# Views of Saudi Teachers and Students on Being Involved in School-based Extracurricular Activities Available at Secondary Schools

**PhD**

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## Abstract

There is widespread agreement that life success requires more than academic learning. Modern schools go further by developing social and personal skills, for example through extracurricular activities (ECAs). This current study, in Saudi boys' secondary schools, had two objectives. Firstly, to explore the perceived impact of the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs on students' personal and social development and feelings of belonging to school from the perspective of ecological systems theory. Secondly, to identify challenges associated with implementing these ECAs and to explore strategies for overcoming them, through the lens of the hierarchical leisure constraints model.

The study uses an explanatory sequential design. Survey responses were collected from male students (447), exploring the perceived impact of the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs on their personal and social development and feelings of belonging to school. Twelve students took part in focus groups, to understand these aspects in more detail. A total of 323 male teachers responded to a survey exploring implementation challenges, and 12 ECAs leaders were interviewed about strategies for overcoming these challenges. Survey data were analysed statistically, and interviews were thematically analysed. The results show that the boys assess participation as providing a rich environment for experiencing various personal and social skills; there are significant correlations between specific types of activities and reported development of particular personal and interpersonal skills. However, the study did not reveal any significant differences in students' reported sense of school belonging in relation to any key variables. Teachers identified budgetary constraints, facility limitations, teachers' heavy teaching workloads and scheduling conflicts as major obstacles to implementation.

Implications are that schools could consider extending and diversifying ECAs to go beyond school time, and from traditional to academic-focused activities. The latter may align with students' and parents' priority of preparing for higher education, for this age group. This study also suggests a need for further research on access to ECAs in Saudi girls' schools. The findings may be helpful not only in Saudi schools but also in other Middle Eastern countries.

# Declaration

***I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.***

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# Chapter One

# 1 Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Study Background

The new trend of education philosophy is centred on the assumption that "*all things need to be seen in their wholeness rather than in fragmented and detached ways*" (Saw, 2013). The purpose of this trend in education is to prepare students holistically to encounter the challenges of current real-life situations by giving them practical experiences mixed with the academic content of curriculum. It is thus important to comprehend that a holistic approach in education primarily aims to keep a balance between the whole and the part. While in traditional education the emphasis is only on the part by separating the school curriculum into units of study, subjects and single lessons (Neves, 2009). The problem, however, with this traditional approach is that school educators might struggle to connect the subjects taught and classroom lessons to meaningful concepts. Likewise, students may find it difficult to apply what they have been taught in individual lessons, and thus, they cannot relate their learning skills with the whole picture of the real world. Eventually students will finish their education without a proper understanding of how their educational experience can be integrated into the employment experience. Simply because they have been adapted to view their education as segmented units, without exposing them to an active challenge to relate the subjects being taught to the wider experience. Whereas, in holistic education, the student is positioned as a critical learner and an active participant rather than a passive recipient of the knowledge (Mahmoudi, 2012), while teachers also tend to interweave learning experiences with subjects and lessons, so the connections among school curriculums can thus be clearly tangible to students. This approach would facilitate the school curriculums to be more coherent for students which in turn helps them to incorporate their education knowledge in the context of their everyday life. However, the issue is that the current educational paradigms in several developing countries, as is the case with Saudi Arabia, rely on measurable learning standards wherein learners are prepared to memorise information from textbooks and then take placement examinations (Alhammad, 2015). Therefore, this approach may not be practically effective for learners to prepare for their future employment, and perhaps it may be psychologically exhausting for some students.

Moreover, the school role is no longer just about teaching measurable skills, but it can go further than that in integrating thinking skills and activities by applying inclusive ways of working with cross-curricular content. From the holistic view, it is the learner's active participation that is deemed to be the main incentive that is conducive to gaining experience

(Mikelsone et al., 2017). The greatest benefit of the holistic education approach is that it equips students with the tools to succeed not only academically, but also in the real world. It can cultivate principles and ethics within students, as well as supporting them in discovering their strengths, interests and talents that are restricted or unexplored in the traditional education approach. Students particularly tend to thrive in fields that meet their ambitions. So for as much as possible, school should strive to find suitable outlets to meet students' interests. Thus, one such method of achieving this view is the introduction of extracurricular activities in school. Getnet and Mekonen (2015) have noted that these extracurricular activities are vital to the development of all-round skills in education, thus meaning that schools have to offer a range of extracurricular programs to help students achieve holistic development. However, Nelson et al. (2017) assured that teachers' participation in the extracurricular activities plays a pivotal role in securing the success of these programs, just like the way they engage in core subjects.

The stability and economic prosperity of any nation is reliant on the people's capability to think as an educated society. To achieve the status of a developed country, Saudi policymakers have aimed to introduce government-driven goals in schools across Saudi Arabia. The key objective is to develop socio-economic understanding in students and equip them with practical experiences and required competencies to become productive members of society. In recent years, the government of Saudi Arabia has been working on a program called the National Transformation Program "Saudi Vision 2030". This program is aimed mainly to develop the governmental sectors, including the education sector. One of the goals of the program is to empower young people to lead socio-economic changes in Saudi society by improving their social awareness, generic skills and knowledge. According to the strategy of the National Transformation Program (NTP ,2016) real wealth will be generated through the development of the younger generation. They are the country's pride and will outline the country's future. For this reason, the government is devoted to further developing young talent and their capabilities.

Secondary school is considered one of the important stages in the lives of many students. In this stage, students are full of energy to try new things, learn new skills, and develop new passions. Therefore, they need to be provided with appropriate activities to maximise their potentials. School based extracurricular activities can provide students with room to fulfill their developmental needs. By taking part in such activities, students are offered numerous important outlets to the current world. It gives them challenges, alternative learning resources, and real-life experiences. These activities have no direct association with the prescribed curriculum and

can include activities like sports teams, competitive academics, art and drama clubs, scouting, trips, debates, community service and numerous other activities that aim to promote general social and physical changes in young people. Participation in school extracurricular activities is widely acknowledged as an integral part of the student life experience and as a technique for students to learn core skills and to apply their school knowledge in real-life situations. It is significant for schools to take into account the impact of participation in these activities on students' overall development (Stirling & Kerr, 2015; Xu, 2017). However, in the Saudi context, access to and the quality of extracurricular activities can be influenced by various factors that contribute to inequality among students. Here are some factors that may play a role:

1. Gender Disparities: Historically, gender segregation has been prevalent in Saudi society, impacting access to extracurricular activities. While efforts have been made to expand opportunities for girls in recent years, disparities may still exist, particularly in traditionally male-dominated activities such as sport (Aljehani et al., 2022; Alghamdi, 2016).

2. Socio-economic Status: Families with higher socio-economic status often have greater resources to enroll their children in private extracurricular programs or provide transportation to participate in activities outside of school. This can widen the gap in access to enriching experiences for students from lower-income backgrounds (Al-Nuaim & Safi, 2023).

3. Regional Disparities: Disparities in access may also exist between urban and rural areas. Urban centres like Riyadh and Jeddah may offer more diverse extracurricular opportunities compared to rural areas, where resources and infrastructure may be limited (Al-Nuaim & Safi, 2023).

4. Educational Institutions: Disparities in the availability and quality of extracurricular activities can also stem from differences between public and private educational institutions. Private schools often have more resources to offer a wider range of activities, while public schools may struggle to provide the same level of enrichment (Alfnifie, 2012).

Addressing these inequalities requires concerted efforts from policymakers, educators, and communities to ensure equitable access to extracurricular opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, or geographic location. This may involve

investing in infrastructure, expanding programs in underprivileged areas, and promoting inclusivity and diversity in activity offerings.

Promoting students' participation in school extracurricular activities and community clubs is one of the top priorities of "Saudi Vision 2030" related to the education sector and youth development. However, according to the statistical figures provided by the National Transformation Program (NTP ,2016) students' participation in extracurricular activities is at a low level, and only 15% of students participate in such activities. Therefore, this current percentage should be increased to 55% by the end of 2030. This issue created a wave of argument among those interested in education reforms and triggered the decision makers of Saudi public education to apply intentional efforts in order to engage more students in these activities (Basnawi, 2016). To achieve this target, the provision of school extracurricular activities in public schools has become an important program of Saudi Education. Since 2017, the Ministry of Education declared that extracurricular activities should be provided in schools with the intention to foster students' developmental needs and cultivate a sense of belonging to the country among students, and to be self-reliant and responsible (Ministry of Education, 2017). Through the proper provision of meaningful activities, youth in Saudi Arabia can thrive successfully in school and community environments and be ready to lead socio- economic changes in Saudi society.

### 1.2 Policy of Saudi Education related to school extracurricular activities

The Saudi community considers the Ministry of Education as one of the most important government bodies responsible for caring for young people either inside or outside schools. In this regard the Ministry has sought to provide youth with opportunities that satisfy their developmental needs. One of these opportunities is extracurricular activity programs that the ministry is interested in implementing in schools. In doing that, the ministry issued guidance aimed at explaining regulations related to the implementation of these programs in schools. These regulations including the following:

1. Encouraging student participation in extracurricular activities sponsored by schools that are carried both inside and outside schools.
2. Designating more time for practising extracurricular activities in schools, ranging from one to four hours per week.
3. School activity leaders are responsible for implementing these activities, and teachers share the responsibility if necessary.

4. School can engage experienced people including students' parents, community leaders and retirees in organising these activities.
5. Participation is optional for students and they have the freedom to choose any type of activity that suits their needs and interests.
6. Participation requires consent of student's parent, and it is subject to places availability (Ministry of Education, 2017).

According to the Guideline Booklet of School Activities issued in 2017, school extracurricular activities comprise a range of programs and activities that are designed to develop life skills in students and broaden their experiences and knowledge. Among these programs are; cultural activity programs, artistic activity programs, sports activity programs, scientific activity programs, family and community programs and scouting activity programs. Through the provision of these programs, the Ministry of Education seeks to achieve the following aims:

1- Promoting Islamic values and national identity in students.
2- Promoting moral values and positive behaviour in students.
3- Providing students with opportunity that satisfy their own interest and developmental needs.
4- Building resilience in students and developing their personality to be successful in their future lives.
5- Improving students' wellbeing and providing them with skills and experience that are necessary for life.
6- Creating a productive generation through enhancing professional inclinations in students.
7- Celebrating national day and events, service weeks and international days.
8- Opening communication and interaction channels between school and family and community.

The "One Hour Activity Plan" is a term used by the Ministry of Education to refer to a scheme which facilitates engagement in school-based extracurricular activities typically for one hour during the school day or at the end of the school day if the activity requires more time to run. According to the guideline booklet for school activities, school ECAs are gatherings that bring students together who share similar interests in a particular type of ECAs within school scope under the supervision of a figure who is qualified in the relevant activity. The "One Hour Activity Plan" shares similarities with other forms of extracurricular activities, but also has distinctive features.

Similarities:

1. Enrichment: like other extracurricular activities, the "One Hour Activity" Plan aims to enrich students' experiences beyond the regular curriculum.

2. Skill Development: it is intended to offer opportunities for students to develop various skills, such as leadership, teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking. This is also the case with some (but perhaps not all) other ECAs.

3. Social Interaction: Students engage with coaches, teachers and peers outside of the classroom which can foster social connections and networks.

4. Personal Growth: Similar to other extracurriculars, the "One Hour Activity" Plan encourages personal growth by challenging students to step out of their comfort zones and pursue their interests.

5. Participation is academically not compulsory and participants are not entitled to earn academic credit unlike co-curricular activities that require students to participate for the purpose of meeting certain academic requirements.

Differences:

1. Time Commitment: unlike some extracurricular activities that may require more extensive time commitments, the "One Hour Activity Plan" is designed to be concise, fitting into a one-hour time frame.

2. Accessibility: its shorter duration may make it more accessible to students with busy schedules or multiple commitments.

3. Focus: the "One Hour Activity Plan" may have a more focused or specific objective within its one-hour time frame compared to broader extracurricular activities.

4. Flexibility: Due to its shorter duration, it may offer more flexibility in terms of scheduling and participation, allowing students to explore different interests within a limited time frame.

Overall, while the "One Hour Activity Plan" shares common goals and benefits with several other extracurricular activities, its unique structure and emphasis on efficiency sets it apart in terms of accessibility and focus. However, since the introduction of the "One Hour Activity plan" in 2017, it has received a wave of criticism from those working in the education field; some of them welcomed this plan as a useful opportunity for students to learn new skills and

explore their potentials, while others see it as an improvised decision taken hastily without considering the current situation of some schools particularly those run in rented buildings. For example, some teachers indicated that the "One Hour Activity plan" ECAs has been made without even conducting a field report to evaluate the readiness of schools for implementing extracurricular activity programs in terms of infrastructural facilities and financial resource (Alghasham, 2017). From another perspective some parents also expressed their worries that extending school day hours might cause their children to feel hungry and get tired in light of the poor quality of food provided in schools' cafeterias (Obaid, 2017).

### 1.3 Background of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a country in the Middle East, with the capital Riyadh located in its centre. KSA is found between the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf. The country shares its northern-most boarders with Kuwait, Iraq and Jordon and its southern boarders with Oman and Yemen. To the east are the countries of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, see Figure 1.1. KSA comprises five provinces. In the centre is *Al- Wosttah*, which is noted for its agriculture. In the west, *Algharbiah* is located next to the Red Sea; it houses the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah and has the largest port city in the country called Jeddah. In the east is the Al-*Sharqhiyah* province, which is famous for its oil reserves, refineries and the country's petrochemical industry. *Al-Janoob* is in the south and is located on mountain ranges which are a welcome summer refuge from the heat; this area collects more rainfall than the rest of the country. Lastly, in the north is *Al-Shamal*, the province that has the largest mineral deposits in the country. KSA covers the majority of the Arabian Peninsula and contains the World's largest desert, called the Empty Quarter (Rub Al-Khali). With such a large landmass, the country contains forest and grasslands in the south and deserts in the east and north (Alabdulaziz, 2019).

