



Comparative analysis of the impact of number and level of participation in extracurricular activities on the academic achievement of students with special needs

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Introduction. This research aims to examine the effect of participation and involvement of students with special needs in extracurricular activities on their academic performance in high schools in Makassar. *Objectives.* The primary objective of this study is to investigate the positive and significant impacts of the number of extracurricular activities and the level of participation in these activities on the academic performance of students with special needs. *Methods.* This study employs simple and multiple linear regression methods on a sample of 72 students with special needs who are active in extracurricular activities. *Results.* The results indicate a positive and significant effect of both the number of extracurricular activities participated in and the level of participation in these activities on students' academic performance. *Conclusion.* This research concludes that participation and involvement levels in extracurricular activities are important factors that can enhance the academic performance of students with special needs. Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools increase opportunities for participation and facilitate higher levels of involvement in extracurricular activities for students with special needs to maximize their potential for skill development and academic achievement.

Keywords: involvement, participation, extracurricular, academic achievement

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Introduction

Extracurricular activities are an essential element of the education system that supports the holistic development of students, including those with special needs. These activities encompass various fields such as sports, arts, and social activities, providing opportunities for social, physical, and cognitive skill development. For students with special needs, participation in extracurricular activities can be a crucial medium for social integration and boosting self-confidence.

Extracurricular activities provide students with space to broaden their horizons, explore new interests, and strengthen skills that may not be covered in the academic curriculum. According to the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 63 of 2014, schools are required to provide extracurricular activities for every student (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). These activities can enhance learning while offering students ways to express themselves and explore their strengths (Sekhri, 2019). Participation in activities outside the school curriculum not only helps students develop additional skills but also expands their social experiences and provides opportunities to explore individual interests and talents. Extracurricular activities are defined as all activities outside the 'classroom,' such as involvement in school clubs and societies, paid and volunteer work, family commitments, and religious activities (Stuart et al., 2011). Furthermore, extracurricular activities do not involve academic grades or credits, and student participation is optional (Bartkus et al., 2012). For students with special needs, extracurricular activities provide a platform to develop skills not always covered in the academic curriculum, such as socialization, leadership, and independence. The importance of these activities lies in their ability to support inclusive education by providing equal opportunities for students with special needs to participate and thrive.

Participation of students with special needs in extracurricular activities is often hindered by various factors such as physical limitations, lack of resources, or insufficient support from teaching staff and peers. However, with proper strategies and adequate support, students with special needs can successfully engage in these activities. High lighting participation levels and factors affecting it can help schools identify and address barriers to full inclusion.

Integrating students with special needs into extracurricular activities requires a deep understanding of their individual needs and how these activities can be adapted for maximum inclusivity. Reviewing relevant literature not only raises awareness of the importance of inclusion but also provides practical and theoretical insights that aid in the implementation of more effective policies and practices in schools.

Extracurricular activities have long been recognized as a significant aspect of the student learning experience at all levels of education. From an academic standpoint, extracurricular activities can enhance students' problem-

solving, analytical, and critical thinking skills through cooperative activities and hands-on experiences (Chan, 2016). Lau et al. (2014) found that students who participate in extracurricular activities rated their creativity, communication skills, leadership, and self-promotion skills higher than their peers who did not participate (Lau et al., 2014). However, Coster noted that although there is potential benefit from participation in extracurricular activities, middle-aged students with disabilities appear to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities at a much lower rate compared to students without special needs (Dymond et al., 2020).

Although there has been extensive research demonstrating the benefits of extracurricular activities for students in general, there has been little research specifically focusing on students with special needs. Thus, there is still a gap in understanding the relationship between student participation and involvement levels in extracurricular activities and their academic performance in high school settings. Therefore, this research aims to fill this knowledge gap by analyzing the impact of the variables of student participation numbers and involvement levels of students with special needs in extracurricular activities on their academic performance. Understanding the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement in students with special needs will provide essential insights for teachers, parents, and educational policymakers. With this information, educational institutions can better design and organize extracurricular activities that are not only inclusive but also effective in supporting student academic achievement. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how significant the role of extracurricular activities is in achieving academic performance for students with special needs. Additionally, by identifying influencing variables, this research can also guide school administrators and extracurricular supervisors in designing more effective programs to enhance the academic achievement of students with special needs. The findings from this research are expected to contribute to educational practice by identifying aspects of extracurricular involvement that most significantly impact academic achievement. Additionally, this research is expected to help schools develop more effective programs to enhance the participation and achievement of students with special needs.

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational design aimed at identifying the relationship between students' participation in extracurricular activities and their academic achievement. The research focused on determining both the individual and combined effects of the number of extracurricular activities and the level of participation on the academic performance of students with special needs in inclusive high schools in Makassar City.

