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**THE ROLE OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN FOSTERING YOUTH
RESPONSIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP: A LITERATURE REVIEW****Sri Andayani**

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*✉: Sri1968andayani@gmail.com**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan antara keterlibatan dalam kegiatan ekstrakurikuler dengan perkembangan tanggung jawab dan kepemimpinan pada siswa sekolah menengah. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan observasi dan wawancara terhadap siswa aktif, studi ini menemukan bahwa partisipasi dalam kegiatan ekstrakurikuler secara signifikan memperkuat keterampilan sosial, kemampuan mengambil keputusan, dan kesadaran diri. Selain itu, keterlibatan tersebut memberikan peluang nyata bagi siswa untuk mempraktikkan kepemimpinan dalam konteks yang mendukung. Hasil penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya peran kegiatan ekstrakurikuler dalam pengembangan karakter dan kompetensi kepemimpinan generasi muda.

Kata Kunci: ekstrakurikuler, tanggung jawab, kepemimpinan, siswa, pengembangan karakter.

Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and the development of responsibility and leadership among high school students. Using a qualitative approach involving observations and interviews with active students, the research reveals that involvement in extracurriculars significantly enhances social skills, decision-making ability, and self-awareness. Furthermore, such engagement provides real opportunities for students to practice leadership in a supportive context. The findings highlight the vital role of extracurricular programs in shaping character and leadership competence in the younger generation.

Keywords: extracurricular, responsibility, leadership, students, character development.

INTRODUCTION

The cultivation of responsibility and leadership skills in young individuals is paramount for their successful transition into adulthood and for the overall well-being of society. These qualities not only contribute to individual achievements in academic pursuits, career paths, and personal lives but also foster active and engaged citizens who can contribute meaningfully to their communities. Responsibility entails accountability, commitment, and the ability to make sound decisions, while leadership encompasses the capacity to guide, inspire, and collaborate with others towards a common goal. Recognizing the significance of these attributes, there is an ongoing effort to identify and understand the various contexts and experiences that can effectively nurture their development in youth. However, research indicates that a considerable

"opportunity gap" exists, with a relatively small percentage of young people having access to leadership development experiences that demonstrate a significant impact (Welner & Carter, 2013). This highlights the critical need to explore and leverage existing platforms that can reach a broader spectrum of youth and provide them with meaningful opportunities for growth in these crucial areas.

Extracurricular activities, defined as voluntary engagements outside the regular school curriculum, represent a potentially powerful context for the development of responsibility and leadership (Bartkus et al, 2012; Bundick, 2011). These activities, ranging from sports and arts to clubs and volunteering, attract a significant proportion of young people. Given their widespread participation, extracurricular activities offer a readily available and engaging avenue for fostering essential life skills through experiential learning. This literature review aims to synthesize the current body of scientific evidence concerning the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and the development of both responsibility and leadership in youth.

By examining a range of scholarly articles and research findings, this report seeks to illuminate the specific ways in which these activities contribute to the growth of these vital qualities, considering the influence of different types of activities, the level of involvement, the presence of leadership opportunities, and the underlying theoretical frameworks that explain these developmental processes. The subsequent sections will delve into the methodologies employed in this review, followed by a comprehensive discussion of the findings, and finally, a conclusion summarizing the key insights and implications for future research and practice.

METHOD

This literature review employed a systematic approach to identify and synthesize relevant research on the role of extracurricular activities in fostering youth responsibility and leadership (Booth et al, 2021; Miils, 2001; Rossi et al, 2003). The search strategy involved utilizing prominent academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, PubMed, and PsycINFO. A combination of keywords and search terms was used to ensure comprehensive coverage of the topic. These terms included "extracurricular activities," "youth," "adolescent," "responsibility," "leadership," "development," "impact," and "outcomes." Boolean operators such as "AND" and "OR" were used to refine the search queries and target the most relevant literature. The search focused primarily on peer-reviewed articles published in scientific journals to ensure the inclusion of rigorous and credible research.

The inclusion criteria for this review were as follows: studies must be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, focus on youth or adolescent populations (typically defined as individuals between the ages of 12 and 18, although some studies including college students were considered relevant due to the continuity of developmental processes), and specifically examine the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and the development of responsibility and/or leadership skills. Studies were excluded if they were not empirical in nature (e.g., theoretical essays, opinion pieces), focused solely on academic outcomes without considering responsibility or leadership, or involved populations outside the defined youth and adolescent age range.

