



To What Extent Extracurricular Activities Affect the Behaviours and School Grades of Primary Schools' Pupils

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How to cite this paper: Abdelhafidh, S., Abdelhafifh, S. and Moussa, A. (2022) To What Extent Extracurricular Activities Affect the Behaviours and School Grades of Primary Schools' Pupils. *Open Access Library Journal*, 9: e8502.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1108502>

Received: February 19, 2022

Accepted: March 27, 2022

Published: March 30, 2022

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the effect of extracurricular activities on pupils' behavior and their school grades. Data collected were analyzed using quantitative statistics. The main results showed that extracurricular activities contribute to the development of pupils' social behavior, reduce their aggressive behaviour, and make them more disciplined and more responsible. The linear regression shows a significant positive relationship between the number of extracurricular activities, the duration of their practice, and the dependent variable which is the level of improvement of pupil behaviour. The results also showed a positive effect of extracurricular activities on pupils' attachments to their school, their motivations, and their abilities to concentrate. Indeed, the mean difference test, T-test, reveals that there is a significant difference between the average of scholar grades of pupils participating in extracurricular activities and those who are not participating for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years for the benefit of the participating pupils. Such results were also confirmed by the linear regression which highlights that there is a significant effect of the number of extracurricular activities and their duration on the levels of improvement of pupils' academic results. The outcomes of this study largely confirm the essential role that extracurricular activities can play in the pupils' learning and education process.

Subject Areas

Education

Keywords

Extracurricular Activities, Primary School, Pupils' Behavior, School Grades, Ordinary Least Square

1. Introduction

The main objectives of extracurricular activities (ECA) were to focus on the individual (pupil), institutional level, and the wider community level. The development of an individual is the main objective of ECA. The many experiences that these activities offer positively impact the emotions, intellectual, social and interpersonal development. By cooperating with others, pupils can learn to negotiate, communicate, and resolve conflict. Taking part in these out-of-the-classroom activities helps pupils to understand the importance of critical thinking skills, academic and intellectual competence. In the last decade, a lot of attention is given to leisure time of adolescents and children. Many researchers [1] [2] [3] reported that with the evolution of technology, new ways of involvement in leisure have emerged and can have both positive as well as negative impact on their academic performance, which make it necessary to create conditions and opportunities for children to spend their leisure time culturally and purposefully. In fact, leisure time is an extremely important segment of children and adolescents' lives that can develop social and communication skills, tolerance, self-esteem, self-confidence, creative expression and provide opportunities for identity exploration and skill building. It is a time in which the pupil can affirm and develop its properties and manage his own experiences by exerting personal control over his environment and becoming autonomous in his actions. Therefore, [4] stresses that awareness of the importance of quality leisure time activity should be nurtured in the society to ensure longevity of universal well being. extracurricular activities provide children with a highly structured leisure environment in which they can widen their social circle, expand their interests and build leadership skills. Aleid [2] indicated that these activities are perhaps one of the school tools to achieve much educational, psychological, social, economic and physical health for their pupils. Indeed, the school function is not limited to the development of the cognitive side of the personality but also to prepare them for life and help them develop suitable social skills and attitudes for effective social roles in the future as well as the academic side. It provides pupils with an enriched environment where they can gain a stronger sense of self and community alongside their peers and grow healthy, emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually to become good citizens. This is what makes cultural activities an integral part of the school program, which does not represent a place where students gather for collection, but a small community where its members interact are affected and influenced each other, these activities provide pupils with additional experiences and a plethora of opportunities to learn and refine their skills. The purpose of this study is to explore the effect of extracurricular activities on pupils' behavior and grades and to determine the gap between the Tunisian pupils who participate in these activities and those who do not.

