



Overview Of the Students' Perception of The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Academic Performance in Rajshahi University

Rayhana Malik Senjuti¹ & A. Z. M. Fuad²

^{1,2}Institute of Education and Research, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

Corresponding Author: Rayhana Malik Senjuti, Email: senjuti1125@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Engaging in extracurricular activities holds a pragmatic role in shaping students' academic performance, self-development, and future career prospects. This study investigates perceptions, experiences and challenges which Rajshahi University students are facing regarding their involvement in ECAs and its impact on their academic success. This research study has taken qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FDGs) along with the students actively participating in various ECAs, including cultural organizations, sports, debate clubs, and social service groups of Rajshahi University. The findings reveal that, ECAs enhance students' cognitive development, leadership skills, networking abilities, and academic engagement as well. However, academic pressure, time constraints, and lack of institutional support are the reason of their hindrance. The findings further reveal the Parental and institutional support that significantly influences students' engagement. Nevertheless, excessive involvement in extracurricular activities (ECAs) has positively been found to have impact on students' learning and personal growth, despite few academic setbacks. Thus, the study suggests that universities should establish structured systems to assist students to manage both academic and extracurricular responsibilities. Additionally, the results provide insightful information that students, university administrators, and educational officials may use to build a more stimulating and well-rounded learning environment.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities (ECAs), Academic Performance, Student Development, Institutional Support.

INTRODUCTION

Education is none but a glistening golden light compared to a golden light in human life. To reach through the light truly is not that easy. A man needs to cross a long way. In the long run, some extra determination, motivation, push, and focus are needed. This extra comes from extracurricular activity. In the extracurricular activities (ECA), the term “extra” implies as not a part of the curriculum or classroom activities that are mandatory and contribute to a grade or academic credit as a result of the activities (Han & Kwon, 2018). They are usually voluntary, social, or philanthropic activities that involve participants to do something good for society as well. Such as sports and physical activities, art, clubbing, community service, student organization, drama, gymnastics, leadership and entrepreneurship, cultural activities, karate, theatre, cycling and so on.

Marsh and Kleitman's study explores the impact of extracurricular school activities (ESAs) on academic outcomes, revealing that school-based ESAs are more beneficial than out-of-school activities, benefiting both academic and nonacademic activities, especially for socioeconomically disadvantaged students (Marsh & Kleitman, 2009). Usually, parents find these activities non-profitable for their kids as a career; therefore, they discourage them from participating. They also do that on purpose, thinking that these activities can hamper students' academic performance. This study is all about knowing whether there is any significant relation between students' extracurricular activity and their academic performance.

According to research, extracurricular activity involvement may boost kids' sense of connection or attachment to their school and reduce their risk of failing in their classes and dropping out. Promoting extracurricular activities (ECA) at school may help reduce high school dropout rates; nevertheless, disruptions from cancellations or exclusions, as well as rules like "No Pass/No Play," may make dropout rates higher (Thouin et al., 2022).

A lot of extracurricular activities, such as music, academic clubs, sports and organizations are found in almost every high school around the world, especially in the United States. These activities open the opportunities for students to learn the values of individuality, teamwork and group responsibility, physical strength and endurance, mental satisfaction, competition, diversity, humanity and a sense of culture and community. Likewise, the US and European countries are always ahead in education. Some consider them the Godfather of

civilized culture. They had shown the importance of extracurricular activity through the Olympics long ago. Still, the culture is performing grandly in the European countries. It is a sign of appreciating the hidden talent of mankind.

Moving towards to the Asian subcontinent, the history has the proof how rich the cultural diversity and traditions they have. Especially the Indian subcontinent is famous for their art, music, literature, dance, sports. Famous artist, dancer, poet, writer are born here. Rabindranath Tagore is one of them who own self contribute in the field of art, music, writing equally. His 'Shantiniketon' is the living example how essential to promote extracurricular activity for the growth of a child.

In Bangladesh, institutions like 'Chayanot', 'Udichi Shilpigosthi', 'Surer Dhara' offers cultural activities to learn. But beside these particular cultural institutes, there are almost each educational institution has their own cultural and extracurricular organization; where they support the eternal development of a student.