The population consisted of students with special needs enrolled in inclusive high schools, while the sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific inclusion criteria. The selected participants were students officially registered in inclusive high schools, identified by the schools as having special educational needs such as intellectual disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, or physical disability, and actively involved in at least one extracurricular activity for a minimum of one semester. The final sample included 72 students drawn from ten schools, representing diverse categories of disabilities 35 students with mild intellectual disabilities, 18 with hearing impairments, 11 with physical disabilities, and 8 with visual impairments. The participants' ages ranged from 15 to 18 years, with an average age of 16.4 years. The sample consisted of 40 male and 32 female students.

Data were collected using three main instruments. The first instrument was a participation sheet developed by the researcher to record the number of extracurricular activities each student participated in. The second instrument was a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Fredricks and Eccles (2010) to measure the level of participation in extracurricular activities. This instrument contained four indicators, namely frequency of attendance, active involvement, contribution to the activity, and enthusiasm or responsibility. The questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in special education and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .86, indicating high internal consistency and reliability. The third instrument was documentation of students' academic performance, which consisted of their average scores obtained from official school report cards for the previous semester.

The research procedure was carried out in three stages: preparation, data collection, and data analysis. During the preparation stage, research permissions were obtained from the education authorities and school principals, and coordination was made to identify students who met the inclusion criteria. Consent forms were distributed to students and parents to ensure ethical participation. In the data collection stage, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the participating schools, with the assistance of teachers and extracurricular supervisors to help students with special needs complete the forms accurately. Academic achievement data were collected from the schools' administrative offices to maintain objectivity and accuracy. In the data analysis stage, all collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 27. The statistical analyses included simple linear regression tests to identify the independent effects of each variable on academic achievement, and multiple linear regression tests to assess the combined influence of both variables. The level of significance used in this study was set at $p < .05$.

All research activities followed ethical standards approved by the Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Informed consent was obtained from students and their parents, and all information collected during the study was treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

Result

The findings of this study show that both the number of extracurricular activities and the level of participation have a significant positive effect on the academic achievement of students with special needs. The results of the simple linear regression analysis for the number of extracurricular activities are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Simple linear regression of the number of extracurricular activities on academic achievement

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	63.208	.843	–	75.018	.000
Number of activities	2.147	.342	.554	6.275	.000

The analysis in Table 1 shows that the regression coefficient (B) of 2.147 with a significance value ($p = .000 < .05$) indicates a significant positive relationship between the number of extracurricular activities and academic achievement. This means that each additional extracurricular activity attended by students contributes to an average increase of 2.147 points in their academic score.

Simple regression analysis also found a significant positive relationship between the level of student participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Simple linear regression of participation level on academic achievement

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant	58.360	3.644	–	16.015	.000
Participation level	.546	.201	.276	2.713	.008

Table 2 shows that the level of participation has a regression coefficient (B) of .546 with a significance value ($p = .008 < .05$). This result confirms that students who show higher involvement and enthusiasm in extracurricular activities tend to achieve better academic outcomes.

The results of the multiple regression analysis, which tested the combined effects of the number of activities and the level of participation, are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3

Multiple linear regression of number and participation level on academic achievement

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
Combined model	.569	.324	.309	21.106	.000

Table 4

Coefficients of the multiple regression model

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	58.648	3.135	—	18.707	.000
Number of activities	2.003	.353	0.517	5.680	.000
Participation level	.271	.180	0.137	2.509	.035

As presented in Tables 3 and 4, the multiple regression model yielded an R value of .569 and an R² value of .324, meaning that 32.4% of the variation in academic achievement can be explained by the two independent variables. Both the number of extracurricular activities ($p = .000$) and the level of participation ($p = .035$) significantly influence academic achievement, with the number of activities showing a stronger contribution to the model.

In summary, the results indicate that students with special needs who participate in more extracurricular activities and are more actively involved in them achieve higher academic performance. These findings highlight the importance of encouraging and supporting active participation in extracurricular activities as part of inclusive education efforts to enhance both social and academic development.

Discussion

The purpose of this causal-comparative and correlational quantitative study was to analyze the impact of extracurricular activities, which include the number of extracurricular activities attended by students with special needs and their level of participation, on their academic performance in high school. This research tests the academic performance of students with the aim of identifying the impact of the number of extracurricular activities on learning achievement, the impact of the level of participation in extracurricular activities on learning achievement, and the impact of both the number of activities and the level of student participation in extracurricular activities on student learning achievement. This study also attempts to predict students' academic performance scores using student attendance and participation in extracurricular activities. This section will outline the findings based on the research questions and discuss the results in relation to the literature on this topic.

Research Question 1: What is the impact of the number of extracurricular activities attended by special education students on their learning achievement? Statistical test results of simple regression analysis found that there is a significant positive impact of the number of extracurricular activities attended by students with special needs on their learning achievement. This means that the more activities attended by students with special needs, the better their learning performance can be predicted.