Tunisia has devoted significant resources to education and teaching since independence. During the period 2012-2017, public spending on education averaged 6.6 percent of Gross Domestic Product compared to an average of 4.8 per-

cent globally. The result is a major transformation of Tunisian society, allowing it to reach the rank of countries with high human development, thereby improving its development potential. Despite the many achievements, many weaknesses and shortcomings remain. Thousands of young people leave school long before the last year of basic school. The illiteracy rate, although declining, remains high, particularly for women. In today's academic world, two positions seem to be prevailed. They are based on academic perspectives or developmental perspectives. The academic perspective views extracurricular activities as sheer entertainment and not part of the school's goals. While development perspective considers that these extracurricular activities are necessary for the overall development of students in today's schools. Hence the effects of extracurricular activities have generated numerous debates in their relation to educational achievement and school behavior. Teachers who, from an academic point of view, have controversies on whether a great deal of time and money should be devoted to these types of activities as most of them care about the academic achievement, while neglect the extracurricular activities, considering them as a heavy burden on the curses and only a sort of entertainment and amusement. Consequently how can they improve the internal and external performance of the education system? Do ECA have any effect on the grade average point (GPA) of the pupils and on their behaviours in a Tunisian context?

It is supposed:

H1: Extracurricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' behavior.

H2: Extracurricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' scholar grades.

2. Methodology

2.1. The Sample

The study was conducted with 125 pupils attending the 4th, 5th and 6th grades of primary schools in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years, from whom 76 were participating in extracurricular activities and 49 were not. Data was collected via an online survey via social media platforms using the Google Forms application. The itinerant school library activity was the most practiced activity among the pupils engaged in extracurricular activities (56%) followed by competition activities (43%), sports activities (26%), school radio (13%), school magazine (8%). The characteristics of the participants (gender, academic year) are presented in **Table 1** which shows that the proportion of female pupils (52.8%) who participated in the study was slightly higher compared to that of male pupils (47.2%). In relation to level of study, majority of the pupils (39%) were in 5th year followed by those in 6th year, and then 4th year. The study further found out that most of the participants lived in urban areas (84%).

2.2. Instruments

The instrument that was used for this research was the questionnaire which consists of three sections (A, B, and C). Section A will be designed to elicit information

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

Characteristics	Value (N = 125), n (%)
Gender	
Male	59 (47.2)
Female	66 (52.8)
Place of residence	
Urban	105 (84)
Rural	20 (16)
Academic year	
4th year	35 (28)
5th year	49 (39)
6th year	41 (33)

on the bio-data of the pupils. Section B will be devoted to the first hypothesis including questions that will focus on extracurricular activities participation (both affiliated and unaffiliated with school), the number of extracurricular activities in which they participated and their duration, social behavior, aggressive behavior and the level of improvement of their behavior since their participation in these activities. Section C will be devoted to the second hypothesis, including questions about pupils' scholar grades for the (2018-2019) (2019-2020), the effect of extracurricular activities on their self-confidence, their attachments to school, their motivation, their abilities to concentrate and the level of improvement of their grades since their participation in these activities. The midpoint of the scale was a score of 1.5. Therefore, a mean score of below 1.5 showed that there is a low level of agreement while a mean score of 1.5 and above showed that there is a high level of agreement. The following steps are followed when designing the questionnaire:

- The starting point is to refer to the proposal and brief and make a listing of all the objectives and what information is required in order that they are achieved.
- A list of all the questions that could go into the questionnaire was made. The aim at this stage is to be as comprehensive as possible in the listing and not to worry about the phrasing of the questions. That comes next.
- Refine the question phrasing: The questions are developed close to the point where they make sense and will generate the right answers regarding pupils behaviour.
- Develop the response format every question needs a response.
- Putting the questionnaires in an ordering sequence: the questions are ordered as they bring logic and flow to the interview.
- Finalise the layout of the questionnaire.
- The final step is to test the questionnaire: the questionnaire is piloted using the interviewing method that will be used.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data that will be obtained in the study will be calculated via SPSS package program. First, descriptive statistics for the variables and sub-dimensions will be calculated in the study. The obtained data will be explained through frequencies, percentages and means. The t-test will be used to determine if a difference existed between scholar grade of those who participated in extracurricular activities and those who did not participate. OLS regression will be also used to study the relationship between the number of extracurricular activities, the duration of their practice, and the dependents variable which are the level of improvement of pupils' behavior and scholar grades.