This study has conducted at University of Rajshahi, a public university which is located in the northern part of Bangladesh. This university is well known for its student organizations and cultural activities. Currently it is offering 50 organizations. These organizations have many types of variety. Some work for research, higher study, library, arts, theatre, music, dance, debate, ethnic and cultural, political action, social welfare, SOS, social awaking groups, blood donate, tour guide, physical fitness or sports, taekwondo, Bangladesh National Cadet Corps(BNCC), mental health and so on. From all the types or groups we are going to take data, interview and analysis all from those.

There is a common conflict on the issue that whether extracurricular activity improves a students' overall development and grades or consume their valuable time. Nikki Wilson claimed that extracurricular activities offer students better grades, higher test scores, and increased self- concept; also teach teamwork and leadership skills, reduce substance abuse, and increase school connectedness. However, over scheduling can decrease benefits and may lead to injuries. Caring adults can reduce financial barriers for healthy extracurricular activities. The point of view among students, parents and educational authorities always have been not in favor to one another. Even there are way more variety of thinking shown. Many researches has done on this

concern; some directly indicates that the student organizations consume the academic time which reflects on their grade and some other favors the engagement of student organization as a cognitive development of the learners. This study interests to show how different aspects come from different minds and which way consider more in the betterment of a learner progress.

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between a membership in a student organization at Rajshahi University and academic performance measured by cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Along with discovering in which organization students feel more interest in involving and whether they play any role in contributing their grade point. Additionally, the study aims to understand students' preferences for specific organizations and how their involvement may influence their academic outcomes.

Therefore, the study objectives are:

- (i) To explore the perceptions of Rajshahi University students regarding the impact of extracurricular activities on their academic performance.
- (ii) To identify the challenges faced by students in balancing extracurricular activities with academic responsibilities

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the era of creativity and innovation, Education comes with new features to boost the learning for modernization itself. To differentiate one from others and overall evolution, there is rare to find any other alternative except extracurricular activity (ECA). Research of this study has shown that 85% students had found who were aware of ECA and reacted moderate in the engagement in non-academic activities. Those who were actively participated in ECA had done great in their studies and came out as a positive view that ECA helps them in constructing their grades, career development and college life. Students should be able to evaluate their ECA performance and record it in their portfolio as part of their achievement (Han & Kwon, 2018). In higher education (HE) students' self-efficacy on ECA was investigated in a survey in UK, where 294 students from a post-92 HEI participated and discovered that ECA helps to build self- efficacy along with an important HE outcomes like employability (Griffiths et al., 2021). Relationship between academic achievement and involvement in extracurricular activities in a

suburban high school district in the Midwest was studied; it gathered archival data from two schools' 2009 senior classes and looked at gender, race, American College Test (ACT) scores, GPA, lunch status, and extracurricular involvement. The findings indicated that extracurricular activity and academic performance were positively correlated (Freeman, 2017). Cuts to the budget have made it harder for children to participate in extracurricular activities at school, which has impacted their grades and perceptions. High school students were questioned for a study that revealed greater grade point averages and more positive opinions of the school among the participants (Furda & Shuleski, 2019).

A cultural capital approach, examines the diversity and worth of extracurricular activities significance the comprehending of various engagement and advantages that students receive from ECA, taking into account elements like family life, faith, and economic circumstances. Intergenerational capital concerns that impact students' comprehension and involvement abilities are also examined in the study (Clegg et al., 2009). To examine the impact of extracurricular activities on the academic success, African American and Latino college students were selected at 27 selective colleges. It uses Ogbu's theory of oppositional culture and Tinto's theory of educational departure to analyze the effects of six different student organizations and a co-ethnic organization. The results show that student organizations' impact on academic performance varies depending on the organization type and student's race and gender (Baker, 2008).

Often there is a concern occurs that spending time on non-academic things may shown up a degradation on the academics. Purdue University found a slight negative correlation between involvement in student organizations and GPA, with student organization officers and members earning significantly higher GPAs than regular members. The study claims that, students involved in organizations have lower academic performance because they commit too much of their time out of class activities was found to be false. Thus students who involved in ECA tend to achieve a higher GPA than others (Hawkins, 2010). French middle school supports this claim too as it explores the impact of extracurricular activities on academic success on their students. It finds a positive effect on marks and non-cognitive skills, but no cognitive skills impact. The findings suggest that participation in extracurricular activities reinforces social inequalities in school achievement (Coulangeon, 2018). Students with financial means were more likely to participate in university-based organizations and community-based off-campus activities.