The population of Saudi Arabia is estimated to be 34.1 million according to a report issued by Saudi General Authority for Statistics in 2021. Most of the population are Muslims whose their social and cultural principles are deeply rooted in Islamic and Bedouin heritage. The Islamic heritage has shaped Saudi Arabia into a rich and diverse culture. Since Islam was introduced in the 7th Century AD the country has become an important pilgrimage site for Muslims around the World. For 14 centuries these pilgrims have travelled to Saudi Arabia to further enrich the country's culture (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington, 2023). The country is a constitutional monarchy, based on Sharia laws, which themselves are derived from the Holy

Book "Qur'an". The country is governed by a Council of Ministers, and is led by the King, who heads the executive and administrative bodies of the government (Alabdulaziz, 2019).

**Figure 1.1**

*The Map of Saudi Arabia*


Source: Alabdulaziz (2019)

## 1.4 Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

School is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 to 15 years, and most pupils study in state funded classrooms. There are three educational stages that each child passes through: with 6 years in Primary school, followed by 3 years in Intermediate and finally 3 years in Secondary school (Alfaraidy, 2020). Students are required to complete all three stages before they can go to university. Classes are divided into different subjects, with Islamic studies, science, administrative, social, and cultural studies. All students are segregated by gender (Alabdulaziz, 2019), and the total number of pupils in 2022 reached 6.3 million across 43,200 schools according to the latest statistics reported by the Saudi Ministry of Education (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2023). More recently the education curriculum has been expanded by the Ministry of Education to allow families to register their children in British and American international schools that use English as the primary language. This has become a popular

avenue for those parents who are keen for their children to receive a more international education (Alfaraidy, 2020). Over a period of 16 years from 2006 the number of international schools has grown to meet demand, from 170 to 2,700 in 2022, with most schools being located in the larger cities (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2023). The Saudi government and education authorities have recognised the need to adopt a more international curriculum for Saudi students in order to open their society to the rest of the world, and in response to internal and external pressure (Makhlouf, 2021). For example, at the time when extremist viewpoints in Saudi Arabia and some parts of the world had prevailed, many countries had applied pressure to KSA to open up to more liberal ideas and include these in its schools' curriculum (Habbash 2011). At the national pressure the Saudi private sector has expressed concerns over the fact that the Saudi education system has failed to equip Saudi students with practical knowledge needed to face the challenges associated with rapid economic developments and changes going around the world (Rugh 2002).

The government has responded to these changing priorities by recognising the importance of education with an international flavour and has gone to great lengths to improve the system for the modern age. One such reform is the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project known as ''Tatweer'' (Alabdulaziz, 2019). However, despite these initiatives, the quality of education has been criticised. For example, the continued requirement to rote memorise facts and figures is seen as outdated and should be replaced by the teaching of critical thinking and other analytical skills in which more emphasis is placed on understanding and argument development rather than pure memory. The traditional method of requiring students to remember information read in a textbook does not provide them with skills for critical and creative thinking, in being able to express their opinions with reasoned argument and in explaining the background behind country and world events (Alkahtani, 2015). Alnofaie (2013) suggested that the more traditional and inflexible methods of teaching, which may have served the country well historically, are now outdated, and that it is more relevant to learn the skills necessary in today's society in order to attain gainful employment and create economic value for the country. Recently, Saudi Arabia's "Saudi National Transformation Program," also known as Saudi "Vision 2030," has made education reform one of its pillars in an effort to address the persistent educational issues faced in Saudi schools. One of its most important demands is to connect Saudi Arabia's economic growth with education (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020).

## 1.5 Secondary System Schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Secondary school education in Saudi Arabia lasts for three years (age level 15-18 – in other words grades 10-12) and it leads to the secondary school diploma "Tawjihiyah". The examination of the secondary school diploma is unified and held nationwide simultaneously. Students can choose between universities and technical schools after the secondary level. In the first year of general secondary school, students share a common curriculum. The final two years are divided into five tracks; general track, computer science track, engineering track, business administration track and the track of health and life. The students choose a track that suits their inclinations and abilities, and provides them with modern skills and competencies, which help them to be ready to complete post-secondary education. Students obtaining a score of 80 % and above in the average' score of the final 2 year subjects may choose between universities or technical schools. However, students obtaining a score of less than 80 % must opt for technical schools. In fact, secondary school stage is considered a turning point in the life of many Saudi students, because they face significant academic pressures as they prepare for university entrance exams. During this critical period, the focus on academic achievement intensifies, with the ultimate goal of securing admission to prestigious universities both domestically and internationally.

The high academic demands during the secondary stage often leave little time and energy for students to engage fully in extracurricular activities. Many students and parents prioritise academic studies above all else, fearing that any distraction may compromise their chances of success in university entrance exams. Despite these challenges, there is growing acknowledgment of the importance of extracurricular activities in Saudi Arabia's educational landscape. Schools, parents, and policymakers are gradually recognising that involvement in extracurricular activities enhances students' interpersonal skills, leadership abilities, and overall academic performance. As a result, efforts are being made to strike a balance between academic pursuits and extracurricular engagement, ensuring that students are adequately prepared for both the academic rigors of university and the challenges of the modern workforce.

## 1.6 Saudi Vision

The Saudi Vision 2030 is a transformative roadmap aimed at spearheading economic and social reform in Saudi Arabia (Saudi Vision 2030, 2023). Developed by the Saudi Council of Economic and Development Affairs it is focussed on three primary areas of improvement: a thriving economy, an ambitious nation, and a vibrant society (Saudi Vision 2030, 2023). It has

been developed in response to those international organisations, for example, the World Bank, that have suggested Saudi Arabia should look beyond oil and diversify its economic development in order to be prepared for the future. In particular, public spending and direct subsidies to the Saudi citizens should be decoupled from oil related revenues, which are becoming more volatile (Moshashai et al., 2020). There is now general recognition amongst Saudi leaders that the economy needs to develop into a more knowledge-based approach, rather than continuing to rely on oil production and refinement. The link between the drive for education reform and future economic development is an initiative to resolve social and economic issues that persist in the kingdom, and hence the need for Saudi vision 2030 (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020).

The vision places importance on preparing students for life in a more competitive and global labour market and to encourage them to meet higher than average international education standards. The Saudi Vision 2030 report (2023) says:

> *Our goal is to provide education that promotes economic development. The gap between higher education's outputs and the demands of the labour market will be closed. Additionally, we will prepare our students and ease their transition between various educational paths while assisting them in making thoughtful professional decisions. We will work with our pupils to help them outperform worldwide education indicators results. To do this, we will create a contemporary curriculum that emphasizes strict criteria for the development of skills, character, and literacy (p. 40).*

Now, the Saudi Ministry of Education is examining how to change the educational system in order to carry out the national aspirations outlined in the Vision 2030. Advocates should work to promote change on a national scale. To prepare Saudi students for entering a worldwide workforce, all Saudi teachers should be motivated by this degree of understanding of change to engage in successful change processes. Teachers need to be aware of the value of participating in the transformation of education, and they should grasp how their work affects the Vision 2030 objectives regardless of their gender or the age of the students they teach (Makhlouf, 2021).

## 1.7 Purpose of the Study

It is believed that the secondary stage of education is a turning point in the life of many students. Therefore, most high schools in advanced education systems around the world are interested in providing students with extracurricular activity programs that are designed to facilitate the acquisition of a wide range of academic and social skills. However, according to Alfnifie (2012) several Saudi high schools do not make efforts to provide constructive activities for students to enhance their developmental needs, interests and core skills, which may deprive Saudi students of meaningful opportunities to unleash their talents. That statement is supported by recent statistical figures provided in the National Transformation Program report (NTP, 2016) that shows students' participation in extracurricular activities is at a low level, with only 15% of students participating in such activities. This statistic triggered the decision makers of Saudi public education to expend efforts to engage more students in these activities. As a result, in 2017 the Ministry of Education put a plan called "One Hour Activity" ECAs aimed to promote students' participation in extracurricular activities sponsored by schools. As there are no solid results regarding the consequences of implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in Saudi secondary schools so far, it is worthwhile to investigate its consequences on students' development and to understand the challenges faced by schools in implementing this plan. **This study has two purposes**. The first purpose is to explore the perceived impact of introducing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs on students personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school. The second purpose is to identify the challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in Saudi secondary schools and to explore the strategies used by ECA leaders for overcoming these challenges and improving the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in secondary schools.

## 1.8 Research Objectives

The following objectives will lead the present research:

- To identify challenges associated with the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" during the school day.
- To examine students' perceptions on the impact of participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" on their social and personal development.
- To examine students' perceptions on the effect of participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" on their sense of belonging to school.
- To explore strategies used by teachers on the challenges associated with implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools?

## 1.9 Research Questions

It has been argued that extracurricular activity programmes may have positive influence on students' social and personal development and their sense of belonging to school. It is thus important to identify the potential challenges that may prevent schools from providing such activities to students. Therefore, the research will address the subsequent questions:

1. What challenges do teachers report encountering in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan"?
2. What (if any) social and personal skills do students perceive to be gained through participation in "One Hour Activity Plan"?
3. To what extent is participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" associated with a reported sense of school belonging among students?
4. How does participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" influence students' personal and social skills and their sense of belonging to school?
5. What strategies do teachers make for overcoming the challenges associated with the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in secondary schools?

# Chapter Two

# 2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature relevant to the study is presented. The chapter will begin with the discussion of ECA definition in relation to the extracurricular activities that are provided in the context of Saudi schools. This will be followed by the potential theoretical frameworks of the study. Two frameworks (ecological systems theory and the model of hierarchical leisure constraints) are selected because they show the inclusiveness and applicability to guide the study. The literature regarding the impact of participation in ECAs on young people's development has been examined through the lens of ecological systems theory. The studies reviewed in this chapter show that school extracurricular activities can provide useful developmental contexts for improving young people's social, emotional and academic development.

The main aim of the current study is to examine the perceptions of Saudi secondary students on the impact of participation in ECAs "One Hour Activity Plan" on their social and personal development. However, most of the available studies focus on the academic outcomes of ECAs participation and tend to overlook the fact that many ECA were initially created based on the idea that young people's participation in such activities would be beneficial for their personal and social development. Therefore, further studies are needed to evaluate the outcomes of ECAs participation on young people's social and personal skills. In fact, through a review of the literature the researcher found a few studies that have considered this gap, especially the outcomes of ECAs that are offered to young people after school hours. The findings of these studies indicate that participation in ECAs can offer different opportunities to experience specific social or personal skills. However, this variation can be affected by several factors, such as the type of activities, length and frequency of participation. While there are many potential social and academic benefits that young people can gain from participation in extracurricular activities, some studies also suggest that over-scheduling participation can have negative impacts on young people's academic, psychological and physical development.

The second main aim of the current study is to identify challenges associated with the implementation of the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan". Therefore, in this literature survey, the model of hierarchical leisure constraints is employed to investigate barriers to students' participation in extracurricular activities and their provision within schools. The

studies reviewed in this chapter indicate that structural constraints (such as schools' lack of equipment and financial resources) are the factors that most hinder schools' ability to provide ECAs. This is followed by interpersonal constraints (such as parents' negative perception toward ECAs, lack of friends and peer pressure), and finally intrapersonal constraints (such as lack of knowledge and lack of interest).

At the end of the chapter, the study's contribution to the literature is explained. According to current literature, most of the studies on the impact of participation in extracurricular activities are conducted quantitatively and mostly focused on the academic benefits of the ECA involvement, with less attention paid to the social and personal skills that students may gain through partaking in such activities. Therefore, there is need to address this gap.

## 2.2 Definition of Extracurricular Activities

There are several terms that are common in practitioners' society to refer to activities under supervision of schools, such as non-academic, extracurricular, co-curricular, non-classroom, recreational, enrichment, allied, extra class, socialising and enhancement activities, but none of them have a firm basis in scholarly literature either in terms of definitions or classifications except two terms namely extracurricular and co-curricular. However, both of the two terms have been used interchangeably across many previous studies, meaning the distinction between them is thus extremely ambiguous in practice. For example, in western countries, such as the United States, the term "extracurricular activities" is common, while in some parts of the world, the term "co-curricular activities" is more academically accepted to describe the same activities (Leung & Wong, 2017).

Jamal (2012) indicated that there has been no academic consensus about the term extracurricular activities. Every education system has its own objectives and policy, and thus it can be argued that the lack of accepted concept of extracurricular activity between scholars is attributed to activity objectives that certain education systems aim to achieve. Bartkus et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the literature to identify the meaning of both co-curricular and extracurricular activities. This study uncovered marked variability in the term's use, definition, measurement, and meaning, often with no clear definition. Based on their analysis of the literature review, they suggested the following definitions:

> *Extracurricular activities are defined as academic or non-academic activities that are conducted under the auspices of the school but occur outside of normal classroom time*

*and are not part of the curriculum. Additionally, extracurricular activities do not involve a grade or academic credit and participation is optional on the part of the student. On the other hand, "A co-curricular activity is one that requires a student's participation outside of normal classroom time as a condition for meeting a curricular requirement (p.699).*

In light of the above definitions, it can now be noticed that co-curricular activities are similar to extracurricular activities in which they are both provided to students outside of the time of the normal classroom, and they are both organised under the supervision of the schools. However, the difference is that participation in co-curricular activities is academically required, meaning that these activities are formally included in the regular school curriculum and participants are graded and can earn academic credit (Bartkus et al., 2012). For example, assuming the case where a student is weak in math, and in order to improve his or her academic level, the student is required to take part in math club that takes place outside the classroom time. In this case, participation in math club is considered a co-curricular activity.

