

# CONTRIBUTION OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MUSANZE DISTRICT (2015 -2018)

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**Abstract:** The study assessed the contribution of extracurricular activities on academic performance of students of catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. The research objectives were to find out the key provisions of extracurricular activities implemented in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District, to examine the extent to which literary, art or subject clubs improve academic performance for students in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District and to investigate the level of sports and athletics activities to enhancing academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. Others were to find out the extent to which community service, scouting, music and dance implementation affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District, to find out the extent to which religious activities and itorerero activities affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District and to find out the challenges faced by catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive extracurricular activities programmes as well as to formulate suggestions on what should be done to overcome challenges faced by catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive extracurricular activities programmes.

Regarding the methodology, the study adopted the field survey method which integrated both qualitative and quantitative data using questionnaires, interviews and document analysis as the main instruments of data collection. The data collected from respondents, comprising students and teachers, was analysed using SPSS and was presented on pie charts, bar graphs, line charts and tables. Interviews were also conducted with head teachers, students, education sector officials and parents. The study revealed that extracurricular activities contribute to academic performance of students in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. The study also brought to fore significant challenges militating against the contribution of extracurricular activities to academic performance of students in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. These include lack of good instructors, inadequate quality facilities, insufficient funds and lack of government support.

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**The suggestions proffered by the study are training of competent instructors and facilitators, provision of quality equipment and facilities, improved budgetary allocation and increased government support for extracurricular activities programmes in secondary schools. To that effect, the study recommends, increased budgetary allocation to education sector, training of trainers courses to build the capacity of facilitators by the Ministry of Education, allocation of more attention, space and time for extracurricular activities to aid students' academic performance; and provision of more equipment and facilities to improve extracurricular activities in secondary schools by the government of Rwanda and ministry of education.**

**Keywords:** Academic performance, Curricular activities, Co-curricular activities, Extracurricular activities.

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## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is primarily one of the major ingredients for societal development. Nations take steps to ensure their citizens are literate to contribute to society meaningfully. To this end, man utilises education to raise his living standards through a holistic framework which includes physical, mental, psychological, intellectual, social and economic emancipation. To acquire literacy, a system of education called schools, is utilised as medium to disseminate knowledge from teacher to student. Conversely, the school system is categorized into primary, secondary and tertiary; and follows a pattern of formal and informal teachings through established curricular and extracurricular activities to aid student performance and growth in their academic pursuit.

Curricular activities encompass all the activities undertaken by students inside the classroom, laboratory, workshop, or in the library. They constitute all the courses of study offered by an educational institution with the aim of enhancing the academic performance of students. Hence, ECAs may simply refer to activities organized by an educational establishment and performed by students at the primary school level, secondary school level and tertiary level, and which take place beyond or outside the scope of its normal curriculum (Wilson, 2009).

It is logical and reasonable therefore to come to the understanding that ECAs are an integral part of educational system. However, it is expedient to note that along with understanding the numerous benefits associated with being involved in ECAs, all stakeholders involved, including students, parents and educationists must consider how to balance academics and ECAs in order to have the maximum impact on students' AP. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to bring a renewed attention to ECAs in secondary schools to both policy makers and academic communities by particularly taking the case of Catholic Secondary Schools (CSS) located in Musanze District of Rwanda. This study is interested to bring to light the importance of ECAs on AP.

### STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Conversely, most schools in Rwanda prioritize curricular activities including science and technology subjects to the expense of ECAs which predominantly suffer budget cuts. The resulting effect engenders poor AP and low nurturing of potential talents. According to Reeves (2008), there is a strong association between students' involvement in ECAs and improved attendance, behaviour, and AP. Reeves explained that all students who participate in some type of ECAs perform better than students who are not involved. Likewise, to boost the AP in Rwanda there is need to encourage the participation of students in ECAs.

