



The reality of extra-curricular educational activities from the viewpoint of students with learning difficulties in English language

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Abstract

This study aimed at uncovering the reality of the extra-curricular educational activities in English language in five areas, planning the extracurricular activity, implementing the extracurricular activity, the objectives of the extracurricular activity, strengthening the link of the extracurricular activity with society, and evaluating the extracurricular activity. The study also aimed to identify the effect of each of the variables of gender, school location, and grade level on the degree of practicing activities. The study sample consisted of (200) male and female students. The descriptive and analytical approach was used as the methodology, where a special questionnaire to measure the reality of educational activities, which included (5) dimensions and (35) items. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the degree of practicing activities due to the gender variable in favor of females. The results also indicated the existence of statistically significant differences attributed to the grade level in favor of the fifth grade.

Keywords: extra-curricular educational activities, students with LDs in English language, planning extra-curricular activities, implementing extra-curricular activities

Introduction

Education is an integrated process with multiple dimensions, which is not limited to classroom activity. It extends to extracurricular activities that deepen and expand the knowledge presented in the classroom, enrich the student's experience, and creates opportunities for growth in various fields. Education related to goals, objectives, interests, needs, and experiences affects the change of the learner's behavior. Children learn issues related to solving real problems, and they learn things that satisfy their needs or are related to their interests.

The interest in extracurricular school activities today takes an important shift in the educational process. This process, which today has become an integrative holistic, is not limited to what is taught in the classroom, nor to the effort exerted by the teacher, or to the means that support the educational process alone. The educational process is no longer limited to classrooms. It is going beyond that to the participation of other educational, social, and cultural institutions such as home, club, media, and other educational materials (Bataya, 2000).

Therefore, extracurricular educational activities are an essential part of the curriculum. The curriculum and the extracurricular activity are two complementary aspects, one of which is indispensable for the other if the school wants to educate its students in an integrated manner. The school activities are important to complete the curriculum, expanding its information and application, and practicing (Makhlouf, 2013) [13].

Therefore, extracurricular activities are an important part of the school curriculum in its modern concept and are compatible with the school. These activities are one of the important elements in building and refining the personality of students and many of the goals are achieved through the activities carried out by students outside the classroom. The

effectiveness of teacher instructing in the classroom depends largely on the students' practice of activities. Achieving the maximum possible growth for students does not take place effectively in the classroom where their temporal and material capabilities do not allow this. Therefore, integrated education requires a general atmosphere that prevails in the school and creates conditions for the practice of such activities (Shehata, 2015) [12].

In sum, any activity is part of education and is a life process in which the individual learns under the guidance of the teacher. Education is concerned with teaching different aspects of life, not just specific subjects, and is concerned with the learner's growth as a complete unit and with ensuring that the learner's personality is balance in all aspects. The extracurricular activity was known by several names, including the extracurricular activity, the accompanying activity, the external activity, and the student activity, all of which are names for one signified concept (Abdel-Wahab, 2016) [1].

Problem Statement

Some teachers do not give enough extra-curricular educational activities and consider it a heavy burden on them and increasing their load. Teachers' interest is directed towards academic subjects only. They provide the learner with a huge amount of information and store it without concern for activating this information and linking it to the environment and the requirements of life, thus neglecting the needs of the individuals and their abilities. These activities are complementary to the curriculum for their great importance in building the students' personality in all its aspects, and preparing them properly to face life and its requirements by directing their mental, physical and emotional capabilities, constructive and fruitful guidance. By providing many extra-curricular educational activities

that suit the students' preferences and their desires, teachers can provide education that is consistent with the modern educational view of activity.

Research Objectives

This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

- Identifying the reality of extra-curricular educational activities in English language from the point of view of students with LDs.
- Identifying the degree of practicing extra-curricular educational activities in English language among students with LDs.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to give answers to the following research question:

1. What is the reality of using extra-curricular educational activities from the viewpoint of students with LDs in English language?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences in the degree of practicing extra-curricular educational activities in English language due to the variable of students' gender?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences in the degree of practicing extra-curricular educational activities in English language due to the variable of students' grade?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses extracurricular activities in English language, which is a very important activity, and plays a major role in the educational process as it helps students to assume responsibility and self-reliance, and trains them in collective leadership, consultation, group cooperation, and mutual understanding. Using these activities satisfies their needs, expressing their tendencies, and equipping them with the skills and mental and academic abilities that the classroom curriculum cannot provide for them in most cases.

Delimitations of the Study

The generalization of findings is highly related to the size of the study sample and the study instrument used in this study, which was prepared and developed by the researcher. Therefore, the results of this study will depend on the validity and reliability of the instrument. The results of this study are generalized in light of the sample's representation of the study population.