In this current study, the term "extracurricular" is used because school activities in the Saudi education system: a) include a combination of academic and non-academic activities, meaning that these activities are not only learning oriented but also for promoting skills building; b) participation is academically not compulsory, and participants are not entitled to earn academic credit unlike co-curricular activities that require students to participate for the purpose of meeting certain academic requirements; and c) participation requires consent of the student's parent and it is subject to places availability, suggesting that not all students take part in these varieties of programs and activities.

According to Balyer and Gunduz (2012), extracurricular activities sponsored by school are varieties of optional opportunities (including excursion, sport and art competitions, scouting, music, folklore shows, school newspaper, theatre, exhibitions, tennis, basketball, creative drama and academic clubs) provided to students inside or outside school within a plan after classes time as strategic tools that are provided to students inside or outside school within a plan after classes time as strategic tools that assist in promoting students' social and academic development. Furthermore, Mahoney et al. (2004) outlined some additional components that are key to the contexts of extracurricular activities: a) physical and psychological safety – providing secure facilities and safe practices that discourages unsafe health practices and foster

safe peer interactions; b) opportunities for belonging – maintaining a social environment that emphasises on including all members of an activity regardless of their individual differences in ethnicity, gender and cultural values; c) positive social norms; promoting prosocial attitudes and values; d) support for efficacy and mattering – promoting independence through encouraging individual expression and enabling individuals to undertake challenging responsibilities; and e) opportunity for skill building – providing individuals with opportunities for improving their intellectual, psychological, social and physical skills, which would contribute to boost wellbeing.

## 2.3 Theoretical Frameworks

Selecting a theory for guiding this study project has been a challenging task, because there are several different theories to select from and each one has its own strengths and weaknesses. Four theories (ecological systems theory, hierarchical leisure constraints model, positive youth development approach (PYD) and the capability approach) were considered to guide this current study. To settle the issue of which theories are relevant to this study, the researcher reflected on the study's questions and the researcher found two appropriate theories: ecological systems theory and the model of hierarchical leisure constraints. They are rooted in the field of ECAs and can help one to understand the role of participation in extracurricular activities on students' social and personal development, and to explain how students' participation and the provision of such activities can be affected by other factors. For example, the ecological systems theory conceptualises extracurricular activities as developmental contexts (microsystems) where students can experience new personal and social skills and enhance their overall development. However, this experience may be influenced by other contextual factors (such as coaches, peers, parents and social norms) which can be beneficial or conversely damaging to his/her development. This example shows how the ecological systems theory is more comprehensive in terms of covering the study aspects than the other mentioned theories, that is, the capability approach and the positive youth development approach (PYD). The next few sections summarise the possible theoretical frameworks, evaluate their potential for the current study, and lead to the adoption of ecological systems theory and the hierarchical leisure constraints model.

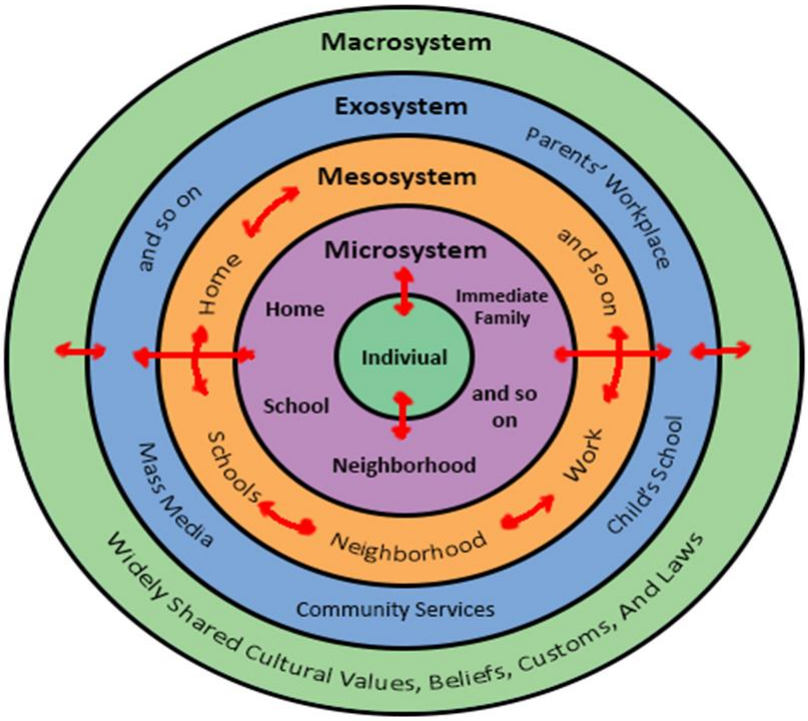
### 2.3.1 Theory of ecological systems

The current theories of human development view development as an ongoing progression and part of a multi-layered process, based on a series of interactions between individuals and the

environmental contexts in which they interrelate (Peppler, 2017). One of these theories is ecological systems theory. Ecological systems theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner, (1979) can provide a framework to understand one's environment by dividing it into different levels or systems that interact and affect one another. Several recent studies in the field of extracurricular activity have been guided by Bronfenbrenner's theory to investigate the connection between engagement in extracurricular activity and adolescent development (Gilman et al., 2004; Feldman, & Matjasko, 2005; Fischer et al., 2014; Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2014). The underlying principle of the model of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that human development takes place in an interactional and dynamic context that exerts influence upon development. The model takes into account physical, biological and sociocultural settings and their influence upon the process of an individual' development.

**Figure 2.1**

*The structure of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory*




Source: Psychology Wiki (2023)

As depicted in Figure 2.1, the centre of the system represents the individual; there is influential interaction between the individual and outer layers of the system. These layers are described as follows:

1. The microsystem is the first layer of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecological systems. It is the immediate surroundings in which the individual interacts with and is influenced. The microsystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979), is a pattern of roles, activities and interpersonal connections that a growing individual goes through in a given setting with specific physical and material qualities. It is the immediate physical and social environment in which a child is situated. The microsystem has the strongest impact on individual development and can create experiences which can be extremely beneficial nurturing, or conversely be damaging to his/her development (Rogoff, 2003). Examples of microsystem settings include the individual's home, school and neighbourhood. People who play a key role in these microsystem settings are parents, teachers and peers/friends. The way the individual responds and acts towards these people will determine how he or she is treated by them and vice versa. The first microsystem setting in which the individual would interact with is the home environment, when the individual grows older, he would experience other microsystem settings such as the school environment, where he would be able to meet new individuals, socialise with them, develop personal and social skills and build social networks.

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) state that a large part of a student's day is spent in microsystems. Students interact and come into contact with members of school staff and their fellow students, each of whom has their own distinct character, outlook and nature. These types of traits either allow, encourage or discourage interpersonal relationships and actions within the immediate environment. According to Metsäpelo and Pulkinnen (2014), extracurricular activities organised by schools can be seen as a major developmental context, or microsystem, in the lives of students. This is because students are not merely impacted by the nature of their home and school, but also by the range of developmental activities they experience whether inside or outside the school setting, and the communication that arises across different settings

The beneficial change in the microsystem context is essential for the individual's development. For instance, a positive change in the microsystem may affect students' developmental experiences. A study conducted by Posner and Vandell (1999) provides an example, demonstrating how a school district's decision to run school extracurricular programs in a low-income neighbourhood significantly changed how students used their time. Many students

stopped wasting long hours on watching television or taking part in random outdoor play, and began to take part in the extracurricular activities offered to them, such as theatre, dance and clubs related to academic subjects. The school district's initiative enabled low-income students to take part in activities that would otherwise have been out of their financial reach, and provided them with developmental opportunities to enjoy. This study demonstrated that the possibilities and limitations offered by various ecologies have a major impact on students' development.

2. The second layer of Bronfenbrenner's nested ecological systems is the mesosystem. it addresses the physical and social interrelationships of the microsystem environments. As stated by Bronfenbrenner (1979), a mesosystem encompasses the interrelations among two or more environments in which the growing individual actively engages. People who play a key role in the different microsystem settings, interact with each other, and thus creating a new experience for the developing individual. If the relationship between those people is positive and has a sense of cooperation, it can support the individual's development and result in an overall positive experience. Conversely, if the relationship is unhelpful, this may lead to the developing individual having a negative experience. One example of the interaction between two mesosystem settings, is to examine the relationship between the student's parents (or the home environment) and their teachers (the school environment).

Parental attitude to extracurricular activity is an excellent example of this relationship. According to a research report conducted by Bertram et al. (2017) parental attitudes were considered as both a possible hurdle and a facilitating factor for extracurricular activity participation. The report indicates that some schools noted that, even though students were consulted about taking part in the extracurricular activities that were being planned, some parents refused to give their children permission to attend. For example, one school delegated the task of consulting the student body on the activities they would enjoy to a group of students (rather than staff), but at first parents were not keen to support the scheme. It took the school some time to persuade the parents that their children would benefit from the activities, and to create a bond of trust between the parents and the school. Another school in this report noted that parents often wrongly assumed that school extracurricular activities would cost them money, and this is why they rejected the idea of allowing their children to participate in these activities. The report's findings exemplify how a developing individual is influenced by the interrelationship between two or more mesosystem settings.

3. Exosystem is the third layer in the model of ecological systems theory. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), an exosystem is described as one or more contexts in which the growing individual is not an active participant in, but in which things happen that have an impact on or are affected by what occurs in the context in which the growing individual is present. Unlike the mesosystem, the exosystem is a set of settings in which the developing individual has no direct interaction with, but it still has indirect influence on the development of the individual in different ways.

Extended family, family friends, parents' workplace, neighbours and peer groups are included in the exosystem and they can influence students experience indirectly. For example, students' experiences in participating in extracurricular activity may be affected by their parent's employment. Peppler (2017) stated that students who came from a home where one parent did not work were more likely to take part in a greater number of activities than those who had two working parents.

4. The macrosystem considers the individual's interactions with the prevailing attitudes and ideologies of the culture. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that the macrosystem refers to any belief systems or ideologies that underlie the form and content of lower-order systems (microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem ) that exist or may exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole. The macrosystem is an overarching system that consists of the current policy climate, sociocultural values, socio-economic status, national norms and religion beliefs of any certain society. The contextual factors of the macrosystem impact and shape the individual's attitudes and social relations with others. The developing individual receives this impact through several social means, such as social media and TV or interaction with other people.

Macrosystem gives researchers a clear indication of what predicts participation in school extracurricular activities; it shows why some students who participate in the same activity have different attitudes, experiences, and difficulties related to fit in such activities (Peppler, 2017). In many education systems school extracurricular activities are equally provided for both female and male students. However, still some factors are discouraging girls from participating in certain activities, such as sporting games. Some studies showed that due to sociocultural interferences, female students are less likely to take part in physical or sporting activities than their male counterparts. For example, Sultana (2017) surveyed parental attitudes towards involvement of female students in school extracurricular activities at secondary schools in

Pakistan; he found that because of community culture, many parents were not eager to let their daughters get involved in certain types of activities such as sporting games.

Feldman and Matjasko (2005) argue that ecological systems theory is the best all-round model to guide research into extracurricular activity because it stresses on the bidirectional processes via which the individual and specific environments affect one another while also taking into account the contextual levels that surround the growing individual. Extracurricular activities can be considered as part of the microsystem that young people can actively choose to suit their own inclinations and abilities. Therefore, partaking in such activities may compensate for the impacts of a lack of fit with other proximate microsystem contexts, and it may even improve the positive impacts of appropriate fits in these contexts (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005).

According to ecological theory, involvement in activities in the early years of life has a positive impact upon identity construction and formation. Participating in activities typically determines the peer groups with which children and adolescents most often associate. This in turn influences the manner in which youths spend their time and the norms and values to which they are subjected (Eccles et al.,2003). In addition, extracurricular activities provide an opportunity for youths to interact and forge relationships with adults and peers beyond the classroom environment (Mahoney et al., 2003). Getting involved in optional activities can impact several aspects and levels of a youth's environment, especially when a large portion of time is devoted to such activities.

Gilman et al. (2004) hypothesise that there are four aspects of extracurricular activity that ecological systems theory addresses. Firstly, the associated connection with other individuals and the supportive social network that emerges from such activities leads to a sense of belonging. Identity development can positively and negatively be influenced by associating with groups characterised by peer-established norms. Constructive values will be incorporated into the formation of identity in those instances where the norms of the peer group norms are positive, promoting the probability of positive outcomes. In contrast, where negative group norms prevail, such as in delinquent peer groups, it is more likely that adolescents will engage in risky behaviour, leading to detrimental developmental consequences (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000). Extracurricular activities, like sport, can provoke both positive and negative norms and values, complicating issues of peer group identification.

Secondly, as already stated, extracurricular activities offer another setting in which a youth can interact and create relationships with adults and peers outside of the classroom environment

(Mahoney et al., 2003). From such opportunities, relationships with non-parent adults can be forged and strengthened (Gilman et al., 2004), and social capital can be promoted (Villarreal & Gonzalez, 2016). Models of learning, for example, Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory, can assist in understanding how the development of character, agency and motivation may be enhanced by interactions with competent adults and mentors able to offer feedback and support, which in turn guides the development of skills. Social connections that are forged through extracurricular activity participation are psychologically beneficial for youths, particularly for those who have a detached or limited relationship with their parents; in this case, the activity and associated relationships can assist by safeguarding the youth against depression and anxiety and other mental health issues. This is primarily attributed to the high support of activity leaders who can guide and mentor youths who have limited relationships with their parents (Mahoney et al., 2002).

