

The Impact and Challenges of Extracurricular Activities on Students' in Public Universities of Ghana: The University for Development Studies Debate Society Experience

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ABSTRACT

This paper looked at the impact and challenges of extracurricular activities on students in public universities of Ghana: The University for Development Studies (UDS) Debate Society experience. 110 respondents out of the total student population of 6,729 were interviewed. The Dean of Students, the President and some members of the UDS Debate Society were also interviewed. The findings of this research showed that a significant number of respondents have heard of the term “extracurricular activities and also engage in such activities after school. They also endorse the idea that students should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities because of the associated benefits, such as being able to reduce stress, feeling overall better and appear fairly fit. The results also showed that a substantial number of respondents hold the view that the choice of how students spend their time in school affect their academic performance positively. The results further showed that factors that affect the smooth operation of clubs and societies include lack of financial resources, mishandling of limited resources by the executives, and unfavorable academic calendar. The results also revealed that difficulty in collecting dues and subscriptions affect the finances of clubs. From the interviews, we gathered that the Debate Societies are not able to attend competitions because of the associated cost which requires substantial funding. In order for the Society to participate in major debates, we recommended that it should be given huge and massive support from Management.

Keywords: Extracurricular activities, Participation, Clubs, Debate society, Challenges and Benefits.

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INTRODUCTION

All work and no play they say make Jack a dull boy. This adage which literally means that there is the need for one to take a break or relax after a hard day's work applies to all manner of groups of people in society. Perhaps, this explains why most students in public institutions engage in extracurricular activities to enable them to socialize with friends and peers after school hours and also during weekends. In recent times, many schools, colleges and universities offer extracurricular activities including sports, debates, essay writing, drama or theatre, choreography, clubs and student councils. It is possible that those students who engage in these activities may perceive the idea that it could enhance their satisfaction.

Many of the Associations range from old school associations, religious associations, departmental associations, through to interest groups. Also, students can start new clubs and societies to fit their situation and are not restricted to only one club or society at any given time, hence the continuous increase in the number of these groups. Acquah and Partey (2014) posit that education is a broad concept which transcends the four walls of a classroom. They argue that total education is the type of education that focusses on the overall development of the child.

In their view, such education comprises curricular and co-curricular activities and explain co-curricular activities

as voluntary activities which are not part of the regular school curriculum. At the University for Development Studies, students can join numerous Clubs and Societies whose activities the institution deems to be healthy and acceptable. For effective monitoring of the activities of these Clubs and Societies, the University has empowered the Office of the Dean of Students to ensure that all student groups register with the Office to enable it to regulate their activities. Management has also put in place certain requirements that every Club or Society should possess; a constitution, registration, and acceptable guidelines. In UDS, Clubs and Societies can be categorized under four (4) groups; namely, religious, non-religious, political and other groups. Files cited from the Office of the Dean of Students Affairs show that as of January 2018, there were 71 registered Clubs and Societies in the University. From our interaction with a cross-section of UDS students on their views about Clubs and Societies, we gathered that most of the Associations have challenges which are mostly financial. We also noted that the source of income of most of these groups is from members' dues and support from benevolent organizations. For these reasons, we think that any delay or outright refusal of members to pay their dues could pose a challenge to the group's finances and also inhibit it from carrying out its activities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Much of today's debating takes its inspiration from the British parliamentary tradition, making competitive debating a permanent fixture in the extracurricular calendar of schools and universities across the world. From our interaction with some students of UDS, we observed that some of them do not have the interest to participate in extracurricular activities which we think is unfortunate. This is because engaging in extracurricular activities serve as an avenue for the constructive use of after school hours, which also explains why UDS encourages the formation of Clubs and Societies and does not restrict students from joining Associations of their choice. Zeroing onto the UDS Debate Society, we observed that when Team UDS has to participate in a debate competition, the various Debate Society groups on the Campuses have to converge at a point to rehearse in order to select a team to represent the University. This arrangement has financial implications because members have to be paid per diem besides their transportation cost. We are aware that the UDS Debate Society is placed under the Office of the Dean of Students Affairs, so funding of its activities is always met with challenges because the office is without its own bank account, unlike the various Faculties and Schools which have their own accounts.