3. Results

The research findings will be presented separately with regard to pupils' behavior and grades.

3.1. Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Pupils' Behaviour

3.1.1. Qualitative Analysis

Research Question One: *Do you prefer teamwork over individual work?*

From **Figure 1**, results show that 67% of pupils participating in extracurricular activities reported that they prefer "always" and "often" to work within group rather than to work alone. This proportion drops to 30% among the non-participating pupils, while the percentage of participants who answered with "Rarely" and "never" was 33 versus 70% for the non-participating pupils. This means that ECA participation assists the personal development of pupils by constructing social connections to others via growing teamwork and social capabilities and promoting interpersonal relationships.

Research Question Two: *What do you do when a student provokes you?*

Figure 2 shows the reaction of the pupils to the provocations. 86% of pupils participating in extracurricular activities answered that they respond softly or do not respond when they are provoked, this percentage drops to 66% among the non-participating pupils. This indicates that pupils participating in ECA had fewer problems at school and fewer conflicts with other persons. This link between ECA and behavior might help pupils to establish a greater internal locus of control and achieve better relationship with peers. ECA participation provides pupils with greater interaction with fellow pupils in the school, hereby building

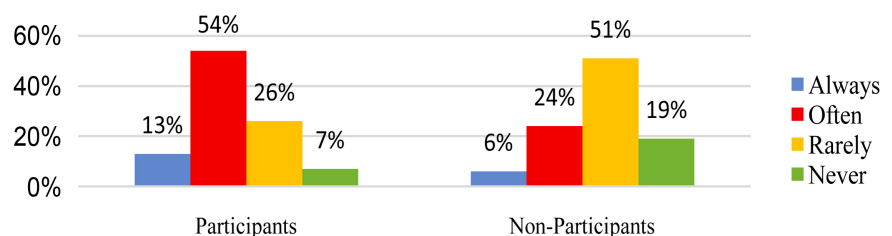


Figure 1. Preferring teamwork over individual work.

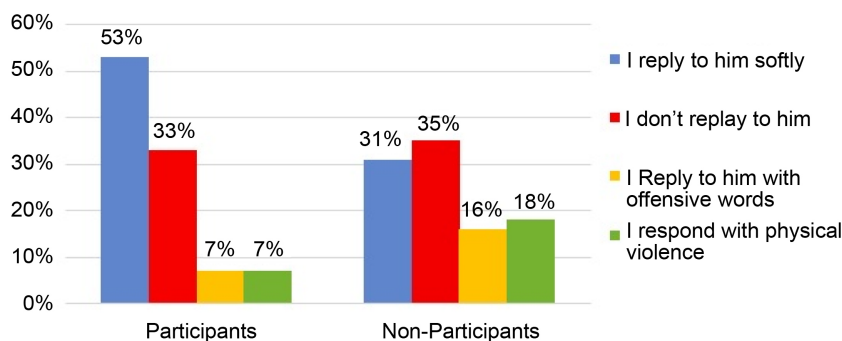


Figure 2. Pupils' reactions to provocations.

social ties and developing social capital. This social capital then acts as a form of social control that encourages pupils to follow school norms and thus attain academic success. ECA participation helps pupils to develop attitudes such as discipline and motivation; and to receive social rewards that influence personality characteristics.

Research Questions Three and Four.

The responses values are as follow: Always: 3; Often: 2; Rarely: 1; Never: 0.

Table 2 indicates that the mean score of the answers to the questions three and four were 2.34 and 2.4 respectively, showing that most of the answers ranged between “Always” and “Often”, which reveals the high percentage of pupils who confirmed that extracurricular activities made them more disciplined and responsible which means that AC develops the pupils' responsible behavior.