Gilman et al. (2004) describe a third benefit of extracurricular activities, that can enhance an individual's engagement with the school and its identity. Finn (1989) noted that students who associate closely with schools have positive attitudes towards their schools and consider themselves an important part of the school community and thus school life forms an important aspect of their own experience. For those students who are at risk of withdrawing from school resulting from their inability to develop a sense of belonging with school, involvement in school-relevant activities can help them to develop this sense and thus increase the likelihood that they will successfully complete 12 years of schooling (Finn, 1989). For example, partaking in fine arts activities is associated with positive consequences such as promoting school belongingness, reducing social isolation and preventing of school dropout (McNeal, 1995). Positive peer affiliation encompassing extracurricular activity participation can improve the sense of belonging for youths in the school setting, which in turn enhances the enjoyment of being at school and ultimately leads to better classroom performance (Mahoney et al., 2003). It also encourages social acceptance and popularity of participants, thereby minimising feelings of social isolation in the school environment (Youniss et al., 1999).

For youths whose lives are typically monotonous and lacking in stimulation, productive school activities can provoke active engagement, set the scene for flow experiences and life-satisfaction. The majority of time for most youths is expended on classroom activities focusing on academic growth; yet, apathy and boredom are typical responses to being passive recipients of classroom learning. In a report produced by the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007) aimed to monitor student engagement in secondary schools. 81,499

students from 110 high schools within 26 different states in the United States of America were surveyed. The report showed that 30% of students reported that the topic was not relevant to them, and 70% of students claimed that they were bored in class because it "wasn't exciting." The most fascinating and stimulating activities, according to students, are those where they may learn from and with their peers (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007).

Because the likelihood of flow occurring is increased during interactive activities, which demand skill and challenge be balanced (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), extracurricular activities present an appropriate opportunity for optimal experiences to be cultivated. Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1992) indicated that flow is an ideal condition of total engrossment in an activity that one finds intrinsically satisfying. This state is characterized by a high level of concentration and a loss of sense of time and self-consciousness. Experiencing flow can create positive emotions and feelings of actual enjoyment, feed an individual's interests and passions and forge a pathway into future optimal experiences. Activities that are fun, creative and that require critical thinking, such as voluntary, optional activities promote feelings of pleasure, emotional wellbeing and opportunities for flow (Rea, 2001).

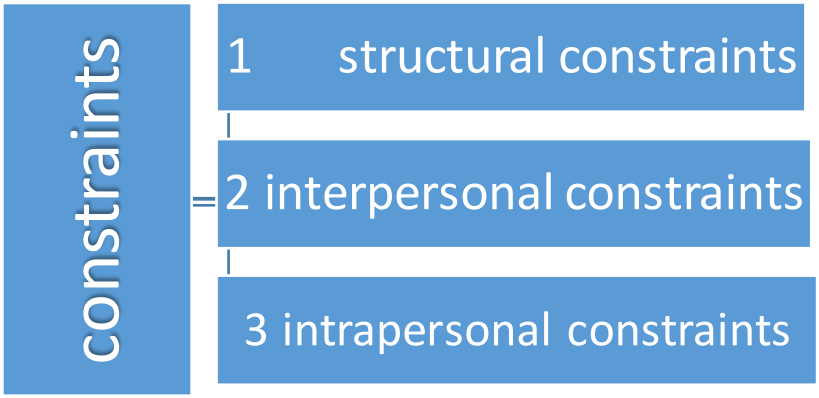
Lastly, by encouraging the development of an individual's strengths and positive psychosocial characteristics, extracurricular activities can influence development (Gilman et al., 2004). Such activities can cultivate self-efficacy, which according to Maddux (2002) is the belief in a person's own capacity to face challenges and achieve desired results by setting and fulfilling goals related to performance in a particular domain. Participating in extracurricular activity encourages agency, initiative and the ability to undertake autonomous action; this gives rise to further intrinsic motivation and incorporating positive behaviour into the forming identity (Larson, 2000).

### 2.3.2 Hierarchical model of leisure constraints

Darling et al. (2005) argued that school based extracurricular activities are classified as one of adolescent leisure activities, but what distinguishes them from other leisure activities is that they are structured in some way to promote a wide variety of positive developmental experiences. Understanding barriers to these activities is an important step to facilitate students' participation in the activities and help schools develop strategies to overcome barriers to their provision. The theoretical foundation for identifying the barriers that may hinder students' participation and the provision of school extracurricular activities can be found in the model of hierarchical leisure activities constraints (HLC) developed by Crawford et al. (1991). In their

recent assessment of the hierarchical leisure constraint model, Godbey and his colleagues (2010) concluded that the HLE model is cross culturally relevant and has the potential for contextual expansion of the theory, which means the model could be used to examine other forms of constraints than the leisure constraints, as is the case with school extracurricular activities.

**Figure 2.2** *Model of Hierarchical leisure constraints*




As it is illustrated in Figure 2.2, the HLE model classified these obstacles into three major constraints: 1) *structural constraints* are physical environment, social, cultural factors and economic status of people. Examples of these factors include weather condition, weak infrastructure, lack of equipment and financial resources. 2*) interpersonal constraints* are personal characteristics or states that restrict one's preference for a certain activity. Examples of the key intrapersonal constraint factors included individual psychological conditions, lack of knowledge and lack of interest. 3) *intrapersonal constraints* are resulting from external factors such as parents, teachers, coaches, peers, cultures. Examples of the interpersonal constraint factors included disapproval from parent, peer pressure, and style of the coach or leader of an activity. Raymore and colleagues (1993) described leisure constraints as factors that restrain partaking in an activity. However, some researchers have suggested that these constraints are not fixed obstacles and can be overcome when people or organisations that are concerned with providing leisure activities adopt specific strategies and resources (White, 2008).

There is evidence that students' participation in ECA and their provision in schools can be strongly influenced by the hierarchical leisure constraints (this is discussed in more detail in section 2.12). Whether schools struggle with financial resources or students lack interest in the ECA for many reasons, all structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints have the potential to impact the ECA provision in schools and students' participation. However, some of the constraints may have more impact than others. Research indicated that structural constraints are the primary factors that hinder students from engaging in school ECA, followed by interpersonal constraints. Intrapersonal constraints may also be inhibiting, but to a lesser degree than the other two types of the model of leisure constraints (Mohamad Sari & Esa 2017). The model of hierarchical leisure constraints guided the researcher to understand the barriers that face Saudi schools in providing ECAs and which useful concepts and items could be used for developing the survey that aimed to measure the opinion of Saudi teachers on the challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan", school ECA.

### 2.3.3 Positive youth development approach

Positive youth development approach (PYD) is a new perspective on adolescent development, in this perspective young people are visualised as valuable resources for society rather than as problems. Therefore, it emphasises the manifest potentialities rather than the supposed incapacities of young people (Damon, 2004). The positive youth development approach rejects viewing the developing process primarily as an endeavour to overcome deficits and risk, even if it acknowledges the existence of adversities and developmental problems that may influence children in many ways. Instead, it starts with a picture of a youngster who is completely capable and ready to learn, become competent, and be able to make a significant contribution to his society and the world. The main aim of the positive youth development approach is to improve the life of young people by educating and engaging them in productive activities rather than correcting and curing them from behavioural and health problems (Damon, 2004).

Organised activities can have the potential to promote positive development in children, when they are structured in an optimal manner. Mahoney et al., (2005) documented features of the organised activities (such as school based extracurricular activities and community programs) that facilitate positive growth in youth: 1) the activities should secure physical and psychological safety, 2) the activities should be appropriately structured, 3) the activities should offer supportive relationships based on mutual respect between activities members and activities' leaders , 4) the activities should offer opportunities for belonging that emphasises on

including all the activities' members regardless of their gender, race, culture and individual differences, 5) the activities should encourage positive social norms among members, and 6) the activities should offer opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social skills to promote members' wellbeing. The approach of positive youth development is relevant to the topic of this current study, because it can inform our understanding of how the life of young people can be improved through engaging them in enriching activities that reduce the likelihood of negative developmental outcomes rather than correct or treat these outcomes.

### 2.3.4 Capability approach

Another theoretical framework that may have the potential to inform the current study is the capability approach. Despite its ambiguity, the approach that was developed by Amartya Sen is an influential theory in human development and welfare in terms of politics, economy, education, health care, social justice, poverty and inequality. According to Sen (2000) human development is achieved when people have greater freedoms "to be able to do and to be" that they have reason to value. However, people's enjoyment of freedom is inextricably linked to and limited by the social, political, and financial possibilities that are important to them. Promoting people's freedoms "to be able to do and to be" greatly depends on institutions and social structures. Therefore, the improvement of institutional frameworks like the judicial systems, political parties, welfare and public services such as health care and education, leads to human progress as an increase of individual substantive freedoms (Kuhumba, 2018).

Education has a multifaceted and intricate function in relation to the capability approach. According to Sen's (2000) capability approach being educated is considered a fundamental capacity, meaning it is a vital aspect of critical actions and behaviours that are essential for wellbeing. Education is considered fundamental to the development of other skills by providing individuals access to knowledge and fostering the acquisition of essential learning outcomes, such as literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, from the capability approach, it may be argued that education that just focuses on teaching fundamental reading and writing skills would not be enough to promote sustainable development and tackle social issues (Hoffman, 2006). Therefore, education should be shifted from memorisation to focusing on the unique growth requirements and ambitions of children, their capacity for critical thinking and logical reasoning, fostering self-esteem, promoting respect for others, and cultivating forward-thinking and future planning skills, together known as life skills, which is increasingly being recognised

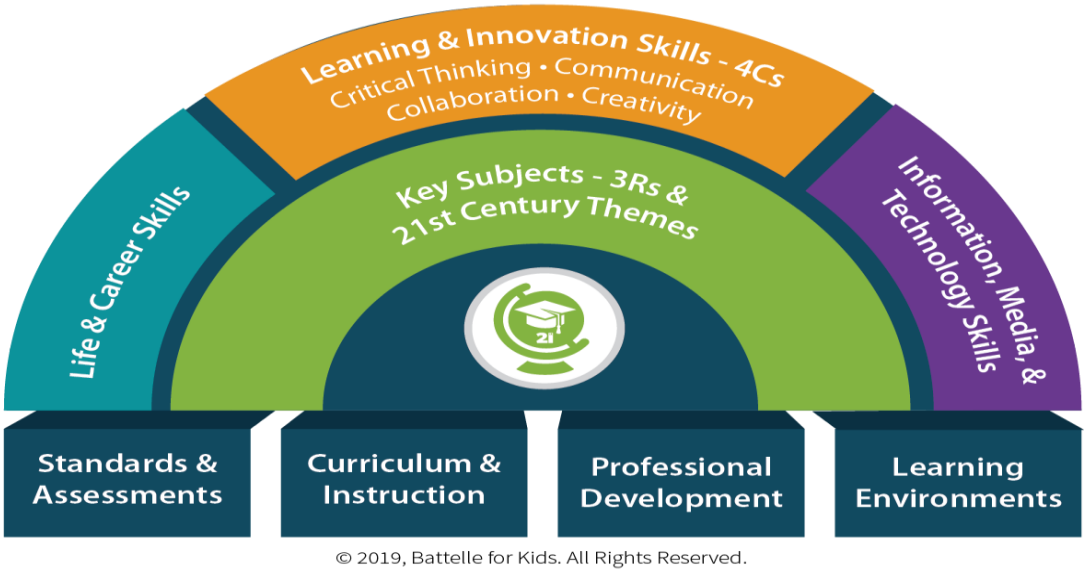
and included into education programs and strategies. The World Education Forum in 2000 asserted that education should prioritise the cultivation of individual potential by focusing on the acquisition of life skills. These skills are believed to be instrumental in shaping one's agency, attitudes, behaviour, and are closely associated with one's capabilities. Cultivating these skills demands teaching practices that go beyond passively passing on knowledge. One way is through opening up more developmental opportunities for students to learn beyond textbooks and outside the walls of classrooms. The capability approach has informed the current study on the role of integrating life skills in education through participation in school extracurricular activities for empowering students "to be able and to do" as a capable person (see section 2.5 for more details).

### 2.3.5 The 21st century framework for learning

According to the 21st century learning framework, the level of performance on core subjects is no longer the only factor that predicts students' success in the world of the twenty-first century. Instead, it is also based on how well-prepared and competent students are in handling real-world circumstances. As a result, the school system needs to be more innovative in preparing future-ready students who can live, work, adapt and compete in our rapidly changing world, and this can be achieved by engaging students with relevant skills, information, appropriate technologies, and real-world linkages.

**Figure 2.3**

*The skills of 21st century learning framework*




Source: Borrowski (2019)

The framework for 21st century learning was created by partnership between policymakers, education and business stakeholders to define and develop the skills students need to succeed in today's world. However, it is worth noting that 21st century talents' do not have a generally agreed definition; this is because of the multiplicity of goals held by various educationalists, policymakers, employers, schools and higher education institutions (Suto & Eccles, 2014). The framework for the 21st century, as shown in the above Figure 2.3, describes four main blends of skills and knowledge that are critical to prepare students to be competent in an ever-changing world.