Definition of Operational Terms

The present study included many terms, which can be defined as follows:

The Reality of Extra-Curricular Educational Activities in English Language

The degree of the actual practice of extra-curricular educational activities in English language in public schools in Aseer region, Saudi Arabia.

Extra-Curricular Activities

These activities are a group of actions and practices that the student carries out under the supervision and direction of the school. They are not controlled by the official curriculum, and are linked to the school's educational programs and

complements them. Students choose the activities based on their interest, without being restricted to a specific academic level.

Literature Review

The use of extracurricular school activities in English language allows students to express their tendencies and aspects of their personality, and satisfy their needs, which contributes to attracting them to school, reducing their absence. Students can be provided with social, moral, scientific, and practical skills and experiences by using extracurricular activities. School activities provide students with educational situations that are similar to life situations, if not similar to them, which helps students to easily benefit from the knowledge they learn through the school in the external community and their impact on their future life (Al-Hashemi, 2018) ^[3].

The extracurricular activity achieves the goals of cooperative work based on the principle of student positivity. It also sets goals for the activity in a cooperative manner in which students are enthusiastic and have positive participation in achieving these goals. During all of this, students learn how to work with others, how to plan for joint action, take responsibility, and respect the opinions of others, freedom of opinion, and the ability to express themselves. Within this framework, educational and psychological research indicates that school activities are considered part of the modern high school philosophy. It was found that these activities help in forming habits, skills, values, and ways of thinking necessary to continue higher education and to engage in comprehensive development. Students who participate in the activity accompanying the curriculum and the recreational activity can enhance academic achievement and have a higher IQ. They are positive with their colleagues and teachers, as they are more confident in themselves, more positive in their relationships with others, and they can make decisions and persevere when carrying out their work (Moqbel, 2012) ^[11].

Previous Studies

Al-Omri and Ahmed. (2019) ^[5] identified the impact of extra-curricular activities on the improvement of oral performance for students of English as a Foreign Language in Al-Namas Province in Saudi Arabia, as perceived by EFL Teachers. The study followed the qualitative method, and the sample of this study consisted of 50 teachers of English as a Foreign Language from Al-Namas Province in Saudi Arabia. And to collect data, a questionnaire was designed by an expert committee and was then analyzed using SPSS. The results of this study showed a positive correlation between the effect of extra-curricular activities adapted in Saudi schools, and the oral performance of the students from the perspective of teachers of EFL. The results also showed no statistically significant differences in the correspondence of the sample in the effect of extra-curricular activities on the development of Saudi student's oral performance due to Qualification.

Ali Sallam (2019) determined some of the effects of ECAs on student's language learning, and the challenges that face the teachers in applying these activities, and some probable solutions for these challenges. This study followed the quantitative analysis methodology where a questionnaire was used to collect data and to answer the study's questions. The sample of this study consisted of 64 teachers who

responded to the survey. The results of this study showed that English ECAs have positive effects on student's language learning; it also showed that there were some challenges in applying ECAs.

Jamshidov (2019) ^[9] investigated the enhancement of socio-cultural competence of EFL students using extra-curricular activities. The control and experimental groups included 80 language learners (each group 40). The control group was given the questionnaires, pre-, and post-tests along with the experimental group. Then, extracurricular activities were given to the experimental group which itself was divided into four mini-groups. 10 participants were asked to prepare a self-video clip each week (4 clips as a whole). Another group of 10 testees was asked to use social networks such as Facebook, Whats App, Telegram, and the likes chatting with native speakers at least two hours a day involving themselves in English practice after taking pre-test and they were also given the subsequent post-test after a month. The third mini group, including 10 participants, had to write a letter each week to a native speaker e-pal (4 letters as a whole). Finally, the fourth mini-group including 10 participants participating at least once a week in ACD (American Corner Dushanbe) sessions which are related to social-cultural events such as festivals, charity activities, etc. After that, research questionnaires were distributed among samples using SPSS software for data analysis. The author concludes that culture-related extra-curricular activities result in the enhancement of the level of language proficiency as well as contribute a lot to bringing up citizens, intellectually, culturally, and multi-culturally developed professionals with a deep awareness of intercultural values.

Ginosyan, Tuzlukova, and Hendrix (2019) ^[8] discussed the potential benefits of foundation program students' involvement in extracurricular activities from the perspective of teachers who develop, lead and facilitate them at the Centre for Preparatory Studies of Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. The study focuses on how teachers perceive the effects of extracurricular activities on student performance concerning eight key areas, namely development of student's language skills and academic performance, development of communicative competency, students' needs and interests, students' self-esteem and self-confidence, students' motivation and positive attitudes towards learning, extracurricular activities in the framework of the foundation program curriculum, cross-cultural experiences, and transitional challenges. The results indicate that extracurricular activities play a valuable role in helping foundation program students adjust to higher education environment and function more easily in English. However, more student involvement and additional assistance to students are needed to boost their motivation and increase engagement in their own learning experiences.

