

A STUDY OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract

The main aim of this research is to investigate the factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities at the Middle School Level. This study sought four possible factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities such as the roles of teachers, infrastructures, funding and parental involvement. Descriptive survey design was used and the respondents included (13) principals, (42) co-curricular teachers and (471) middle school students from (13) schools within Kyauktaga Township of Bago Region. (526) respondents were selected by using stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods. Data was collected by using attitude questionnaires for three different types of respondents and a set of participation questionnaire for students only. So, students are asked by two questionnaires. Principals and teachers' attitude questionnaires consist of (10) items for each factor. Students' attitude questionnaire contains (6) items for each factor. Students' participation questionnaires contain (10) Likert-type items. Moreover, researcher conducted interview with (13) principals to enhance the credibility of current research findings. All questionnaires are self-structured. Data analysis included both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative results indicated that these four factors have significant and positive relationship towards students' participation in co-curricular activities (the role of teacher $r(471) = .407^{***}$, $p < .001$, infrastructures $r(471) = .310^{***}$, $p < .001$, funding $r(471) = .199^{***}$, $p < .001$ and parental involvement $r(471) = .292^{***}$, $p < .001$). Teachers' role factors is the most influent factor among them and 22% of the combination of four predictor variables can be predicted from the influencing factors. It can be concluded that these factors are necessary to become more participation of students in co-curricular activities at the middle school level.

Keywords: activities, participation, co-curricular activities

Introduction

Modern education aims at the wholesome development of children. In fact all-round development is the key theme of education. Today, when a child comes to school, he comes in his totality and, so education should help him to develop his total personality. To fulfill these purposes, varieties of educative experiences are to be provided in the school programs which may contribute to a long, happy and normal life of the child. The function of the education is to bring change in child behavior and personality in a more desirable form. So, modern approach of education emphasizes on all-round development of the child.

In this modern world, our nation needs citizens, dynamics and excellent leaders. The schools are where the molding should begin, and thus the importance of students' participation in co-curricular activities, which has proven to turn out better and successful students, as leaders and responsible citizens of tomorrow. Co-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities play a significant role in the lives of the students. Therefore, participating in these activities has been linked to greater school attachment and sense of belonging, better academic achievement, and higher academic aspirations. There are many factors which affect students' participation in co-curricular activities. In order to fulfill some requirements for more participation of students in

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co-curricular activities, this study aimed at investigating the influencing factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities.

Purposes

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities at the Middle School Level. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To study the assumptions of participants about the factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities.
- To explore the relationship between the influencing factors and students' participation in co-curricular activities.
- To explain the extent of the influence of the roles of teachers, infrastructural facilities, funding, and parents' involvement on students' participation in co-curricular activities.
- To find out the most influential factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities.
- To give suggestions for the improvement of students' participation in co-curricular activities according to the results of the study.

Research Hypothesis

There is a relationship between the influencing factors and students' participation in co-curricular activities.

Scope of the Study

The subjects were confined to the principals, middle school co-curricular teachers and middle school students at the three basic education middle schools, five basic education high schools (branch) and five basic education high schools in Kyauktaga Township, Bago Region of Lower Myanmar. The total number of schools was (13) and the total participants were (526). This study was delimited into the four factors such as teachers' role, funding, infrastructural facilities and parents' involvement.

Definition of Key Term

Co-curricular Activities

Co-curricular activities mean the programs of educational activities, which are systematically organized in or out of the school compounds together with the teaching of subject matters in order to implement the educational objectives for the purpose of students' all-round development (Basic Education Law, 1973).

