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EFFECTS OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN LOWER SECONDARY LEARNERS' RWANDA, A CASE KICUKIRO DISTRICT

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Abstract

Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in students' holistic development and have been widely recognized as important components of secondary school education. However, the specific impact of participation in extracurricular activities on English performance remains unclear, particularly in the context of lower secondary schools in Kicukiro district, Rwanda. This research project aims to address this gap by investigating the effect of extracurricular activities on English performance in these schools. The study had three specific objectives: To describe the types of extracurricular activities performed, to identify the participation levels of extracurricular activities, and to explore their effect on English performance. The research adopted a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire with Likert scale statements to collect data. This research targets the students from lower secondary schools, Stratified sampling was employed to ensure representation from different schools, and the sample size of 308 students was calculated using the Yamane formula with which the majority of 139 students were selected from EFOTEK/Kanombe, 95 students from ES Kagarama and only 74 from G.S Gako. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data and examine the relationship between extracurricular activities and English performance. By shedding light on the types of extracurricular activities available, students' participation levels, and their impact on English performance. The results indicated that the majority of respondents were aged between 15-28 years old, gender was fairly distributed with 51% were males. Only 2.9% had disability, 1.6% had vision impairment. Overwhelming majority receive support from their parents to engage in ECA (93.2%). The Music and support were the main observed ECA in the school with 40.3% and 30.8% participation respectively. More than a half of students (62.3%) participate in ECA on weekly basis followed by daily basis (31.8%). All students (100%) agreed that participating in ECA had effect on English performance. This underscores the potential benefits of extracurricular involvement in enhancing students' language skills and overall development, highlighting the need for further exploration and support in this educational context.

Key words: Extracurricular activities, Academic performance: Project-based learning, Social and emotional learning.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

While it is believed that extracurricular activities have a good effect on academic achievement, English proficiency remains a challenge among students in public secondary schools (Okeke, 2020). The Rwanda Education Board has recognized the importance of extracurricular activities for students' holistic development, but there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding their effectiveness in improving English language skills (REB, 2021). Study finds extra-curricular involvement, especially leadership, benefits English major students' academic performance and well-being. Encourage diverse activities for enhanced socio-emotional development (Calanoga et al. 2020). Studies such us Chakraborty and Roy (2021) found that despite English being a challenge in a foreign language context, students at the institution, like others, struggle. However, engaging in Extra-curricular Activities (ECAs) significantly enhances Communicative Competence (CC) and English academic excellence. Therefore, by examining the connection between extracurricular activities and English language proficiency in Rwanda's Kicukiro district, this study seeks to close the knowledge gap in this area. By examining the specific impact on English performance, the research seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform educational policies and practices. The study findings can contribute to addressing the issue of poor English proficiency among lower secondary students and potentially enhance their language skills and overall academic achievement in Rwanda. The main objective of this study is to investigate the effects of extra curricula activities on English performance in lower secondary schools in Rwanda.

(i) To find out the types of extracurricular activities are performed in lower secondary schools in Kicukiro district.
(ii) To analyze the participation levels of extra-curricular activities among students enrolled in lower secondary school in Kicukiro district.
(iii) To assess the effect of extra-curricular activities on English Performance in lower secondary school in Kicukiro district.

2.0. Review of Related Literature .

2.1 Empirical Review

This section discusses the findings from relevant studies.

