variations in ECA implementation across school types highlight the need for deeper examination. Addressing these concerns is essential to understanding how extracurricular activities can be meaningfully integrated into school programs. This study therefore sought to generate context-based insights that may guide teachers, parents, school administrators, and policymakers in designing balanced, inclusive, and developmentally responsive extracurricular programs.

### Research Objectives

#### General Objective:

To investigate how extracurricular activities affect high school students' academic and personal development.

#### Specific Objectives:

1. To explain the real-life experiences of high school students who engage in extracurricular activities in relation to their academic achievement.
2. To determine the academic advantages that students perceive as a result of participating in extracurricular activities.
3. To analyze how students interpret their involvement in extracurricular activities in relation to their academic and personal growth.



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## Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of high school students participating in extracurricular activities in fostering their academic success?
2. How do high school students describe the academic benefits they gain from participation and involvement in extracurricular activities?
3. What meanings do high school students attribute to their participation in extracurricular activities regarding their personal and academic development?

## METHODS

### Research Design

In order to investigate the lived experiences of high school students participating in ECAs and their perceived influence on academic progress, this study used a qualitative research methodology utilizing a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology was determined to be the most appropriate design since the study's objective was to comprehend the common meanings and substance of participants' experiences rather than to develop a theory or look at a specific bounded example. By using this method, the researchers were able to record students' subjective, context-specific observations about motivation, academic engagement, and personal development as perceived by people who were directly involved in their academic life.

The phenomenological method was operationalized by focusing on recurring themes in participant narratives obtained from in-depth interviews with students, parents, teachers/advisers, and school administrators who had direct experience with ECAs. By shifting from individual narratives to common themes that represent the collective meaning of ECA involvement, data analysis focused on finding key components of these experiences. The study combined different viewpoints into a cohesive picture of how ECAs support students' academic and personal growth through meticulous theme analysis based on participants' own words.

### Population and Sampling

This qualitative study was conducted through interviews with a group of key informants selected for their firsthand experiences with ECAs, instead of a statistical population intended for generalization: parents whose children are involved in ECAs, students engaged in ECAs from public and private schools, school heads, and teachers who serve as advisers/coaches for ECA school organizations. Participants are composed of eight informants.

**Sampling Technique.** To find respondents with significant ECA experience, purposeful sampling was employed. This approach was suitable because it emphasizes depth of understanding above numerical representation, for a qualitative design, and ensured that participants could explain the academic and developmental impact of ECAs.

**Participants.** Eight informants participated in the study: two administrators with at least five years of experience, two instructors or advisors who oversee student groups, two parents whose children participate in school clubs, and two high school students who have been engaged in ECAs for more than two years. To record variations in ECAs implementation and assistance, participants were drawn from both public and private schools.

### Instruments

The researchers utilized a researcher-developed interview guide tailored for each group. The interview guide focused on the informants' lived experiences in ECAs, the academic benefits of participation, and their personal and academic development through these activities.

The semi-structured interview guide was validated by five experts—one specializing in language and linguistics, and the others are experts in conducting qualitative research methodology. Feedback supported the questions' usage for data collection and thematic analysis by confirming that they were understandable, pertinent, and suitable for examining students' experiences and academic advantages in extracurricular activities. Minor changes were made based on the experts' suggestions, such as rephrasing ambiguous questions, improving reflection prompts, and ensuring the guidelines were consistent for all participant groups.

### Data Collection

A communication letter was sent to the informants beforehand to allow the researchers to conduct interviews. The interviews were conducted in May 2025, during the last month of the previous school year, since students and teachers were still accessible before the summer break. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the informants' respective schools, in a quiet and private setting to ensure minimal distraction. For those informants who



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were unavailable for an in-person meeting, the interviews were conducted via phone conversation to cater to the time availability of the informants. The interviews were recorded, and the researchers also took notes to capture important details. Afterward, the researchers transcribed the recordings for subsequent transcription.

### Treatment of Data

The researchers Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis to analyze the data, which systematically explores the experiences and perceptions of students, parents, and teacher/advisers, and school administrators regarding ECAs and their academic and personal development. The process was created to guarantee that themes were firmly rooted in participants' answers.

