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The Effects of Extra-Curricular Activities
on Student's Perceived Academic Self-Efficacy

Abstract

The differences in academic self-efficacy scores between students who participated in extra-curricular activities and students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities were examined. It was hypothesized that students who participated in extra-curricular activities would score higher, on an academic self-efficacy scale, than students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities. As expected academic self-efficacy scores were significantly higher in the extra-curricular group. These findings suggest that participation in activities outside of the school, will produce positive effects on students' perceived academic ability.

The Effects of Extra-Curricular Activities
on Student's Perceived Academic Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief about their capabilities to achieve a certain level of performance (Bandura, 1994). This belief can influence events that affect a person's life. Perceived self-efficacy determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave. It influences the choices they make, the effort they put forth, how persistent they are when confronted by obstacles, and how they feel. A strong sense of self-efficacy can enhance a person's accomplishments in many ways. A strong sense of self-efficacy can influence a person's aspirations; increase their level of motivation and their perseverance in the face of difficulties and setbacks (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). Bandura et al. (1996) state that unless a person believes that they can produce a desired effect by their actions, they have little incentive to act. A child's self-efficacy can affect the different aspects of their lives as well. Bandura et al. (1996, p. 1206) states that a child's "belief in their efficacy to regulate their own learning activities and to master difficult subject matters affect their academic motivation, interest, and scholastic achievement". A child's perceived self-efficacy affects adaptation and can influence perseverance and resilience to adversity (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). The benefits of having an increased level of self-efficacy many benefit a child's life in many ways. Helping create this better sense of self-efficacy may be achieved in numerous ways. A supportive and encouraging social network positively influences a child's sense of self-efficacy.

Some factors that influence a child's academic achievement are prosocialness and

positive interpersonal relationships. Positive interpersonal relationships have a direct influence on a child's life. The benefits of high quality interpersonal relationships are important in a child's capacity to function effectively including their academic lives (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Equally as important is the child's prosocial behavior. Prosocialness is portrayed in cooperativeness, helpfulness, ability to share, and empathy (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000). Individuals learn about themselves during social interactions with others. They learn what is needed to fit into a group. Martin and Dowson (2009) state that through social interactions a person develops beliefs and values. It is within this relatedness that teaches students how to function effectively in academic environments. These beliefs and values direct behavior in the form of enhanced persistence, goal striving and self-regulation (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Caprara et al. (2000) found that early prosocial behavior strongly predicted levels of academic achievement. Caprara et al. (2000) also found that prosocialness fosters mutually supportive social and intellectual relationships. It also reduces vulnerability to depression and other problem behaviors, which undermine the pursuit of academic activities. Martin and Dowson (2009) further state that relatedness affects a child's motivation by creating positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem, which are related to continued achievement motivation. A child's academic achievement is shaped by their perceived academic ability, social and self-regulatory efficacy and academic aspirations. The vicarious influence from other people through positive social models is a key influence on self-efficacy. Bandura (as cited in Martin and Dowson, 2009) states that self-efficacy can be achieved through the communication with significant others as well as through observation of problem solving techniques.

One way for students to promote and practice their prosocial and interpersonal relationships is to be involved in extracurricular activities outside of school. Additionally, the involvement of extracurricular activities has other benefits. In a study of academically successful urban high school males, Hibert (2000) found that involvement in youth organizations after school gave students the awareness that they had options in their lives outside of their urban environments. These organizations were perceived by these young men as “safe places where they could be with their peers and engage in activities centered on cooperative team building and reinforced with consistent adult support” (Hibert, 2000, p. 93). These organizations provided opportunities for these students to build a sense of self-efficacy in addition to providing success in different types of activities. McLaughlin (cited in Hibert, 2000) found that urban teenagers who participated in extracurricular activities built a positive sense of self through their accomplishments and successes within the program. Perry-Burney and Takyi (2002) found that girls who are involved in team sports tend to have a higher sense of self-confidence while playing. These feelings resulted in higher grades academically, increased participation in extracurricular activities in school, and more involvement at home. It was found that these behaviors were demonstrated because of their high level of self-efficacy. These girls were also found to have a clearer and more consistent view of their long-term goals. It was also found in Perry-Burney and Takyi’s study that not only did these girls have higher grades, they also scored higher on standardized tests when compared to their non-athletic peers.