However, because of their time, money, or other obligations, not all students participate in these activities on a regular basis. According to the study, students who have dependents may be more inclined to participate in extracurricular activities because of the support of their families (King et al., 2021). Yet the on campus participation founds beneficial in many studies; especially the correlation between first-year college students' attendance at campus sponsored extracurricular events and their grade point average, persistence, and retention. It was discovered that participation in signature events improved grades and retention, deepening our knowledge of student involvement and engagement (Kulp et al., 2021). 16. In some study it is also observed that there is a conflict between students about theoretical and outside knowledge on ECA. Looking into the methods used by first-year public university chemistry students to learn the four levels of learning approaches identified through interviews with 61 students. While Level 3 students independently assess knowledge, Level 1 students rely on outside sources. Yet a lot of students stick with Level 2, memorizing problems and methods (*The Relationship between Student Success in Introductory University Chemistry and Approaches to Learning Outside of the Classroom - Sinapuelas - 2015 - Journal of Research in Science Teaching - Wiley Online Library*, n.d.)

Each and every single particle in the universe has good and bad side both. Participating in ECA no wonder has the same. A study found that students who participated in extracurricular activities (ECAs) had a 2% lower CGPA compared to those who did not. Additionally, an increase in weekly ECA time resulted in a 0.2% decrease in CGPA. Students involved in sports, social work, and political activities had a 1.08%, 5.73%, and 2% lower CGPA compared to those not involved. Furthermore, increasing time spent on each activity led to a decrease in CGPA (Sabuj et al., 2018). Over scheduling hamper not only students' routine and health but also teachers suffer sometimes too. In investigation, the experiences of full-time Ontario secondary school teachers involved in extracurricular activities (ECA) found that teachers' main reasons for involvement were passions in sport, personal growth, and time management. But ECAs affected their lunch and class preparation time, affected work after school hours. Teachers needed extra support and felt they had little value from colleagues. However, they found a sense of community and belonging between teacher and student along with the importance of extracurricular activities for students, teachers and future stakeholders in education (Khalife, 2017). Sometimes the inflation of extra-credential experiences and credentials sustain status

disparities. A longitudinal study of Canadian university students from the working class shows that social networks and financial resources prevent extra-credential experiences from developing, which alters aspirations for further education and employment (*Extra-Credential Experiences and Social Closure: Working-Class Students at University: British Educational Research Journal: Vol 38, No 2, n.d.*).

Adolescent period activities have the longer effect on anyone's life as the period itself contains so much emotion, attachment and a different point of view; it carries through in a long run. A survey on 174 high school seniors in Mississippi had done to understand the impact of extracurricular activities (ECAs) on adolescent development. The findings indicated that pupils who experienced poverty had lower participation rates, with ignorance being the most frequent obstacle. ECAs have a favorable effect on some areas of development (*Exploring the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Adolescent Development, n.d.*). Sex, age, and parental education all have an impact on teenage academic achievement. Girls do better in the early stages of adolescence in terms of parental education, reading, and duration of exercise. In middle and late adolescence, academic achievement improves with less participation in sports and reduced activity breadth, while parental education levels follow the same trend (*Not Everything Helps the Same for Everyone: Relevance of Extracurricular Activities for Academic Achievement | Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, n.d.*).

METHODOLOGY

To explore students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges regarding ECAs and their impact on academic performance, this study adopts a qualitative research approach and descriptive study design. The researchers have focused on gathering in-depth insights through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Thus, this approach allows a profound understanding of students' motivations for participating in ECAs and the way they manage the balance between academics and extracurricular activities. This study examines the impact of extra-curricular activities on the academic performance of Rajshahi University. The research conducted the study using a purposive sampling technique that includes undergraduate and postgraduate students from diverse academic disciplines. Data is gathered through ten semi-structured interviews with

individuals approximately for 30-45 minutes and allowed them to answer open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses. Moreover, two FGDs are conducted to bring a broader view and experiences in a collective setting. For data analysis, the team has taken a thematic analysis approach and the interviews are FGDs, have been transcribed and coded to identify recurring themes related to the role of ECAs in skill development, time management challenges, institutional and parental support, and the perceived academic impact of extracurricular participations. After that, the results are analyzed to comprehend the wider effects of extracurricular activities on college education.