2.2.1. Types of Extracurricular Activities are offered in Lower Secondary Schools

Schools engage in extracurricular activities to raise the general performance of enrolled students. The study conducted by Balaguer et al. (2020) mentioned the following ECA, Sports activities: Sports activities, such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, and athletics, are commonly offered in Rwandan lower secondary schools. These activities are often organized by the school or by external organizations and are focused on developing students' physical fitness and teamwork skills. Music and arts activities, such as choir, dance, and drama club, are also commonly offered in Rwandan lower secondary schools (Emmanuel et al., 2020). These activities are often focused on developing students' creativity and artistic skills, and can also help to build confidence and self-expression. Academic clubs, such as debate clubs, science clubs, and math clubs, may be offered in some Rwandan lower secondary schools to provide students with opportunities to explore academic interests outside of the classroom. These activities are often focused on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Volunteer and service activities, such as community service projects and volunteer organizations, may also be offered in some Rwandan lower secondary schools to provide students with opportunities to give back to their communities and develop leadership skills (REB, 2021). The findings of these articles and studies suggest that extracurricular activities are a prevalent aspect of secondary school students' lives, with participation rates ranging from 35% to 68% depending on the type of activity and country studied. Sports, clubs, and community service are among the most common extracurricular activities in high schools, with academic clubs and student government also being popular in some contexts. Student achievement, academic motivation, social growth, and college admissions have all been demonstrated to benefit from extracurricular activities. However, the strength of these impacts may differ according to the kind of activity, the level of student involvement, and the environment of the school and community.

2.2.2 Participation Levels of Extra-Curricular Activities among Students Enrolled in Lower Secondary School

According to the study of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that 68% of high school students participate in extracurricular activities, with the most popular activities being sports, clubs, and music (Nces, 2017). A survey by (DoSomething, 2019) found that 56% of high school students in the US volunteered for a community service project during the 2018-2019 school years. Around 80% of US secondary students participate in extracurricular activities, with athletics, clubs, and music being the most common pursuits, according to research on Extracurricular Activities in High School and College by collegeboard.org (2020). The article also notes that participating in extracurricular activities can improve students' chances of getting accepted into college. Similar to a study on the Prevalence of Extracurricular Activities among Secondary School Students in Zimbabwe by Peter & Musara (2017), this study found that 68% of secondary school students in Zimbabwe participate in extracurricular activities, with sports and clubs being the most popular activities. The study also found that factors such as parental education and socio-economic status can influence students' involvement in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular Activities and Adolescent Development by Eccles et al. (2023). According to information in this article from the National Survey of Children's Health, about 60% of high school students in the US take part in extracurricular activities. According to the report, extracurricular activity participation is linked to social skill improvement, increased self-esteem, and a decline in dangerous behavior including drug use and delinquency.

2.2.3 Effect of Extra-Curricular Activities on English Performance in Lower Secondary School

For many years, scholars have been interested in the link between extracurricular activities and academic success. This theoretical review's goal is to investigate the research on the effect of extracurricular activities on English performance. Several research studies have looked into the connection between extracurricular activity involvement and academic achievement. Academic performance may benefit from extracurricular activity engagement, according to some studies, although other research has found no connection between the two factors. Students who participated in extracurricular activities including sports, music, and theater had superior academic accomplishment than those who did not, according to a study by Marsh & Kleitman (2022). Similar findings were made by Blomfield & Barber (2019) , who discovered that involvement in extracurricular activities was especially beneficial for female students' academic success. However, some research has found no conclusive link between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement. For instance, research by McNulty& Eitle (2022) revealed no connection between high school student's involvement in extracurricular activities and academic ability. Numerous studies have concentrated on this particular academic field while discussing the impact of extracurricular activities on English performance. For instance, a study by (Natasha K. Bowen, 2019) discovered that students' engagement in theatrical and debate activities improved their English ability. Similarly, a study by (Lien & Cao, 2014) discovered that involvement in extracurricular activities, particularly in English-related groups, had a favorable effect on Taiwanese students' learning of the English language. (Furrer & Skinner, 2023) study, "The Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Achievement," According to this study, involvement in extracurricular activities is especially beneficial for children who are having difficulty in the classroom and is favorably correlated with academic success. The study also discovered a correlation between extracurricular involvement and improved attendance, higher levels of academic engagement, and stronger academic self-efficacy. In conclusion, the literature suggests that involvement in extracurricular activities can improve academic achievement, including English performance. However, the relationship

between the two variables is complex and may depend on various factors, such as the type of activity, the level of involvement, and the individual student's characteristics. Therefore, further research is needed to explore this relationship in more depth. Also, these studies suggest that factors such as academic success, parental involvement, school culture, and community context can influence students' participation in extracurricular activities. Barriers such as transportation, scheduling, and financial constraints can limit participation, and schools can take steps to address these barriers and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Social Learning Theory are both relevant frameworks for understanding the outcomes of extracurricular activities on English performance in this study. However, they approach the topic from different perspectives and emphasize different factors.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