Hibert (2000) found that young urban males in his study who were involved in extracurricular activities felt that their involvement allowed them to develop their talents

and exposed them to another world outside of their urban community. Furthermore, they began to see themselves as valued individuals. This perception enabled their belief in self to become stronger. This in turn led them to believe they were better prepared to succeed. It was concluded by Hibert (2000) that the most important factor influencing the success of the urban males in his study was a strong belief in self. The students that participated in this study claimed that it was in fact their membership in the schools swim team that fostered their strong sense of self and had a powerful impact on shaping their belief in self. In addition, Perry-Burney and Takyi (2002) concluded from their survey that teenage girls from suburban schools who participated in team sports have a higher sense of self-confidence; they also observed improvement in GPA and the desire to attend college.

Barber, Eccles, and Stone as well as other researchers (as cited in Martin and Dowson 2009) found that extracurricular activities such as sports, music, dance, clubs, and church groups are positive influences in a child's life. This positive influence affects their educational, social and emotional lives. This sense of belonging is a key factor that helps create positive effects in a child's life. The adults involved in these extracurricular activities model effective behaviors, and help develop social skills that in turn build a student's sense of control (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo (2000) contend that the importance of investing resources to develop and promote children's prosocialness will enhance other realms of their lives. Not only will it enhance the social aspects of their lives, but will also facilitate subsequent academic success. Moreover, it can generate additional gains in self-regulation and aptitude.

Given the previous research that found that involvement in activities outside of school could increase a child's sense of belongingness and self-confidence, the research on how it affects self-efficacy is limited. The current research seeks to extend the previous findings by investigating the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and how they affect academic self-efficacy. More specifically it is hypothesized that those students who are involved in extra-curricular activities will display higher academic self-efficacy when compared to students who do not participate in any extra-curricular activities.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of four intact classes from fifth to eighth grades. The sample included male (n=29) and female (n=35) students from these classes. They all attend a catholic elementary school in the Stapleton area of Staten Island, New York. The school is a Title I school, i.e., at least 40% of the student body qualifies for either free or reduced-priced school lunches. The mean participant age is 12.4 years, and the age range is 11 to 15 years old. The participants were mixed in ethnic make up.

Materials

Students will be administered a student survey (Appendix A) which asked for their gender, age, grade and if they participate in extracurricular activities. They will then complete the *Morgan-Jinks Students Efficacy Scale (MJSES)* (Jinks & Morgan, 1999) (Appendix B). The MJSES is an inventory designed for middle school students to gain information about student efficacy beliefs that are related to school success. The MJSES is comprised of 30 items to which participants respond using a Lickert scale

ranging from “really agree: to “really disagree.” Of these 30 items, nine are reverse scored. The responses were designed in this student friendly language to ensure student comfort and ease in responding to the statements. The MJSES yields an overall Academic Self-Efficacy score as well as scores on three sub-scales. The sub-scales measure a student’s self-efficacy with respect to context, talent, and effort. Context refers to how the student’s feel about school in general. Talent refers to how they feel about their academic performance. Effort refers to how they feel about their work ethic in school. All scales have shown to have reliability coefficients greater than .66 (Jinks & Morgan, 1999).

Procedure

A brief written description of the study was sent home to all legal guardians and informed consent to participate was obtained for each student. Surveys were administered to students during class time over the course of one week. Students were informed that their responses would remain anonymous. They were told not to put their name on any sheet. They were instructed to read each statement and respond according to how they felt about the statement. They were directed not to talk to each other and when they completed the information packet, they could place it in a box next to the researcher. Students were informed that they could withdraw from the survey any time they wanted to do so. Upon completion of the questionnaires, students were fully debriefed as to the purpose of the study. They were instructed not to talk about the study to their friends, because most of the students in the school would be future participants.