Ethical considerations are carefully addressed in this research. All participants provide informed consent, and their identities remain confidential to ensure privacy. They have the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

FINDINGS

The concept of the research is to reach an idea about the acceptance of extracurricular activities with academia among students. To analyse that, we stand up with two goals or objectives in this research. The first objective is to explore the perceptions of Rajshahi University students regarding the impact of extracurricular activities on their academic performance. The second one is to identify the challenges faced by students in balancing extracurricular activities with academic responsibilities. The five themes of this paper represent the objective, and to develop the analysis, 14 sub-themes are specifically added under the central theme for better results.

Theme: Personal Involvement in ECAs

1. *Types of ECAs Participated in*

The study understands that students from different backgrounds have different choices in involving extracurricular activities. Some ought to do debate, some in writing, some are in dancing and whatnot.

One participant shared his personal involvement, mentioning,

I wrote about cinema in academic publications like Magic Lonthon. Different perspectives or narratives of cinema are discussed in my writing. I would like to add that I worked as an actor in theatres and wrote a story or worked as a

scriptwriter.

Another Participant talked about her experience with the interest in participating in extracurricular activities,

“There is a volunteer organization called UDICHI where I am associated with. It is a left- leaning or neutral organization that originated before the Liberation War. The organization engages in various cultural activities, including dance, music, recitation, theater, and more.”

Some participants were shown interested in those organizations which are related to their academic field. One experience was,

“As I am a student of Life Science and the topics related to sustainability are in my research, I can learn many things from this organization. Eco-Network Global is a global organization that works for environmental sustainability like SDG 13, SDG 7, SDG 15, climate change, clean & renewable energy, life & land, and clean & water station. They arrange many campaigns, seminars, climate schooling related to social awareness about the sustainability that help me to learn many things.”

Various participants have a variety of tastes and interests, which lead them towards their personal involvement in extracurricular activities along with their academics.

2. Motivations for participation

Every task requires interest, motivation to be done. People often find doing many activities, but most of them are for some visual benefits, whereas people find peace while getting involved in extracurricular activities. This study tried to find out from where the participants got the motivation to get involved in extracurricular activity.

One responded shared about her story,

“Skillful and experienced people attracted me a lot to be like them, then I started networking with them. From them I got inspiration and started debating and engaging with different types of organizations.”

Participants often found to build up the same energy in their spare time, aligning with that their studies.

“I enjoy writing. I realized that there is scope to pursue journalism without formally studying it, which is why I joined RUEC outside of my discipline”.

Mostly, we want to be admired or respected by others. Many participants have seen to get involved in one ECA, but after recognition, they got more motivated to actively participate in ECAs.

One example leads to that,

“After handball, I participated in the volleyball tournament. Thus, I started participating in other sports later as well. Because of my interest and active participation, since then, I was called to every tournament by the authorities to participate.”

Recognition, appreciation and motivation made them more enthusiastic to continue their tasks of interest. Also surroundings play a vital role in growing up from oneself, as it appeared in their statement.

3. Time spent on ECAs

Sometimes it is hard to find time for extracurricular activities along with studies. In this study, most of the participants shared that they spent 2-3days a week on ECAs, whereas a few were found who spent a noticeable time in these activities.

One participant who is involved in at least 3 organizations said,

“Combining 17 to 18 hours per week in all of my organizations; sometimes it can be more or less, according to the demand.”

In contrast, some students were found who don't even spend more than 3 hours in a week in ECAs. One said,

“3 hours mostly, sometimes on events it can be more.”

Average analysis shows that students with dedication spend 2-3 days a week for 1-2 hours is found in general; others exist, but not at a noticeable rate.

4. Skills and experiences gained

Extracurricular activities mainly focus on developing the qualities of leadership, team management, peer work, organizing events, networking, punctuality, public speaking and so on. The responses from the interview and FGDs were no more exceptional than this. Learners shared how their leadership, networking and team management quality are enhanced by being involved in different organization of their university.

There were more than these qualities found in one respondent's answer,

“Through my involvement in extracurricular activities, I've gained several valuable skills. One of the key benefits has been networking with diverse individuals, which has enhanced my communication and negotiation skills. I've developed professionalism through hands-on projects with various organizations. On the technical side, I've improved my proficiency in tools like G Suite, Microsoft Excel, and other software. Moreover, working alongside professionals has given me deeper insights into career and higher study-related fields, both expanding my foundational knowledge and preparing me for future opportunities.”