Abu Al-rub (2018) ^[2] investigated the impact of a training program based on volunteerism and extracurricular activities program to limit attention deficit hyperactivity among students with learning difficulties. The training program prepared by the researcher to a sample number has been applied (16) of the students who have learning difficulties, divided equally into two samples and experimental officer. The researcher used the experimental design. The two groups (experimental and control). The results showed that there are significant differences among the middle ranks of the experimental and control groups

after the application of the training program for the experimental group. In the light of the results, there were some useful recommendations aimed at Promote the participation of children in volunteer work and extracurricular activities who have hyperactivity and distraction.

Research Methodology

This section provides information on the methodology of the present study, which includes population and sample, research instrument, and validity and reliability of the instrument.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all (1000) primary school male and female students in the schools within the Education Department in Aseer region. The study sample consisted of (200) male and female students, which was chosen randomly.

Research Instrument

To identify the reality of the extra-curricular educational activities in English language, the researcher referred to the literature related to the extracurricular school activity in general and previous studies (Al-Salem, 2010; Al-Jallad, 2003) ^[6, 4]. The study developed an analysis card of extra-curricular activities for the English language curriculum in five areas:

1. The extracurricular activity planning; (6) paragraphs.
2. Implementing the extracurricular activity; (6) paragraphs.
3. The objectives achieved through the extracurricular activity; (10) paragraphs.
4. Strengthening the link of extra-curricular activity with society; (7) paragraphs.
5. Evaluating the extracurricular activity; (5) paragraphs.

The Validity of the Instrument

The card was presented to a group of judges specialized in curricula and teaching the English language. Their feedback, suggestion, and comments were taken into consideration to amend the final version of the card.

The reliability of the instrument:

To ensure the reliability of the study instrument, the researcher distributed (20) cards to (20) students from outside the sample. The internal consistency coefficients of the instrument were calculated using the Cronbach Alpha equation. The Cronbach Alpha was (90%), which is a high value that fulfills the purposes of this study. The researcher also conducted the test and re-test on an experimental sample of (20) male and female students, and after two weeks the card was redistributed to the same sample without prior knowledge. The correlation coefficient between the two tests was extracted according to the Pearson method, and the reliability coefficient was (80%), which was sufficient for the objectives of this study.

Findings and Discussion

First: The Results Related to the Main Question

To answer the first question, the mean scores and standard deviations of the degree of practicing extracurricular educational activities were extracted for each of the five fields of study, arranged in descending order, as shown in Table (1).

Table 1: The mean scores and standard deviations of the degree of practicing educational activities for each field of study arranged in descending order

Rank	NO.	Field	Mean score	Standard deviation
1	3	The objectives achieved from the extracurricular activity.	4.20	0.51
2	2	Implementing the extracurricular activity	3.63	0.66
3	5	Evaluation of the extracurricular activity	3.61	0.79
4	4	Strengthening the link of the extracurricular activity in society	3.42	0.78
5	1	Planning the extracurricular activity	3.24	0.78
Total			3.73	0.50

We notice from Table (1) that the total mean score of the instrument was good (3.73). The third field was the highest practiced field, which was the “objectives achieved from extra-curricular activity”, with a mean score of (4.20). It is followed by the second field, "implementing the extracurricular activity" with a mean score of (3.63), followed by the fifth field, "evaluating the extracurricular activity" with a mean score (3.61), then the fourth field, "strengthening the link of extracurricular activity with society" with a mean score of (3.42). The first field, "planning the extracurricular activity," came last with a mean score of (3.24).

These results indicate the students' awareness of the importance of extracurricular school activity and their role in achieving several educational goals that the school curriculum cannot achieve. Students considered the extracurricular school activity as a broad field for gaining selected and purposeful educational experiences, and

because it is an indispensable means to complete the curriculum, expand its information and its application, and train to benefit from it. Students believe that the extracurricular activity represents the practical applied aspect in the English language, as this activity stems from the subjects of the English language and its multiple meanings that stimulate students. In addition, the subjects of study in the English language are bounded by textbooks and theoretical aspects. Therefore, the extracurricular activities helped in providing the practical touch by connecting the established topics to life situations.

Second: Results of the Second Question

To answer the second question of this study, the mean scores of the answers of the study sample were extracted on the five fields of study. The T-test was used to detect any differences between the mean scores on all the fields according to the effect of gender as shown in Table (2).

