

# Co-Curricular Management Practices Among Novice Teachers In Malaysia

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**ABSTRACT---** *This article aims to identify the level of knowledge and preparedness among novice teachers in the implementation of co-curricular activities in secondary schools in the state of Kedah, Malaysia. A total of 162 novice teachers deployed to teach in secondary schools throughout the state of Kedah answered the questionnaire completely. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and statistical inference including mean, percentage, independent samples t-test, ANOVA and Pearson correlation. The results, based on six different academic disciplines, show that novice teachers in the humanities, sciences and technical were higher than novice teachers of language areas in the level of knowledge in managing as well as their willingness to plan teaching and learning co-curricular activities in school. A comparison of novice teachers based on gender showed that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers related to level of knowledge and preparedness in managing co-curricular activities. The Pearson correlation analysis showed positive and significant correlation between teachers' readiness in planning teaching and learning and the teachers' knowledge in managing co-curricular activities. Furthermore, novice teachers who had attended the extra-curricular course during the first degree acquired higher levels of knowledge in managing extra-curricular activities after teaching in schools.*

**Keywords--** Novice teacher, Co-curriculum, Malaysia

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Co-curricular activities are complementary to the process of teaching and learning in the classroom and it is part of the curriculum in the education system of Malaysia that will help strengthen the capacity and performance of its students. In keeping with the Education Development Master Plan, co-curricular activities are seen to be one of the important approaches to realize the human capital development process. Co-curricular activities are activities that are planned as an extension of the process of teaching and learning in the classroom to give students the opportunity to add, consolidate and practise the knowledge, skills and values learned in the classroom. Co-curricular activities at school can help in various aspects, such as fostering integration among the races and the school community, helping to create a school climate that drives learning and human culture, training and inculcating the values of leadership and motivating themselves. To this end, the Ministry of Education has decided that the extra-curricular activities serve as important and necessary activities in the primary and secondary schools in Malaysia (Mohd Nor, 1985).

Today's generation will be to lead and shape the country towards a better future. Therefore, teachers who have been entrusted to manage the implementation of co-curricular activities are expected to play an effective role in translating and interpreting the goal. Teachers need to implement extra-curricular activities effectively to develop the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner to produce a balanced and harmonious, knowledgeable, competent, honourable, individual responsible and capable of achieving well-being, and contributing to the betterment of the family, the community and the country.

The National Education Philosophy has explained that a balanced development of students in terms of intellectual, spiritual and emotional, and physical should be inculcated from the school. Through the National Education Philosophy, a curriculum was designed to meet the needs of the mental, physical and social development of students with the emphasis on formal learning that involves measurement and subject content. The extra-curricular activities also serve as an extension of the above, such as student involvement in associations and clubs, sports and games and uniformed

bodies. All activities in the education system promote the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual formation of students apart from promoting student leadership. Salmah (1992) in her study found that students' participation in extra-curricular activities affects the quality of leadership, involvement, fitness, recreational skills and the relationship between race and social skills; increases academic performance and self-control. She said co-curricular activities can train students to control themselves when they are under stress and foster a sense of desire to compete and succeed.

A study done by Eisa (1998) showed that weaknesses in the management of extra-curricular activities have influenced students' participation in the activities. According to him, other factors that influence student engagement are facilities and equipment, the involvement of teachers as well as the recognition factor of the school on educational achievement in co-curricular activities. Adnan Khamis (1989) in a study of co-curricular involvement in university students found that these activities can foster close collaboration among lecturers and collaboration. However, the lack of understanding of the concept of co-curricular activities, poor planning and implementation have resulted in extra-curricular performance being still far from satisfactory.

Gregson (2003) states that prospective teachers and trained teachers should be equipped with knowledge related to extra-curricular activities so that they are capable, in the context of national education, to produce capable individuals. Extra-curricular activities are a very important element in teacher training which can be applied in schools where educators and students can identify and apply the theories learned (Hartley et al. 2002).