Research Question five. *How do you evaluate the degree of development of your behavior after your participation in these activities?*

Figure 3 represents the evaluation of pupils participating in extracurricular activities to the degree of improvement of their behavior. The percentage of answers with “significant improvement” reached 59%, followed by the percentage of answers with “slightly improvement” (39%), while the percentage of answers with “there is no change” did not exceed 2% whereas there were no answers with a “made worse”.

3.1.2. OLS Regression Results

The dependant variable takes the value of 4 if significant improvement, 3 if slightly improvement, 2 if no change and 0 if made worse.

Table 3 shows the extent of the influence of the independent variables (number of practiced ECA and duration of practice) on the level of improvement of pupils' behavior as a dependent variable. The calculated F value of (29.107) at the significance level ($\alpha < 0.05$) indicates the good fit of the model. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1), which states that there is a statistically significant effect for the duration and number of extracurricular activities in the level of improvement in pupils' behavior.

The multiple correlation coefficient R^2 of (0.444) reveals the strength of the

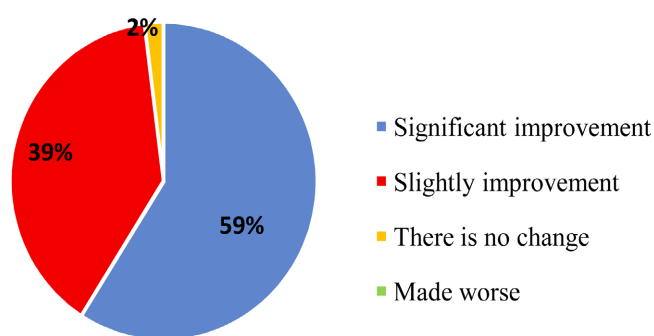
Table 2. Role of extracurricular activities in the development of pupils' discipline character.

Questions	Mean	Pupils' responses Percentage				Total (%)	
		Always	Often	Rarely	never		
		3	Do you think that your participation in extracurricular activities made you more disciplined?	2.34	40		54
4	Do you think that your participation in extracurricular activities made you more responsible?	2.4	46	48	6	0	100

Table 3. Regression analysis of the influence of pupils' participation in extracurricular activities on their behavior.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t-statistic	Sig.
	Coefficient	S.D		
(Constant)	1.757	0.120	14.606	0.00
The number of extracurricular activities practiced	0.36	0.066	5.435	0.00
Practice period	0.008	0.002	4.057	0.00

R = 0.666; R² = 0.444; F = 29.107; P(F) = 0.00

**Figure 3.** Pupils' evaluation to the degree of improvement of their behavior.

relationship between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable, and indicates that 44% of the behavior change is explained by the independent variables that were chosen. Further, results show that the number of extracurricular activities has a positive relationship to the level of behavioral improvement, as the coefficient is estimated at 36% and significant at the level of 1%. This means that the more the pupil engages in an additional extracurricular activity,

the greater the level of his behavior improvement by 36%. **Table 3** also shows that there is a positive relationship between the duration of practicing activities and the degree of behavior improvement, as the coefficient related to the duration of practice shows that the longer the duration of practicing extracurricular activities in a month, the higher the degree of behavior improvement by 0.8%.

3.2. Effects of Extracurricular Activities on Pupils' School Grades

3.2.1. Qualitative Analysis

Research Question Seven: *Do you like being in school?*

Figure 4 shows that 83% of pupils participating in culture activities reported that they want to be in school “to a very large extent” and “to a large extent”. This percentage drops to 49% among the non-participating pupils, while we find no one from the participants in these activities responded with a “low degree” in contrast to the non-participating students, where 10% of them answered that they like to be in school with a “low degree”.