Self learning and helping others to learn through clubbing is rare to find, yet one participant shared the experience,

“From these clubs, I have been able to acquire some general skills. I have learned several soft skills, such as communication, leadership, networking, and some technical skills like data analysis, research techniques, and statistics. Additionally, by teaching these to others, I assess myself to ensure that I am truly learning and mastering them”

Organizations or formal clubs only help to learn team management, and event organization is a myth nowadays. Sports can play a crucial role in building these qualities strongly.

A female student, aka a sportsperson, shared that,

“Through sports, I mainly learned discipline, teamwork, team management, and leadership. As for leadership experience, an Inter-University Volleyball Tournament was held at Chittagong University in 2022; I was there as the captain of the Rajshahi University team”

Theme: Impact of ECAs on Academic Performance

5. Perceived academic impact

This question excites scholars mostly, and one topper stated,

“If I said about debate, by doing debate I have developed in my speaking and being an active listener as well. My cognitive development increases as I have to search a lot of things, which helps in my searching and finding ability. It really helps me in my viva board, presentations and assignments. As I manage some program and people, my leadership skills are uplifting day by day. It has a positive impact on my academic life.”

An Engineering student revealed,

“As an engineering student with an EEE background, my academic life is quite demanding, so I’ve had to carefully manage my time and balance both academics and extracurricular activities. Initially, it was challenging, but over time I realized that with proper scheduling. This experience has not only helped me improve academically but also build a stronger resume.”

Some experiences are not well. One shared that,

“No, I don’t think it made much of an impact. However, in some cases, it can affect academic performance. BNCC camps were usually held in winter, around January, and my semester final exam was held in February, right after the January camp, so therefore I faced a bit of a problem. I was not in the physical and mental state to attend the exam. It harmed my academic performance.”

6. Influence on grades

Directly or indirectly, ECAs influenced academic results. Over-involvement, providing more time unnecessarily and taking an extra burden definitely affect the year-end result.

Some explain that due to the excessive time, they have a lot of struggles. One stated,

“I believe that if I had focused solely on academics, my CGPA might have been slightly higher. However, I see extracurricular activities as a "necessary evil" for students, in the sense that while they may take time away from academics, they provide immense benefits for future career or higher education prospects by helping you stand out. My academic performance isn't exactly where I want it to be, but I can compensate for it through the skills and experiences gained from extracurricular involvement. Time management plays a big role here. I spend a lot of time on extracurricular, which has affected my CGPA, but I feel that I've utilized my academic time well. I stay in contact with classmates who prioritize their CGPA more, and they help me maintain a good academic standing.”

Some also defend the thought and stated,

“I can't say for certain because it entirely depends on how I manage my time. The effect on my grades is directly linked to how well I balance my extracurricular commitments with my academic practice and focus.”

7. Balancing academics and ECAs

As young learners, many found difficulties in balancing their academics with other interests and activities; due to that, they often felt clueless about what they should do.

One participant who invests time in dancing said,

“Yes, since my subject and the club activities are completely different, I face challenges when I am called for club duties, especially during times when I'm focused on subject-related tasks like painting. During such times, I prioritize my department work, which is my main priority and try to delegate my club responsibilities to someone else.”

Overloaded work becomes a burden and causes health issues; it should be considered for all.

An unhealthy mind and body cannot function well. This suffering showed in many participants' statements;

“Yes. Sometimes, I feel challenged with my sleep schedule when I am to organize or host a campaign. Because that time, I am to manage the whole team, distribute individual tasks to the team members, etc. For example, I had launched a cleaning campaign across the campus. That time I felt little discomfort with my sleep cycle.”

Yet some people find peace and self-satisfaction by managing both spontaneously.

A BNCC ex-cadet shared,

“No, balancing extracurricular activities and academic responsibilities is surely possible through time management. For example, if I had any responsibilities at BNCC, I would finish my academic work earlier. Also, being a cadet sergeant in BNCC, I had a bit more responsibility than others. As a result, I had to spend a little more time there, which I think had a slightly negative effect on my studies.”

8. Missed academic commitments

Attending classes, completing assignments and giving in courses are as important as the final examination; especially the deadlines are highly encouraged to follow in institutions. Our study found that almost all the students are really conscious about these academic commitments and prioritise their studies. A few stated,

“No, such an incident has never happened. When we join a club as fresher, sometimes pressure is applied, but I was able to handle it back then. And where I couldn't manage, I tried to step away from those situations.”