As far as the researcher knows there is no comparative study of novice teachers willing to undertake extra-curricular activities at school. This study is important as the availability of novice teachers to perform extra-curricular activities in school are seen to have certain advantages. First, it has to do with the inputs obtained while studying at the university. Second, the skills can be needed to carry out an action plan to achieve specific objectives. This paper will try to find out the level of readiness of novice teachers in the implementation of co-curricular activities in school.

## **1.2 Research Questions of the Study**

The goal of this article is to identify the level of knowledge and readiness of novice teachers to implement co-curricular activities in secondary schools throughout the state of Kedah, Malaysia. The results of this study will be based on the following research questions:

1. What is the level of knowledge of the novice teachers in the implementation of co-curricular activities in schools?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of knowledge and readiness of novice teachers in managing extra-curricular activities in schools based on six different academic disciplines?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of knowledge of the novice teachers in the management of extra-curricular activities in schools based on gender?
4. Is there a relationship between the knowledge and the readiness of novice teachers in managing extra-curricular activities?
5. Do novice teachers who have attended extra-curricular courses during their training have more knowledge than those who have never attended the course?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Co-curricular activities are important to sow, cultivate and instill a sense of belonging or "esprit de corps" among students of different ethnic backgrounds and different ways of life. They also aim to train students to be responsible. These activities can also train them to be disciplined, self-reliant and skilled in the particular field they participate (Cabinet Committee Report, 1979). Educationists and philosophers admit that extra-curricular activities are a force of positive social and educational progress. This fact is acknowledged by Hancock (1968), who argues that intellectual progress is determined at every step by the physical power to achieve excellent results and physical exercise must be included in the mental group.

According to Omardin (1999) in the management of co-curricular activities in the schools, the scope and role of the school manager is the centerpiece and driving force in the implementation. Principals are responsible for ensuring the planning-work activities, be mentors, and advocates for improving the efficiency of teachers implementing the curricular activities. As leaders, principals should discuss and provide incentives to increase the efficiency of the teachers implementing the programme. In addition, principals must also give examples and be firm in carrying out assessments to determine that the goal of co-curricular activities are achieved. The importance of leadership in an organization is

undeniable and it is in accordance with the opinion of Hicks (1975) that without leadership, the organization will only be a patchwork of people and equipment.

If the principal acts effectively as a manager of co-curricular activities, then certainly the extra-curricular activities can be considered to be effective promoting a balance of the mental, spiritual, physical, and social development of students. Extra-curricular activities can provide direction to students to engage in meaningful activities. Following this engagement, it is hoped that the skills learned through these activities can cultivate a healthy lifestyle after school days (Wee, 1996).

A study done by Mohd Jaflus Bahari (2008) on 160 respondents of different races, namely Malays, Chinese and Indian students from secondary schools in Seremban found that structural factors were the major factors that limited student participation in extra-curricular sports activities. A structural factor that influenced students' involvement was a lack of information about the facilities and activities conducted in the school. The results showed that most students did not know the extra-curricular activities in the school. This may be due to the school not providing a bulletin board to publicize the extra-curricular sports activities, as well as the location of the non-strategic board. A lack of time to read the information posted was also a reason why students did not get the proper information. It is proposed that a board with more information about extra-curricular activities should be placed in a suitable location so that students have clear information about the facilities and activities that are carried out in the school. Notices can be distributed to the students and pasted in classrooms for the information of all students.

A study by Abu Bakar (2007) found that the role of the extra-curricular teacher was one of the factors that influenced the level of involvement in extra-curricular activities. This study aimed to gather information and views of teachers on the school curriculum. He concluded that the participation and interest of the students in co-curricular activities were affected by the activities undertaken, and the facilities and the equipment. In addition, the role of the mentor teachers also influenced the participation and involvement of the students in the activities designed and implemented. Interest should not only be shown by students but teachers too should have the skills and interest in extra-curricular activities.