This tends to negatively affect any activity that the office has to undertake, including raising funds for the UDS Debate Society to participate in competitions and carry-out its activities. Thus, we are of the view that since every

student of the University is mandated to contribute a levy towards sports development, a marginal increase in the levy could enable the Sports Directorate to recoup more funds. We trust that this gesture will go a long way to support the activities of sports and recreation in the University including that of the Debate Society. We also observe that the Debate Society is confronted with academic related challenges including attendance to lectures, writing of quizzes, mid and end of trimester examinations. In order not to alter the academic calendar of the University, if the date for a debate competition coincides with the writing of a quiz or mid-trimester, members of the Society can only be exempted from writing the examinations and allowed to take the examinations at a later date. Sometimes, this arrangement is met with difficulties because some lecturers feel reluctant to organize another quiz for students. So therefore, the lack of funding and coinciding of the writing of quizzes, mid and end of trimester examinations with the activities of the debate society is hindering them from operating effectively.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The study considers whether students understand what constitutes extracurricular activity and whether they have ever participated in such activities. It further sought out the views of students on the impact of students' participation in extracurricular activities and the associated challenges. Factors that affect Clubs and Societies and specifically the Debate Society to enable them to be efficient requires attention, hence our resolve to delve into the issue and find a possible remedy.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to examine the benefits and challenges of extracurricular activities on students in public institutions, with respect to the University for Development Studies Debate Society. The specific objectives which the study sought to achieve are:

1. To ascertain whether students understand extracurricular activities, and have ever engaged in such activities.
2. To investigate the views of respondents on the impact of students participating in extracurricular activities.
3. To solicit the views of students on the factors that affect the activities of Clubs and Societies in schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do students understand the term extracurricular activities and have they ever engaged in such activities?
2. Why do students participate in extracurricular activities?
3. What common factors affect the activities of Clubs and

Societies in a university setting?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Caldwallader et al. (2002) define extracurricular activities as the activities in which the students participate after the regular school has ended. He cites examples to include school athletics, school clubs, marching band, chorus, orchestra, and student leadership organizations. Wilson (2009) also defines extracurricular activities as organized student activities that are connected with the school, which do not usually carry any academic credit. He opines that students who participate in such activities stand to benefit in so many ways including attaining better grades, having higher educational attainment, and a higher self-concept. He asserts that such participants are not only able to reduce the consumption of alcohol and forbidden drugs but are able to acquire leadership skills and also work as a team. For the purpose of the reader, it is important to note the difference between co-curricular activities and extracurricular activities. Frame (2007) cited in Craft (2012) defines co-curricular activities as those activities that occur during the normal class time. Craft (2012) also indicate that most students who participate in the high school band, chorus, and orchestra spend uncountable hours outside of the normal class hours; hence, he classifies these activities as extracurricular activities. Acquah and Partey (2014) write that various co-curricular activities are carried out by students in Ghanaian Senior High Schools, some of which are social clubbing, sporting activities and religious activities. Daley and Leahy (2003) argue that students stand to benefit from participating in extracurricular physical activities because they will be able to reduce stress, feel overall better about their appearance and become more fit. They, therefore, suggested that there is a positive association between participating in various forms of physical activities and positive self-perception. Nwankwo and Okoye (2015) also state that clubs and societies are important because of their ability to arouse and re-awaken the interest of students in the basic core subjects.

In their view, lots of students can develop an interest in schooling and make informed decisions based on the motivation they get from the club they belong to. They came up with numerous recommendations some of which are the need to encourage students to enroll and participate in at least one club of their choice whilst in school. They also recommended that the school timetable should have a period purposely for activities of clubs and societies where a dedicated teacher would be assigned to oversee these activities. This, they argue is geared towards encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities whilst in school. In his study on the relationship between out-of-school activities and positive youth development, Morrissey (2005) affirms that there is an established link between the extracurricular activities of adolescents and their