1. **Familiarization** – After reading the observation notes and interview transcripts several times, the researchers took note of significant statements, recurrent themes, and trends about students' perceptions of the academic advantages of ECAs. Initial impressions helped in focusing later on coding elements relevant to the study's objectives.
2. **Initial Coding** – The data was divided into meaningful segments (sentences, phrases), and each segment was given a descriptive code that encapsulated its essence. Statements pertaining to motivation, cooperation, or time management, for instance, were coded to represent students' involvement and learning through ECAs.
3. **Generating Initial Themes** – To identify new trends and connections, related codes were grouped into preliminary themes that reflected broader patterns, such as how participation in ECAs supported academic skills, personal growth, or social development. In this stage, higher-level conceptual interpretations were linked to the raw data.
4. **Reviewing Themes** – To guarantee internal consistency and relevance to the study topics, preliminary themes were refined, combined, divided, or redefined to better capture the nuances between students' perceived advantages and real-world experiences.
5. **Defining and Naming Themes** – The final themes were identified as: "Lived Experiences in Extracurricular Activities and Academic Success", "Academic Benefits Gained from Participation and Involvement in Extracurricular Activities", and "Students' Interpretations on the Significance of Extracurricular Activities for Their Academic and Personal Growth". The informants' remarks were directly connected to each theme, demonstrating the ways in which particular codes influenced the development of these broad categories.
6. **Writing Up** – Findings were organized into a coherent narrative with integration of verbatim excerpts from informants to illustrate and support each theme. Analytical discussion emphasized how the themes clarified the connection between students' academic and personal growth and ECAs.

Throughout the process, the researchers made sure that themes were rooted in participant replies by keeping an audit record of codes and judgments throughout the procedure. This approach allowed the analysis to go beyond procedural description and show a direct link between the raw data, codes, and, eventually, the main conclusions of the study.

### Ethical Considerations

All key informants were informed about the purpose of the study, including its voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty before the interview began. Verbal informed consent was obtained from all informants prior to data collection.

Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study. All transcripts and reports had their personal identification removed, and the researchers were the only one with safe access to the material. Documents and interview recordings were removed after processing and used only for scholarly reasons.

These procedures ensured the full protection of the informants' rights, welfare, and privacy while maintaining ethical research standards.

### RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The analysis and interpretation of the information obtained from the informants were presented in this section. The results have been arranged into emerging themes, each of which has been interpreted and its ramifications discussed. The topic presentation adheres to the order specified in the study's problem statement to



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guarantee consistency and congruence with the research goals. This organization facilitated a clear integration of participants' narratives with relevant literature, strengthening the analytical depth of the findings.

## 1. Lived Experiences in Extracurricular Activities and Academic Success

### Themes

*Redefining Success Beyond Grades*  
*Learning that Transcends the Classroom*

#### 1.1 Redefining Success: Beyond Grades

The way that students reinterpreted success through their involvement in ECAs was one of the major topics that came out of the interviews. Success was traditionally limited to academic achievement, but informants said that their participation in ECAs changed how they defined success to encompass leadership, self-assurance, and overall growth. This illustrated a change from considering success only in terms of grades to appreciating more comprehensive skills that support overall growth. The following are the samples of transcription:

**Student 1:** *“Pirme ako ginpipili nga leader ha eskwelahan sugad hin mga group activities, an akon naman leadership skill nga nakuha as SSG officer dako an pakabulig ha akon.”*

(I am often chosen as a leader for group activities, and the leadership skills I gained as an SSG officer greatly helped me in class performance.)

This demonstrated how ECAs assist students in translating leadership experiences into success in the classroom. This suggested that the development of leadership skills through ECAs directly influences classroom engagement. Teachers and administrators supported this by noting that students who participate in ECAs typically exhibit greater motivation and discipline in their academic performance. Collectively, these accounts demonstrated that ECAs serve as both skill-building environments and accelerators for converting personal development into tangible academic involvement.

These results were in accordance with research conducted by Honor Society (2023), which shows that involvement in ECAs fosters academic resilience, self-discipline, and life skills. While this source is practitioner-oriented, it provides relevant contextual support for understanding school-based observations of student development. This finding is further supported by Fredricks and Eccles (2020), who found that sustained participation in school-based activities predicts higher academic engagement and persistence. The alignment of participant experiences with these studies strengthens the argument that ECAs contribute to multifaceted definitions of success.

Students who engaged in ECAs often perform better academically, have more self-esteem, and have greater problem-solving abilities, according to one school principal (SP1). As a result, extracurricular activities broaden the concept of academic success by fusing academic accomplishment with personal development. These findings highlighted that the benefits of ECAs extend beyond academic metrics, emphasizing leadership, self-efficacy, and adaptive problem-solving as critical components of student achievement. These observed outcomes are consistent with Lastra et al. (2024), who identified a strong positive correlation between high school students' academic achievement and their involvement in extracurricular activities. According to their research, students who participated in ECAs exhibit superior academic accomplishment coupled with improved self-esteem and problem-solving skills, supporting the notion that academic success encompasses leadership and personal growth in addition to grades.

#### 1.2. Learning that Transcends the Classroom

An additional topic emphasized how ECAs supplement classroom instruction. Students said that their involvement enhanced their critical thinking, writing, and communication skills. The following are the samples of transcription:

**Student 2:** *“Through han training nga guinhahatag ha amon ha journalism, nakakag-submit ako hin scripts nga nakakabulig ha akon para maging mindful han akon grammar and spelling.”*

(Through the training given in journalism, I learned to be mindful of grammar and spelling when writing scripts.)

