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## THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AFTER CLASS ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the research paper is to investigate the impact of after-class activities on the development of children according to social, cognitive, interactive and emotional areas. To conduct this research 40 different aged students have been involved and divided into several extracurricular activity groups including art, music, craft and sport. Survey method has been utilized in order to know the responds of students. 10 questions have been prepared beforehand and half of them were asked firstly as the pre-test assessment and other half was asked at the end of the research as the post-test assessment.*

*The analyses indicated significant improvements in different domains, for instance, the sport group showed enhanced physical fitness and teamwork skills. Art and craft activities were related to improved creativity and communication, musical activities showed their effect on children's emotional well-being. The outcomes indicate that organizing after-school programs outside of school hours have positive impact and serve them develop their weak points and nurture their talents. So, educators, parents and government should recognize the significance of after-class activities and equip them with essential tools for their success.*

**Key words:** *Extracurricular activity, after-class activities.*

### INTRODUCTION

Today, it is undoubtedly true that after class activities benefit young children in many ways. It is known that those classes are organized for children in the afternoon and in the evening after they have done their classes at school. They play an important role in children's development, and the significance of this program is recognized by

many scholars and scientists. After class activities not only help the children to fill the gap in their knowledge but also enhance their abilities, overall well-being, communicative and social skills. It is not compulsory and anyone voluntarily can attend when they have extra time.

They are organized differently than traditional lessons, for example, they can take place in libraries, outside of the school like, in parks, community centers and others. Several subjects can be taught and it may include maths, writing, art, PE, music, crafts and so on. Activities can be a great way to support them in subjects that they may be having difficulty with. However, after class programs can be a fun place. Programs offered in the classes can give children an opportunity to learn something new. Besides, it may enable them to enjoy and in some cases to find a career and job that they are interested in.

Several researches have been conducted and the thing which has been found out is that after class activities may have positive impact on various aspects of children's development. For instance, when they are engaged in PE, it promoted their physical fitness, teamwork and discipline. Art craft activities improved their creativity, motor skills and when they are involved in musical programs children's emotional well-being, self-confidence and cognitive abilities fostered.

Understanding the crucial role of these programs is not only important for teachers but also for parents and policy makers, too. When the value of extracurricular activities are widely recognized, more informed decisions are made and fundings could be provided to facilitate these classes with necessary equipment and tools. These initiatives may contribute to achieve goals and success that have been put by activity organizers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used in this paper can provide readers with exact answers whether after class activities can help children perform better in both schools and social life or improve their overall well-being. So, 40 students from different classes were selected and their age was also different. Overall, 10 questions were asked in this survey method.

The respondents of the research were children aged 8-12. As I am teacher at Success center, I selected my own 40 students. First of all, I obtained parental consent from the parents of each child.

### **Procedure:**

1. Several after class activities were chosen such as, sport, art, craft and music lesson. It was based on the interests of children and recommendation of educators. The

opinions of parents were also taken in to consideration as they were the ones who are well informed about their children.

2. The selected children were assigned to 4 different after-class activity groups according to their own choice. But each group should have consisted of 10 children. The groups were as followings: sport, art, craft and music group. Every student was asked to attend after class activities which they were assigned.

3. As after class activities are scheduled three times a week at schools children were supposed to make extra time to attend to them with each sessions lasting for one and half an hour. The activities were conducted for a period of a month.

4. Before students started attending those classes all participants witnessed pre-test assessment which included questions related to cognitive abilities, social skills, physical fitness, and emotional well-being.

Questions are followings:

1. Do you face challenges when you are doing homework which was given you by your teacher?

Yes / No

2. Have you noticed that you need friendship and social interactions?

Yes / No

3. Are good at time management?

Yes / No

4. Do you think you would enjoy participating after class programs?

Yes / No

5. What is your favourite after class activity?

Art / Music / PE/ Craft

5. Following the one-month intervention period, all participants underwent a post-test assessment to measure changes in the developmental factors. The different questionnaires were used for the post-test assessment. The questions are as followings:

1. Do you think after-class activities helped you make new friends?

Yes/ No

2. Have after-class activities improved your skills or abilities in any specific area?

Yes / No

3. Do you find the classes to be enjoyable?

Yes / No

4. Are you motivated to attend the after class activities regularly?

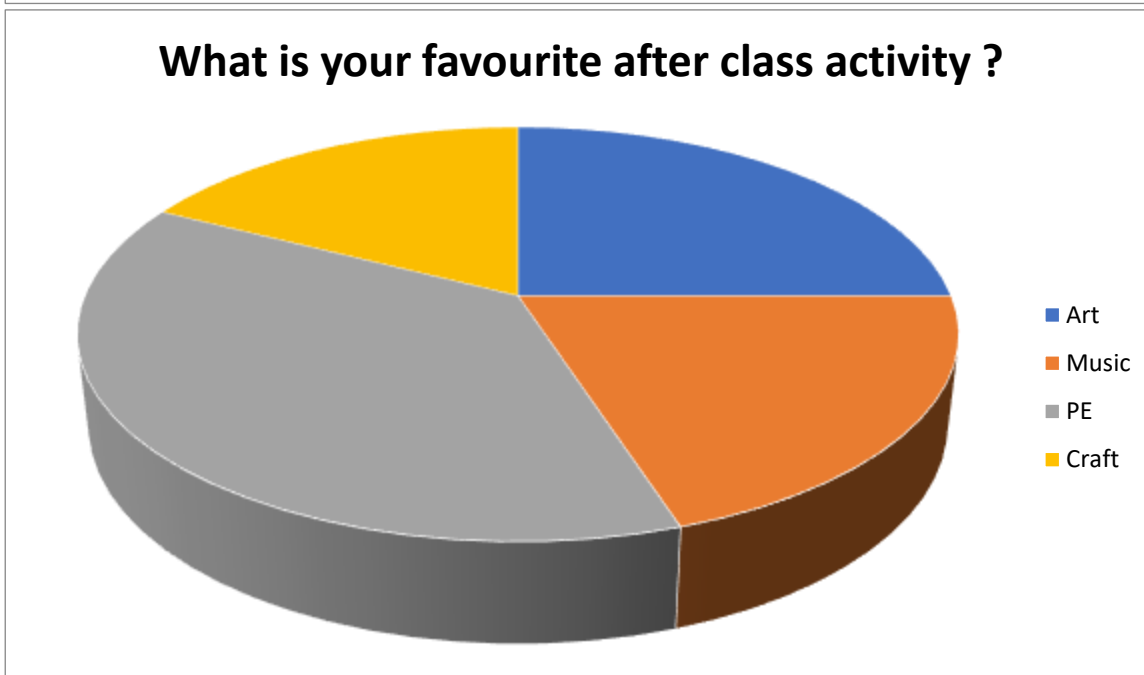
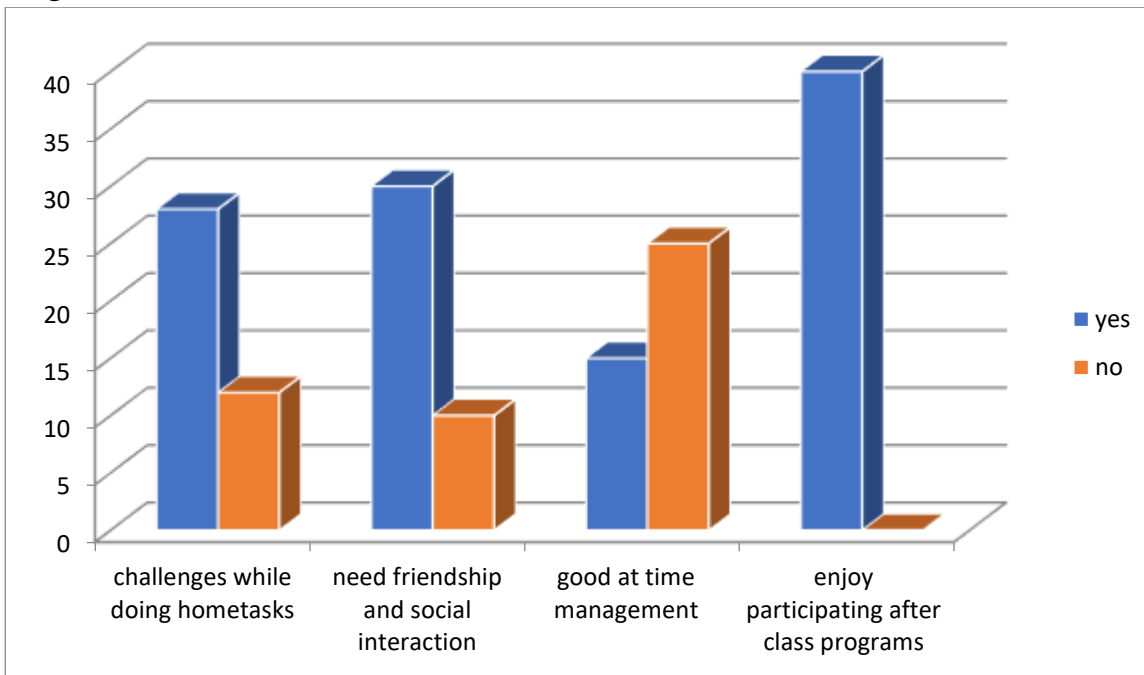
Yes / No