**Core subjects and 21st century themes**

This includes the core academic subjects that students are required to study throughout each stage of education, such as English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. These subjects are equally important in gaining knowledge, and their contents are often defined by experts in the curriculum. Added to the key school subjects, the 21st century interdisciplinary themes are important in fostering the student's understanding of academic content defined in the syllabus. These themes include global awareness, financial, economic and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy and environmental awareness.

**Learning and Innovation Skills**

Learning and innovation skills are increasingly acknowledged as characteristics that distinguish between pupils who are prepared for facing the challenges involved in the life and work of 21st century environment and those who are not. As depicted in Figure 2.3,, such skills include: 1) Critical thinking and problem solving – learning these skills enables students to effectively evaluate evidence, arguments, assertions, and attitudes to ; find creative and conventional solutions to a variety of unfamiliar challenges, 2) Communication – learning this skill enables students to communicate ideas and thoughts clearly utilising both oral and writing skills in several formats and circumstances, 3) Collaboration – learning this skill enables students to show their capacity to collaborate politely and productively with various teams, and 4) Creativity and innovation – students who have this skill can use a variety of idea generation approaches to create new and valuable ideas.

**Information, technology and media skills**

Information, technology and media skills include: 1) information literacy – being able to control the flow of information from a number of sources, access it, and critically assess it, 2) technology literacy – being able to utilise, understand, control, and analyse new technology in an ethical and responsible manner to assess, develop, and integrate information, and 3) media literacy – being able to comprehend the methods and purposes used to create media messages; generating media products by being aware of and employing the most suitable media creation features, protocols, and tools.

**Life and career skills**

According to the 21st century learning framework, students must pay close attention to building the necessary life and career skills if they are to successfully traverse the challenging personal and professional contexts in the globally competitive information era. Therefore, more than just understanding academic content and critical thinking are needed to navigate today's challenging work and life situations; life and career skills include:

1- Flexibility and adaptability – students who learn these skills will be able to adjust to a variety of roles, jobs and circumstances; work well in an environment of uncertainty and shifting priorities. They will effectively incorporate feedback and positively respond to compliments, setbacks, and criticism. Finally, to arrive at practical answers, especially in multi-cultural settings, one must comprehend, bargain with, and balance different viewpoints and beliefs.

2- Initiative and self-direction – learning these abilities will help students to define goals with both concrete and abstract success criteria, manage their time and workload effectively, work independently, and critically evaluate their past experiences in order to shape their future development.

3- Social skills, having these skills will help students to interact effectively with other people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds in a respectable and professional manner. They will be able to open-mindedly approach different ideas and values, and to work effectively in group teamwork.

3- Leadership and responsibility**,** these skills require the ability to influence and lead others toward a goal while using interpersonal and problem-solving abilities, and act responsibly with the interests of the greater community.

The 21st century learning framework emphasises that to enhance and enrich curriculum for 21st century three programs should be included in a public education system's curriculum: a program of studies that covers academic subjects and disciplines; an activity program that includes hands-on and incidental learning experiences; and a program of guidance that includes professional assistance and advice given to students. It is anticipated that the schools will offer students a range of experiences through clearly defined academic, guidance, and extracurricular programs, enabling them to make wise decisions in their extracurricular and curricular activities as well as in their interpersonal relationships. Via an engaging curriculum, the programs will be tailored to meet the demands of each student's developmental stage and help them recognise their individuality and reach their greatest potential. According to these three programs, a successful curriculum is built on sensory-rich experiences, employs a concept to integrate knowledge, skills and content from various subject areas, gives students a variety of activity options, and applies pertinent learning outside of the classroom and into real-world scenarios. Engaging kids in extracurricular activities that expose them to real-world experiences is one way to enhance and enrich the curriculum.

There is a longstanding theoretical belief that school extracurricular activities may effectively foster 21st century skills outside of classroom time. For example, Haensly, Lupkowski and Edlind (1985, as cited in Suto & Eccles, 2014) indicated that several students actively pursue and seem to flourish in extracurricular activities outside the conventional classroom environment. These activities are sometimes referred to as the co-curriculum or the extra-curriculum, depending on whether they are direct extensions of academic coursework or peripheral to it. Therefore, students have the opportunity to enhance and broaden their existing academic abilities by participating in contests such as interscholastic debates, as well as by applying these talents to real-world scenarios, such as writing for school publications. In the extracurricular context, individuals have the opportunity to cultivate and refine their creative, musical, and psychomotor abilities. Additionally, they may enhance their leadership qualities and acquire valuable professional and occupational skills. Interpersonal and social skills, which are not often included in the academic curriculum, may be developed via involvement in extracurricular activities.

According to Olibie and Ifeoma (2015) extracurricular activities have gained a popularity in many educational systems throughout the globe and become an integral part of traditional high school experiences because they can have the potential for enriching students' knowledge and skills. For example, in the Saudi education context, the Ministry of Education has paid attention

to the importance of empowering all Saudi students with 21st century skills through promoting students' participation in school extracurricular activities and community clubs. One of the aims of this current study is to examine students' perceptions of the impact of participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" school extracurricular activities on their social and personal skills. Therefore, the framework of 21st century skills constitutes a significance for this study in terms of identifying the skills that are needed for improving students' social and personal development. The framework also serves the study in terms of which type of pre-existing surveys can be workable to inventory secondary school-aged students' developmental experiences in school extracurricular activities.

## 2.4 Extracurricular Activity Programs

From an ecological perspective, extracurricular activities (ECAs) are conceptualised as important and beneficial developmental contexts or "microsystems" surrounding students. Such developmental contexts are widely recognised by schools in many global educational systems because of their potential positive influence on student development (Mtika, 2019). Many schools around the world are now offering students multiple ECA programs during or after school hours, which are designed to meet their individual physical, psychosocial, spiritual, and academic needs. Although there is no literature discussing how the ECAs offered in secondary schools are classified, the findings of most studies on ECA demonstrate that students at secondary level participate in at least four of the following major types of activity: scientific, sporting, art and cultural, and scouting activity programs.

### 2.4.1 Scientific activity programs

Fenichel and Schweingruber (2010) found that student motivation and knowledge levels are both positively influenced by informal learning. The main aim of extracurricular scientific programs is to provide interest and stimulation outside of the normal science curriculum (Mannion & Coldwell, 2008). Zhang and Tang (2017) point out that ECAs give students the freedom to discover new areas of interest and develop both their skills and knowledge in their own time, which is not possible in traditional classroom settings.

Many schools offer their students a range of extracurricular science activities to provide practical experience of learning and understanding science (Eastwell & Rennie, 2002). These include science and technology clubs, competitions, and visits to museums and science and technology centres. Research shows that extracurricular scientific programs enable students to develop skills and have a positive impact on their academic attainments. In a mixed-method

experimental study, Magaji et al. (2022) examined the impact of after school science clubs on students' academic attainment and non-academic skills. They collected data from observations, questionnaires, and focus groups, and used test performance scores in STEM subjects as the outcome measure. The experimental group (n = 17) consisted of students who took part in science clubs, and the control group (n = 140) was composed of those not involved in the clubs. They found the students who attended after school science clubs showed more academic progress in their STEM subjects. The students also rated the acquisition of non-academic skills (communication, collaboration, teamwork, leadership skills, learning confidence) as the most significant benefit of participating in school science clubs. The authors recommended that STEM clubs should be promoted by schools to facilitate students' learning in these subjects.

Before starting extracurricular scientific activity programs, students' backgrounds and their knowledge of science should be assessed, and the areas of the STEM subjects they wish to learn about should be explored. Students who are interested in the programs can be surveyed, and the results can be used to organise the content of the programs. Blanchard et al. (2017) discuss the following important steps for schools to take when running extracurricular science activities. First, schools need to find suitable volunteers from the teaching staff. Such teachers should be interested in the activity, be capable of acting both as a classroom teacher and a club leader, show commitment to learning about the topic, and have good organisational skills. Second, administrators must arrange a time and meeting place for the STEM club, and find transport, sundries and money for other club-related expenses. Third, the environment must be safe for students and the club leader sufficiently competent to use any required scientific equipment and materials. Teachers should also be instructed on how to teach students appropriate equipment handling, and when to use safety gloves and goggles.

### 2.4.2 Sporting activity programs

Participation in regular physical activity has many positive benefits for young people's overall health, such as building strong bones and muscles, reducing obesity and stress, and maintaining body fitness (Kohl & Cook, 2013). For several reasons, the physical activity pattern of young people tends to decline during adolescence (Telama & Yang, 2000). Education policymakers and researchers have become more aware of the causes and consequences of this decline and the importance of schools in minimising it. Schools are the public institutions where students spend most of their time and have the human and physical resources to design and implement

health behaviour change programs. Therefore, opportunities for young people to be physically active are higher in schools than in other settings (Bocarro et al., 2008).

Most secondary schools provide students with physical education classes designed to improve their fitness and mental health, and to teach them the skills needed to maintain physical health. However, some students find these classes too competitive and limited in time and choice of activities. Extracurricular physical activity programs therefore provide alternative and more enjoyable opportunities for those dissatisfied students. Such programs are designed both to improve students' physical health in an enjoyable context, and to provide a space for them to explore their abilities under adult supervision (Bocarro et al., 2008).

Extracurricular sporting activities are the most popular type of ECA among students. Veliz et al. (2019) found that the preferred activities in a sample of US secondary school students, were sports programs (60%), music and the performing arts (32%), and academic clubs (25%). There are a wide range of sporting activities that schools provide during or outside school hours, including baseball, basketball, diving, karate, football, swimming, tennis, volleyball, ice hockey, wrestling, cycling, horse riding and athletics (Feldman & Matjasko, 2007). The availability of particular activities depends on school policy, infrastructure, facilities, and human resources. Students are encouraged to participate in the one most suited to their individual interests and abilities. The activities should not be planned for a single period in the school year, but made available on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis to maintain students' fitness and athletic curiosity. There are four points to consider when planning such activities: 1) Students should be given the chance to select activities according to their age, ability, and interests, 2) The activities provided should take account of their gender and any health conditions, 3) Students may prefer specific times (for example, before or after school hours), and 4) Rules and regulations for participating in sporting activities should be made clear to all students.

### 2.4.3 Art and cultural activity programs

Engagement in the arts and cultural events or customs can positively influence young people's cognitive development and overall wellbeing. They also can increase their ability to express themselves freely and learn to become part of the community (Smyth, 2016). Sadly, the opportunity to do this is not enjoyed equally, but affected by factors such as family background and income levels. Young people from families of lower socio-economic status tend to have less opportunity to engage with the arts or cultural events. Mak and Fancourt (2021) suggest

that this places schools in a position to address the inequality by making arts and cultural activities available to all of their students.

Art and cultural activity programs include activities from debating, writing articles and poems to celebrating national and social festivals (Feldman & Matjasko, 2007, Mak, & Fancourt, 2021). The activities are not just provided for pleasure, but also to engage students in meaningful actions and interactions. They help students express their feelings, control their emotions effectively, and build their confidence. They can expose students to literary works and develop their interest in literature. They can also develop students' independent thinking, creativity and communication, and help students to unlock their potential and hidden talents. Students' socialisation is improved and they learn about their own culture and traditions and to respect other cultures. In addition, these programs promote integration and cooperation among students (Ennis & Tonkins, 2015; Arts Council England, 2021). A description of some art and cultural activities is given below.

**Debating;** in this activity, students discuss a topic in front of other students and teachers. It is made more formal by choosing a question or proposal that one team of students argues for (the proponents) and another group argues against (the opponents) with another student or teacher (the moderator or judge) keeping the time and making sure the teams keep to the rules. Both proponents and opponents have fixed times to speak to the audience without being interrupted, and the aim of the activity is to convince the audience of their views about the debate's question or proposal. The audience is meant to listen critically to the arguments presented by the opposing and proposing teams, and decide which side puts forward the best arguments. Typically, there are three or four students on each side, with each team member having a fixed time to present their arguments. There are usually two rounds. In the first, the team members present their arguments, and in the second they can respond to the arguments of the other side (often called a rebuttal) and summarise their opinions. There is often a vote at the end where the audience gives their own opinions about the proposal having heard the arguments (Agarwal , 2013).

The debate program is designed to equip students with beneficial lifelong learning skills. According to the American Debate League, students who participate in debates experience and develop their confidence, curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, respectful communication, and self-leadership. However, such beneficial skills cannot be gained without the debate being properly conducted. Agarwal (2013) argues that to ensure a successful debating experience,

debate leaders and students should consider the following steps: 1) developing the idea or problem to be debated, 2) organising the debating teams, 3) establishing the rules and timelines for the debate, 4) researching the debate topic and preparing logical arguments, 5) gathering supporting evidence for the position to be taken on the topic, 6) anticipating counter arguments and preparing rebuttal evidence, 7) planning the order and content of the debate, and 8) preparing an appropriate venue for the debate.

**Drama**; in drama, students take on the characters of a play and perform their role in front of an audience. The play can represent a fictional story or one based on historical events, and the actors perform on a platform or stage with objects or 'props' that set the scene. Drama involves playwriting and acting, performing in front of an audience, instructing the actors on how to perform, and planning how the performance unfolds. The performing actors develop their abilities to portray different characters through the use of their voices and actions, with the aim of bringing the story to life for the audience. The directors or producers take overall charge of the production and instruct the actors on how to perform to convey their interpretation of the play. The director of the play needs to consider how the stage, actors, and other elements of the performance will affect the audience to produce the desired effect (Québec, 2004).