Results

The responses of students who currently participate in extra-curricular activities

were compared to the responses of those students who do not participate in these activities (Figure 1). As hypothesized students who participated in extra-curricular activities scored significantly higher on overall academic self-efficacy ($M=95$) when compared to students who did not participate in extra-curricular activities ($M=83$), $t(63) = 4.40, p < .05$ (Table 1). Table 1 indicates that students who participated in extra-curricular activities scored significantly higher on the effort sub-scale ($M=13$) when compared to those students ($M=9$) who did not participate in extra-curricular activities, $t(63) = 2.05, p < .05$. When comparing students on the talent sub-scale the extra-curricular group ($M=45$) scored significantly higher than the non-extra-curricular ($M=32$) activities group, $t(63) = 3.15, p < .05$. The groups also differed on the their context sub-scale, $t(63) = 3.25, p < .05$, where the extracurricular group ($M=48$) scored higher than the non-activities ($M=35$) group.

Discussion

As predicted, those students who participated in extracurricular activities scored significantly higher in academic self-efficacy than those students who did not. These results are consistent with the findings of Perry-Burney and Takyi's (2002) study of adolescent girls and team sports. They found that girls who participated in team sports have an increase in self-confidence and also an improvement in overall GPA. Moreover, these results are also consistent with Hibert's (2000) study of successful adolescent males in urban high schools. Hibert showed that those students involved in team sports such as the swim team had a direct influence shaping the student's self identity and a powerful impact on shaping their belief in self. In both these studies, the researchers found a link between the student's participation in extracurricular activities and the positive impact on

their self-concept and belief in self.

One limitation of this study is that it is a quasi-experimental design. The experimenter did not control membership in each group. Future studies should focus on true experimental designs where the groups are manipulated by the experimenter. Another possible limitation is the sample. To better generalize the results of this study, a more heterogeneous sample should be used. Whereas this study focused on students enrolled in an inner city private school, future studies could expand the sample to include public schools as well as a more diverse sample with respect to the neighborhood.

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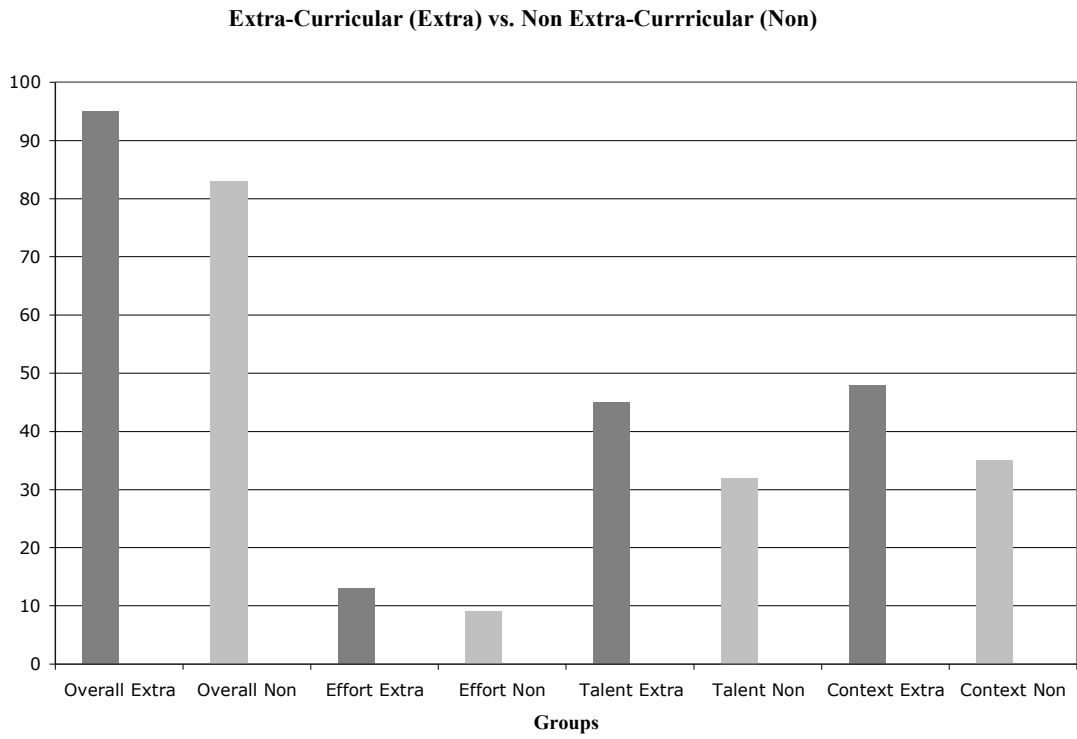
Table 1