In Rwanda, various studies on curricular activities have been undertaken by various authors such as Ernest Ngendahayo (2016) on "Rwanda's new competence based school curriculum"; Cyprien Tabaro (2018), on "The Rwandan Secondary School Competence-Based Curriculum: Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes to Incorporate in the University of Rwanda-College of Education Programs to Align them with the Current Curriculum"; and Jean de Dieu Minani (2016), on "The management of school activities and learners academic performance in Rwanda". However, none of these studies have paid attention specifically to the contribution of ECAs to students' AP in Rwanda, which is the reason why this study is being undertaken. The study will have positive impact on students in the areas of academic performance, social interaction, responsible behaviours, and host of other benefits

## Objectives of the Study

### Specific objectives

- 1) To find out the key provisions of extracurricular activities implemented in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District.
- 2) To examine the extent to which literary, art or subject clubs improve academic performance for students in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District.
- 3) To investigate the level of sports and athletics activities to enhancing academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District.
- 4) To find out the extent to which community service, scouting, music and dance implementation affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District.
- 5) To find out the extent to which religious activities and iteroro activities affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District.
- 6) To find out the challenges faced by catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive extracurricular activities programmes
- 7) To formulate suggestions on what should be done to overcome challenges faced by catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive extracurricular activities programmes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Review

There are many theories that relate to the subject matter. Piaget (1936) and Erikson (1950) theory of child development were of great relevance to this study. Their theory asserts that children develop through stages and during these stages; it is nurture that develops a child rather than nature. They both argued that a child's personality is shaped by varied circumstances. These include the environment, social life and the family. Thus children get inspired from their surroundings during learning processes. The theory is relevant to this study owing to the fact that an understanding of the stages of child development will help inform teachers and school administrators on how best to teach, lead, and educate a student.

The 10,000 – Hour Rule Theory proposed by Malcolm Gladwell (2008) opines that reaching the utmost level of excellence in knowledge in all spheres of life which includes child development will require extra time in and off class. The theory revealed that secondary school students who practiced for more hours did better than their colleagues who practiced for fewer hours. The theory also stated that any extracurricular activity that is bent on mind improvement is equally welcomed. The theory concludes that the extra time devoted to studying and extracurricular activities that are related to mind improvement will boost student development exponentially. To this end, the 10,000-Hour Rule Theory sees extracurricular activity more from the point of mind related activities. Thus this theory assisted the study in understanding the nature of extracurricular activity to be initiated to effectively boost students' performance in school.

Student Involvement Theory has many applications in the world of higher education, and is one of the strongest pieces of evidence for extracurricular student involvement. The main thrust and central pillar of this theory is hinged on the fact that there is a positive correlation between ECAs and academic success and school authorities are advised to adopt and ensure the practice of ECAs to boost the AP of their students. Consequently, as Astin's SIT captures the importance of student participation in both curricular and ECA in improving AP, it was adopted for this study.

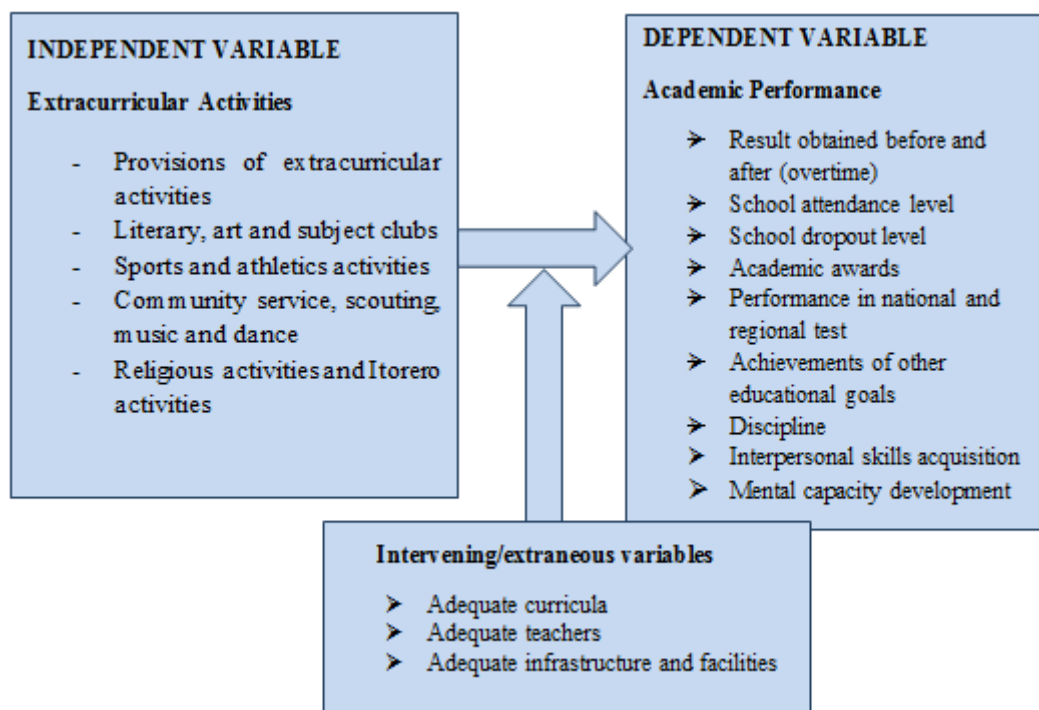
**Conceptual Framework.****Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework of the study variables:**