The Theory of social learning is a well-established theoretical model that suggests that people learn by observing and imitating the behavior of others and that social context and interactions can influence learning and behavior (Albert Bandura, 1977). The Social Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of modeling and reinforcement in shaping behavior. In the context of extracurricular activities, this theory suggests that students may learn important skills, values, and behaviors by observing and interacting with their peers and role models. For example, students who participate in drama or debate clubs may learn communication and presentation skills by watching and imitating the behavior of more experienced members.

2.2.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) focuses on intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence as key drivers of behavior and engagement. It emphasizes the importance of individuals' internal motivation and sense of choice and control over their activities. In the context of extracurricular activities and English performance, SDT would explore how students' intrinsic motivation, their sense of autonomy in choosing to participate in activities, and their perceived competence in English language skills impact their engagement and subsequent performance. Social Learning Theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of observation and social interactions in learning and behavior. It suggests that individuals learn through observing others and imitating their behaviors. In the context of extracurricular activities and English performance, Social Learning Theory would examine how students' exposure to role models, peer influence, and social interactions within the activities influence their English language learning and performance. Both theories provide valuable insights into the factors that can influence students' engagement and performance in extracurricular activities related to English. However, in this study, the Self-Determination Theory may be more suitable. It allows for an exploration of students' intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and perceived competence, which is particularly relevant to understanding their engagement and performance in extracurricular activities. By focusing on these factors, the study can shed light on how students' internal motivation and sense of control impact their English performance, offering valuable insights for educational practices and interventions.

(Marsh & Kleitman, 2022) study on the impact of extracurricular activities on academic achievement, this approach was employed. This study looked at the connection between academic success and extracurricular activity engagement among high school students in Australia. This model was also employed in a study by (Gorski, 2021) titled Extracurricular Activities and Academic Achievement: An Exploratory Study on High School Students, which looked at the connection between extracurricular activity participation and academic achievement among Indian high school students.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities.

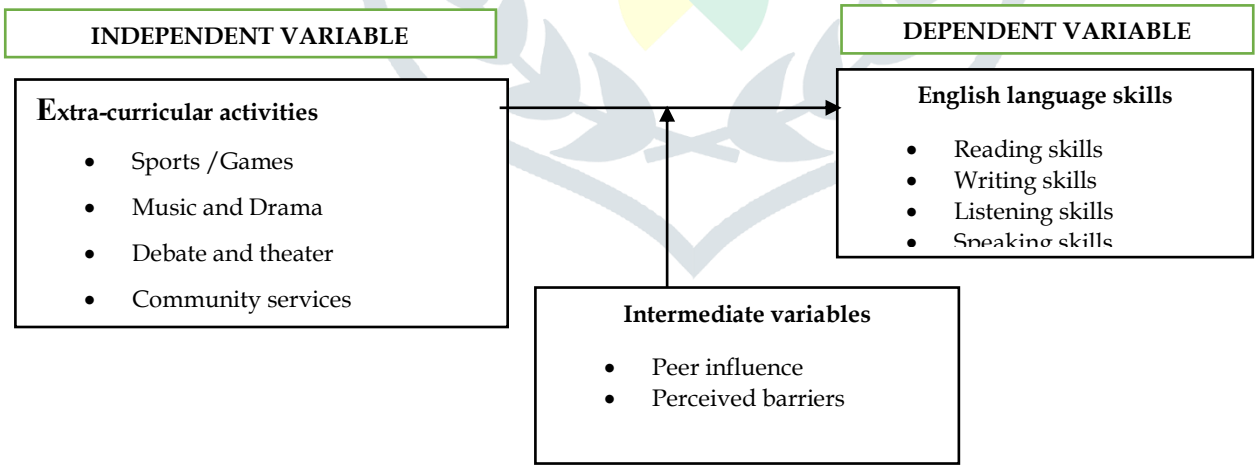


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework

3.0. Research Methodology

To determine how participation in extracurricular activities affects lower secondary school students' English performance at a single school, this study employed a cross-sectional research design and a quantitative methodology.