A study done by Siti Hajar (2000) aimed to identify the management practices that were effective in co-curricular practice and also to see the pattern of involvement of the extra-curricular committee members and students in extra-curricular performance. Her findings showed functional aspects of management such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling only at a modest level. She noted that the management of co-curricular activities was related to the achievement of the students in co-curricular activities.

According to Mohd Jaflus (2008) who studied of over 72 teachers to assess teachers' perceptions of the implementation and supervision of co-curricular activities in secondary schools found that the main factors that hinder the implementation of effective co-curricular activities were less experienced teachers and irrelevant courses attended by teachers. In addition, the extra-curricular activities were also not supervised by school administrators. The situation deteriorated further when a teacher was active but did not receive any award from the school.

Managing co-curricular activities broad with more flexibility if provided fair returns to students. The effectiveness of extra-curricular activities depends on effective management system. Principals, as managers, have to manage "do things right". This means that a manager is a person who has the competencies and skills in management (Hussein, 1997).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

After obtaining a list of teachers who had been placed in all the schools in the state of Kedah from the Kedah State Education Department, a stratified random sampling was done. The respondents were selected from schools in all the districts in the state. However, this study did not compare novice teachers' involvement in extra-curricular activities based on the districts concerned.

#### **3.1 Sample**

Survey questionnaires were mailed or personally delivered to the respondents. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed but only 170 were returned. However, the number of questionnaires completed by the respondents was 162. The participants in this study comprised of novice teachers or new teachers deployed to teach in secondary schools throughout the state of Kedah from 2010. The questionnaire were distributed in 2012.

#### **3.2 Data Analysis**

Several statistical methods were performed using the SPSS package for analysing qualitative and quantitative data. A descriptive analysis using mean, percentage and crosstabs was performed to identify the distribution of data on race, gender, six areas of teaching, and related extra-curricular courses followed during the first degree.

Three methods of statistical analysis were used in this study, such as one-way ANOVA, Independent Samples Test, and Pearson correlation. Research questions 1 and 5 used descriptive analysis to determine the mean and standard deviation. Research question 2 used one-way ANOVA. Research question 3 used Independent Samples Test, while research question 4 used the Pearson correlation test.

#### 4. FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents surveyed. The analysis found that a total of 162 respondents answered the questionnaire completely. 152 respondents (93.8%) were Malays while the remaining 10 respondents were 5 Chinese and 5 Indians (3.1%). In terms of gender, a total of 121 respondents (74.7%) were female, and the remaining 41 of the respondents were men.

Table 1: Number of respondents by race and gender (N = 162)

	Number	Percentage
Malay	152	93.8
Chinese	5	3.1
Indian	5	3.1
Male	41	25.3
Female	121	74.7

Table 2 shows the number of respondents and the universities they attended for the first degree before pursuing the Post Graduate Diploma in Education or in part, and were directly absorbed as teachers in secondary schools throughout the state of Kedah. It was found that most of the respondents were pursuing their first degree at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (14.8%), Universiti Putra Malaysia (11.7%), and Universiti Utara Malaysia (10.5%). A total of 12 respondents (7.4%) obtained their first degree at the University of Al-Azhar or other universities in the Middle East.

Table 2: Number of respondents by university during their first degree

Universiti	Number	Percentage
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI)	24	14.8
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	19	11.7
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	17	10.5
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	14	8.6
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	12	7.4
Universiti Malaya (UM)	10	6.2
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	10	6.2
Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (UIA)	10	6.2
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	9	5.6
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM)	6	3.7
Other universities in Malaysia	13	8.0
Al-Azhar University & universities in the Middle East	12	7.4
Other foreign universities	6	3.7

Table 3 shows the six academic fields followed by the respondents during their first degree. The highest number of respondents were in the Technical & vocational fields, followed by Islamic Education & Arabic Language (18.5%). Humanities and Languages had a total of 26 respondents or 16% each.