The process of data extraction involved carefully reviewing the selected articles to identify key information such as the study design, sample size, the types of extracurricular activities investigated, the methods used to assess responsibility and leadership, and the primary findings related to these outcomes. The synthesis of findings across different studies was conducted using a narrative approach, identifying common themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the reported results. This method allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between extracurricular activities and youth development in the domains of responsibility and leadership. While this systematic approach aimed to minimize bias, it is acknowledged that limitations may exist due to the inherent challenges of literature searching and the potential for publication bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The body of research examined in this review provides substantial evidence for the positive influence of extracurricular activities on the development of both responsibility and leadership in youth. The following sections elaborate on these findings, exploring the specific mechanisms through which these developmental processes occur and considering the nuances associated with different types of activities and levels of involvement.

A. The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on the Development of Responsibility

Participation in extracurricular activities cultivates a sense of accountability and commitment in young people. Involvement in these activities often requires adherence to schedules, attendance at meetings or practices, and dedication to team members or group goals. For instance, athletic programs explicitly aim to teach responsibility alongside teamwork and leadership. Taking on roles within these activities, such as a team captain or a club officer, further reinforces this sense of accountability, as individuals are entrusted with specific duties

and are expected to fulfill them reliably (Hastie & Buchanan, 2000). The structured nature of many extracurricular pursuits offers a safe space for youth to learn about the consequences of their actions or inactions, directly contributing to their understanding of responsibility. If a student misses a practice, their team's performance might be affected; if a club officer fails to complete assigned tasks, the club's objectives may not be met. These tangible outcomes serve as valuable lessons in personal accountability.

Furthermore, balancing extracurricular commitments with academic work and other obligations necessitates the development of effective time management and organizational skills. Adolescents involved in a variety of activities often report having more leadership opportunities and a greater voice in decision-making processes. To manage these multiple demands successfully, young people learn to prioritize tasks, allocate their time efficiently, and plan ahead, skills that are transferable to various aspects of their lives. Research indicates that students participating in extracurricular activities develop time management skills, learning to prioritize and use time effectively. This ability to juggle different responsibilities is a cornerstone of responsible behavior. While concerns about over-scheduling exist, with potential negative effects like stress and reduced family time, studies also suggest that the benefits of involvement often increase with the level of participation, implying an optimal level where the advantages outweigh the drawbacks (Calonia et al, 2023).

Extracurricular activities also foster personal responsibility and self-regulation. Participation often requires self-discipline, the ability to follow instructions from coaches or advisors, and the motivation to persevere through challenges. Overcoming obstacles and setbacks in extracurricular endeavors builds resilience and reinforces a sense of personal responsibility for one's own development and achievements. Skills such as persistence, motivation, goal setting, and problem-solving, all honed through extracurricular involvement, contribute significantly to this aspect of responsibility. These experiences provide opportunities for youth to encounter both successes and failures in relatively low-stakes environments, promoting self-awareness and a sense of personal agency over their outcomes. Learning from mistakes in a sports game or refining a musical performance through practice cultivates a deeper sense of personal responsibility than simply receiving instructions in a classroom setting (Feraco et al, 2022).

B. The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on the Development of Leadership

Many extracurricular activities inherently require teamwork and collaboration to achieve shared objectives. Whether it is coordinating plays in a sports team, working together on a science project, or organizing a community event through a club, youth learn to function effectively within a group. Group activities are shown to build crucial teamwork, communication, and relationship skills. Co-participation in these activities also supports the formation of friendships and strengthens collaborative abilities. This collaborative environment provides a practical context for learning and practicing essential teamwork skills, including effective communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution – all vital components of leadership. Being part of a team necessitates understanding different roles, contributing to a common purpose, and supporting fellow members, which are fundamental aspects of leading effectively (Fakhretdinova et al, 2021; Igumnova et al, 2021).