Figure 2.1 highlights the relationship flow amongst the IV and DV as well as the interventions of the extraneous variables. The IV which centered on ECAs brought about provisions of ECAs such a literary, art and science clubs, sports and athletics, music and dance clubs, community service and itorero, scouting and religious activities amongst others and how they result in the DV as achievements of other educational goals, interpersonal skill acquisition and academic awards.

**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY****Research design**

A research design is a blue print for research work. It can also be seen as the plan for the entire research. Some research designs include survey, historical, experimental, exploratory and descriptive. The qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection used in the study are indicated and justified in this part. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research entails interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world and thus studies things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

According to Sidhu (2002), qualitative research emphasizes holistic description of whatever is being observed rather than comparing the effects of a particular treatment. On their part, Ary, Jacobs and Razavie (2002) assert that qualitative investigation seeks to understand human and social behaviour from the insider's perspectives. In other words in qualitative investigation, there should be vivid description of phenomena.

As the survey research design was employed for the study, the researcher used unstructured and semi-structured interviews as well as questionnaires and document analyses to gather the required data from respondents. The design also involved using statistics available from other material sources. These data are analyzed and findings are presented thereafter.

**Study population**

The researcher selected respondents from different CSS in Musanze District to get relevant information on how participation in ECAs contributes to students' academic performance. Respondents include students, teachers, principals, parents and educationists all involved in secondary schools education. The study focuses its attention on the contribution of ECAs to AP of students of CSS in Musanze District. Therefore the study population consists of 3000 people.

### Sample Size

A sample of 353 respondents from the population of 3000 people were considered and issued questionnaires; and to that effect, 338 returned as valid and were considered and utilized for the study.

## 4. FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### FINDINGS

This research assessed the contribution of extracurricular activities to academic performance of catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in Rwanda. Chapter 1 brought to fore the background of the study that included global, regional and local perspectives on the contribution of ECAs to students AP. Countries such as USA, South Africa and Rwanda were highlighted. The chapter addressed the statement of the research problem, highlighted the purpose, objectives and research questions that gave direction to the entire body of research. The scope and significance of the study were also identified.

Chapter 2 identified the linkage between ECAs and AP. This linkage was bolstered by the theoretical review, empirical review and the conceptual framework. The theoretical review identified the weaknesses, gaps, immediate relevance and contributions. The empirical review contained the scientific findings on the link between ECAs and AP, the effectiveness of ECAs worldwide and the use of ECAs in Africa as well as the evolution and use of ECAs in Rwanda. The conceptual framework discussed the respective attributes of the two variables in the study, and the analysis of their relationship aided the study to achieve stated research objectives and provided an indication that the contribution of ECAs is fundamental to AP.

In chapter 3, the methodology of the study was highlighted. The methodology spanned research design, study population, sampling data collection methods and tools as well as data processing and data analysis. Limitations and ethical considerations were also considered in this chapter. The study adopted the field survey method that analysed the data mined from a study population of 3000 and a sample size of 353 respondents as calculated using the Taro Yamane formula. This consequently led to 338 valid respondents. Accordingly, the views of respondents were used to build data for the study as well as the data from key informants. This approach contributed immensely to the validity of the research.

The presentation of the analysis of data collected and the interpretation were captured in chapter 4. The catholic secondary schools in Musanze District provided a reference point for empirical assessment. Respondents' views were analysed as well as the data provided by key informants were brought to fore and deductions made on the contributions of ECAs to AP. The respondents' views in chapter 4 are in tandem with the research questions and objectives. Solutions were proffered to mitigate challenges while findings from observations were addressed. This chapter gave the researcher a greater insight on the contributions of extracurricular activities for academic performance of students in CSS of Musanze District. Consequently, chapter 5 would present a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations in relation to the study as shown below.

### Summary of the findings of the study

The summary of the findings is presented per each objective of the study.