Though sometimes, for some tournaments or any event, participants needed to go there for a couple of days, they managed it later. As a sportsperson explains,

“Yes, initially, I missed classes for sports. Later, I did not have to face this problem as I gave priority to my studies.”

Theme: Perceived Benefits and Drawbacks of ECAs

9. Benefits of ECAs

Every learning or productive activity comes with a lot of benefits; extracurricular activities are beneficial no wonder found in participants' responses.

A debater stated that,

“University is Universal. It's not only about attending lectures, taking notes and studying. To think on a broader level, analyze things, enrich cognitive development and face the real-life challenges, clubs help to provide that knowledge and skills. It's not limited to just doing debate with a few members, but it acknowledges us and different departments come here from where they build a huge network, some find mentors, advisors or well-wishers there as well. It creates a motivation among the students to do better, improve results.”

Some show concern regarding the demands of the 21st-century world,

“Participating in extracurricular activities offers several advantages for students, especially during the transition from college to university life, which often brings significant changes. This period is crucial for developing 21st-century skills, such as networking and interacting professionally. Extracurricular activities provide a platform for building these essential skills, while also serving as a form of stress relief for some students, allowing them to take a break from the academic grind.”

Students don't benefit benefitted from ECAs only; their thinking level has surprisingly changed through involvement in it.

An environment active participant shared the experience,

“Extracurricular activities helped me to think and grow differently like before joining the Eco- Network, I didn't used to think twice to throw a plastic bottle randomly. But now, this behavior of mine has been changed. Now, I feel that I teach people not to throw plastics randomly and if I do that by myself, it would be hypocritical.”

A few students share about, rather than just academic or non-academic, how they benefit in building persona by coming out of the box,

“I was too shy. After joining the organization, I met new people, created a network, and now I can feel that I can present myself to others with a different perspective or point of view. For me, this is a personal achievement from the organization.”

Mostly, a huge part of the responses focused on the basic skills like preparing presentations and slides, sending emails, how to write assignments, talking to professors confidently, and being well spoken, leading and managing teams. All these soft skills are enhanced by being involved in clubs. They suggest every student should get involved in different clubs for the first two years to develop these skills within them. It also reduces monotony and stress levels.

10. Future career prospects

After completing graduation, a career is the core concern. To prepare for that phase, every student starts working on several skills during their university time to meet the standards of a suitable professional. The study found participants who are involved in ECAs are focused and try to balance it with their career goals.

A graphic designer student revealed,

“Yes, I believe ECA will be helpful because I want to continue with dance and music alongside graphic design. I have also studied dance academically, and if given the opportunity, I aspire to become a dance instructor at a university.”

For a career abroad, many students joined higher study-related clubs. According to them,

“For instance, I am interested to pursue my higher studies abroad and the ‘X’ Higher Study Club organize seminars, discussion and campaigns where different type of people shares their knowledge and expertise which will help me deciding which country will be suited the best for me and other important details that should I know.”

A business faculty student stated that,

“Yes. I believe extracurricular activities will help me in my future career. For example, if I want to go to sales sector, I will have to have the ability to convince people. And as I am involved in the club, I think my networking skill, how I communicate with people, these will give me a plus point.”

Combining career interest with a related club or organization surely provides a guideline or roadmap to do well in a future career.

11. Drawbacks of ECAs

Excessive use or habit of anything can cause harm; ECAs are not exceptional. If a student is not able to balance the academic and non-academic life consciously then they could suffer for a long period.

Most despondences focus that clubs, organizations are time-consuming and as an active student, it is hard for them to provide that much time after dealing with studies. A participant said,

“Some clubs are time-consuming, while some do not have so many skilful activities.”

On the contrary, some clubs or organizations perform well, but again, they demand active participation of the members all the time without considering their exam or assignment schedules.

“The demands of extracurricular commitments can lead to time constraints, making it difficult to keep up with coursework and study schedules. Additionally, while networking is a valuable benefit, there may be times when socializing with friends or engaging in leisure activities is sacrificed, potentially resulting in feelings of isolation.”

Theme: Institutional and Parental Support

12. Institutional support

According to most students, the prestigious university does not provide sufficient support in

extracurricular activities. Especially, the big tournaments are organized for boys only; centrally, a few are organized for girls. Overall, the support from the university is not noticeable.