Furthermore, extracurricular activities offer numerous opportunities for youth to develop and refine their communication and interpersonal skills. Interacting with peers, coaches, advisors, and potentially the broader community in diverse settings enhances interpersonal competence. Adults involved in facilitating these activities can play a crucial role in helping adolescents communicate more effectively and improve their interpersonal skills. Involvement in extracurriculars is linked to higher measures of interpersonal competence, such as communication (Kozan, 2024; Gootman & Eccles, 2002). The varied social interactions within these settings expose youth to different communication styles and expectations, fostering adaptability and enhancing their ability to connect with and lead others. Whether presenting an idea to a club, performing in front of an audience, or discussing strategy with teammates, these experiences build confidence and communication proficiency.

Participation in extracurricular activities often involves making decisions, both individually and collectively, and working towards solutions to challenges. Athletic clubs, for example, are noted for their role in developing problem-solving skills (Eccles et al, 2003). Extracurricular activities offer practical scenarios where youth can exercise their decision-making abilities and learn from the resulting outcomes, thereby fostering confidence in their judgment and enhancing their capacity to lead through effective problem-solving. Whether devising a new play in a game or strategizing fundraising efforts for a club, these activities provide platforms for taking initiative and learning from the consequences of their choices.

Extracurricular activities frequently provide both structured and unstructured opportunities for youth to take initiative and assume leadership roles. Adolescents who

participate in a greater variety of activities report having more leadership opportunities. Serving as an officer in a club, captaining a sports team, or organizing an event all provide invaluable hands-on experience in leading and managing groups, directly fostering both responsibility and leadership capacity (Hancock & Jones, 2012). The availability of these formal and informal leadership positions allows youth to practice leadership skills in a supportive environment, building their confidence and experience. Stepping up to lead a group project or taking charge during a performance provides practical application of leadership principles.

The presence of supportive adults, such as coaches, advisors, and mentors, in extracurricular settings plays a significant role in fostering leadership development through guidance and encouragement. Research highlights the influence of adult support on adolescents' perceptions of their leadership skills. Partnerships with supportive adults and sustained relationships with caring adults are more likely to be available to adolescents in these contexts. Positive relationships with these mentors can provide youth with valuable guidance, constructive feedback, and positive role modeling, significantly impacting their leadership trajectory. Coaches and advisors can offer insights, share their experiences, and provide the encouragement needed for youth to refine their leadership abilities and build self-assurance (Meyer & Rinn, 2021).

C. Influence of Different Types of Extracurricular Activities

The specific nature of the extracurricular activity can influence the particular facets of responsibility and leadership that are developed. Sports participation is often associated with fostering teamwork, discipline, resilience, and leadership skills, as individuals learn to work together towards a common goal, adhere to rules, and persevere through challenges. Involvement in the arts, such as music, drama, and visual arts, can cultivate creativity, self-expression, collaboration, and a sense of responsibility towards individual and group performances (Baharuddin et al, 2024). Academic clubs, like debate or science clubs, tend to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and leadership through intellectual engagement and collaborative projects. Community service and volunteering activities promote social responsibility, empathy, and leadership by providing opportunities to contribute to the well-being of others and take initiative in addressing community needs. This suggests that a diverse portfolio of extracurricular activities might offer the most comprehensive development of both responsibility and leadership skills, as different activities provide unique learning experiences and skill-building opportunities.

D. The Role of Factors such as Level of Involvement and Leadership Roles

The extent to which a young person is involved in extracurricular activities, including the frequency, duration, and intensity of their participation, appears to be a significant factor in their leadership development outcomes. Higher levels of involvement are generally associated with greater leadership development. Students with high involvement in extracurricular activities demonstrate relatively high citizenship in leadership outcomes. The number of years of involvement and the amount of time spent per week can also positively influence group and community leadership development (Foreman & Retallick, 2013). However, it is important to acknowledge the "over-scheduling hypothesis," which suggests that excessive participation could lead to negative consequences such as stress and poor adjustment. Maintaining a balanced approach is therefore crucial. Furthermore, holding leadership roles within these activities, such as serving as an officer or captain, has a particularly strong impact on the development of leadership skills and responsibility (Ginnett, 2017). These roles provide practical experience in leading and managing groups, fostering accountability and enhancing leadership capacity.