Review of Related Literature

All-round, Balanced Development and Co-curricular Activities

Students must be nurtured with focus on all-round, balanced development especially in terms of intellectual, physical, social, moral, emotional and aesthetic dimensions (National Education Law, 2014). The all-round development or holistic development of an individual is only possible through balanced development of scholastic or academic as well as non-scholastic or non-academic aspects in the formal, in-formal and non-formal educational

setting in the society. The co-curricular or extracurricular activities help the student to overcome the stress of stunts and allow the holistic development of individual. Holistic Development is basically the development of everyone's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative, religious values and feelings. It is pretty much just the development of the entire brain's thoughts and feelings. Co-curricular activities such as academic or special interest clubs, theatre and music groups, and internal sports teams have traditionally enhanced students' sense of school membership by providing them with a special position in the school community. Students involved in these kinds of co-curricular activities find opportunities to shine and are less likely to become disengaged from school. Many studies have indicated an association between co-curricular activities in general and positive academic outcomes. Co-curricular activities promote enthusiasm, vitality, positive thinking and team spirit which in turn, contribute to personality development. Co-curricular activities facilitate the development of various domains of mind and personality such as intellectual development, emotional development, social development, moral development and aesthetic development (Kisango, 2016).

Teachers' Role and Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities

The importance in education does not only lie in academic but also in all other fields which are required in educating students, which include skills and co-curriculum. Fostering a sense of school co-curricular engagement in a personalized environment requires an expanded role for teachers. In this expanded role, teachers seek to influence students' social and personal development, as well as their intellectual growth. The new school has considerably modified the status, duties and privileges of the teacher. In the new school, the teacher goes beyond the classroom (Kochhar, 1985).

Teaching is a broad occupation and teachers may range far beyond their specialization in their reading, writing, and the enjoyment of the arts. They may range over every type of composition from biography, fiction, travel, adventure, science, poetry, to journalism. Their interest in music, drama, and the fine arts may be just as catholic. Such interests tend to "elevate and liberate the human spirit" (Alcorn, Kinder, & Schunert, 1964).

The Influence of Infrastructural Facilities and Funding on Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities

Education is very important to the economic development of Myanmar. Only when the education system is good enough will the workers needed for the country's manufacturing and services sectors that support the development of the economy be improved. For that kind of quality education, the level of expenditure plays a major role. In Myanmar, education expenditure, the curriculum, infrastructure, learning materials and the attractiveness of the teaching profession are related. If those elements, and specially the budget allocation, are limited, the education environment will not be conducive to effective teaching and learning. Limited budget allocations cause significant difficulties for education reform. Most graduates are not interested in being teachers because the low salaries offered to them are not attractive. According to a survey conducted by Comprehensive Education Sector Review, teachers reported that most schools do not have enough desks and chairs for classrooms, the classroom size is inadequate, and there are no toilets in the schools. Moreover, many classes are crowded into the same room without any walls or partitions between them. These kinds of problems are mostly the result of inadequate budget allocation (Min ZawSoe, Aye MyaSwe, Nan Khin Moe Aye, & Nan Htet Mon, 2017).

School's physical facilities provide and maintain safety, cleanness, and creativity learning environments to the students which encourage students to perceive high achievements and outcome. Physical facilities strive to give students a comfortable learning environment in which they work and learn. In developing countries, low quality of learning among students can partly be attributed to poor or physical facilities of the schools. School physical facilities are fundamental factors for better learning environment and achievements, and outcome of the students (Saeed&Wain, 2011, cited in Nepal &Maharjan, 2015).

Parental Involvement and Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities

The modern educator seeks the active interest and co-operation of parents in the education of their children. In the new school, every week is "Education Week" when the school doors are open to visitors. The new school realizes that home and school share a mutual interest and school, there cannot be full success in educating the child. The result is that parents and teachers meet in small or large groups to discuss their common problems. In some schools, parents assist in the office and classrooms, they participate in trips and many other social and community undertakings (Kochhar, 1985).

Effective schools also tend to have high levels of parental involvement. Parents are key individuals whose support can make important contributions to a school's effort to accomplish its educational missions. There is strong evidence that, when parents show a strong interest in school, their children have a more positive attitude about school and do better in their academic tasks (Armstrong, Henson, & Savage,1989).

Research Method

Descriptive survey design, both quantitative and qualitative method is used to carry out the study. As a quantitative research method, data were collected by surveys from the principals, teachers and middle school students to investigate how the various factors influenced students' participation in co-curricular activities at the Middle School Level. As a qualitative research method, the researcher conducted interview by meeting headmasters or headmistress in the selected schools. Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study (Gay, 1987).