educational attainment just as there is a relationship between the occupational choice of adults and their income. Reeves (2008) is of the view that there is a strong association between student involvement in extracurricular activities and improved attendance, behaviour and academic performance. Accordingly, he argues that students, who participate in some types of extracurricular activities such as sports and other school-sponsored activities, perform better than students who are not involved. For Cash (2009), students who are consistently exposed to music perform better than students that are not exposed. Reeves (2008) notes that considering the benefits that students and the school stand to benefit, it is important to compare the benefits to the expenses and look at how some minimal investments can be made to support extracurricular activities in schools in addition to the creation of new clubs and societies. Exploring the concept of extracurricular activities and adolescent development, Eccles (2003) stipulates that more than half of the waking hours of children and adolescents in the United States are spent on leisure activities. He avers that the impact of individual development depends on the type of extracurricular programs that he/she is engaged in as well as the level of participation. For Kentiba (2015), extracurricular activities are a part of students' everyday life and indicate that these activities play important roles in the lives of students. He identified a number of positive effects of extracurricular activities on students' lives some of which are an improvement in their behavior, school performance, and school completion. Cassinger (2011) cited in Kentiba (2015) opines that extracurricular activities began in the United States in the 19th Century, and asserts that the first extracurricular activities that were well known in schools started at Harvard and Yale University. According to Esokomi et al. (2016), the school curricular consists of formal, informal and non-formal dimensions, and indicates that whereas more emphasis is given to formal curricular activities, less emphasis is given to non-formal activities.

From the literature and as posited by Esokomi et al. (2016), the way students choose to spend their free time can influence their school performance. Accordingly, they maintain that there is a positive relationship between educational achievement and non-formal curricular activities such as field trips, clubs and science competitions that students engage in. According to Sanchez (2014), a debate is an exchange of arguments between two teams or individuals. He avers that the whole idea behind the debating discipline is to teach or perform the approach to a certain topic from different points of view. In his opinion, it is quite interesting for students who are close to graduation to become university debaters, and as he puts it, it can broaden their general knowledge and prepare them for a large and growing number of intervarsity tournaments. For Quinn (2009), the first step in preparing any debate is working out the issue and observes that debating is fun. He argues that participating in organized debate gives the

individual the chance to meet new people and also learn new ideas. In his view, debate helps one to improve upon his/her skill of formal argument. Sidapra and Webb (2013) define debating as the act of arguing with rules, and assert that every debate has two teams (a proposition team and an opposition team) and indicate that each team contains three (3) speakers. According to the duo, individuals who take up debating benefit from the following: overcome the fear of speaking in public, getting compliments from barristers, boosting the individual's confidence level when speaking, and helping one to learn so much. They encouraged individuals to go into debating because it is a lifetime experience which should be taken seriously. Smelko and Smelko (2013) identified five (5) skills that are in constant need of improvement for every debater which are flowing skills, writing skills, listening skills, questioning skills, and speaking skills. In their view, debate is about problems, so debaters try to accomplish why the problems exist and how they can be solved without creating new ones. Akerman and Neale (2011) describe debate as a formal discussion where two opposing sides follow a set of pre-agreed rules to engage in an oral exchange of different parts of view about an issue.

They explain that formal debates are commonly seen in public meetings or legislative assemblies where individuals choose which side of the issue to support. They note that in schools or university competitions, participants are often assigned a particular side for which to advocate. Arbenz (2001) cited in Akerman and Neale (2011), argues that the quick pace of competitive debate and the need to back up one's arguments with evidence provide students with opportunities to develop research, organizational and argumentation skills. Evidence also abounds from the literature that there is a link between debate activities and general academic attainment. For example, Akerman and Neale (2011) observed that when it comes to the development of literacy skills of young people, there is an intuitive link between debate activities and academic attainment irrespective of the individual's background. Tumposky (2004) also observes that when students research on an issue and are able to defend it, this gives them a more meaningful encounter with the issue than merely reading about it in a textbook. For Elliot (1993), by debating in the classroom, students become aware of the available choices and are also able to participate actively in the class. This, he argues, enlighten students and also provide them with cooperative learning. Parcher (1998) cited in Akerman and Neale (2011) avers that young people who engage in debate get the opportunity to practice skills such as organizational, reasoning, listening and oral communication, all of which he deemed valuable at the workplace. The literature again proves that student debaters are able to improve upon their argumentation skills with constant practice in the classroom, and as Simmonneaux (2002) posit, they are able to develop such skills from classroom discussions and role play. In his view, the argumentation skills so acquired help the

student debater to build upon his/her knowledge. Fine (2000) observes that when students take part in a debate, they are able to acquire critical thinking skills and to legitimately argue from either side of a given topic. For him, debaters can stick to only one position in a contest but when given another opportunity to hold a different position on the same topic, they are able to do so perfectly. Further, Fine (2000) maintains that the ability to process information and retrieve data require sophisticated reasoning skills. Accordingly, he argues that it is only the opportunity provided by a debate that can assist one to learn such skills and maintains that this cannot be acquired naturally. Robinson (2016) also maintains that debate requires confidence in one's position, teamwork between speakers, instills general knowledge, and transforms the individual. For these reasons, he suggests that debating competition and debating societies should be a feature of all good schools. He argues that young people stand to perform well academically and indeed socially if they acquire the skill of questioning, reasoning, and critical thinking. From the ongoing, it is worth concluding that debate activities can help improve the critical thinking of students.