In drama programs, students interactively develop three interdependent competencies: creating, performing, and appreciating dramatic works. To create a dramatic work, students must imagine stories and characters and put them into action in a dynamic manner. Students develop their language and articulation, their memory, expressive skills and confidence, their creativity and inherent abilities, and their individual understanding of different cultures and experiences. To perform a dramatic work, students must assimilate its content and convey its meaning to others. A work's meaning is revealed through students' use of body language and voice, which become expressive and communicative instruments to represent dramatic situations and bring fictional characters to life. Through performance, the students may take on many improvisational roles that provide an opportunity for students to communicate and express their ideas clearly and effectively, ultimately enriching their collective performance. Students learn how to appreciate a performance by developing their listening and interpretative skills, being receptive to the characters, understanding the meanings it contains, and the different dramatic styles and forms it uses. Throughout the appreciation process, students share what they found meaningful and compare their experience with others, enabling them to refine their judgment and develop their artistic awareness and knowledge (Québec, 2004).

Drama programs can develop many specific cognitive skills in students. Psychomotor skills are enhanced by giving students the chance to explore how their physical actions relate to particular thoughts and emotions. They learn to control their voice and body to convey subtle differences in meaning, thereby improving their expressive power and communication. They learn how different gestures relate to emotions, which develops their emotional intelligence and empathy, as they need to understand the characters' feelings and perspectives. These processes build their self-esteem, confidence and creativity, thus allowing them to explore their own emotions, attitudes, and beliefs. Students also learn the value of teamwork and the importance of collaboration in producing dramatic effect, all of which increase their social skills. All aspects of drama, from performance to appreciation as part of an audience, involve critical thinking and employ students' analytic as well as observational and interpretative skills. Producing and performing plays also engages their own and other people's interests and cultural perspectives, and makes students more aware of their own attitudes and beliefs. By visiting theatres, watching performances and professional actors, and reading dramatic literature, students learn about and appreciate their own cultures, and come to respect the cultures of others (Quebec, 2004).

### 2.4.4 Scouting activity programs

Scouting is a youth education movement that young people of all ages and backgrounds can join and is not affiliated with any political organisation. Scouting was introduced to the world by Sir Robert Baden Powell in 1907 in England (World Scout Bureau, 2019). Soon after, scouting was accepted in many public schools all around the world as an extracurricular activity practiced by students. Scouting promotes the education of young people and encourages them to play a valuable role in society by asking them to make a scout's promise to act for the greater good. Every scouting member makes this sincere promise to obey the Scouting Law. The latter is based on ten essential principles that should be believed in and practiced by the members of scouting clubs. These principles relate to being trusted, loyal, useful to others, a friend to all people and animals, courteous, obedient to the orders of parents and patrol leaders, cheerful and optimistic under all difficulties, thrifty in the use of resources, and finally, free from bad thoughts, words and deeds. Thus, the scouting member is trained to have the best personality traits (World Scout Bureau, 2019).

Scouting is a non-formal educational activity for students aged 8 to 18 and supported by adult volunteers. The scouting activity is designed to complement, rather than substitute, the formal

educational duties carried out by school. In this way, scouting activity helps schools to teach the basic competencies and skills that can be difficult to teach through textbooks, especially those needed to interact with the social and physical environment in which students live (Vallory, 2012). Scouting clubs include many activities such as patrolling, first aid, camping, marching, navigation, and mapping. Scouting can build young people's character by teaching them essential life skills, and gives them the resilience to withstand the difficulties and complexities of the modern environment (World Scout Bureau, 2019).

## 2.5 Life Skills

According to the capability approach developed by Sen (2000), human development is achieved when people have greater freedoms "to be able to do and to be" that they have reason to value. However, people's enjoyment of freedom is inextricably linked to and limited by the social, political, and financial possibilities that are important to them. Promoting people's freedoms "to be able to do and to be" is greatly dependent on institutions and social structures. Therefore, the improvement of institutional frameworks like the judicial systems, welfare and public services such as health care and education, leads to human progress as an increase of individual substantive freedoms (Kuhumba, 2018).

Education is considered fundamental to the development of individuals' skills by providing them access to knowledge and fostering the acquisition of essential learning outcomes, such as literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, from the capability approach, it may be argued that education that just focuses on teaching fundamental reading and writing skills would not be enough to promote sustainable development and tackle social issues. Therefore, education should be shifted from memorisation to focusing on the unique growth requirements and ambitions of young people, their capacity for thinking critically, communicating effectively, solving problems and dealing with new challenges together, known as life skills, and it is increasingly being recognised and included into education programs and strategies (Hoffman, 2006). The World Education Forum in 2000 asserted that education should prioritise the cultivation of individual potential by focusing on the acquisition of life skills. These skills are believed to be instrumental in shaping one's agency, attitudes, and behaviour, because they are closely associated with one's capability of learning to know, learning to be and learning to do.

Developing young people's life skills can help them to face the real world and its demands. The World Health Organisation WHO (1994) defined life skills *"as abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges*

*of everyday life"*. There are many skills that can be said to fall into the category of life skills, but deciding which skills are applicable and pertinent depends on cultures and settings that young people live in. As a result, educators are faced with the challenge of determining which skills need to be prioritised. The WHO suggests that there is a core set of life skills formulated by UN agencies and other organisations that are considered to be at the heart of skills-based initiatives for promoting the health and wellbeing of young people. The skills can be grouped into three major categories of generic life skills, which include cognitive, personal and interpersonal skills.

### 2.5.1 Cognitive life skills

Fitzpatrick et al. (2014) stated that cognitive skills can be defined as the ability to undertake higher order thought, which underpins the process of comprehension, questioning, evaluating, thinking creatively and critically to find effective solutions, synthesising and analysing alternatives - before coming to a well-judged decision. The whole process can be sub-divided according to the skills that are needed for each step: 1) skill of solving problems, 2) skills of creative and critical thinking and 3) skills of making decision.

**Skills of solving problems** are broad and general, since they include the abilities harnessed to organise the entire cognitive process. Fitzpatrick et al. (2014) viewed problem-solving as being able to learn and relearn in response to the new situations individuals come to face throughout their lives. This encompasses the proficiency to devise goals, create plans and use time effectively (Fitzpatrick et al, 2014). Papacharisis et al. (2005) add that problem-solving skills encompass being able to work under pressure, to work as part of a team and manage feedback, all of which also call for personal as well as interpersonal skills.

**Critical thinking and creative thinking skills** are placed in their own category by the WHO (1994). It is possible to argue that these skills help individuals to remain objective by enabling them to identify and assess sources that impact on their attitudes and behaviours, whether these be personal principles or stem from external pressure from family and friends, media and the surrounding community. Having skills of creative thinking enables the individual to adjust to different circumstances, as they evaluate potential actions, along with their outcomes, prior to making a conclusion (WHO, 1994).

**Skill of making decisions** consist of being able to reach rational decisions and are seen as essential for making effective decisions (Papacharisis et al, 2005; WHO, 1994). Fitzpatrick et al. (2014) pointed out that personal and interpersonal skills are key elements, since they provide

the courage and certainty to make a decision and not to be swayed or persuaded to reverse it. In addition, such decisions need to be useful, both for the person and other people, provided that they take into account social norms and ethical standards.

### 2.5.2 Personal life skills

The term of personal life skills includes self-knowledge, self-management, coping skills, physical fitness and identity development (WHO,1994; Ager, 2013). Personal life skills include becoming aware of oneself, knowing personal weaknesses, strengths and values, coming to an understanding of what is beneficial for oneself, and acting in a way that mirrors and harmonises with that knowledge, particularly in various new situations, which could act as triggers for stress and emotional responses (Ager, 2013).

**Skill of self-awareness** is the ability to correctly identify one's personality and character, in relation to values, functional abilities, emotions and thoughts (Ager, 2013; WHO, 1994). Self-awareness encompasses respect for oneself (Ager, 2013), being aware of when one is facing pressure and stress, and tackling life challenges with being confident and optimistic (WHO, 1994).

**Skill of self-management** is the ability to effectively control one's behaviours, thoughts and emotions in any situation which might arise. Self-management depends on having self-awareness, and then responding appropriately. In daily life it often takes the guise of self-discipline and self-motivation. In addition, it may require using cognitive skills, such as organisational skills and the setting of goals. Skills of self-management are of major importance when handling issues and situations in the person's life, and the WHO (1994) has placed them in their own category of life skills, since they bolster individuals' ability to deal with emotions, which are external stressors. Individuals must be capable of identifying the sources of stress and strong emotions such as anger and impulsive behaviour, and respond in a way which is both rational and in line with their identity and values. This could be achieved by finding ways to minimise or eradicate stressors, changing one's environment or routine behaviours and finding a means of relaxing, for example by taking up meditation (WHO,1994).

**Health and fitness skills** include the abilities to look after one's health and fitness in the short and long-term. These skills enable individuals to be physically active, to have a positive relationship with their body, and follow healthy and nutritious diets (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014). Its components include developing psychomotor skills, in order to enjoy playing sports and a healthy lifestyle (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014). Health maintenance and physical fitness skills enable

individuals to be aware of the relationship between physical activity and overall wellbeing and life satisfaction. These skills also include recognising risk factors which threaten a person's health and fitness, like drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and knowing where to find useful resources and turn for help, should it prove necessary (Sahu & Gupta, 2013).

### 2.5.3 Interpersonal life skills

According to the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF (2012), interpersonal skills are essential for communication, negotiation, cooperation, working in teams, building trust in others and increasing a sense of belonging to a community

**Skills of communication** are composed of the ability to express thoughts, ideas and emotions in a confident manner and, conversely, of acknowledging vulnerabilities by openly stating fears and asking for help (WHO, 1994). Communication can be verbal or non-verbal, and includes being aware of situational contexts - such as cultural differences (WHO, 1994). Fitzpatrick et al. (2014) state that communication skills are of vital importance in finding a resolution to conflicts.

**Relationship skills** are those abilities that enable individuals to forge strong and positive relationships with others, and maintain them over time. The WHO (1994) adds that knowing how to end a relationship is also a skill. Although relationship management depends to a large extent on communication skills, relationship skills focus on how individuals act and respond to others. Social awareness is an important component, since it consists of knowing how to develop and show empathy by understanding and acknowledging different viewpoints, along with social and ethical principles and norms. Empathy is central to relationship skills, and Fitzpatrick et al. (2014) describe it as compassion. The WHO (1994) defines empathy slightly differently, stating that it is the ability to imagine what life would be like in another person's situation, however unfamiliar this might be. Empathy promotes nurturing and social interactions, and is particularly beneficial for people who need this help and support in healthcare or emotional situations. In daily life, relationship skills are expressed by showing respect for other people and steering clear of gossip or speculation, and displaying turn taking in order to create positive surroundings for one's immediate circle (Fitzpatrick et al., 2014).

Students gain the most benefit from their secondary school education by enriching themselves, not just academically, but through participation in other school activities that help in developing a range of valuable life skills. Many authors consider that supporting young people in acquiring life skills can be achieved through offering them with real life experiences such as that happen

in school extracurricular activities. Evidence from evaluating the existing studies shows that the outcome of participation in school ECA can have the potential to promote a range of specific life skills; this outcome will be discussed in the subsequent section.

## 2.6 Extracurricular Activities and Students Personal and Social Development

There is growing evidence that how and where young people spend their time has a significant impact on how they develop. For example, youth who spend their time unsupervised after school hours are more likely to experience negative developmental outcomes such as behavioural and academic issues, drug use, and other dangerous behaviour (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). As a result, there is increased interest from schools, educators, families and youth policy advocates in viewing after-school programs as a safe and supportive environment for young people who have experienced long-time lack of supervision. For example, in the United States there is strong federal funding which exclusively supports after school programs organised by schools; now almost every secondary school in the USA offers some type of after school activities, such as sports, academic clubs, music and cultural activities.

In recent years, the impact of participation in ECA on students' development has become a significant topic in the field of education research. Researchers have begun to recognise that school extracurricular activities organised after school time are important contexts for improving students' social, emotional, civic and academic development. While most previous studies in the field of school extracurricular activities have focused specifically on the impact of ECA participation on students' academic outcomes, the examination of personal and social outcomes of participation in ECA programs has been somewhat overlooked (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). To review the literature, ecological systems theory is used to highlight the developmental profiles of participating in different types of activities on students' development.

According to the ecological systems theory, extracurricular activities are conceptualised as developmental contexts (microsystems) where students can experience new skills and enhance their overall development. The literature already published offers hints regarding the varied developmental potential that various extracurricular activities may offer to teenage students. For example, Larson et al. (2006) used quantitative survey research design to capture the social and personal skills that students may have experienced in different types of organised extracurricular activities (performance and fine arts, academic clubs, faith, community and service activities). The sample of their study included 2,280 students at high school age, from both genders. The study suggests that participation in organised sports offers more chances to

practice initiative skills (such as goal setting, perseverance, problem-solving, cooperation, emotion control, and time management) compared with other activities. The study, however, found that organised sports were associated with higher rates of stress than in other organized activities (this stress is mainly attributed to the high expectations from the public on students' performance). In terms of academic clubs, the study found that they were not felt to be favourable conditions for experiencing teamwork, emotional regulation and identity work; this is because the main goal of these clubs is typically to support students' academic growth. The study's findings also showed that faith, community and service activities stood out from the other activities as distinguished contexts of experiences related to interpersonal development more than personal development. This is because faith, community and service activities connect students to adult networks and provide social capital. Finally, the study indicated that participation in performance and fine arts experiences was associated with higher rates of reported identity work experiences than participation in other activities. However, students who participated in performance and art activities reported fewer teamwork experiences than other activities. The study concluded that organised activities seem to cover a crucial gap in offering experiences linked to essential non-academic workforce abilities (such as teamwork, initiative, and social responsibility) that sometimes can be difficult to be gained in normal school classes. Even though the researchers used a robust survey with a large sample, the study results should be considered in light of some limitations. First, because the study's results are based on self-report, they are constrained by the participants' capacity to provide accurate and reliable accounts of their experiences. Second the study's researchers did not investigate the demographic characteristics of participants in more details, such as their gender, their developmental stage, their participation duration and their reasons for taking part to understand the differences between participants in their reported developmental experiences. However, Larson et al. s' (2006) research holds significance for the current study, as their instrument will be utilised to measure the experiences of Saudi teenagers in taking part in ECA on their personal and social development.