### Summary of findings for the general research objective

The general objective was aimed at assessing the contribution of ECAs to AP in CSS in Musanze District. The results from the survey revealed that about 70 percent agreed that ECAs contribute to AP. This buttressed the purpose of the study and gave an indication to the strong positive relationship between ECAs and AP. The performance of students within the scope of the study, which is from 2015 to 2018, was also ascertained from respondents' views, specifically from teachers in their administrative and supervisory roles over students. Cumulatively, the results from the survey revealed that 71.4 percent of respondents agreed that students' academic performance is impressive when they involve in ECAs. Conversely, 71.9 percent of respondents also agreed on the benefits of participation in ECAs as it contributes to improved student interaction and consequently AP. Thus it was inferred that ECAs are positive and contribute to AP in students of CSS in Musanze District.

**Summary of findings for the first specific research objective**

The first specific research objective was aimed at finding out the key provisions of extracurricular activities implemented in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. In view of this, respondents' views were elicited. Consequently, 54.7 percent of respondents opined that there are provisions of ECAs in their school. This is significant as the researcher interprets that the generality of the respondents are aware of the variables of the study and that the ECAs are available for utilization in their school for improved academic performance. To that effect however, 50.9 percent of respondent's alluded that ECAs in their school is not sufficient against the views of 49.1 percent of respondents who confirmed ECAs as being sufficient in their schools. The study revealed head to head results split by just 1.8 percent. This gave the researcher the interpretation that CSS in Musanze District have different scenarios on the provisions of ECAs for their respective students and teachers. The researcher concluded that sufficiency of ECAs is expedient for ensuring AP in students of CSS of Musanze District.

**Summary of findings for the second specific research objective**

The second specific research objective was aimed at examining the extent to which literary, art and subject clubs improve academic performance for students of CSS in Musanze District. Respondents' views reveal that 41 percent of respondents strongly agree that literary clubs are a significant contributor to improving AP of students of CSS in Musanze District. Conversely, 32 percent also agreed that literary clubs improve student AP of CSS in Musanze District this is against respondents' views who disagreed at 17 percent and strongly disagreed at 5 percent respectively. Cumulatively, 73 percent of respondents affirm that literary clubs improves students' academic performance against respondents who answered the contrary at 22 percent. Meanwhile, 5 respondents remained neutral. 86 percent of respondent also affirmed that art improves students' AP against 12 who answered the contrary. Similarly, 96 percent solidly affirmed that subject clubs are beneficial to students' academic performance against a minute 3 who answered the contrary. Going from the above, the researcher concluded empirically that literary, art and subject clubs are vital as ECAs in improving students' AP in CSS of Musanze District.

**Summary of findings for the third specific research objective**

The third specific research objective was aimed at investigating the level of sports and athletics activities to enhancing academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. Consequently respondents' views were elicited to reflect their perspective on sports and athletics. Cumulatively, 15 percent of respondents were neutral, 25 percent were against sports and athletics as an ECA that enhances AP while 60 percent affirmed that sports and athletics are significant to enhancing student AP. The researcher therefore concluded that, sports and athletics as an ECA enhance students' academic performance in CSS of Musanze District.

**Summary of findings for the fourth specific research objective**

The fourth specific research objective was aimed at finding out the extent to which community service, scouting, music and dance implementation affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. The findings revealed that 57 percent of respondents cumulatively affirmed that community service affects AP in CSS in Musanze District. 41 percent of respondents also affirmed that scouting affects AP while 46 percent similarly affirmed that music and dance affect positively students' AP. The extent to which community service, scouting, music and dance affect AP was put to the contrary by respondents who disagreed by 37 percent, 32 percent and 34 percent respectively. The researcher adjudged from the findings that community service, scouting, music and dance affect to a significant extent the AP of students of CSS of Musanze District.

**Summary of findings for the fifth specific research objective**

The fifth specific research objective was aimed at finding out the extent to which religious activities and iteroro activities affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. The researcher took into cognizance that the schools in the primary survey are religious schools. The research also revealed that religious activities go alongside educational activities. The researcher therefore sought to know if religious activities are generally seen as a contributor to AP of students in CSS in Musanze District. The cumulative results from the survey revealed that 61 percent are favourable towards religious activities positively affecting AP of students against 26 percent who disagreed. Similarly, 43 percent affirm that iteroro activities affect AP while 32 percent disagreed and another 25 percent remained neutral. Notwithstanding the results, a significant percentage of respondents generally agreed that religious activities and iteroro activities affect AP of students in CSS in Musanze District.