3.1 Target Population

The targeted population of this research is secondary students enrolled in three lower levels of secondary school which are Senior 1, Senior 2, and Senior 3. According to the (NISR, 2015), Kicukiro District had a net secondary enrolment rate of 48.7%, which was higher than the country's average of 21% and higher than not just its sibling Districts in Kigali City but also all other Districts. due to the availability of extracurricular activities in these schools, they were purposively selected to participate in our study; Es Kagarama with 413 students in the Lower secondary level located in Kagarama Sector, Efotek/ Kanombe with 605 hundred students in the Lower secondary level is located in Nyarugunga Sector and G.S. Gako with 324 students in Lower secondary level and is located in Masaka Sector. The Yamane formula, also known as Yamane's method, is a statistical formula that is used to determine the appropriate size of the sample given the population size in a research study. The formula was developed by a Japanese statistician (K. Yamane, 1967).

The formula is as follows:

$$no = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

where:

- no is the sample size
- N is the population size
- e is the level of precision desired (expressed as a proportion or percentage)
- 1 is a constant value that represents the total variance of the population

With our student's numbers from targeted schools, the following will be the sample size to consider:

$no = \frac{1342}{1+1342(0.05*0.05)} = 308$

308 students were selected following the stratified method as indicated in this table.

A stratified and random sampling technique was adopted to select the participants for this study, class levels were our Stata, all lower secondary school students in the selected school who are willing to participate in the study was included until the sample size is reached, class levels was having an equal proportion of respondents as well as gender balance was ensured.

3.3 Data collection Methods and Analysis [procedures

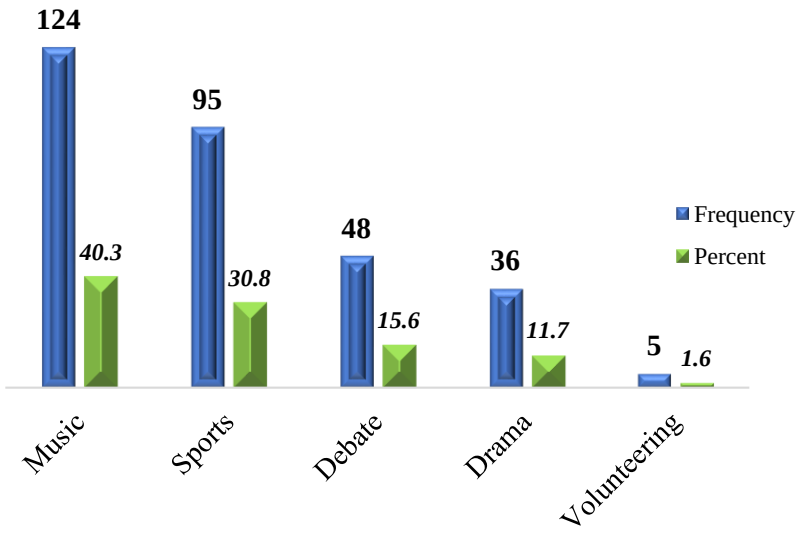
Structured questionnaire was used in this study. The questionnaire was used to collect data on students' participation in extracurricular activities, including the types of activities they engage in and the frequency of participation. Using SPSS Version 21, relevant statistical methods were used to analyze the participant data. Inferential statistics were used to test the research hypotheses, whereas descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data. The results of the study was displayed in tables, charts, and graphs, and they will be addressed about the study's goals and questions. To summarize the information gathered from the questionnaire, the researchers employed descriptive statistics. To explore the effect of extracurricular programs on English performance in middle secondary schools in Kicukiro district, the researchers used the Likert scale, this will allow them to determine the overall level of agreement or disagreement regarding the effect of extracurricular activities on English performance. Statistical analysis techniques, such as mean scores or percentage distributions, will be used to summarize and interpret the data.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