One participant had some experience,

“After enrolling in our university, within a very short time students are influenced to do only academic activities rather than extracurricular activities. In our university we do not get enough support to get a room for clubs or organizations programs and during the campaigning the authority also does not show much support for that students; do not even get to reach the clubs. However, many universities in Bangladesh provide a separate room and sufficient facilities for clubs; personally I watched this during a debate program in Dhaka.”

Though the unsupportive state of the university is reflected in the responses but some parts of the campus needed to be counted as a blessing.

As it reflects in one’s statement,

“We didn't really get ‘adequate’ support. But we have our own stadium, enough space to play indoor sports, and enough skilled and helpful physical trainers who are well versed in their respective sports of expertise (handball, volleyball, etc.), all having experience of playing these sports in the national team. The university has a gymnasium is for boys, there is also a designated time slot for girls. However, the construction of a separate gymnasium for girls is currently underway.”

To overcome the condition a few students recommended some suggestions. Such as,

“To help students, better balance extracurricular activities and academics, the university should increase financial support and improve infrastructure. This would significantly enhance students' self-development and overall experience at the university. If the university can support organizational goals through funding, it would enable clubs to grow and make it easier for members to pursue their aspirations.”

Some also suggested that institutions should be considerable for attendance. One stated,

“Many students often find themselves missing classes or facing scheduling conflicts due to their involvement in organizations. If students struggle to maintain their academic routines, it is crucial for faculty and peers to offer assistance. The university should create an environment that nurtures students, allowing them to develop the skills necessary to balance both aspects effectively.”

13. Parental support

Learning starts from home, from parents. If parents create the environment in such way where children feel free to share what they think and learn, I think its way easier to grow and maintain a healthy relationship between these two generations. It applies especially for students in college- university level, where they are going through a new phase of life and want to explore the world. Parents want them to be more careful. Many children get the support to participate in extracurricular activities since childhood, but there are many others also who never receive such a warm gesture from parents.

One responded shared an experience,

“In childhood they made decisions for my academic and non academic activities. Now, as I grew up, they have faith in me. If I ask them about what they want me to do in future, they reply that whatever makes me happy just go for it. About club activities they suggest that I maintain it if my studies are not hamper. They don't forbid me to do anything as long as it does not hamper my studies.”

In our study, we also discover the girls do share about the non academic activities with parents more than boys. Asking about it a male participant shared,

“Not really, only special occasions are shared mostly. If I get recognized or awarded then I inform them mostly. Or if it's a big program and I have to stay engaged with the program for a long period of time, then I discuss about that. Sometimes I need to buy a dress at that time I inform them.”

Along with financial support some seek for mental support, for peace in mind. One responded

revealed,

“My parents provide me with mental support, which I consider the most important aspect. Without mental support, it’s difficult to find peace in any endeavor.”

In university life, it’s not just about academic guidance from teachers, but also about having the support and experience of parents to lean on. Their advice can be incredibly valuable, especially when navigating challenges. If trust is built between students and their parents, and they are shown that balancing both is possible, parental advice becomes even more significant, offering both emotional support and practical insights.

About parental support one added,

“Parental support is crucial for balancing extracurricular activities and academic responsibilities. I struggle to perform well if something is forced upon me. My parents give me the freedom to make my own decisions, allowing me to consider both the positives and negatives before choosing what feels right for me. This trust helps me maintain a healthy balance between academics and extracurricular activities.”

A few focused on additional support of the parents,

“Trust your child and support mentality. If not able to support financially, then provide mental support.”

Theme: Additional Insights Overall

14. Perceptions and experiences

Every society has its own norms and culture. Similarly, everyone has their own perceptions which kind of come from family. Every family has their own way to process things. Some support their child to do other things along with studies and some don’t.

A female participant shared that,

“Most club activities, meetings or sessions are held after the University class

time; therefore the program time occurs in the afternoon. Many parents do not support staying outside in the afternoon or evening, especially females are mostly not permitted for this. Some parents think that these activities are a total waste of time and energy. In that case, it demotivates students. If parents support them and appreciate their child for little achievements then the participation rate will increase a lot in extracurricular activities.”

Some parents don't even object but if the studies are hampered by any chance then they don't support students in an appropriate way. In some family it is also found that fathers don't support but mothers are wholeheartedly supporting their child.

One participant said about the perception of his/her parents,

“It's actually conditional. Like when my exams are approaching, they discourage me not to engage too much with the extracurricular activities. The other time, they don't forbid me, they inspire me instead.”