Population and Sample Size

The sample of the subjects was principals, junior teachers; particularly co-curricular teachers, and middle school students from the thirteen schools in Kyauktaga Township and they were selected by using stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods. The total numbers of principals, junior teachers and students participated in this study were (526).

Table 1 The Sample Schools and Sample Size

No	Schools	Numbers of participants		
		Principals	Teachers	Students
1	B.E.H.S, Kyauktaga	1	6	78
2	B.E.H.S, Thamin Inn Kone	1	2	26
3	B.E.H.S, In Kone	1	4	20
4	B.E.M.S, 14-Ywa	1	2	28
5	B.E.H.S(Branch), Htain Tall	1	2	16
6	B.E.M.S, KoneLalYoe	1	2	16
7	B.E.H.S, PaeNweKone	1	4	45
8	B.E.H.S, Pha do	1	6	72
9	B.E.H.S(Branch), 2-Yat Quat	1	2	36
10	B.E.M.S, Myot Ma	1	2	30
11	B.E.H.S(Branch), HmanChaung	1	3	32
12	B.E.H.S(Branch), Say YoeKhin	1	3	32
13	B.E.H.S(Branch), AnaukYat	1	4	40
Total		13	42	471

Note: B.E.H.S = Basic Education High School, B.E.H.S(Branch) = Basic Education High School, Branch, B.E.M.S = Basic Education Middle School

Instrument

As the instrumentation, three questionnaires for the factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities were self-structured. Each questionnaire included demographic data and items deal with the influencing factors, such as, the role of teachers, infrastructural facilities of schools, funding condition, and involvement of parents in education.

Questionnaires for principals and teachers consist of 10 items for each factor and totally 40 items were contained. And one set of interview question for the principals is prepared. Questionnaires for students consist of 6 items of each factor and totally 24 items were contained. Another one set of participation question for students contains 10 items. Each item in attitude questionnaires is constructed with five-point Likert scales (1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Moderately agree, 4- Agree, and 5- Strongly Agree). Each item in participation questionnaire for students is constructed with five-point Likert scales (1-Never, 2-Seldom, 3-Sometimes, 4- Often, 5- Always).

Procedure

First of all, the researcher found out the relevant literature concerning with the research. Secondly, in order to the required data, the researcher constructed the instruments under the guidance of the supervisor. For the validation of the instrument, the questionnaires for the factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities were distributed to three experts from the Department of Methodology, Sagaing University of Education. The instrument was modified according to the advices and guidance of the experts. Content validity was determined by expert judgment. After that, a pilot testing was conducted in 3rd October, 2018. Based on the findings of the pilot test, internal consistency reliability of the questionnaires are determined by Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach' alpha internal consistency reliability of the students' questionnaire was (0.674) and the Cronbach' alpha internal consistency reliability of the teacher's questionnaire was (0.876). So these items were used for the final test.

And then, the main study was conducted from 9th November, 2018 to 28th November, 2018. The questionnaires were distributed to the subjects with the request to complete and return as soon as possible. At the same time, the researcher interviewed to the principals. The respondents were asked to decide about the questionnaire statements and marked the relevant response category honestly. So the response rate was (100)%. After the questionnaires were returned, the obtained data were entered into a computer file and were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed by using descriptive (means, standard deviations) and inferential (correlation) statistics. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess whether there were relationship between students' participation in co-curricular activities and the influencing factors. Multiple regressions were used to calculate the extent of influencing factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities. To interpret the interview response, constant comparison method was used.