In his study on '*Difficulties Faced in Social Club Activities: A Qualitative Study Based on Teacher Opinions*', the findings of Kece (2015) showed that there was a difficulty for teachers to be able to carry-out club activities at their desired level because of insufficient logistical and physical means, indicating that schools did not have the necessary physical equipment for efficient organization of social club activities. Accordingly, we are of the view that for students to be able to socialize effectively, their schools are expected to have the requisite physical infrastructure. From the ongoing and as indicated in the literature, we can argue that students who indulge in extracurricular activities stand to benefit immensely. This view is consistent and supported by Wilson (2009) who affirms that when students indulge in extracurricular activities, they will more likely acquire better grades, higher educational attainment and higher self-concept. He posits that such students do not only attend school more regularly but are also able to obtain higher standardized test scores. Wilson (2009) adds that students who participate in out of school activities develop interest and skills of working as a team and other leadership skills. He was optimistic that all these would lead to a decrease in the students' involvement in problem behaviors, a decrease in absenteeism, and increase connectedness to the school. Regarding some challenges associated with extracurricular activities in schools, Logan and Scarborough (2008) argue that because of finances and transportation issues prohibiting the participation of students in extracurricular activities, they tend to miss out on opportunities that can help them enhance their future option. Wilson (2009) on the other hand argues that many schools are faced with tough economic times which tend to impede them from carrying-out their schedule of activities. Notwithstanding, he was positive that engaging in extracurricular activities

was worth the money because of the associated benefits. He recommended that institutions should fund and promote extracurricular activities in their schools and local communities. Writing on the topic *Difficulties Faced in Social Club Activities: A Qualitative Study Based on Teacher Opinions*, Kece (2015) asserts that when students participate in social club studies, they are able to develop the skills of working with various persons and groups. Students who participate in social club studies are not only able to improve upon their collaboration skills but are also able to develop abilities that assist them to apply their knowledge to new situations (The Social Skills Central, 2014).

The report of the Social Skills Central (2014) suggests students are able to conduct observations, examinations, and analyses much better. Kece (2015) argues that students with adequate knowledge in social club studies have the ability to develop good relationships with others. Such students, he maintains, are also able to play active roles in any social group they find themselves. The advantages of engaging in extracurricular activities can be enormous and as Stearns and Glenne (2010) posit, students who engage in extracurricular activities are able to improve upon their physical and mental development. They affirm that such students are also able to develop their academic success, improve upon their self-management skills, develop the readiness to live in a democratic society and have the impetus to partake in social club activities. For Broh (2002), the social ties of students tend to be strengthened when they participate in extracurricular activities. Kece (2015) observed from the responses of most of the teachers he interviewed for his study and suggested that most clubs are unable to carry out their desired planned activities because of insufficient logistical and physical means. By implication, one can conclude that it is necessary for schools to have the requisite physical infrastructure which will enable social clubs carry-out their planned activities efficiently and also make them relevant. We are of the view that when adequate physical infrastructure and the needed logistics are provided to schools, students who join clubs and associations would be able to socialize much better. It can be said that many schools are faced with difficult economic issues, budgetary constraints, and cash flow challenges; hence they are unable to render support to most clubs and societies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive design for this research. The main aim of descriptive research is to provide an accurate and valid representation of the factors or variables that are relevant to the research questions (Bampoh-Addo and Ansah Koi, 2015). Considering the research problem under investigation, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches

were adopted. Documents were also analyzed for information. The main reason for adopting a mixed method approach was to compensate for the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research. Creswell (2009) notes that in this type of approach, one set of data compliments the other which help to overcome any weaknesses that are associated with the other.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study was undergraduate students of the Tamale Campus of the University for Development Studies. The researchers adopted the simple random sampling method in selecting 110 respondents out of the total student population of 6,729. The reason for adopting a simple random sampling method is that it helps in eliminating sampling bias. We further interviewed the Dean of Students, the President of the UDS Debate Society and some members of the Debate Society-Tamale. This was to solicit their views on challenges that the Debate Society face and the way forward towards resolving them. Cohen et al (2000) noted, apart from interviews allowing for two-way communication between interviewer and interviewee, it also allows for supplementary questioning to follow-up on interesting statements and issues as they emerge.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires and interview guides were the main instruments of data collection. Questionnaires were used in the survey to gather quantitative data, while in-depth interviews were used for gathering qualitative data. The questionnaire comprised both close-ended and open-ended questions, and was used to elicit information on the impact of extracurricular activities on students and challenges of the UDS Debate Society. The questionnaire was designed using 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not Sure, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree). Interview guides were used to clarify issues bordering on activities of the Debate Society.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The quantitative data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 programme for Microsoft Windows. Descriptive Statistics including frequencies and percentages were used to present the results of the data analyzed. Tables which are the major ways of illustrating quantitative output was also used. Some classical responses from respondents were quoted for a vivid description of the issues under consideration.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Engaging in Extracurricular Activity

Table 1. Responses to knowledge about extracurricular activity and if they belong to a club, society or an association.

S/N	Variable	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
1	Have you ever heard of the term “extracurricular activity	107	97.3	3	2.7	110	100
2	Do you engage in extracurricular activity after school	101	91.8	9	8.2	110	100
3	Do you belong to a Club, Society or an Association	96	87.3	14	12.7	110	100
4	Are you a member of the UDS Debate Society	52	47.3	58	52.7	110	100

Source: Survey Data, 2019.

We asked questions seeking to elicit answers from respondents on their understanding of what constitutes extracurricular activity and whether they engage in such activity while in school. The findings presented in Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents representing 97.3% (n=107) of the total have a fair idea about what constitutes extracurricular activity. About 92% (n=101) responded in the affirmative that they engage in extracurricular activity after school. The results also show that 87.3% (n= 96) respondents belong to a Club, Society or an Association while about 48% (n=52) are members of the Debate Society.

The Impact/Effect of Students’ Participation in Extracurricular Activities

This section of the study dealt with the impact/effect of students’ participation in extracurricular activities with the responses ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). The findings indicate that respondents have adequate knowledge about the impact/effect of students’ participation in extracurricular activities. The results of Table 2 shows that over 100 respondents made up of 71 (64.5%) and 30 (27.3%), respectively, strongly agree and agree with the assertion that it is a laudable idea to encourage students to indulge in extracurricular activity because of the associated benefits. Also, 46.4% (n=51) and 35.5% (n= 39) of the respondents, respectively, strongly agree and agree with the view that the choice of how students spend their time in school affect their academic performance. This implies that for students to be successful whilst in school, their destiny lies in their own hands. Furthermore, 88 respondents consisting of 36 (32.7%) and 52 (47.3%), respectively, strongly agree and agree with the view that students who participate in extracurricular activities are able to reduce stress, feel overall better and appear more fit. It was also found from the results that 34 (30.9%) and 53 (48.2%) respondents, respectively, strongly agree and agree with the assertion that debate activities help improve subject matter in schools. Moreover, it was evident from the results that students who participate in extracurricular activities are more focused and strive to attain leadership skills as indicated by the respondents. From Table 2, 31 respondents representing 28.2% and 52 respondents representing 47.3%, respectively, strongly agree and agree with this assertion. Generally,

we found out from the responses that students’ participation in extracurricular activities can impact positively on their school performance and ultimately, their educational attainment.

Factors that Affect the Activities of Clubs and Societies

This section of the study dealt with factors that affect the activities of Clubs and Societies, with the factors ranging from ‘the existing physical infrastructure influence students to be socialized by social club activities’ to ‘mismanagement of scarce resources by executives of Clubs and Societies obstruct their smooth operations’. Table 3 shows that the three topmost challenges to the activities of Clubs and Societies are that lack of financial resources affects the operations of clubs and societies negatively. Also, mishandling of limited resources by executives affect the smooth operation of clubs, and thirdly, unfavorable academic calendar impedes clubs and societies from carrying out their planned activities. From the findings, 104 (94.6%) respondents strongly agree and agree with the view that the lack of financial resources affects the operations of clubs and societies negatively. Also, 102 (92.7%) respondents strongly agree and agree to the assertion that mishandling of limited resources by executives affect the smooth operation of clubs. Furthermore, 101 (91.8%) respondents strongly agree and agree to the view that unfavorable academic calendar impedes clubs and societies from carrying out their planned activities. The results also revealed that difficulty in collecting dues and members subscription fees affect the finances of clubs as shown in Table 3. Again, we observed from Table 3 that 87 (79.1%) respondents strongly agree and agree with the assertion that the absence of logistics affects the activities of clubs and societies. Results of the investigation also show that about 83 (75.5%) respondents strongly agree and agree with the view that tough economic conditions impede the anticipated objectives of clubs and societies. From our interviews and the open-ended questions, when students were asked what motivated them to join the Debate Society, there were varied responses some of which were; the zeal to acquire public speaking and critical thinking skills, to become good public speakers, and the passion for debate.