When it comes to students' perception about ECAs, we found many of them support and have a strong positive mindset for non academic activities. They were happily encouraged and share some valuable insights.

One shared the insights,

“I noticed that the people who are involved in extracurricular activities, their academic performance have never been affected that much, in fact class toppers also improved themselves in many areas through participating in clubs or organizations. So those who think that what's the benefit of participating in non academic activities or it's a waste of time, should change their perception and come forward. Teachers should also encourage students to participate more in such activities in first and second year; and in third and fourth year focus on the future related activities more being a participator. That's all from my side.”

Another optimistic participant revealed,

“I strongly believe in a quote by Steve Jobs, which suggests that we should be naively optimistic. If we only make decisions by considering the benefits and costs of one thing, we might miss out on many opportunities in life. I will only know if my decisions were right when I look back on them. So, whenever we have an opportunity, we should at least try. If I find something enjoyable, I'll pursue it; if not, I won't.”

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study focus on an average comparison of perception between students, for getting a positive outcome and no outcome by being active in extracurricular activities. Here, a maximum number supports the idea of being an active in non-academic activities fosters a student in overall development. Yet as these activities require a good amount of time and effort, many don't get motivation to participate actively despite of knowing the benefits. Researchers in UK also notices the dilemma in many surveys but found ECA helps to build self-efficacy along with an important higher education(HE) outcomes like employability (Griffiths et al., 2021). On contrarily Purdue University shows a slight negative correlation yet emphasizes on the students who were active in ECAs for earning significantly higher GPAs than regular members.

Many students were found who willingly participate in many non-academic chores but don't feel the need to show or portfolio of them as a future asset. Later, in career or higher education they cannot showcase it which sometimes comes with a huge opportunity loss. In a study it was mentioned, students should be able to evaluate their extracurricular performance and record it in their portfolio as part of their achievement (Han & Kwon, 2018).

As ECAs in our country never treated with importance as formal education or never considered to be add as a score with academics, students don't value it inspite of knowing the worth. Whereas, a survey in Midwest shows the American College Test(ACT) scores and extracurricular involvement were positively correlated (Freeman, 2017).

A cultural diversity, different norms and beliefs are found in everywhere, our study has no exception. Here many organizations and clubs serves various purposes and objectives were these cultural diversity comes to a unity and focuses on leaning and growing. A social study findings suggested, participation in ECAs reinforces social inequalities in school achievement (Coulangeon, 2018). Along with cultural diversity, students come from different

economic background; not all the students are able to invest money or costly products. A study focuses student who are dependent financially on family probably more incline to participate in extracurricular activities (King et al., 2021). Therefore sufficient budgets or funds by university are always recommended by students and researchers. It motivates the enthusiasts to participate and manage the family pressure.

Excessive use of anything can cause harm. Over scheduling causes a students' imbalance lifestyle, hampers health and studies. Study says, students who are involved in sports, social work, and political activities had a 1.08%, 5.73%, and 2% lower CGPA compared to those not involved. Even, too much spending time on each activity led to a decrease in CGPA (Sabuj et al., 2018). In this study it is recommended highly to get involved in non-academic activities by balancing academic priorities. Along with, the study grabs the attention of authority and stakeholder of the educational institutions to provide more even infrastructure and facilities to build up a creative generation. Progressive change in parents thinking has no other alternative. Despite of encouragement and events, extracurricular should be emphases towards evaluating on academic and non-academic progression both in education policies.

CONCLUSION

The study sum it up in this conclusion, despite of knowing that extracurricular activities helps to boost an individual result besides academics grades, for many barriers students don't feel encourage to participate. Their respective education institutions don't seem to play a noticeable role on encouraging students, teachers, and parents to let enthusiasts do whatever they want. Yet a great number of students were found in our study who are devoted in their passion and do participate in related organizations more. Mostly those who involved moderately are also found as involved in their field of interest oriented organization. The CGPA of our participants seems pretty decent and highly appreciating leading position in those organizations; it boosts their overall persona revealed by them. Primary, the study focuses on the overview of students on ECAs and were it found a positive review. Whereas in the second focus of the CGPA or results were also found pretty decent. It shows that, participating in ECAs is encouraged by all but performed genuinely by a little. Counting it as a year final evaluation may enrich the value.

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