In a similar quantitative study but in a different country, Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) used a self-assessment tool developed by Hansen and Larson (2005) to survey a large number of Grade 9 students (n 3367) who engaged in various extracurricular activities, ranging from sporting activities and school clubs to various other types of hobbies. The study's aim was to investigate how Russian teenagers perceive the influence of participation in extracurricular activities on the acquisition of specific competencies and skills. When the self-reported data

were analysed by performing a multiple regression, the study's authors discovered a link between particular activities and improvement in certain reported social and personal skills. For example, adolescents engaging in single sports (swimming) or martial arts (Karate) perceived these activities as effective settings in developing goal setting and time management skills. Whereas those involved in team sports or in performing arts, such as theatre and dance, felt that they had developed teamwork skills. Ivaniushina and Zapletina's study (2015) also established that a relationship exists between participation in literary, media and art clubs and personality development; according to the students' perception, these activities assist in shaping their identities. The authors concluded that while all types of extracurricular activities have the potential to exert a positive impact on adolescent development, nonetheless, each type can be characterised by its own unique effect. The study's results should be interpreted cautiously because the aim of the study was not to find out what the students have actually learned in such activities but on their self-reported assessment of what they experienced during their participation. Although the context in which this research was conducted is different, it is pertinent to the current study for the purpose of comparing the results, since it employs the same survey to assess the influence of ECA on the personal and social development of adolescents.

In addition, youth's ability to communicate confidently has been found to be associated with extracurricular activity involvement. For example, an experimental study conducted by Ozturk et al. (2015) aimed to determine the outcomes of involvement in group sport activities on the communication skills of Turkish high school students. The study's participants comprised 30 high school students from both genders, who were divided equally into two groups. The experimental group took part in one of several sport activities for a ten-week period. During that same time, the control group was not permitted to engage in any group sport activities, but instead was required to participate in different types of extracurricular activities. The researchers used pre- and post-test measures to assess the improvement in students' communication skills. For collecting the study data, they employed pre-existing survey to evaluate the students' communication skills developed by Korkut (1996). The analysis of the data revealed an improvement in the communication skills of the experimental group, which was attributed to the appropriate selection of group sport activities. Additionally, in both groups, gender was not found to be statistically significant in terms of the relationship between participation in group sport activities and improvement in communication skills. The study concludes that offering such sport activities in schools may positively impact upon the

socialisation process in children. There are some limitations that may limit the generalisation of the study's findings, most notably the use of only one instrument for data collection, namely self-report assessment to measure the impact of sport-groups games on students' communication skills. In addition, this study was conducted in one high school and its sample size is small, and because of that, it would have been better if the researchers had used observation coupled with the self-report assessment over the course of the study; this would help in generating accurate and comparable data. Even though experimental research design that involves pre and post-tests is considered to be an effective approach to measuring the impact of certain interventions, it can still be influenced by different processes that can have an effect on study results. An example of a factor that can affect the study results is "performance bias", which refers to the fact that the study's participants can change their responses or behaviour if they know which groups, they are allocated in. For example, if participants know that they are in the intervention rather than the control group, they may be more motivated to show more improvement. In this study, participants are aware of being in the treatment group; this may motivate them to respond in a biased manner to questions that measure their communication skills.

The adolescent years are a crucial time in human development. During this time, children strive to become independent, and thus environments outside the family's circle start to play a role. Teenagers' opportunities and decisions during this pivotal time could affect their emotional and physical health for the rest of their lives. According to Feldman and Matjasko (2005) the patterns of conduct that started in youth can persist throughout adulthood. Therefore, the surroundings that adolescents encounter are crucial because they offer chances for keeping or changing behaviours that may have an impact on their development, either for positive or negative developmental changes. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account continuity over time in the developmental settings. The length of time that adolescents participate in extracurricular activities may be a factor in determining whether or not those activities have an impact on how they adjust as young adults.

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) the founders of the ecological system theory, engaging in activities more frequently and for longer durations would result in more significant consequences. They suggested that in order to be successful in promoting development, activities must be sustained for a sufficient duration to gradually increase in complexity. They further argued that activities that occur seldom and are often disrupted will not be effective.

Therefore, to remain engaged with the content of an activity and to maintain connections with adult leaders and peers, youth need to participate in structured activities on a regular basis.

Studies that follow children into young adulthood offer a unique opportunity to look at the consequences of longer participation in extracurricular activities across their life course. For example, Fredricks and Eccles (2006) have examined whether the amount of time spent in a range of extracurricular activities (particularly school clubs and organized sports) influence adolescents' psychological and academic adjustment or not. They used data from a large longitudinal study aimed at examining the process of children's development over childhood and adolescent stage. The sample was mostly white American middle-class students in Grades 7 through 12. They found greater involvement in organised school activities was associated with favourable academic adjustment and heightened psychosocial competencies in the participants. In particular, the association was greater in the oldest group of adolescents who have more than one year of participation than other groups. The authors explained that the developmental differences between all groups of participants can be traced to the nature of activity participation through school stages. For example, extracurricular activities are more embraced in the culture of secondary schools because they are accounted as an important aspect in the life of many students than they are in middle school. The study's authors concluded that regular participation in high-quality school programs is likely to be associated with positive youth development than occasional participation and this pattern of participation should be encouraged, because promoting socially acceptable behaviour, and developing intellectual, psychological and social skills takes long time. It should be noted that the sample of the study consisted of students from middle-class families and therefore this sample can have implications for the generalisability of the study findings, because some studies suggested that participation in extracurricular activities has more positive benefits for relatively privileged populations as opposed to less privileged populations (Eccles & Templeton, 2002).

In another longitudinal study, Gardner et al. (2008) investigated the relations between the duration of participation in organised activities during high school years and young adult outcomes following the high school stage. The study sample was taken from a longitudinal data set representing a national educational assessment of students from the United States of America. The sample included 14,038 students who completed assessments in 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade, and 2 to 8 years after high school. They found positive associations between the length of participation in ECA during high school and young adult successes; those who participated for 2 years or more in school or community-sponsored activities demonstrated

greater developmental success (with regard to educational attainment, civic engagement and occupational success) than those who participated for one year or less. In particular, longer term of participation in school organised activities was often associated with professional success than community sponsored activities, whereas longer term of involvement in community or school sponsored activities was often associated with better civic and educational outcomes. The study's findings did not provide an explanation for why short-term of participation result in fewer favourable consequences. However, the study' authors argued that teenagers who participate in organised activities for a year have a tendency to participate less frequently than teenagers who participate over a period of two years, which may be a contributing factor.

Similar results were observed by Zaff and colleagues (2003). They used a nationally representative data set of American students who remained in grade 8 school until they completed secondary school to examine if consistent participation in extracurricular activity is related to multiple positive outcomes such as academic success, volunteering for community and voting in national elections. Their results revealed that participation in at least one activity consistently each year was associated with high rates of college attendance and prosocial behaviours (such as voting and volunteering) in young adulthood. The study's authors argued that the structure of school sponsored activities can contribute to that positive development, by providing young people with the sense of self-efficacy that can be gained from the practical skills experienced in ECAs, such as leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution and academic skills. In a cross-sectional study, Randall and Bohnert (2009) examined the links between different dimensions of organised activity involvement (including the dimension of participation duration) and psychosocial adjustment in an economically and ethnically diverse sample of American adolescents. They found that adolescents who were involved in organised activities for more years reported lower symptoms of loneliness and depression. Interestingly, the relation between organised activity participation and level of loneliness was stronger for certain ethnic groups. For example, African American adolescents who were involved in more years of organised activities reported experiencing less social isolation than European American adolescents. The study's findings did not provide an explanation of why organised activity involvement and low level of loneliness was stronger in the African American adolescents. The study's authors concluded that consistent participation in structured activities over years can provide youth with a socially interactive environment outside family context.

Here, students can have more time to forge supportive social relationships with the adults and peers, so their sense of loneliness is reduced.

In line with the ecological system theory, research has shown that greater participation in multiple extracurricular activities for longer duration is associated with more positive outcomes than less exposure. For example, Fredricks and Eccles (2006) investigated the link between the breadth of involvement in organised sports and school clubs over the span of three years and adolescents' development. They found that participation in a wide range of extracurricular activities for more years has been associated with psychological wellbeing, school belonging and positive peer influence (less percentage of having high-risk friends and greater percentage of having intellectual friends). Fredricks and Eccles (2006) argued that each extracurricular context offers a distinctive opportunity to learn skills, interact with peers and adults, and assume different roles, which is one possible reason for the cumulative beneficial impacts of engagement in multiple organised activities.

## 2.7 Extracurricular Activities and Students' Academic Development

In particular, the high school period can be quite challenging for many adolescents because they are under pressure to become academically successful in order to gain admission to colleges (Polirstok, 2017). Therefore, students need psychosocial support, either from their families or from their schools who are responsible for promoting their academics. However, boosting students' academic performance, particularly for those who struggle academically, is not an easy endeavour for many schools due to several intertwined factors such as class size, a family's socio-economic status and school attendance issues. Participation in school extracurricular activity has been shown to have mixed outcomes on youth academic adjustment such as higher-grade point average, increasing students' connectedness to school, improving school attendance, reducing rates of dropping from schools, increasing students' academic aspiration and improving academic self-efficacy in students (Burr, 2012; Craft, 2012; Fredricks, 2012; Hiğde & Aktamış, 2022; Knifsend & Graham, 2012). These outcomes do not imply causal effects of participation, because there are many considerations that must be taken into account before judging those outcomes as a causal relationship of participation.

When examining the relationship between involvement in extracurricular activities and students' academic performance, it is better to look at the outcomes of studies that employed longitudinal methodology. In their longitudinal study, Haghighat and Knifsend (2019) looked into the role of breadth and intensity of extracurricular activities participation in affecting the

future academic success of the tenth-grade students eight years after completing high school. The sample was taken from an educational longitudinal study conducted in 2002, which followed 10th graders in 2002 through the 12th grade and into their subsequent years. In order to better understand the transition from high school to college or job pathways, the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 was conducted. The National Centre for Education Statistics in the USA carried out this investigation. Youth were chosen at random from among the roughly 750 schools they attended in the 10th grade in 2002 (n = 15,362 at the base year), with an oversample of Asian and Hispanic pupils and private schools to assure representation. The results indicated that both the breadth of participation and the time spent in extracurricular activities in the 10th grade were correlated with increased educational attainment eight years after high school. In a similar longitudinal study Fredricks (2012) found a correlation between the breadth and intensity of extracurricular activity participation in the 10th grade and higher-grade point averages, higher mathematics test scores, and future academic aspirations (for example, plans for the 12th grade and beyond high school).

In terms of a sense of school connectedness, researchers have found that the extracurricular activities environment may increase students' sense of connection to schools, which may in turn increase their academic engagement and achievement. In their study, Knifsend and Graham (2012) looked into the effects of 11th grade ECA participation on students' sense of school belonging, academic engagement, and grade point average both then and in 12th grade. The findings showed that grade point average in 11th grade, academic engagement in 12th grade, and sense of belonging at school in 11th and 12th grade all had curvilinear correlations. In comparison to those who were more or less involved in school ECA, students who moderately participated (in at least two ECAs at school) reported higher sense of school connectedness, grade point averages in both the 11th and 12th grades as well as higher levels of academic engagement in 12th grade. Additionally, the association between domain participation in 11th grade and academic engagement in 12th grade was mediated by the sense of school connectedness in 11th grade. The study concluded that moderated engagement in a variety of school organised activities may be the best way to encourage adolescents to experience a sense of belonging at their school and achieve academic success.

In particular, moving from a familiar school to different school, or transition between educational stages, often means there is a significant change in a student's academic life. This transition is often associated with academic and psychosocial challenges. During this period, many young adolescents may experience disruption in friendship networks, which may

negatively affect their academic achievement (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000). Researchers indicate that facilitating a student's transition between educational stages required programs that specifically smooth the transition period. For example, Akos (2006) conducted a study to examine the impact of taking part in school-sponsored extracurricular activities on students' academic and social adjustment during the transition period to middle school. The researcher developed a questionnaire to measure students' perceptions during the course of a transition period. The questionnaire aimed to collect information about the role of school activities, students' connectedness to the new school, and students' concerns regarding the transition period. There were 173 participants from middle and high schools. The study concluded that participation in such activities has the potential to foster successful school transition and promote the academic and social adjustment of new, upcoming, students. It should be noted that the sample of this study was taken from one school characterised by high performance and the majority of its students were from high socioeconomic background. Beside that, the study involved cross-sectional data which are not able to capture circumstances that influence the academic and social adjustment of participants prior to the transition period. The study also did not examine the patterns of participation and the types of extracurricular activities that provided to participants. All these factors should be considered when it comes to generalise the results of the study.