Table 2. Responses to the impact of students' participation in extracurricular activities.

S/N	Variable	SD	%	D	%	NS	%	A	%	SA	%	Total	%
1	Debate activities help improve subject matter in schools	2	1.8	4	3.6	17	15.5	53	48.2	34	30.9	110	100
2	The choice of how students spend their time in school affect their academic performance	3	2.7	9	8.2	8	7.3	39	35.5	51	46.4	110	100
3	Students participation in extracurricular activity assist them to attain better grades	1	0.9	14	12.7	29	26.4	46	41.8	20	18.2	110	100
4	Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more focused	2	1.8	9	8.2	16	14.5	52	47.3	31	28.2	110	100
5	Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more disciplined and do not take in alcohol and drugs	26	23.6	29	26.4	28	25.5	18	16.4	9	8.2	110	100
6	Students who participate in extracurricular activities are able to reduce stress	3	2.7	4	3.6	15	13.6	52	47.3	36	32.7	110	100
7	Engaging in clubs and societies re-awaken students' interest	10	9.1	17	15.5	29	26.4	40	36.4	14	12.7	110	100
8	Belonging to clubs and societies enable students to develop an interest in schooling	4	3.6	11	10.0	23	20.9	49	44.5	23	20.9	110	100
9	Participating in extracurricular activity help students improve their behavior	5	4.5	10	9.1	21	19.1	50	45.5	24	21.8	110	100
10	It is a laudable idea to encourage students indulge in extracurricular activities because of the associated benefits	1	0.9	3	2.7	5	4.5	30	27.3	71	64.5	110	100

Source: Survey Data, 2019.

Table 3. Responses to factors that affect the activities of clubs and societies.

S/N	Variable	SD	%	D	%	NS	%	A	%	SA	%	Total	%
1	Lack of physical infrastructure can influence students to be socialized by social clubs	2	1.8	12	10.9	21	19.1	43	39.1	32	29.1	110	100
2	Unfavorable academic calendar impedes clubs and societies to carry out their planned activities	2	1.8	5	4.5	2	1.8	36	32.7	65	59.1	110	100
3	The absence of logistics affects the activities of clubs and societies	2	1.8	2	1.8	19	17.3	31	28.2	56	50.9	110	100
4	Inadequate investments by authorities affect the operations of clubs and societies	6	5.5	11	10.0	17	15.5	36	32.7	40	36.4	110	100
5	Tough economic conditions impede the anticipated objectives of clubs and societies	2	1.8	11	10.0	14	12.7	50	45.5	33	30.0	110	100
6	Transportation issues affect the activities of clubs and societies	6	5.5	12	10.9	10	9.1	39	35.5	43	39.1	110	100
7	Lack of financial resources affect the operations of clubs and societies negatively	3	2.7	1	0.9	2	1.8	32	29.1	72	65.5	110	100
8	Interference by authorities thwart the effort of clubs and societies to carry out their planned activities	4	3.6	12	10.9	18	16.4	45	40.9	31	28.2	110	100
9	Difficulty in collecting dues and subscription fee of members affect the finances of clubs	4	3.6	4	3.6	4	3.6	9	8.2	31	28.2	62	56.4
10	Mishandling of limited resources by executives affect the smooth operation of clubs	4	3.6	4	3.6	2	1.8	2	1.8	32	29.1	70	63.6

Source: Survey Data, 2019.

The responses also included; self-confidence and the eloquence exhibited by some pioneer members, to be able to express oneself in public and to enable one improve on his or her confidence level. Others also said that the desire to be an orator and the ability to socialize with members pushed them to join the Debate Society. From the responses we gathered, the goals and objectives of the Debate Society are

to become pacesetters and champions in University Debate Championships, to train students (members) in the art of debate and public speaking, and to help push and advocate for students' rights on campus. It also included; to nurture students to be the voices and advocates for social development, to train students to become good debaters as well as public speakers, and to uplift the good image of UDS.