**Summary of findings for the sixth specific research objective**

The aim of the sixth specific research objective was to find out the challenges faced by catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive extracurricular activities programmes. The challenges highlighted were lack of good instructors, inadequate quality facilities, religious interference and poor managerial leadership. Others were insufficient funds, time constraints, overscheduled academic activities and lack of government support. Respondents lent their views on these challenges mentioned. Accordingly, 51 percent affirmed that lack of good instructors is a challenge, 59 percent said that inadequate quality facilities is a challenge while contrastingly 61 percent responded that religious interference is not a challenge to CSS in adopting comprehensive ECAs.

Conversely, 37 percent were neutral on the question of poor managerial leadership as a challenge, 34 percent agreed that it is a challenge while 29 disagreed. 57 percent of respondent's affirmed that insufficient funds are a challenge as against 22 who disagreed and 22 who were neutral. Similarly, 33 percent said overscheduled academic activities are a challenge, however, 52 percent of respondent answered the contrary. Lack of government support had a respondents' view of 63 percent for it as challenge and 20 percent against. The researcher does conclude that despite the overwhelming empirical evidence that ECAs contributes to AP, there exist challenges impeding CSS from adopting comprehensive ECAs programmes. Notable among them are lack of good instructors, inadequate quality facilities, insufficient funds and lack of government support.

**Summary of findings for the seventh specific research objective**

The seventh specific research objective is aimed at formulating suggestions on what should be done to overcome challenges faced by catholic secondary schools in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive extracurricular activities programmes. To that effect, solutions proffered for mitigating the challenges faced by CSS in adopting a comprehensive ECAs programme are training of competent instructors and facilitators, provision of quality equipment and ECAs facilities, improved budgetary allocation for ECAs and increased government support for ECAs programmes in the CSS in Musanze District. The researcher is of the opinion that these suggestions would go a long way to mitigate the besetting challenges faced by CSS in Musanze District in adopting comprehensive ECAs programmes.

**CONCLUSION**

The conclusion is done per objectives of the study. Based on the findings of the general objective, the study concludes that ECAs contribute to AP of students in CSS in Musanze District. Based on the findings of the first specific objective, the research agrees that there are provisions of ECAs in CSS in Musanze District. Based on the findings of the second specific objective of the study, the study concludes that ECAs have greatly improved the AP of students in CSS in Musanze District, through literary clubs, art and subject clubs. These forms of ECAs have contributed positively to improved AP of students in the CSS in Musanze District.

Pursuant to the findings on the third specific objective, the researcher affirms that sports and athletics as ECAs enhance AP of students in the CSS in Musanze District. The fourth specific research objective was aimed at finding out the extent to which community service, scouting, music and dance affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. The researcher adjudged from findings that community service, scouting and music and dance affect to a significant extent the AP of students of CSS of Musanze District.

The fifth specific research objective was aimed at finding out the extent to which religious activities and iteroro activities affect academic performance in catholic secondary schools in Musanze District. Consequently, the study confirms from the findings that religious activities and iteroro activities affect positively the AP of students in CSS in Musanze District. Based on the findings of the sixth objective which was aimed at identifying the challenges faced by CSS in adopting comprehensive ECAs programmes; the study ascertained lack of good instructors, inadequate quality facilities, insufficient funds and lack of government support as challenges to the adoption of comprehensive ECAs programmes in CSS in Musanze District.

The intent of the seventh specific research objective was to proffer workable suggestions to mitigate the challenges. To that effect, the suggestions proffered by this study are training of competent instructors and facilitators, provision of quality equipment and ECAs facilities, improved budgetary allocation and increased government support.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the objectives coupled with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are provided.

- i) The Government of Rwanda should increase budgetary allocation to the education sector to further ECAs programmes in secondary schools.
- ii) The Ministry of Education should promote training of trainers courses to build the capacity of facilitators of ECAs programmes in secondary schools.
- ii) Secondary schools should allocate more attention, space and time for ECAs programmes to aid students' academic performance.
- iv) The Government of Rwanda in concert with the Ministry of Education should avail more equipment and facilities for ECAs programmes in secondary schools.
- v) The government of Rwanda should give more support to ECAs by sponsoring legislations that make them mandatory in all secondary schools.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The researcher suggests further research to be conducted in the following areas;

- i. Impact of co-curricular activities on students' academic performance in Rwanda.
- ii. Contribution of extracurricular activities on youth development in Rwanda.
- iii. Contribution of extracurricular activities on talent detection, nurturing and development in Rwandan primary schools.
- iv. Extracurricular activities and talent detection and development: an appraisal of Rwandan Youth.

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