4.1 The Types of Extracurricular Activities Are Performed In Lower Secondary Schools in Kicukiro District

When considering the types of extracurricular activities that participants engage in, the data illustrates a diverse range of interests as shown on the figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4. 1: Type of Extra-Curriculum Activities Available and Students' Participation



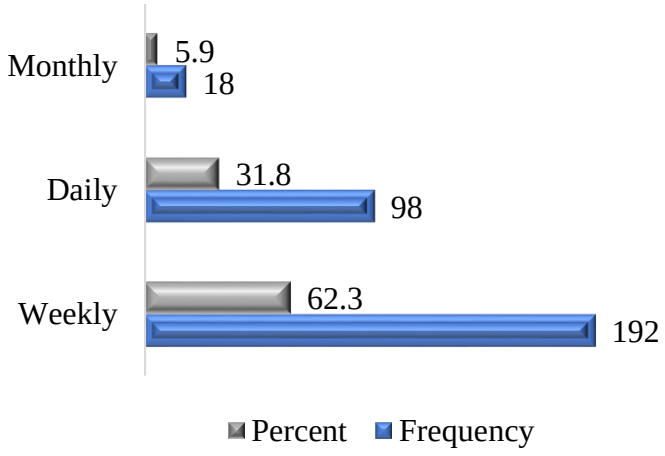
Source: Primary data, 2023

The results Figure 4.1 indicated that the most popular activity is music, with 40.3% of individuals indicating their involvement. Sports also have a significant following, with 30.8% of participants reporting participation. Drama and debate, though less common, are still notable, with 11.7% and 15.6% engagement rates, respectively. Additionally, volunteering has the lowest participation rate at 1.6%. This diversity in extracurricular interests suggests that students are actively pursuing a wide array of activities beyond their academic curriculum, potentially influencing their personal development and, subsequently, their English performance.

4.2 Participation Level of Students in Extra-Curriculum Activities

To understand the participation levels of students in extra-curriculum activities, the researcher asked them to indicate how frequent they participate in the ECA. The frequencies assessed include daily, weekly and Monthly. The results from the analysis are presented in the following graph.

Figure 4. 2: Participation Level of Students in Extra-Curriculum Activities



Source: Primary data, 2023

The data on participation levels in extracurricular activities reveals several significant findings. First and foremost, all surveyed individuals, accounting for 100% of the sample, report participating in extracurricular activities. This high level of participation underscores the importance of extracurricular activities within the context of the study and highlights that they are a ubiquitous aspect of the lives of the surveyed individuals.

Assessing the frequency of participation in extracurricular activities further informs us about the level of commitment among the surveyed individuals. The majority, 62.3%, engage in these activities on a weekly basis reflecting a significant regular commitment to extracurricular pursuits. Furthermore, 31.8% participate daily indicating consistent involvement. A smaller portion, 5.8%, engages in these activities on a monthly basis. This distribution implies that extracurricular activities are an integral part of the routines of most participants. Such regularity in participation suggests a potential impact on students' English performance, as consistent engagement in these activities may contribute to their holistic development.

4.3 The Effect of Extra-Curriculum Activities on English Performance of Students

The following table indicates the statements to evaluate the effect of participating in extra-curriculum activities among lower secondary levels in Rwanda.