Others also said that it was to promote confidence among students during public speaking, to prepare students for life outside the University campus and in the job market, and to equip the student with the skills to tackle societal issues through advocacy and debate.

On the question of how the Debate Society funded its activities, many of the respondents interviewed

responded that they did not know how the Debate Society fund its activities. Those who responded that they knew the sources indicated that it was from the support of University Management, members' subscription fees, and through SRC funds. Others also said that the Debate Society funded its activities from sponsorships whilst others said it was from the Finance Directorate of the University.

On the question of how the Debate Society carried-out its schedule of activities, some of the responses were that, it was through the meager support from the University, sponsorships from banks, benevolent organizations, private persons and corporate organizations. Others also said that it was through the committed members of the group especially the executives and SRC dues.

The respondents also enumerated lots of challenges they are faced with, which include the mismanagement of their scarce resources by the executives, difficulty in the collection of members' subscription fees, and members not paying their dues on time. Others figured that interference by Senior Members, especially during elections of Association executives pose lots of challenges to Clubs and Societies. Other respondents categorized the challenges of the Debate Society under operational, organizational and financial. On the way forward towards addressing these challenges, respondents indicated that; Management should try and institute a financial fund for the Debate Society. Some responded said that members should be encouraged to pay their dues/subscriptions on time, whilst others said that the University should make financial provisions for the Society because it was lifting the flag of the institution higher. Other members also responded that there should be a budgetary allocation for the Debate Society, as well as the establishment of a monthly dues' initiative for the society. Further, others suggested that a standard means of funding and training session should be initiated for members.

Lastly, some respondents suggested that Management should support the Debate Society operationally, organizationally and financially. The President of the UDS Debate Society indicated in the interview we had with him that the zeal to have public speaking and critical thinking skills motivated him to join the Debate Society. He said the Debate Society funded its activities through the SRC and indicated that the Society carried out its schedule of duties through its weekly meetings on Tuesdays and Fridays at 4.00pm. He asserted that the Debate Society was not able to attend national/international competitions because of the associated cost which tends to be expensive and required substantial funding. He told the researchers that because of inadequate funds, the Society is unable to attend competitions and cited the Pan African Universities Debate, Speech Forces Debate, and the Accra Open Debate, as examples of such competitions. He also said that the club was able to participate in some competitions through the support of SRC. He was of the

view that in order for the Society to participate in major debates, it needed huge and massive support from Management.

In an interview with the Dean of Students on the issue of financial support for Clubs and Societies to enable them to organize their programs and operate efficiently, the Dean's response was more of sadness and frustration. He indicated that the office did not have a bank account of its own nor a budget line to make the office more relevant and effective in its operations. Related to finances, the Dean argued that cash flow challenges, limited internally generated funds (IGF) and financial support from the University not forthcoming usually will not allow the office to meet its financial needs to be able to address the welfare-related issues of students. In his view, the lack of a budget line made it extremely difficult for the office to have funds to support extracurricular activities of students including that of the Debate Society to participate in competitions. He wished something could be done about the situation.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study shows that majority of the respondents (n=107) 97.3% out of the total number of the respondents have heard of the term "extracurricular activity and also engage in extracurricular activity after school. Majority of the students (n=96) 87.3% belong to a Club, Society or an Association. This implies that students appreciate that by indulging in extracurricular activities it could enhance their satisfaction. Also, 88 respondents consisting of 36 (32.7%) and 52 (47.3%), respectively, strongly agree and agree with the view that students who participate in extracurricular activities are able to reduce stress, feel overall better and appear more fit. This finding reaffirmed the work of Daley and Leahy (2003) who argued that students stand to benefit from participating in extracurricular physical activities because they will be able to reduce stress, feel overall better about their appearance and become fit. Further and from results of the investigation, over 100 respondents made up of 71 (64.5%) and 30 (27.3%), respectively, strongly agree and agree with the assertion that it is a laudable idea to encourage students to involve themselves in extracurricular activity because of the associated benefits. This finding is supported by Nwankwo and Okoye (2015) who averred that clubs and societies are important because of their ability to arouse and re-awaken the interest of students in the basic core subjects. Again, from the results, 55 respondents representing 50% disagree with the assertion that students who participate in extracurricular activities are more disciplined and do not take in alcohol and drugs. Another 28 respondents representing 25.5% were not sure of the assertion whilst another 27 respondents representing less than 25% agree with the assertion. This finding was therefore not consistent with the finding by Wilson (2009) who researched on the Impact of