Findings

Findings of the Quantitative Results

Table 2 Percentages of Assumptions of the Factors Influencing Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities by the Participants

Factors	Numbers of Participants	Disagree		Normal		Agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
The Role of Teachers	526	2	0.4%	46	8.7%	478	90.9%
The Role of Infrastructures	526	29	5.5%	266	50.6%	231	43.9%
The Role of Funding	526	14	2.7%	245	46.6%	267	50.7%
The Role of Parental Involvement	526	5	1%	56	10.6%	465	88.4%

Table 3 Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities and Predictors Variables (N=471)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Teachers' Role	Infrastructural Role	Funding Role	Parents' Involvement
Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities	3.53	.547	.407***	.310***	.199***	.292***
Predictor variable						
Teachers' Role	4.05	.435	--	.448***	.144***	.384***
Infrastructural Role	3.46	.581		--	-.095*	.282***
Funding Role	3.57	.490			--	.244***
Parents' Involvement	4.10	.481				--

Note: * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

The correlation coefficient indicates the size and the direction of a relationship. As it can be seen in Table 3, there is a positive correlation between students' participation in co-curricular activities and the four factors.

Table 4 Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Teachers' Role, Infrastructural Role, Funding Role, and Parents' Involvement Predicting Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities (N=471)

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	Sig.
Teachers' Role	.335	.061	.267	5.516***	.000
Infrastructural Role	.165	.044	.175	3.721***	.000
Funding Role	.169	.048	.152	3.513***	.000
Parents' Involvement	.117	.052	.103	2.250*	.025
Constant	.519	.271		1.918	.056

Note: R² = .223 ; F(4,466) = 33.46, ***p < .001, *p < .05

According to the result, the adjusted R² value is .216. So the predictors are particularly good at predicting students' participation in co-curricular activities and it can be assumed that the model is a particularly modest fit one. The combination of variables to predict students' participation in co-curricular activities from the role of teachers, the role of infrastructural facilities, the role of funding, and the role of parental involvement was statistically significant, F(4,466) = 33.46, p < .001. This indicates that approximately 22 % of the variance in students' participation in co-curricular activities can be predicted from the influencing factors.

The model equation to predict students' participation in co-curricular activities is;

$$SPCA = .519 + .335 TR + .165 IR + .169 FR + .117 PI$$

Note. SPCA = Students' Participation in Co-curricular Activities, TR = Role of Teacher, IR = Role of Infrastructure Facilities, FR = Role of Funding, PI = Parental Involvement.

From the regression analysis, among four variables, the best predicting factors of the influencing factors for students' participation in co-curricular activities were found to be role of teacher (β = .269), role of infrastructure facilities (β = .175), role of funding (β = .152), and parental involvement (β = .117). According to the results, the role of teacher appeared to be the strongest predictor of students' participation in co-curricular activities. These findings support that the students' participation in co-curricular activities was closely related with the influencing factors such as their teachers' role, schools' infrastructures, funding role and their parents' involvement. So it may be interpreted that the better the role of teachers in co-curricular teaching, the higher the students' participation in co-curricular learning would be. The following model is constructed to predict students' participation in co-curricular activities.

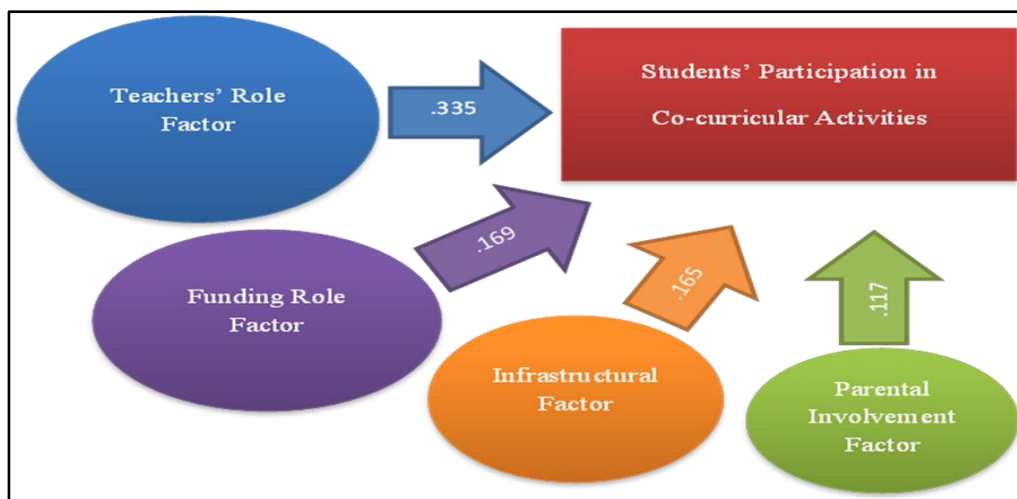


Figure 1 Summary model of the results

Findings of Qualitative Results

In dealing with the influencing factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities such as the role of teacher, infrastructural facilities, funding and parental involvement, the representative responses of the principals are as follows:

- All principals have basic general concepts of co-curricular activities.
- Most of the principals perceived co-curricular activities have advantages for students.
- There is little effectiveness of co-curricular teaching in today schools.
- Barriers of Co-curricular Teaching in Schools (principals' responses)
 1. There are little competent teachers in all co-curricular teachings.
 2. Since no adequate teachers in schools, there are more burdens on teachers to teach co-curricular activities.
 3. Insufficiency of teaching aids for some co-curricular activities.
 4. Lack of appropriate space or playground in schools.
 5. Some activities cost appropriate funds to carry out and there is no particular fund allotment for co-curricular activities in the school grants given by the government.
 6. Most parents are less interested in school activities and in their children education.
 7. Some teachers and students are less interested and little focused in co-curricular activities because these activities have no examination.
 8. Since most of the parents did not know the importance and benefits of these activities, they do not encourage their children to participate in.
- Suggestions of Principals to Become More Participation of Students in Co-curricular Activities
 1. It should be fulfilled more adequate teachers in schools.
 2. It should be appointed specialized teachers for each co-curricular activity or subject.
 3. It should be trained in-service teachers about how to teach these activities.
 4. If possibility, particular fund for all co-curricular activities are assigned by the government.

5. It should be supplied adequate infrastructures, facilities, and equipment for co-curricular teaching.
6. It should be distributed knowledge of co-curricular activities to the students' parents by any way.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors on middle school students' participation in co-curricular activities. The researcher assigned the possible four factors previously, such as, the teachers' role factor, infrastructural role factor, funding role factor and parental involvement role factor, and then prepared three sets of questionnaires dealing with these factors for three strata, such as students, teachers and principals.

In order to assess the assumptions of participants on the factors influencing students' participation in co-curricular activities, three groups such as disagree, normal and agree are classified as presented in Table 2. the percentages of disagree populations of the study on each factor are relatively small to the comparison of agree populations, so the assumptions of the participants in respect of the four factors were the same as the researcher that these four factors would be influenced to the students' participation in co-curricular activities.

In the part of relationship between students' participation in co-curricular activities and the four factors, by applying Pearson correlation analysis, the results showed that the four factors such as the role of teachers [$r(471) = .407^{***}$, $p < .001$], infrastructures [$r(471) = .310^{***}$, $p < .001$], funding [$r(471) = .199^{***}$, $p < .001$] and parental involvement [$r(471) = .292^{***}$, $p < .001$] were positively and significantly correlated.

The results of the role of teachers revealed that the correlation was positive correlation. This means that if the performance of teachers in co-curricular teaching is high, the participation of students in co-curricular activities is likely to be high, or if the performance of teachers in co-curricular teaching is low, the participation of students in co-curricular activities is likely to be low. In other word, students who are taught by more enthusiastic teachers were more eager to participate in co-curricular activities than who are taught by less enthusiastic teachers. Therefore the role of teachers significantly affects students' participation in co-curricular activities.

Based on the result of infrastructural facilities, it shows the direction of correlation was positive. This means that if the role of infrastructural facilities in the schools is high, the participation of students in co-curricular activities is likely to be high, or if the role of infrastructural facilities in the schools is low, the participation of students in co-curricular activities is likely to be low. In other word, students whose schools have good and adequate infrastructures, playgrounds and agricultural grounds are willing to learn co-curricular activities than those have poor. Therefore the role of infrastructural facilities significantly affects students' participation in co-curricular activities.

According to the research's finding concerning with funding, the result shows that the direction of correlation was positive and low related. This means that if the schools may have more adequate fund for co-curricular activities and may be used appropriately them in the teaching of co-curricular activities, the level of students' participation in co-curricular activities may be high. Moreover, there is found that less adequate fund granted by the government for co-curricular teaching in Myanmar Schools. It seems that it is one of the barriers in more co-curricular participation.