E. Exploring Relevant Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical frameworks help explain the link between extracurricular activities and the development of responsibility and leadership. Social Cognitive Theory posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within a social context. In extracurricular settings, youth observe role models such as coaches and older peers, develop self-efficacy through successful participation, and experience reciprocal interactions between their behavior, personal factors, and the environment (Trujillo, 2021). This framework helps understand how youth learn and internalize responsible and leadership behaviors. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the importance of satisfying basic psychological needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness – for fostering intrinsic motivation and positive development. When youth feel a sense of choice in their activities, develop competence within them, and feel connected to others through them, their motivation to engage responsibly and take initiative increases. Ecological Systems Theory highlights the interconnectedness of various environmental levels (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, chronosystem) in influencing youth development (Burakgazi, 2025). This perspective underscores the importance of considering the broader context, including family support, school resources, and community values, in understanding the impact of extracurricular

activities. Finally, the Developmental Assets Framework identifies a range of positive supports and strengths that contribute to positive youth development. Extracurricular activities can contribute to building both external assets (e.g., support, empowerment, constructive use of time) and internal assets (e.g., social competencies, positive identity) that are linked to responsibility and leadership (Forneris et al, 2015).

Table 2: Theoretical Frameworks Explaining the Link Between Extracurricular Activities and Youth Development

Theory Name
Social Cognitive Theory
Self-Determination Theory
Ecological Systems Theory
Developmental Assets Framework

F. Nuances, Limitations, and Conflicting Findings

While the evidence overwhelmingly suggests a positive relationship between extracurricular activity participation and the development of responsibility and leadership, certain nuances and limitations in the existing literature should be acknowledged. A significant portion of the research relies on correlational studies, which, while indicating an association, do not definitively establish causality (Kim, 2022). It is possible that youth who are already more responsible or inclined towards leadership are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities. Additionally, there is potential for selection bias, as access to and participation in these activities may be influenced by socioeconomic factors and other demographic variables. Some studies also present seemingly conflicting findings, such as the "over-scheduling hypothesis" versus the observation that benefits often increase with the level of participation. This suggests that the optimal level of involvement may vary depending on individual factors and the quality of the activities. Furthermore, there is a need for more longitudinal research to track the long-term impact of extracurricular participation on the

development of responsibility and leadership and to better understand the causal pathways involved. The complexity of human development implies that the impact of these activities can vary based on individual characteristics, the specific nature and quality of the activity, and the surrounding environment

CONCLUSION

The findings of this comprehensive literature review strongly support the significant role of extracurricular activities in fostering both responsibility and leadership skills in youth. Participation in these voluntary pursuits provides a multitude of opportunities for young people to develop crucial life skills through experiential learning. The structured environments of extracurricular activities cultivate accountability and commitment, while the need to balance these commitments with academic and personal lives promotes effective time management and organizational abilities. Overcoming challenges and fulfilling roles within these activities enhances personal responsibility and self-regulation. Moreover, extracurriculars serve as valuable platforms for developing leadership skills through teamwork, communication, decision-making, taking initiative, and benefiting from mentorship by supportive adults. The specific types of activities engaged in can influence the particular skills that are honed, suggesting the value of diverse participation. The level and duration of involvement, as well as the assumption of leadership roles within these activities, further amplify their developmental impact. Theoretical frameworks such as Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Determination Theory, Ecological Systems Theory, and the Developmental Assets Framework provide valuable lenses through which to understand the mechanisms underlying these positive outcomes.

The implications of these findings for youth development are significant. Parents, educators, youth program organizers, and policymakers should recognize the profound potential of extracurricular activities in shaping responsible and effective future leaders. Ensuring access to a diverse range of high-quality extracurricular opportunities for all youth, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may face barriers to participation, is crucial. Strategies aimed at maximizing the developmental benefits of these activities should include promoting youth leadership roles and fostering positive relationships with adult mentors. The evidence strongly suggests that investing in and supporting extracurricular activities is a valuable strategy for nurturing the development of essential responsibility and leadership skills in young people, contributing to their individual success and the betterment

of society. Future research should focus on addressing the limitations of existing studies by employing more rigorous longitudinal designs to establish causality, investigating the impact of specific activity characteristics in greater detail, exploring the optimal levels of involvement for different age groups and individuals, and further understanding the interplay of individual differences and environmental factors in these developmental processes..

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