Extracurricular Activities on Students. Wilson asserted that students who participate in extracurricular activities are not only able to reduce the consumption of alcohol and forbidden drugs but are able to acquire leadership skills and also work as a team. Accordingly, we are of the view that depending on the type of extracurricular activity that students engage in, for example, an athletics or football supporter's union, they are likely to work as a team but most likely to take in alcohol and forbidden drugs. It is expected that this will motivate them to cheer their team on to victory in the game. Moreover, from the results of the investigation, 46.4% (n=51) and 35.5% (n=39), respectively of the respondents strongly agree and agree with the view that the choice of how students spend their time in school affect their academic performance. This finding was consistent and supported by Esokomi et al. (2016). Writing on the Influence of Science Club Activities (SCA) on Secondary School Interest and Achievement in Physics in Vihiga County of Kenya, Esokomi et al. (2016) posited that the way students choose to spend their free time in school can influence their performance. The results further revealed that 87 (79.1%) respondents strongly agree and agree with the assertion that the absence of logistics affects the activities of clubs and societies. These findings were consistent with that of Kece (2015) and Reeves (2008). Kece (2015) observed from his study, on Difficulties Faced in Social Club Activities, that most clubs are unable to carry out their desired planned activities because of insufficient logistical and physical means. Reeves (2008) also noted that considering the benefits that students and the school stood to benefit, it was important to compare the benefits to the expenses and look at how some minimal investments could be made to support extracurricular activities in schools. This implies that clubs and societies can be efficient and effective when given the requisite resources. In an interview with the President and some members of the Debate Society as well as the Dean of Students, they all indicated that lack of financial resources was the major hindrance to the Debate Society for participating in competitions. They, therefore, recommended that Management should channel sufficient funds to the UDS Debate Team to enable it to participate in competitions.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that a significant number of respondents have heard of the term "extracurricular activity and also engage in extracurricular activity after school. The results also show that an appreciable number of respondents belong to a Club, Society or an Association. Furthermore, the study revealed that respondents have adequate knowledge about the impact of students' participation in extracurricular activities. One reason is that it is a laudable idea to encourage students indulges in extracurricular activities because of the associated benefits. Secondly, the choice of how

students spend their time in school affects their academic performance. Thirdly, students who take part in extracurricular activities are able to reduce stress, feel overall better and appear fit. Factors likely to affect the operations of clubs and societies negatively include lack of financial resources, mishandling of limited resources by the executives, and unfavorable academic calendar impede clubs and societies from carrying out their planned activities. The results also revealed that difficulty in collecting membership dues and subscriptions, respectively affect the finances of clubs. From the interview, the Debate Society is not able to attend competitions because some competitions are very expensive, which require substantial funding. In order for the Society to participate in major debates, it needed huge and massive support from Management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Participating in extracurricular activities can be beneficial to the student, school and learning environment hence we recommend School Counsellors to pay interest in the extracurricular activities of students and counsel them accordingly.
2. The benefits that students stand to gain by joining Clubs and Societies are enormous, hence, we recommend Management to make an effort to raise funds to support the Debate Society participate in competitions.
3. We recommend leaders of groups to ensure that their members pay their dues on time and also eschew from the lackadaisical attitude towards meetings and the group's success.
4. We recommend that requisite logistics for carrying-out the schedule of activities of groups are made available, likewise identifying, addressing and fixing those factors that can impact negatively on the group's operations.
5. Further, we recommend students to participate in extracurricular activities and possibly join the Debate Society considering the associated benefits.
6. The Office of the Dean of Students does not have a budget to address student welfare-related issues including their engagements in extracurricular activities. Accordingly, we, recommend Management to try and levy all students to generate funds for the office.
7. We recommend the Debate Society to solicit financial support from telecommunication companies, banks, embassies, organizations, and corporations. It is on record that the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the American Council for International Education and the American Field Service have been supportive of the growth of most debate societies in high schools in Ghana. They could, therefore, be contacted.
8. Again, we recommend the Debate Society to be placed under the University Sports Directorate to reduce the problem with funds when it must attend competitions.

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