Research Question Eight: *Have you noticed that your motivation to learn has increased after your participation in extracurricular activities?*

Figure 5 shows that the majority of participants (85.5%) agree that after participating in cultural activities, they are more motivated to study than they were before. Since participation helps students to develop attitudes such as motivation and enhances students' self-concept.

Research Question Nine: *Have you noticed that your concentration has increased after your participation in extracurricular activities?*

Figure 6 shows that 65.8% of participants agree that after participating in extracurricular activities, their concentration has increased. This proves that ECA participation indirectly boosts students' academic performance and develops well characteristics which in turn mediates positive effects on other academic outcomes.

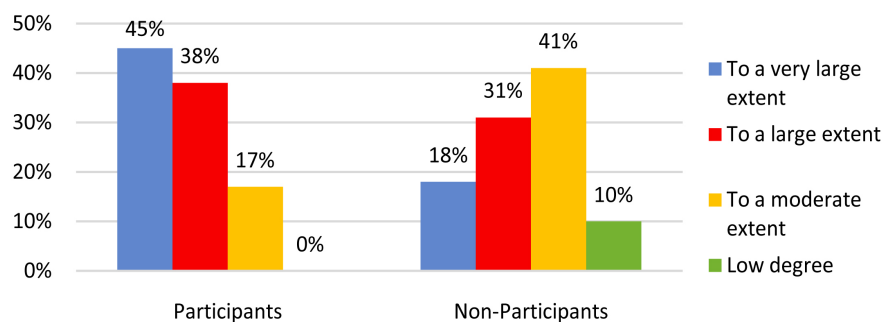


Figure 4. The level of student's attachment to school.

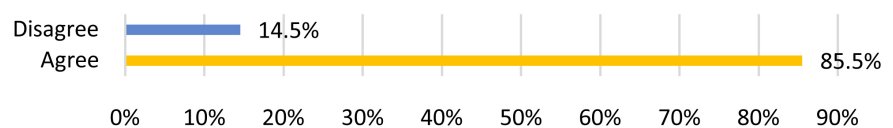


Figure 5. Role of extracurricular activities in improving students' motivation.

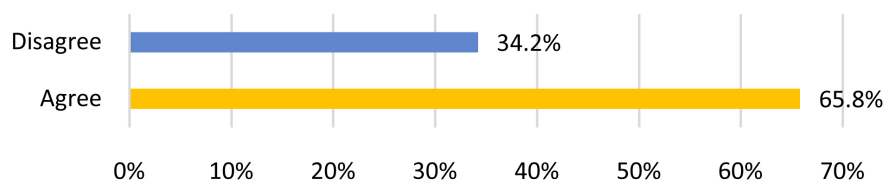


Figure 6. Role of extracurricular activities in improving students' concentration.

Research Question Ten: *How do you evaluate the degree of development of your school grades after your participation in these activities?*

Figure 7 represents the evaluation of pupils' perceptions to the degree of development of their school grades after participating in extracurricular activities. The percentage of answers with "a significant improvement" reached 54%, followed by the percentage of answers with "slightly improvement" and represented 41%, while the percentage of answers with "no change" did not exceed 5% and the answers were absent with "made worse". This means that over time, the blessings of constant ECA participation may want to generalize beyond the ECA placing closer to educational hobbies which include in educational purpose putting carried out a longitudinal observe and discovered that steady ECA participation become related to excessive interpersonal competence, academic status, and academic aspirations.

3.2.2. Independent Sample T-Test

To determine how participation and non-participation in extracurricular activities influences pupils' grades, an independent sample t-test was conducted.

Table 4 shows that there are statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average of scholar grades of pupils participating in extracurricular activities and those who are not participating for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years for the benefit of the participating pupils. The average of scholar grades of pupil group who participate in extracurricular activities, for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years, are around 17.08/20 and 16.94/20, which are clearly higher than those of non-participating group (15.98/20 and 15.39/20). Hence, we conclude that extracurricular activities contribute to improving pupils' grades.