5. Do you believe after-class activities has helped you to perform better at school?

Yes / No

## RESULTS

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test assessments were analyzed to examine the impact of after-class activities on various aspects of children’s development. Statistical analyses were conducted to compare the different activity groups such as sport, art, craft and music. Results are illustrated utilizing quantitative method. Concerning the pre-test assessment results I intended to show it through diagram.

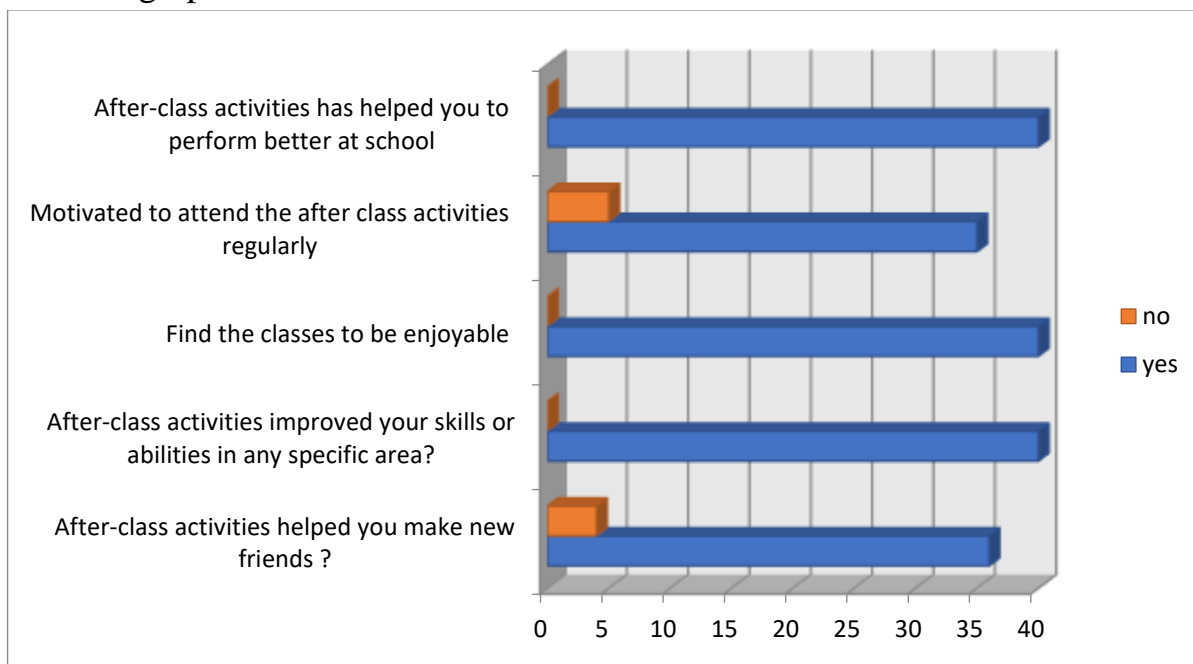


The graphs above depict data about the responds of children on different questions. It is visible that 70% of children come across some difficulties while doing the assignments whereas 30% of them said no. Likewise, 25% of the respondents

mentioned that they need more friends and expose to social interactions. This might be because of their introverted characters. But it is wonderful to find out that significantly more kids expressed with their answers that they had enough interactions with friends. Concerning the next question which was about the time management 63% of them told that they were not good at distributing their time. Finally, the last question was about their willingness to attend to after-class programs. The surprising thing was that 100% of children said they had an intention to do extracurricular activities.