Table 2: The mean scores, standard deviations, and (T) test for the effect of gender

Field	Gender	No.	Mean score	St. Dev	T-value	Sig.
Planning the extracurricular activity	Male	100	3.1959	.826	.96	.337
	Female	100	3.2832	.748		
Implementing the extracurricular activity	Male	100	3.5888	.606	.93	.352
	Female	100	3.6605	.708		
The objectives achieved from the extracurricular activity.	Male	100	4.1293	.499	2.35	.019*
	Female	100	4.2664	.507		
Strengthening the link of the extracurricular activity in society	Male	100	3.4786	.695	1.25	.211
	Female	100	3.3655	.842		
Evaluation of the extracurricular activity	Male	100	3.6022	.715	.09	.929
	Female	100	3.6104	.851		
Total	Male	100	3.6933	.475	-1.03	.304
	Female	100	3.7525	.513		

It is noticed from Table (2) that there are statistically significant differences between males and females in one area only, which is (The objectives achieved from the extracurricular activity.) The T-value was statistically significant at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and the difference was in favor of females; their mean scores were higher than those of males. There were no statistically significant differences between males and females on the fields (planning the extracurricular activity, implementing the extracurricular activity, strengthening the connection of the extracurricular activity with society, and evaluating the extracurricular activity), where the T values were not significant at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The researcher attributes the difference in this field to the fact that the female students, at an important age stage, and within the data of the environment and social traditions that

support education, have positive views towards the extracurricular activity in the school. Such kind of activities is the only way for the student to interact in and practice, due to the absence of any places other than schools, such as clubs and societies in which the student performs the activity, in addition to the parents' satisfaction and their encouragement for the students to participate in this activity.

Third: Results of the Third Question

To answer the third question of the study, the One-Way ANOVA was extracted to find out if there are any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the degree of practicing extra-curricular educational activities in English language due to the grade level. Table (3) shows these results.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA analysis of the effect on the fields of the instrument

Field	Source	Freedom value	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F-value	Sig.
Planning the extracurricular activity	Within group	2	22.4200	11.2100	20.6104	0.0000*
	Between groups	297	161.5389	.5439		
	Total	299	183.9589			
Implementing the extracurricular activity	Within group	2	6.0396	3.0198	7.1453	0.0009*
	Between groups	297	125.5206	.4226		
	Total	299	131.5602			
The objectives achieved from the extracurricular activity.	Within group	2	.5356	.2678	1.0414	0.3542
	Between groups	297	76.3703	.2571		
	Total	299	76.9059			
Strengthening the link of the extracurricular activity in society	Within group	2	10.9029	5.4515	9.4923	0.0001*
	Between groups	297	170.5681	.5743		
	Total	299	181.4710			
Evaluation of the extracurricular activity	Within group	2	6.7250	3.3625	5.5447	0.0043*
	Between groups	297	180.1116	.6064		
	Total	299	186.8367			
Total	Within group	2	5.3917	2.6958	11.7385	0.0000*
	Between groups	297	68.2085	.2297		
	Total	299	73.6002			

Table (3) shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to the grade level on the fields: (planning the extracurricular activity, implementing the extracurricular activity, strengthening the connection of the extracurricular activity with society, evaluating the extracurricular activity, and the total score of the instrument). The F-value was statistically significant at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the difference was in favor of the fifth grade. The mean score of the fifth-graders students was higher than the mean scores of the sixth and fourth grades. The table shows no statistically significant differences for the grade level in one field (the objectives achieved from the extracurricular activity), where the F-value was not significant at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

These results could be attributed to the difficulty of the English language curriculum, which made parents and students of these two grades focus on the achievement side. Both parents and students feel that school exams focus on students' attainment of the cognitive aspect of school subjects, without concern for evaluating other aspects of development, which reduces participation in school activities. The curriculum of the fifth grade is less difficult than these two grades, which allows students of this grade to participate in the activities more, as well as the fact that the sixth grade is the end of the higher basic stage and a gateway to a higher stage, which is the intermediate stage.

Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to identify the reality of extra-curricular educational activities in English language from the point of view of students with LDs in English language. The study also aimed to identify the degree of practicing extra-curricular educational activities in English language among students with LDs. The findings showed that there is a difference in practicing and the views toward extracurricular activities according to the gender of the students, where female students have better perspectives and practice of such activities. The results also showed that the fifth grade differs in their views and practice from the fourth and sixth grades.

Recommendations

Based on these results, the study suggests the following

recommendations:

- Emphasizing the preparation of the English language teacher and the trainer on planning and managing extracurricular educational activities, because there is a beneficial effect on the quality of supervision of such activities.
- Encouraging teachers and students to practice activities by providing material and moral incentives from the Ministry of Education.
- The need to involve students and their families in developing a plan for these activities.
- Conducting courses for teachers supervising this activity to make them aware of good supervision, the goals of this activity, and how the goals are achieved.

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