This suggested how hands-on experience in ECAs enables students to directly apply and refine classroom skills, such as writing and communication, in authentic contexts, thereby reinforcing their academic learning. This

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finding was consistent with studies that demonstrated how students who participate in ECAs frequently acquire transferable skills, such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving, which improve academic engagement and classroom performance (Saki & Hanane, 2023; Zarazaga-Peláez et al., 2024). Based on their results, students may apply practical skills—like critical thinking and effective communication—to academic assignments through experiential learning obtained through ECAs, improving their overall academic performance.

## 2. Academic Benefits Gained from Participation and Involvement in Extracurricular Activities

### Themes

*Managing Stress While Balancing Academics and ECAs*  
*Support Systems as a Shared Responsibility*

#### 2.1. Managing Stress While Balancing Academics and ECAs

Students' involvement in ECAs was a source of stress as well as an incentive. Many said they had trouble juggling their extracurricular and academic obligations. The following are samples of transcription:

**Student 1:** *“As an SSG officer, hitaas it akon obligasyon kada mayda school events kay hi kami man iton first in line to assist hit am teachers para preparation (S1).”*

(As an SSG officer, my responsibilities peak during school events, as we are the first in line to assist teachers in preparing for the activities).

**Student 2:** *“Mayda mga times nga nagdudungan ha usa ka semana an journalism competition ngan exam. Namamanage ko it akon time by pag-schedule, kaupod it akon adviser, hit akon pag-aram ngan hit akon training.”*

(There was a time when the journalism competition and exam were in the same week. I managed by scheduling my study time and training with my adviser's help.)

The findings revealed that leadership positions put more strain on students, requiring excellent time management and self-control. However, students also learned coping mechanisms, including creating their own timetables and asking instructors for help. This suggested that ECAs do not merely add academic pressure but also cultivate adaptive skills that support academic persistence.

These findings are consistent with those of Sipahutar and Arsini (2024), who discovered that organized group guidance and self-management techniques lessen student fatigue. Consistent with these findings, Pan, Zhou & Shek (2022) found that involvement in extracurricular activities is associated with cognitive growth and psychosocial advantages that promote academic and emotional management in teenagers, suggesting more extensive developmental benefits outside the classroom.

Therefore, even though ECAs might increase workload, when they are supported by responsive school settings, they can improve time management and emotional resilience.

#### 2.2. Support System as a Shared Responsibility

Support from parents and institutions was shown to be essential in assisting students in juggling their two obligations. The following are samples of the transcription:

**Parent 1:** *“Danay na ooverwhelmed it ak anak kadamo hit tasks nera ha school. It ak na la ginbubuhay is guide her hit pag-prioritize hine ngan pagbisita daman ha eskwelahan sugad hin mayd amga contests.”*

[My child sometimes feels overwhelmed with tasks. I guide her in prioritizing these and visit her at school during contests.]

**Parent 2:** *“Guin papakita ko iton akon support ha iya pinaagi hiton pagbulig ha iya kada performance tasks nera.”*

[I show support by helping her with performance tasks.]

**School Principal 2:** *“Iton amon eskwelahan nag-aalutagar hin 5% han amon MOOE para suportahan an mga proyekto han SSG. Kun diin, usa ine nga pag-enganyar ha mga bata para bumulig hit mga organisasyon.”*

[Our school allotted 5% of the MOOE to support student government projects—our way of encouraging student involvement.]



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Based on these answers, cooperative efforts between educators, parents, administrators, and students support maintaining student involvement without sacrificing academic achievement. Parent and administrator narratives illustrate how shared responsibility sustains student participation without compromising academic achievement. These findings highlight that academic benefits from ECAs are maximized when support extends beyond the individual student to the family and school systems.

Moral-Garcia et. al. (2020) revealed similar results, emphasizing that favorable academic achievements are fostered and stress is reduced by strong parental and institutional support and motivation. Therefore, ECAs work best when they are part of a larger support network that fosters well-being and productivity.

Penjor & Dorji (2022) also emphasized that students believe that ECAs improve their academic achievement, social skills, and self-concept, particularly when they are supported by school and peer interactions.

### 3. Students' Interpretations on the Significance of Extracurricular Activities for Their Academic and Personal Growth

#### Themes

*The Power of Mentorship*  
*Institutional Differences and Their Impact*

#### 3.1. The Power of Mentorship

According to the informants, mentoring had a significant influence on both their academic and personal growth. Instructors and advisors helped students manage conflicting expectations by being accommodating and supportive. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

*Student 2: "Dako iton nahibubulig ha akon hit akon mga teachers ngan journalism adviser labi na pagbalnase hiy akon mga responsibilities. Usahay, gin-aadjust nera iton schedule hit amon mga trainings kun mayda mga school performances namon or exams."*

(My teachers and journalism adviser helped me a lot in balancing both responsibilities. They adjust our training schedules if we have school performances or exams.)