3.2.3. Regression Analysis Results

Table 5 shows the extent of the influence of the independent variables (number of practiced extracurricular activities and duration of practice) on the level of improvement of pupils' grades as a dependent variable. The statistic F value of (21.9) at the significance level of 0.00 indicates the good fit of the model. Hence, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H1), which states that there is a statistically significant effect for the duration and number of extracurricular activities in the level of improvement in pupils' grades. The multiple correlation coefficient R^2 of (0.375) reveals the strength of the correlation between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable, and indicates that 37.5% of the grades change is explained by the independent variables that were chosen. Further, the table

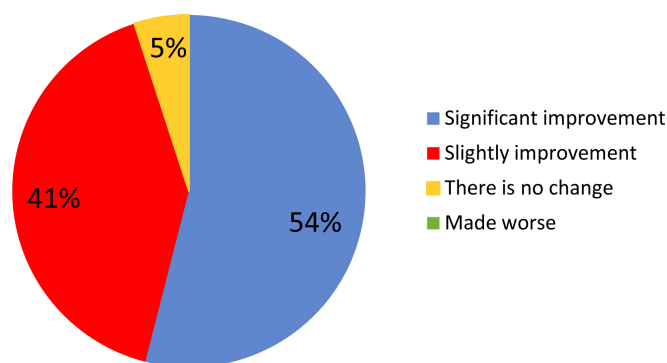


Figure 7. Pupils' evaluation to the degree of development of their school grades.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test results regarding scholar grades differences between participating pupils and non-participating pupils.

School year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-statistic	df	Sig.
2018-2019	Participants	76	17.08	0.21	3.855	123	0.00
	Non-Participants	49	15.98	0.35			
2019-2020	Participants	76	16.94	0.19	3.150	123	0.00
	Non-Participants	49	15.39	0.39			

Table 5. OLS regression analysis of the influence of pupils' participation in extracurricular activities on their grades.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t statistic	Sig.
	Coefficient	S.D		
(Constant)	1.628	0.146	11.136	0.00
The number of extracurricular activities practiced	0.367	0.08	3.694	0.00
Practice duration	0.009	0.002	4.566	0.00

$R^2 = 0.375$; $F = 21.9$; $P(F) = 0.00$

shows that the number of extracurricular activities has a positive relationship with the level of grades improvement, as the coefficient is estimated at 0.367 with a significance level of 0.00. This means that the more the pupil engages in an additional extracurricular activity, the greater the level of his grade's improvement by 36.7%. **Table 5** also shows that there is a positive relationship between the duration of practicing activities and the level of grades improvement, as the coefficient related to the duration of practice shows that the longer the duration of practicing extracurricular activities in a month, the higher the level of grades improvement by 0.9%.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of participation in