The pie chart shows the percentage of subjects included in after-class programs. According to findings, 10 student favoured art, 8 of them liked musical sessions, PE likers made up 15 and 7 children chose craft. Although their numbers are not balanced they had to be divided to 4 distinct groups including 10 children.

Post-test assessment reveals following outcomes and I aimed to illustrate the results in graph form:



It is clear that results are satisfactory since students have proved the importance and effectiveness of extracurricular activities. Students participating in these activities showed improvement in their cognitive abilities. They experienced highest growth in their academic performance. The results also indicated that programs had positive effect on the development of their social abilities for example in teamwork and cooperation. Children who were involved in art and craft groups witnessed increase in their creativity and communication skills. The music group showed considerable improvement in their emotional well-being. Significant enhancement in physical fitness was also observed in sport group. All in all, results showed that these activities

play an important role in children's cognitive abilities, social skills, physical fitness and emotional well-being.

## **DISCUSSION**

The outcome of this study proves that extracurricular activities are crucial for enhancing kids' growth in different areas. Involving children in extracurricular activities can improve their physical, social and cognitive capacities. Furthermore, kids who engaged in sport on a regular basis during a month benefited from opportunities for physical activities. Children's mental well-being was also positively affected by music related activities, too.

However, there are some contradictory arguments to this issue. Unfortunately, making children too busy with such kind of activities cause them to get bored with their school and studies. Whenever students are overscheduled and under stress they may be prone to frustration, anxiety, and exhaustion.

According to David (1985) there are some children who studies when they are under control or being supervised, others may end up achieving their success and their goals independently without being pushed. Criticism of extracurricular activities is that they put restrictions within the life of children. Carl (2008) states that children should have freedom to make choices and develop their own ideas.

Overparenting is other problem which is concerned by others. Bernstein, Gaia; Zvi, Triger (2010) mention that after class activities are one symptom of overparenting. In overparenting parents have a tendency to heavily monitor their children's schedule for the sake of improving their overall academic performance at school. In the result, it may leave a long lasting impact on children leading them to consider themselves as having low self-esteem, stress and anxiety-related disorders. In her study Madeline (2006) examined the effects of after-class activities on children from socioeconomically privileged families. She detected that children of wealthy families have tendency to suffer from psychological disorders such as stress and depression.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the results of this study provide evidence for the significance of after-class programs in improving children's development. Involving students in scheduled activities outside of constant school hours has indicated positive impact on cognitive abilities, social skills physical fitness, and emotional well-being of kids, especially participants in sport based activities fostered teamwork skills, cooperation and problem solving skills. Without any doubt these skills will be essential for them in various spheres of life in the future.

The thing which can not be neglected is the effect of art and musical activities in creativity, communication and emotional expression. Engaging kids in these kind of

activities enable them to explore and go beyond their imagination, they develop better motor skills, and help them express their inside world.

After-school programs should not be school and shouldn't feel like school or homework. They are often environment where kids can act freely and more open, allowing kids to be themselves and easily come across other like-minded kids. These programs give kids the opportunity to express and practice their social skills. Look for spaces that foster this environment and let kids experiment and even fail.

On the other hand, there have been numerous scientists who did not advocate the advantages of extracurricular programs by indicating their factors. At all times as they said after class activities can not be beneficial for all kids. It may have negative impact on some students but for some it could have positive effect. Not all students need being controlled. They do best and show their potential when they work independently without their teachers and parents. There are also some kids who do not think about their studies until they are told to do so.

In other cases, overscheduling students with so many activities can cause physical and mental diseases such as stress and tiredness. But the disadvantages of extracurricular activities can be overcome by the plus points of them.

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