

Participation in School-Based Co-Curricular Activities and Student Development: A Motivation and Engagement Perspective

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KEY IMPLICATIONS

- Attention needs to be given to primary school students who opt not to participate in co-curricular activities (CCA) because they seem to have a less adaptive profile of academic and non-academic attributes than CCA participants.
- There needs to be systematic guidelines on the weekly frequency of CCA participation, the number of CCA groups, and the starting point students are to participate.
- CCA sessions need be conducted in an autonomy-supportive way such that the benefits of CCA participation in developing CCA-desired outcomes can be optimal.

BACKGROUND

CCAs are an integral part of school curriculum in Singapore, and they propose to offer an authentic platform for a) development of moral values, b) acquisition and practice of soft skills, c) social integration of children from differing backgrounds and ethnicities, d) provision of a safe learning environment, e) opportunities for character and leadership development, and f) lifelong pursuit of interests and greater outward expression (Chong-Mok, 2010). With the increased investment in school-based CCAs (Ministry of Education, 2012), it is important to

examine the potential impacts of CCAs on the holistic development of Singaporean students.

FOCUS OF STUDY

The focus of this project is to examine the extent to which the quantitative (CCA breadth, intensity, and duration) and qualitative (CCA motivation and engagement) indicators of CCA participation predict CCA-desired outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- Non-CCA primary school participants scored lower than those in Physical Sports on almost all of the academic and non-academic outcomes.
- Duration of CCA participation significantly predicted the development of secondary students' CCA autonomous motivation, whereas the weekly frequency of CCA participation led to decreases in their CCA autonomous motivation.
- Students' perceived autonomy support of CCA environment strengthened the benefits of CCA participation for students' CCA-related mastery goal and autonomous motivation and in facilitating CCA-desired outcomes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

There needs to be educational policies that regulate the implementation of school-based CCAs in the following areas. First, compulsory CCA participation among upper primary school children should be considered. Second, there needs to be a set of guidelines that determine the weekly intensity of students' CCA participation, the number of CCA groups that students participate in, and the time point students begin their CCA participation. Third, CCA sessions should be designed and conducted in such a way that creates a learning atmosphere, thus promoting students' mastery goal and autonomous motivation. Each of these policies and practices are expected to facilitate students' holistic development, especially as a function of school-based CCA participation.

POPULATION

A total of 28 schools (14 primary and 14 secondary), comprising 1648 primary and 2242 secondary students, participated in this project.

RESEARCH DESIGN

An online survey was administered to students in different CCAs at three time points (i.e., ends of Term 1, Term 2, and Term 3).

REFERENCES

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This brief was based on the project OER 09/13 GAD: Participation in School-Based Co-Curricular Activities and Student Development: A Motivation and Engagement Perspective.

How to cite this publication

Liem, G.A.D, Huan, V., Yeo, L.S., Chua, B.L., & Seng, Y. (2018). *Participation in School-Based Co-Curricular Activities and Student Development: A Motivation and Engagement Perspective*. (NIE Research Brief Series No. 18-008). Singapore: National Institute of Education.

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