The result of parental involvement showed that the direction of correlation was positive and low related. This means that if the students receive appropriate directions, endowments and encouragements to participate in co-curricular activities by their parents, the level of students'

participation in co-curricular activities is high. If so not, students are less and less interest and do finally not participation in co-curricular activities. Therefore, the role of parental involvement significantly affects students' participation in co-curricular activities.

And the multiple regression analysis revealed that the role of teacher appeared to be the strongest predictor of students' participation in co-curricular activities. So it may be interpreted that the better the role of teachers in co-curricular teaching, the higher the students' participation in co-curricular learning would be. The adjusted R^2 value is .216 and this indicates that approximately 22 % of the variance in students' participation in co-curricular activities can be predicted from the influencing factors.

To enhance the credibility of the current research's findings, the researcher conducted interview with (13) principals of the sample schools. Based on their responses, it was found that the four factors assigned by the researcher such as the roles of teachers, infrastructures, funding and parental involvement are inclusive in interview responses. So, it is confirmed the quantitative results of the study.

Results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis showed that these four factors have the significant relationship towards students' participation in co-curricular activities. It can be realized that these factors are necessary to become more participation of students in co-curricular activities at the middle school level in the selected township.

Conclusion

Modern education recognized that when the child comes to the school, he comes in mentally, physically, spiritually, socially and vocationally and as such he must be educated in all of them, now it is recognized that these activities are valuable media for developing proper attitudes, habits, interests, ideals among people. Because of their importance in education, they have been renamed as co-curricular activities as they form an integral part of the school curriculum (Kisango, 2016). Parents, teachers and administrators should implement it effectively in all types of educational setting through all related agencies of education. Co-curricular activities are important elements of the curriculum and should not be treated as extra activities but treated as non-academic improvement activities.

In this research, different variables of determinants of the influencing factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities were investigated. The study included variables such as role of teachers, role of infrastructures, role of funding and role of parental involvement. It was found out that these variables had a direct impact on the development of the students' participation in co-curricular activities because of positive correlations between them.

The role of teachers in the development of co-curricular participation among middle school students was very affected as from the analyzed data. It can be concluded that teachers play a very important role in co-curricular teaching. Teachers should be the best role models for instilling or implanting the knowledge of co-curricular activities. In Myanmar, most teachers cannot encourage and stimulate pupils to participate actively in the co-curricular activities in schools because of the assigned monthly content of the academic subjects to finish regularly. Although it was natural process in teaching co-curricular activities in schools, the teachers should try to change their attitude towards teaching co-curricular activities and should not adopt that their responsibility was enough to finish the assigned syllabus.

The research findings also revealed that the role of parental involvement was the further influencing factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities. By the students' responses of the dimension of parental involvement from the students questionnaires, parents were seen to contribute positively in their role on the development of students' participation in co-curricular activities. It can be concluded that when parents or family members are involved in

their children's development of co-curricular participation in positive ways, students more participate and realize their potential in co-curricular activities.

According to the research findings of the roles of funding and infrastructures, they play a significant effect on students' participation in co-curricular activities. By this study, it can be concluded that when schools funding is increased and more money allocated towards co-curricular activities, more students participate and then their skills are nurtured. From the quantitative and qualitative findings, Myanmar schools are weak in the part of funding towards co-curricular activities. Moreover, it was found that there are inadequate infrastructures in some schools in the research, so some co-curricular activities cannot be carried out effectively. Therefore, the government and stakeholders such as teachers, parents and education officials should cooperate and put the relevant infrastructures in place to encourage students' participation in co-curricular activities.

To conclude, this study shows that students' participation in co-curricular activities is affected by many factors which co-curricular teachers and learners should be aware of. The four factors investigated in this research are moderately linked to the participation of students in co-curricular activities. It is sure that there are many other residual factors. Another researcher should investigate other influential factors on students' participation in co-curricular activities. Then, the stakeholders in education should provide appropriate plans to improve the development of co-curricular participation among students.

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