Like typical students, students with special needs also have extracurricular activities prepared by the school. One of the extracurricular activities that must be provided and attended by students is scouting. Besides scouting, the school also provides various activity options that students can choose according to their interests and talents. The research shows that the more extracurricular activities attended by students with special needs, the greater their learning achievements in areas such as reading and mathematics.

Several studies discuss the number of activities attended by students and their correlation with academic achievement. Some studies support and align with this research, while others do not. Research conducted by Marbury (2021) found that there is no statistically significant difference in science achievement between students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not (Marbury, 2021). This means that extracurricular activities do not provide a positive impact on science learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, several studies that support the findings of this research were also found. Attendance in extracurricular activities positively affects the development of student achievement (Schuepbach, 2015). Besides attendance, the number of extracurricular activities attended by adolescents has a positive impact on academic achievement, and overall, there is a positive impact on schools (Furda & Shuleski, 2019). The number of extracurricular activities attended by students has a broader impact not only on their academic achievement but also on the school. Student involvement in extracurricular activities has been proven to have a positive relationship with school engagement and adolescent self-esteem, academic achievement, and adolescent development (Palmer et al., 2017), and behaviors that cannot be instilled through academic activities can be developed through co-curricular activities and other recreational programs (Sekhri, 2019).

Nevertheless, the number of activities needs to be limited because if students are too busy with additional activities, their focus on core lessons may decrease (Rahayu & Dong, 2023) because participation in a large number of extracurricular activities can begin to cut into the time needed for schoolwork (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). There was even a decline in academic achievement among senior students who spent more than 10 hours a week on extracurricular activities, even lower than those who did not participate in extracurricular activities (Yang, 2023). This is particularly true for students with special needs

who have to add compensatory subjects to compensate for their special needs. Students with special needs who have extracurricular activities are influenced by the level of their special needs; the more severe their special needs, the fewer activities they participate in (Selvi et al., 2023). This certainly adds more burden and requires more time. There is growing concern that some adolescents have too many extracurricular activities scheduled, and that increasing this involvement has negative consequences on adolescent functioning (Fredricks, 2012).

In relation to this, and based on the research data,, the frequency of the number of extracurricular activities attended by students with special needs is highest in the medium category, with 2 – 3 activities. Therefore, it is suggested that the number of activities that students with special needs can participate in is up to 3 activities. This number also depends on the type of student's specialization, the ability in terms of time, and the parent's economic capacity.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of the level of participation of students with special needs in extracurricular activities on academic achievement? Simple regression analysis statistics found a significant positive impact of the level of participation in extracurricular activities attended by students with special needs on their academic performance. This means that the higher the level of participation in the activities attended by students with special needs, the better their academic performance can be predicted.

The level of participation in this study refers to students' emotional and mental involvement in participating in extracurricular activities, the impact of extracurricular activities on students' interest and ability, and the extent of their contribution and cooperation in conducting extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities are arranged in such a way as to facilitate high-quality peer interactions and the development of prosocial friendships (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). Through intensive extracurricular activities, they make a significant contribution to their task completion and school. Research findings on students with special needs show that students with special needs who participate in high school extracurricular activities are more likely to complete a post-secondary degree (Palmer et al., 2017) because through participation in these extracurricular activities, students with special needs can enhance learning, while offering a way for students to express themselves and explore their strengths (Sekhri, 2019). Extracurricular activities are understood as complementary training for students to enhance all aspects of their development at various levels (Castellary-López et al., 2023). Although only complementary, research results show that the average reading and math exam scores of students with special needs who participate in extracurricular activities are higher compared to their peers who are not involved (Miller, 2022). The higher the student participation in extracurricular activities, the more aspects can be developed.

When students with special needs participate in these extracurricular clubs, they receive the same benefits as students without special needs. What

many people do not realize is that there are more opportunities for motivation and learning created in extracurricular activities than in most academic classrooms (Shaffer, 2019). The positive impact of extracurriculars is good for students' future, thus impacting the overall quality of life. If this applies to students with typical abilities and development, then it can be hypothesized to produce similar results for students with special needs (Eastling, 2021).

Research Question 3: What is the impact of the number of extracurricular activities attended by students and their level of participation on the academic achievement of students with special needs? This research question explores the impact of the number of extracurricular activities attended and their level of participation on the academic achievement of students with special needs in Makassar City. Multiple regression analysis results show a positive and significant simultaneous impact of the number of extracurricular activities and the level of participation of students with special needs on their academic performance. In other words, the more activities attended and the higher the level of participation, the better the academic performance of students with special needs can be predicted. However, it should be noted that the impact of the number of extracurricular activities has a greater influence than the level of participation on academic achievement.