Summary of Self-Efficacy Means as a Function of Group

	Extra-curricular	Control	t
Overall Self –Efficacy	95	83	4.40*
Effort Sub-Scale	13	9	2.05*
Talent Sub-Scale	45	32	3.15*
Context Sub-Scale	48	35	3.25*

Note. *p < .05.

Figure 1. A comparison of mean self-efficacy scores for overall, effort, talent, and context, for the extra-curricular group vs. the non extra-curricular group.



Appendix A: Survey Filled out by the Participants Before They Complete the Self-Efficacy Scale.

Student Survey

Please answer all questions

Circle one: male female

What grade are you in? _____

How old are you? _____

Do you play any team sports? Yes No

If yes, what team sports do you play? _____

Who do you play for? School _____

Other organization _____

Do you go to dance Classes? Yes No

If yes, where do you go for classes? _____

Do you participate in any other activities out side of school (music, church groups, art classes)? _____

Where do you go for these activities? _____

What is your favorite thing to do after school? _____

Appendix B. The Morgan-Jinks Self-Efficacy Scale

Statement	Really Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Kind of Agree	Really Agree
1. I work hard in school	1	2	3	4
2. I could get the best grades in class if I tried enough.	1	2	3	4
3. Most of my classmates like to do math because it is easy.	1	2	3	4
4. I would get better grades if my teacher liked me better.	1	2	3	4
5. Most of my classmates work harder on their homework than I do.	1	2	3	4
6. I am a good science student.	1	2	3	4
7. I will graduate from high school.	1	2	3	4
8. I go to a good school.	1	2	3	4
9. I always get good grades when I try hard.	1	2	3	4

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10. Sometimes I think an assignment is easy when the other kids in class think it is hard.	1	2	3	4
11. I am a good social studies student.	1	2	3	4
12. Adults who have good jobs probably were good students when they were kids.	1	2	3	4
13. When I am old enough I will go to college.	1	2	3	4
14. I am one of the best students in my class.	1	2	3	4
15. No one cares if I do well in school.	1	2	3	4
16. My teacher thinks I am smart.	1	2	3	4
17. It is important to go to high school.	1	2	3	4
18. I am a good math student.	1	2	3	4
19. My classmates usually get better grades than I do.	1	2	3	4

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20. What I learn in school is not important.	1	2	3	4
21. I usually understand my homework assignments.	1	2	3	4
22. I usually do not get good grades in math because it is too hard.	1	2	3	4
23. It does not matter if I do well in school.	1	2	3	4
24. Kids who get better grades than I do get more help from the teacher than I do.	1	2	3	4
25. I am a good reading student.	1	2	3	4
26. It is not hard for me to get good grades in school.	1	2	3	4
27. I am smart.	1	2	3	4
28. I will quit school as soon as I can.	1	2	3	4
29. Teachers like kids even if they do not always make good grades.	1	2	3	4

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30. When the teacher asks a question I usually know the answer even if the other kids don't.	1	2	3	4