Table 3: Academic fields followed by respondents during their first degree

Academic Fields	Number	Percentage
Humanities	26	16.0
Languages	26	16.0
Science and Mathematics	21	13.0
Technical and vocational	49	30.2
Islamic education and Arabic language	30	18.5
Counseling	10	6.2

The novice teachers' involvement in co-curricular activities during their first degree or while pursuing a Diploma in Education is shown in Table 4. A total of 78 respondents (48%) participated in co-curricular activities during their first degree compared to 15 respondents who participate in co-curricular activities while pursuing a Diploma in Education. Furthermore, a total of 34 respondents who had participated in extra-curricular activities during their undergraduate and Diploma. Furthermore, a total of 34 respondents who had participated in extra-curricular activities while pursuing both first degree and education diploma.

Table 4: Novice teachers' involvement in co-curricular activities during their study.

		Co-curricular course during first degree		
		Did not participate	Participated	
Co-curricular course during Diploma in Education	Did not participate	35	78	<b>113</b>
	Participated	15	34	<b>49</b>
		<b>50</b>	<b>112</b>	

The mean measurement scale used for research objectives 1 and 2 are as follows;

Mean score	Measure
1.0 – 1.40	Very Low
1.41 – 2.81	Low
2.82 – 4.22	Moderate
4.23 – 5.63	High
5.64 – 7.00	Very High

Research question 1: **What is the level of knowledge of the novice teachers in the implementation of co-curricular activities in schools?**

Teachers' knowledge in managing extra-curricular activities as a whole was at a high level (mean score = 5.15). This was because they had just completed their studies. Knowledge that they acquired at the university could help them perform tasks in the co-curricular activities in their school. Furthermore, their young age gave them an advantage in terms of energy to manage activities involving students.

Research question 2: **Is there a significant difference in the level of knowledge and readiness of novice teachers in managing extra-curricular activities in schools based on six different academic disciplines?**

The one-way ANOVA analysis showed that novice teachers' knowledge in the humanities field was higher than those in the language discipline. In addition, science and mathematics teachers, and technical and vocational teachers had higher levels of knowledge than teachers in the field of languages in managing school co-curricular activities. Science and mathematics teachers also had higher level of knowledge in managing extra-curricular activities than Islamic education and Arabic language teachers, and also counselling teachers. All relationships are significant at 0.05.

Research question 3: **Is there a significant difference in the level of knowledge of novice teachers in managing extra-curricular activities in schools based on gender?**

Data analysis using the independent samples test found that there was no significant difference in the level of knowledge in managing extra-curricular activities based on gender.

Research question 4: **Is there a relationship between the level of knowledge and the readiness of novice teachers in managing extra-curricular activities?**

Data analysis using Pearson correlation showed a positive and significant relationship between the level of knowledge in the management of extra-curricular activities and the readiness of the novice teachers in planning the teaching and learning of extra-curricular activities. However, the strength of the relationship was weak ( $r_{xy} = 0.288$ ).

Research question 5: **Do novice teachers who have attended extra-curricular courses during their training have more knowledge than those who have never attended the courses?**

The results showed that novice teachers who had attended extra-curricular courses during their first degree had a higher level of knowledge in the management of extra-curricular activities (mean score = 6.20) compared to novice teachers who had never attended any extra-curricular course at the undergraduate level (mean score = 5.94).

## 5. SUMMARY

Teachers' knowledge in managing extra-curricular activities as a whole was at a high level because they had just completed their studies. The knowledge that they had acquired at university could help them perform tasks in co-curricular activities in the schools. Furthermore, their young age gave them an advantage in terms of energy to manage activities involving students. The results showed that novice teachers' knowledge varied according to their academic disciplines. The result also showed a positive and significant relationship between the level of knowledge in the management of extra-curricular activities and the readiness of the novice teacher in planning teaching and learning of extra-curricular activities but there was no significant difference in the level of knowledge in managing extra-curricular activities based on gender.

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