Table 4. 1: Effect of Extra-Curriculum Activities on English Performance

Variables	Strongly disagree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Agree N (%)	Strongly Agree N (%)	Average	SD
Participating in Extracurricular Activities has Improved my English reading skills	6 (1.9)	2 (0.6)	34 (11)	88 (28.6)	178 (57.8)	4.4	0.86
Engaging in Extracurricular Activities has Enhanced my English writing skills	1 (0.3)	4 (1.3)	21 (6.8)	115 (37.3)	167 (54.2)	4.4	0.71
Involvement in extracurricular activities has positively impacted my English listening skills.	0 (0)	3 (1)	6 (1.9)	60 (19.5)	239 (77.6)	4.7	0.54
Participation in extracurricular activities has helped me develop better English-speaking skills.	1 (0.3)	0 (0)	4 (1.3)	45 (14.6)	258 (83.8)	4.8	0.47
Extracurricular activities have motivated me to learn English	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0.6)	44 (14.3)	262 (85.1)	4.8	0.38
Engaging in extracurricular activities has made English learning enjoyable for me.	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (1.3)	40 (13)	264 (85.7)	4.8	0.40
Participating in extracurricular activities has increased my confidence	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.3)	36 (11.7)	271 (88)	4.9	0.34
Extracurricular activities have improved my overall English language proficiency	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0.6)	40 (13)	266 (86.4)	4.9	0.37
Involvement in extracurricular activities has positively influenced my English grades.	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (1)	34 (11)	271 (88)	4.9	0.36
Extracurricular activities have provided me with opportunities to practice and apply English skills	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.3)	16 (5.2)	291 (94.5)	4.9	0.25

Source: Primary data, 2023

The results as indicated in the table 4.2 reveal highly positive sentiments among the respondents. A significant majority (86.4%) either agrees or strongly agrees that participating in extracurricular activities has improved their English reading skills. This high level of agreement is reflected in the average score of 4.4, indicating a positive impact on reading skills with relatively low variation (SD of 0.86). Similar to reading skills, the majority (91.5%) agrees or strongly agrees that extracurricular activities have enhanced their English writing skills. The average score of 4.4 suggests a positive impact, with a slightly lower standard deviation (0.71) compared to reading skills. An overwhelming majority (97.1%) agrees or strongly agrees that involvement in extracurricular activities has positively impacted their English listening skills. The high agreement level is reflected in the average score of 4.7, indicating a strong influence on listening skills with low variation (SD of 0.54). A vast majority (98.4%) agrees or strongly agrees that participating in extracurricular activities has helped them develop better English-speaking skills. The average score of 4.8 suggests a substantial positive influence, with a minimal standard deviation (0.47). Almost all respondents (99.4%) agree or strongly agree that extracurricular activities have motivated them to learn English more effectively. The average score of 4.8 indicates a high level of motivation, with a very low standard deviation (0.38). An overwhelming majority (99.3%) agrees or strongly agrees that engaging in extracurricular activities has made English learning enjoyable for them. The average score of 4.8 highlights the strong connection between extracurricular activities and enjoyable learning, with minimal variation (SD of 0.40). A substantial majority (99.7%) agrees or strongly agrees that participating in extracurricular activities has increased their confidence in using English. The average score of 4.9 reflects a significant boost in confidence, with a low standard deviation (0.34). Nearly all respondents (99%) agree or strongly agree that extracurricular activities have improved their overall English

language proficiency. The average score of 4.9 indicates a remarkable improvement in language proficiency, with a relatively low standard deviation (0.37). A strong majority (99%) agrees or strongly agrees that extracurricular activities have positively influenced their English grades. The average score of 4.9 suggests a significant impact on academic performance, with a low standard deviation (0.36). Virtually all respondents (99.8%) agree or strongly agree that extracurricular activities have provided them with opportunities to practice and apply English skills. The average score of 4.9 highlights the value of these activities in skills development, with a minimal standard deviation (0.25).

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Types of Extracurricular Activities are Performed in Lower Secondary Schools

In this study, the most observed extracurricular activities were Music and support, with 40.3% and 30.8% participation, respectively. This aligns with previous research conducted by Tjaden et al., (2019) , which found that Music programs were popular extracurricular choices among students in similar educational settings.