extracurricular activities on pupils' behavior and grades. The first hypothesis states that extracurricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' behavior. The findings of the study reveal that extracurricular activities develop the sense of teamwork as 67% of pupils who are participating in these activities confirmed that they prefer "always" and "often" to work within group rather than to work alone, while this percentage decreased to 30% for the non-participating pupils. These findings align with those of Eccles [5], whose study showed that extracurricular activities facilitate the acquisition of interpersonal skills and positive social norms, membership in prosocial peer groups, stronger emotional and social connections to one's educational institute. Adeyemo [6] supported the view of Eccles that extracurricular activities enhance students' social skills and teach them to work in teams and work cooperatively. In addition, the results show that pupils who are participating in extracurricular activities are less aggressive and exhibit less behavioral problems than the non-participating pupils as 86% of pupils who are practicing extracurricular activities do not use physical violence and offensive words when they are provoked, this percentage drops to 66% among the non-participating pupils which means that extracurricular activities reduce aggressive behavior. This finding corroborates with the views of ([5] [7] [8] [9]) that participation in activities increase achievement, help students to control their emotions and reduce risky behaviors. The results reveal also that extracurricular activities make students more disciplined and more responsible which is similar to the findings of the study conducted by Massoni [10] which states that extracurricular activities affect students' behavior and attitudes and make them more disciplined and obedient. The linear regression shows a significant positive relationship between the number of extracurricular activities, the duration of their practice, and the dependent variable which is the level of improvement of pupil behavior and indicates that the more the pupil engages in an additional extracurricular activity, the greater the level of his behavior improvement by 36% and that the longer the duration of practicing extracurricular activities in a month, the higher the degree of behavior improvement by 0.8%. The positive results revealed in this study concerning the influence of extracurricular activities on students' behavior have confirmed the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis states that extracurricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' scholar grades. The findings of this study show that extracurricular activities increase pupils' sense of engagement and attachment to their school as 83% of pupils who are participating in extracurricular activities answered that they like to be in school "to a very large extent" and "to a large extent", compared with 49% of non-participants pupils. This finding is in line with Wilson study [11] which reveals that participation in extracurricular activities is important for fostering school connectedness and that students who engage in these activities are more attached to their school and achieve good education results. Similarly, McGee *et al.* (2006) [12] found that students who participate in extracurricular activities show higher level of attachment towards their mates, teachers. Their work in teams helps them to build a sense of togetherness and to reduce their social an-

xiety.

The findings of the analysis reveal also that extracurricular activities increase pupils' motivation and concentration as the majority of pupils who are involved in these activities reported that they are more motivated to study than they were before and that their concentration has increased. This is supported by the view of Tavani and Losh [13] who stated that participation in extracurricular activities increases students' motivation to succeed in every aspect of life including school, improves their brain function and helps them concentrate and manage their time better. Similarly, Denault and Guay (2017) [14] found that when students are involved in extracurricular activities the levels of autonomy support from their activity leader could boost their later motivation, in both the extracurricular activities and the school contexts. This is because the more students felt that their leader provided them with choices in the activity, encouraged them to ask questions, and listened to what they would like to do, the more they perceived that school could help them achieve their personal goals. The linear regression shows a significant positive relationship between the number of extracurricular activities, the duration of their practice, and the dependent variable which is the level of improvement of pupils' grades and indicates that the more the pupil engages in an additional extracurricular activity, the greater the level of his grades improvement by 36.7% and that the longer the duration of practicing extracurricular activities in a month, the higher the level of grades improvement by 0.9%. This corresponds with the findings of Cosden *et al.* (2012) [15] which states that students who participate in extracurricular activities have three times more likely significantly higher grades and other academic achievements than those students who do not participate in extracurricular activities. Jansen (2016) [16] and Gibbons (2006) [17] found also a positive correlation between the hours that students spent in ECAs and their cumulative grade point averages. These findings highlight the importance of extracurricular activities in improving pupils' grades which confirms the second hypothesis. There were a few limitations in this study. First of all, the current study was limited to a total of 125 pupils. Hence, future studies should include more sample size in order to provide more precise data and to examine the full extent of the relationship between extracurricular activities and pupils' behaviour and grades. Another limitation is that this study didn't examine the effect of each type of extracurricular activities on pupils' results and behaviour, therefore, further research might take into consideration the type of extracurricular activity in which the pupils are participating to determine if there is a specific type of activity that is more beneficial for or strongly related to grades or behaviour than others.

5. Conclusion

The current study examines the impact of extracurricular activities on pupils' behavior and their school grades. The results show that these activities play an important role in pupils' life, as they cultivate their social development, reduce

their aggressive behavior and increase their concentration and motivation. Findings also show that extracurricular activities have a significant positive influence on pupils' academic achievement. Therefore, it is advisable for school administration to promote sustained participation in extracurricular activities and to provide training for the activity leaders in order to ensure that participation remains a positive context for pupils' development. Furthermore, all members of school community might take up the responsibility of encouraging pupils to participate in extracurricular activities.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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