Students who participate in sports clubs and art clubs are 5 times more likely to complete their education than those who participate in only one group (Lipscomb, 2007). When students with special needs participate in these clubs, they receive the same benefits as their peers without disabilities (Vinoski et al., 2016). They have the opportunity to interact with many people and gain various knowledge, allowing them to gain diverse learning experiences and expand their social networks. The range of activities refers to various participations over a certain period, which can also be understood as part of social reproduction, where students can develop broad social connections (Kravchenko & Nygård, 2023) and understand psychological aspects such as the duration and intensity of participation (Eisman et al., 2016). It is important to remember that participation in extracurricular activities is not just about how many activities are attended, but the quality of participation offered. Both have a great impact on academic achievement. Therefore, policy recommendations include encouraging schools to create an inclusive environment that facilitates full and meaningful participation of students with special needs in extracurricular activities. In this context, full school support in ensuring the participation of students with special needs in extracurricular activities is key. Closing this discussion and summarizing opinions about participation in extracurricular activities, participation in extracurricular activities, regardless of context, promotes positive youth development (Guèvremont et al., 2014).

Limitations. While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of extracurricular activities on the academic performance of students with special

needs, there are several limitations to consider. First, the findings are specific to a high school population in Makassar City, limiting their generalizability to other regions or different educational settings. Additionally, the causal-comparative and correlational design does not establish causation, and other factors like socio-economic status or family support might also influence the observed outcomes. Another concern is the potential for self-selection bias, as more motivated or academically inclined students might be more likely to engage in extracurricular activities. Finally, the assumption that all extracurricular activities are of equal value could overlook variations in how different activities influence student development.

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is a significant and positive relationship between the number of extracurricular activities that students with special needs participate in and their academic achievement. This indicates that the more activities students participate in, the better their academic performance can be predicted. Additionally, the level of student participation in extracurricular activities also has a positive and significant effect on their academic performance. In other words, the higher the level of student participation in extracurricular activities, the better their academic performance. Furthermore, the results show that the positive effects of the number of extracurricular activities and the level of student participation in extracurricular activities on academic performance occur simultaneously. This means that the more activities students participate in and the higher the level of their participation in extracurricular activities, the better their academic performance will be. Thus, this conclusion underscores the importance of student participation and involvement in extracurricular activities as factors that significantly contribute to enhancing the academic achievement of students with special needs.

Based on the conclusions presented, the following recommendations can be made: The study findings suggest that the number of extracurricular activities that students with special needs participate in has a significant impact on improving academic performance. However, some theories suggest that when students participate in too many extracurricular activities, they may not have enough time to focus on their academic abilities. Therefore, it is recommended that students with special needs limit the number of extracurricular activities they participate in, ideally to between two and three activities, to allow them to remain focused on their academic learning.

Additionally, the level of participation of students with special needs tends to be lower compared to regular students due to various factors. Therefore, schools need to provide more opportunities for these students to enhance their participation according to their individual needs. For example, for visually impaired students, schools could provide extracurricular activities that allow

them to participate actively and feel included in the school environment. Thus, efforts to expand and enrich the participatory experiences of students outside the academic curriculum can be key in holistically enhancing the academic achievement of students with special needs.

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Komparativna analiza uticaja broja i nivoa učešća u vanškolskim aktivnostima na akademska dostignuća učenika sa posebnim potrebama

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Uvod: Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj da ispita uticaj učešća i nivoa angažovanja učenika sa posebnim potrebama u vanškolskim aktivnostima na njihove akademske performanse u srednjim školama u Makasaru. *Ciljevi:* Osnovni cilj ove studije je istražiti pozitivne i značajne uticaje broja vanškolskih aktivnosti i nivoa učešća u tim aktivnostima na akademske performanse učenika sa posebnim potrebama. *Metode:* Ova studija koristi jednostavne i višestruke metode linearnih regresija na uzorku od 72 učenika sa posebnim potrebama koji su aktivni u vanškolskim aktivnostima. *Rezultati:* Rezultati pokazuju pozitivan i značajan efekat i broja vanškolskih aktivnosti u kojima su učestvovali, i nivoa učešća u tim aktivnostima na akademske performanse učenika. *Zaključak:* Učešće i nivo angažovanja u vanškolskim aktivnostima važni su faktori koji mogu poboljšati akademske performanse učenika sa posebnim potrebama. Na osnovu ovih nalaza preporučuje se da škole povećaju mogućnosti učešća i olakšaju viši nivo angažovanja u vanškolskim aktivnostima za učenike sa posebnim potrebama kako bi maksimalno iskoristili njihov potencijal za razvoj veština i akademska dostignuća.

Ključne reči: angažovanje, učešće, vanškolske aktivnosti, akademska dostignuća

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