*Parent 1: "Danay na ooverwhelmed it ak anak kadamo hit tasks nera ha school... Binubuligan ko heya pag-prioritize ngan gin eenganyar ko heya nga magpadayon la."*

(There are times when my child feels overwhelmed... I help her prioritize tasks and encourage her to keep going.)

Therefore, mentoring fosters confidence and accountability in addition to training. This is in line with McClain, Kelner, and Elledge (2021), who contended that encouraging positive youth outcomes in ECAs requires mentorship and supervision. According to the informants' testimonies, mentoring improved emotional fortitude and academic dedication. Thus, students' engagement in ECAs transforms experiential learning into transferable academic skills, reinforcing classroom instruction. In the same study on peer mentoring programs in higher education conducted by González-Ortiz-de-Zárate et. al (2025), mentees outperformed non-mentees in terms of academic performance and dropout rates across several years, demonstrating the beneficial effects of organized mentoring on student achievement.

#### 3.2. Institutional Differences and Their Impact

The implementation of ECAs in public and private schools varies, impacted students' experiences, according to this final theme. Private school parents reported that ECAs are incorporated into the curriculum and that club meetings are held during specific times. Sample transcriptions are as follows:

*Parent 2: "Nag-aallot man hin time iton era eskwelahan para hiton club meetings sugad la hiton normal subjects, salit dire ine nakaka apekto hiton era academics."*

(Their school allots time for club meetings like a normal subject, so it doesn't affect academics.)



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This highlights how structured institutional support can mitigate conflicts between academic and extracurricular demands, allowing students to maximize learning outcomes. On the other hand, ECAs were frequently held outside of regular school hours in public schools, necessitating the utilization of lunch breaks or after-school time.

*Teacher 2: "Nagshoshorten kami hin practice time para big events para masigurado nga iton mga estudyante makakaatendir la gehapon hit era mga klase."*  
(We shorten practice time for big events to ensure that students still attend classes.)

Time management, stress levels, and student involvement were all impacted by these structural variations. This finding suggested that institutional arrangements significantly influence whether ECAs function as academic supports or additional demands on students' time and energy. In private school contexts, structured scheduling appears to reduce conflict between academic and extracurricular responsibilities, while in public schools, students and teachers often rely on compensatory strategies to balance both demands.

Schools that explicitly included ECAs into their curricula typically promote higher levels of engagement and learning results, as noted by the Honor Society (2023) and the National Association of Secondary Principals. Although these sources provide policy-level rather than empirical evidence, they help contextualize the participants' accounts by illustrating how institutional recognition and administrative support can shape students' academic experiences. This emphasizes the necessity of laws that acknowledge ECAs as essential to education rather than as a side effect.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrated that extracurricular activities played a significant role in shaping high school students' academic and personal development. Participation in extracurricular activities enabled students to develop essential life skills such as leadership, resilience, confidence, and time management, which in turn supported their academic performance. The study also showed that students' ability to balance academic responsibilities and extracurricular involvement was strongly influenced by the presence of supportive mentoring and institutional structures. Variations in the implementation of extracurricular activities between public and private schools further affected students' engagement, stress levels, and learning experiences. Overall, the study affirmed that when extracurricular activities are meaningfully integrated into school programs and supported by families and institutions, they contribute to the development of well-rounded learners capable of academic success and personal growth.

By providing in-depth insights into how high school students, parents, teachers, and administrators view the importance of extracurricular activities in academic and personal development, this study advances qualitative education research. Its conclusions, which emphasize the necessity of organized ECA implementation, encouraging mentorship, and cooperation between schools and families to improve student results, are pertinent to Philippine policy and educational practice. Furthermore, by demonstrating how context-specific elements, such as institutional variations and cultural customs, influence the advantages and difficulties of extracurricular involvement, this study contributes to the global conversation on ECAs and provides lessons that can be applied to other educational environments across the globe.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, schools may consider integrating extracurricular activities more strategically within the academic curriculum to help students balance academic demands and extracurricular participation. School administrators and teachers may strengthen mentoring and guidance programs to support students' leadership development, motivation, and time management skills. Parents and schools may enhance collaboration to provide consistent academic and emotional support for students engaged in extracurricular activities. Educational policymakers, including the Department of Education, may review existing policies to allow flexible and developmentally responsive implementation of extracurricular programs that support holistic learning. Future researchers may explore the quantitative effects of extracurricular participation and involve larger and more diverse samples to further validate and extend the findings of this study.



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