5.2 Participation Level of Students in Extra-Curriculum Activities

The majority of students in the study participated in extracurricular activities on a weekly basis (62.3%), followed by daily participation (31.8%). This pattern of participation frequency is consistent with the findings of Johnson and Rahman et al. (2021) who reported that most students engaged in extracurricular activities regularly. Such high levels of participation could be indicative of the importance students place on these activities in their lives.

5.3 Effect of Extra-Curriculum Activities on English Performance

A significant and noteworthy finding was that all students (100%) agreed that participating in extracurricular activities had a positive impact on their English performance. This strongly supports the conclusions of several previous studies. For instance, Anjum (2021) found that students who participated in extracurricular activities showed improved academic performance, including language skills. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Chan (2016) demonstrated a positive correlation between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement. The overwhelming majority of students (93.2%) reported receiving support from their parents to engage in extracurricular activities. This highlights the significance of parental involvement in students' extracurricular pursuits, a factor emphasized in the work of Đurišić & Bunijevac (2017). Parental support can play a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude towards these activities and their potential benefits. The majority of respondents (86.4%) agreed that participating in extracurricular activities improved their English reading skills. This aligns with studies by Alghonaim (2020) which found that extracurricular activities, such as reading clubs or literature-related clubs, can enhance reading skills. Over 91.5% of respondents agreed that engaging in extracurricular activities enhanced their English writing skills. This result is consistent with research by Lloyd (2018) which emphasized the positive impact of writing-related extracurricular activities on writing proficiency. The overwhelming majority (97.1%) of respondents agreed that involvement in extracurricular activities positively impacted their English listening skills. This aligns with findings by Picard & Velautham (2016) , which showed that participation in activities involving spoken English can improve listening skills. Nearly 98.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that participating in extracurricular activities helped them develop better English-speaking skills. This result supports the findings of a study by Burns (2019) , which highlighted the role of speaking-focused activities in language skill development. The findings of this study underscore the potential benefits of extracurricular involvement, not only in enhancing students' language skills but also in contributing to their overall development. These results suggest that educators and policymakers in Kicukiro district, Rwanda, should recognize the importance of extracurricular activities and consider ways to promote their availability and accessibility to a wider range of students. It is important to acknowledge some limitations of this study, such as potential response bias in self-reported data. Additionally, the study's focus was limited to a specific district in Rwanda, and findings may not be generalizable to other regions or countries. Future research could explore the long-term effects of extracurricular participation on various aspects of students' development and academic performance.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter includes the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations regarding the study on effect of extra-curriculum activities on English performance in lower-secondary school in Kicukiro district.

This study aimed to investigate the effects of extracurricular activities on English performance in lower secondary schools in Kicukiro district, Rwanda. The specific objectives were to describe the types of extracurricular activities, identify participation levels, and explore their effect on English performance. The findings revealed that music and support activities were prevalent, with high participation rates among students. Importantly, participation in extracurricular activities had a significantly positive effect on English performance, with all respondents reporting its benefits. This highlights the potential advantages of diversifying extracurricular offerings, emphasizing the importance of student involvement, and recognizing the role of such activities in enhancing language skills and academic performance.

The following are recommendations regarding the results of the study: By introducing new extracurricular options in areas like arts, and STEM, schools can cater to a broader range of student interests and talents, enhancing overall participation and engagement. Given that high percentages of students agreed that extracurricular activities positively impacted their English skills and overall development, implementing mentorship programs can leverage these positive experiences. By allowing students with advanced skills in specific activities to mentor their peers, schools can create a supportive and motivating atmosphere that encourages even more students to participate actively. The recommendation for a standardized evaluation framework is rooted in the findings that all students agreed that participating in extracurricular activities had a positive effect on their English performance. This framework would enable a systematic assessment of the impact of extracurricular activities, allowing for data-driven decisions on resource allocation and program improvement. Based on the findings that students highly valued their extracurricular activities and perceived them as beneficial, organizing a national extracurricular competition can further incentivize schools to invest in high-quality programs. Such a competition

would celebrate student achievements, foster healthy competition, and promote the growth of extracurricular offerings across the country.

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