Another benefit of participation in extracurricular activities on student academic adjustment is that they may prevent school dropout. Early research found that voluntary partaking in organised activities is positively associated with reducing the likelihood of dropping out of school. However, the association's degree is varied based on the types of student activities involved. For example, McNeal (1995) used data (taken from National Centre for Educational Statistics in the United States of America) of 17,251 high school students. The author used a series of logistic regression models to examine the role of participation in school extracurricular activities in the dropout process among students. The results show that involvement in some extracurricular activities organised by school, such as athletics and fine arts, greatly lowers a student's risk of dropping out, whereas involvement in academic clubs has little effect. The study concluded that despite the fact that students who often leave school early are academically, socially, and economically poorer than their counterparts who do not drop out, the chance of dropping out of school is determined by their degree of integration into the school community. As a result, the social interaction occurring during the school ECA may provide them with an incentive to continue their education.

Research also shows that participation in extracurricular activities can act as a protective factor against early leaving school among aggressive students. In his longitudinal study, Mahoney (2014) applied a mixed-method design to examine the associations between involvement in extracurricular activities sponsored by schools and the rates of early school dropout with considering the significance of peer social networks in the context of activity participation. The study sample was taken from a longitudinal dataset that included 695 participants (331 boys and 364 girls, one quarter of them African American) who were recruited from seven public schools between 1981 and 1983 in the USA. Participants were firstly interviewed during the 7th grade and then followed annually to the 12th grade. Later on, at the ages of 20- and 24-years old the participants were tracked and interviewed again. Records from the participants' schools were used to determine their dropout rates, and school yearbooks were used to obtain information on their school extracurricular activity participation. According to the study's findings, adolescents' peer social networks and the specific extracurricular activities they choose to participate in throughout time have a great amount in common. Participation in extracurricular activities considerably reduces the chance of early school dropout for the individual who had previously been labelled as being extremely hostile by school staff and those in his or her social network.

In a recent study, Thouin and his colleagues (2022) studied the benefit of involvement in school-based extracurricular activities for preventing high school dropout, particularly for high-risk students. They employed data from a high-risk Canadian student cohort (N=545). According to their study findings, consistent involvement in school ECA throughout the previous year was linked to a lower risk of dropping out. Teenagers who stopped participating during this time (due to cancellations or exclusions) were just as likely to drop out as those who did not participate at all. Thouin and his colleagues (2022) suggested that high schools with low-income students could prevent dropout among them by encouraging sustained ECA participation. They also suggested that keeping high-risk students out of ECA (for instance, due to No Pass/No Play restrictions) may increase their chance of dropping out.

Improvement in students' skills, motivation and career interests in science are another academic benefit that can be gained from participating in school extracurricular activities. Hiğde and Aktamış (2022) employed a mixed-methods technique to examine how students' interests, motivation, science process skills, and academic success were affected by their involvement in STEM activities. A total of 44 students in seventh-grade secondary schools made up the sample for the study. The sample was split into two groups, with 22 students in the experimental group

who were involved two hours a week for a ten-week period, and 22 students in the control group. The findings demonstrated that, in comparison to the students in the control group, STEM activities enhanced experimental group students' science process skills, STEM career interests, and motivation for STEM professions.

Building students' academic self-efficacy is another academic benefit of participation in school extracurricular activities. According to Bandura (1999) self-efficacy is the degree to which a person has confidence in their capacity to carry out tasks and accomplish goals, despite the events that may affect his/her life. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to overcome obstacles and turn failures into successes, while a person with low self-efficacy is more likely to avoid challenging tasks and might stop pursuing important life goals when they face obstacles (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Self-efficacy is established in Bandura's social cognitive theory. According to the theory, self-efficacy stems from four fundamental sources: learning based on observation; practical experiences; the mastery of social confidence; and emotional arousal. This theory assumes that young people observe those around them and how they encounter and react to events; through this process, they become competent in reacting to events in their own terms (Bandura, 1999). Since self-efficacy can be reinforced through various experiences. According to the ecological systems theory, organised extracurricular activities can provide different developmental contexts (microsystems) where adolescents can shape their self-efficacy through observing the reactions, successes, performance and behaviour of their peers while they participate in these activities.

Studies have indicated that the relationship between involvement in school extracurricular activities, and an advancement in students' academic performance, may be mediated by self-efficacy beliefs. For example, Burr (2012) examined the extent of the relationship between extracurricular activities organised by school and students' academic self-efficacy. The researcher utilised information from the National Centre for Education Statistics in the United States. This information is largely taken from a national longitudinal study conducted in 2002; it encompassed 15000 high school students who were questioned with respect to their academic performance and their experiences and attitudes towards different types of activities sponsored by the schools, ranging from school clubs to interscholastic sports. To measure academic self-efficacy, the researcher used a number of observed variables, such as general academic behaviours and beliefs. For example, students who believe in their ability to master mathematics and English skills. In order to determine the relationship between involvement in extracurricular activities and students' academic self-efficacy, the researcher used confirmatory

factor analysis to generate data. The results revealed that involvement in varied types of extracurricular activities has boosted students' academic self-efficacy, which is attributed to improving their level of academic achievement. The results also found that the level of academic self-efficacy begins to decrease in students who spend long periods of time in extracurricular activities (Burr, 2012).

## 2.8 Extracurricular Activities and Students' Feelings of Belonging to School

For many students, school is at the heart of everyday life because they think school can play an important role in their long-term wellbeing; this can be seen in their level of belonging to school. These students tend to feel that they are part of a school community, more motivated to their education, and have good relations with teachers, staff and peers (Willms, 2003). Nonetheless, this feeling of school belonging is not felt by all students, some of whom do not feel like they belong with their classmates or teachers, and they do not think their school experience will have much of an impact on their future. These students gradually distance themselves from school life and lose interest in learning (Willms, 2003). Finn (1989) and Jenkins (1995) assert that lack of feeling connected with school can cause such students to disassociate with the school environment and sometimes engage in unruly behaviours, showing negative attitudes towards peers and school staff.

According to Goodenow (1993) students' sense of connection to school is referred to as the degree to which a student feels socially respected, included, accepted and supported by teachers and peers in the school social environment. Blum (2005) argued that when students have a positive sense of connecting to their school, they are more likely to 1) feel like they belong and are a part of the school community; 2) like school; 3) think that teachers are supportive and caring; 4) have good friends within the school; 5) be involved in their own current and future academic progress; and 6) think that discipline is fair and effective. Blum (2005) further argued that when students feel more connected to school, this can have many positive outcomes for the school environment such as decreasing the rate of absenteeism, fighting, bullying, vandalism and underachievement among students.

The ecological system theory that was proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) can provide a theoretical framework to understand students' sense of belonging within a school system. According to the Bronfenbrenner theory, as explained in section 2.3.1, school belonging is a multilayered socio-ecological phenomena divided into five levels or systems. These five levels are: individual; micro-systems; meso-systems; exo-systems; and macro-systems. Feelings of

belonging to school in relation to these five levels in the theoretical framework are discussed next.

1) **Individual level**

The individual student and related person-level issues that are related to his or her feeling of school belonging are represented in the inner section of the socio-ecological framework of school belonging. Previous research has revealed that academic drive, emotional stability, and personal qualities (such as social and emotional competences) are the three unique traits of a student that are correlated with his or her sense of school belonging (Korpershoek et al., 2020).

Academic drive includes factors related to academic performance (such as the student's test results and grades), the student's active classroom engagement, and student's perceived worthiness of school and its curriculum and rules. In American high schools, Neel and Fuligni (2013) conducted a longitudinal study over a 4-year period with 572 boy and girl students (age between 13 to 19) to examine how school belonging changes over the years of teenage and how it is associated with academic performance and motivation. The study's findings indicated that academic motivation was positively correlated with school affiliation. According to the authors of the study, young people are more likely to find school beneficial and be academically motivated when they have a connection to their school. However, according to the study's results, school belonging can be changed over the course of the high school years and depending on students' gender; over the course of high school, school belonging among girl students tended to decline, whereas school belonging in boy students remained stable. The authors argued that there are many possible explanations for the gender difference in school belonging, and one of them is access to extracurricular activities. According to the authors, promoting students' participation in extracurricular activities for both genders, particularly in the late adolescent years, is important to foster students' connection to school. However, the problem is that many high schools still provide more extracurricular opportunities for boys than for girls. Therefore, gender disparities in extracurricular options may explain boys' stable and girls' declining school belonging over the course of high school years.

Students' emotional engagement refers to the way that students respond to school or learning activities with feelings like curiosity, anxiety and enthusiasm. The degree of a student's negative or positive reaction toward their instructors, peers, academics and school community is the main indicator of their emotional involvement (Iskandar & Pahlevi, 2021). Therefore, high emotional involvement is assumed to improve students' relationships with their schools,

increase their awareness of the need to complete their school assignments and foster their sense of school belonging (Korpershoek et al., 2020). Whereas lower emotional engagement may impair students' cognitive engagement in their education (Iskandar & Pahlevi, 2021).

Personal traits are the third topic at the student level; coping skills, positive affect, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-concept are among the personal traits that have been linked to school belonging. According to Reschly et al. (2008) school belonging is significantly influenced by social and emotional competences such as having a positive affect and effective coping mechanisms, and vice versa. Therefore, students' feeling of school belonging is likely to improve when schools participate in strategies that support academic motivation, develop emotional stability, and cultivate certain personal traits such as coping skills, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-regulation.

2) **Microsystem level**

This is concerned with relationships with teachers, peers and parents. Students spend much of their time at school interacting with teachers and this interaction can be a key to understanding students' belonging or disaffection from school. El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022) conducted interviews with a group of high school students from one public school in the United Arab Emirates and they observed that teachers- students' relationships that are characterised by care, trust, respect and cooperation can foster school belonging. They concluded that while working with disaffected students who show little or no respect to their teachers is sometimes difficult, constructive interaction between teacher and student that is based on reciprocal understanding and appreciation for each other's efforts should be established to foster a sense of belonging to school among those disaffected. Similarly, but in a large longitudinal study from the United States of America, McNeely and colleagues (2002) reported that students were more likely to report feeling disconnected from school if they thought their classrooms were poorly run and marked by tense interactions between teachers and students. Allen et al. (2018) argued that students' sentiments of social and emotional security grow when teachers act with compassion and assist them in finding solutions to their academic and social issues; such interaction would be expected to facilitate a stronger sense of belonging to school.

Parents have also been found to play an important role in strengthening students' affinity to school. According to Allen et al. (2018) parental support is the ability of the parents to give their children social and intellectual assistance, and having a supportive parent can give a young person a sense of safety and acceptance. Uslu and Gizir (2017) indicated that students are more

likely to be motivated and have higher levels of emotional, social, behavioural and academic adjustment when their parents are involved in their education both at home and school and have positive communication with school. They further added that parental involvement in school can increase teachers' knowledge of students' psychosocial and learning needs and thus enable teachers to offer appropriate schooling support. This multi-dimensional construct can assist in creating a healthy school climate, which can contribute to the students' sense of school belonging.

It is not only a supportive and caring relationship with parents and teachers that seems to be an important variable for boosting students' sense of belonging to school, but also peer relationships. Uslu and Gizir (2017) surveyed 815 Turkish students from both genders to examine if teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and parental involvement predict the sense of school belonging or not. The study findings show that peers' relationships are the second strong variable that predict adolescents' sense of school belonging after teachers-students' relationships. The study concluded that peer support and acceptance and friendships are all important social influences on school belonging. Young people during adolescence are increasingly looking for friends for social belonging (Allen et al., 2018). However, being part of a group can have a negative impact on students' sense of belonging to school. Research shows that peer interactions that are not acceptable can lead to school disaffection. For example, Galand and Hospel (2013) conducted a study to investigate the relationships between peer victimisation and school disaffection. The study's participants were 407 students from Belgian secondary between ages 11 and 16 years old. They found that peer victimisation was positively associated with school disaffection. Galand and Hospel (2013) stressed on the importance of teachers' social support in integrating students who feel excluded in school. According to Goodenow (1993) students may join peer groups with disapproving attitudes toward academic norms if they perceive a lack of social support from school personnel; they will progressively stop being integrated in the school environment and lose interest in their education.

3) **Mesosystem level**

As a consequence of the connections between the levels in the socio-ecological framework, the mesosystem represents the special bidirectional interactions of the characteristics inside the microsystem level with regard to school procedures, practices, policies, pedagogy and activities. For example, feeling safe at school has been identified as an important element in a student's sense of belonging to school (El Zaatari & Maalouf 2022), however this feeling may

be strengthened or weakened by aspects of the mesosystem level, such as school policies, rules and practices. According to Allen et al., (2016) schools that use feedback from students, parents, and school staff when developing policies that are concerned with creating a fair and safe school climate have been found to be important practices for fostering school belonging in students.

Another mesosystem element in the socio-ecological framework of school belonging is the provision of curricular and extracurricular programs that are aimed to enhance students' social and emotional skills, which have also been found to foster school belonging in students. For example, Frydenberg et al. (2009) examined the links between emotional and coping strategies, and school connectedness. They found that learning an effective coping strategy was positively related to student-reported sense of school belonging. In addition, being a member in group activities such as school extracurricular activities has been found to positively influence school connectedness. One such study was conducted by Soria et al. (2013) who found that students' reported sense of school belonging was impacted by their involvement in extracurricular activities. The researchers looked at 1,865 students who participated in different student groups formed during orientation week activities. According to the results, students who took part in these activities felt more like they belonged at their school than those who did not.

4) **Exosystem level**

The exosystem, which includes the neighbourhood, grandparents and other family members, nearby companies, and community organisations, is a representation of the area around the school. Similar to the mesosystem, this level is made possible to connect by the chances that schools provide to unite these groups. Cemalcilar (2010) claimed that for valid interventions (in the exosystem level) that aimed at promoting school belonging, change in school-level practices should be made. Getting in touch with nearby companies or other schools, as well as organising school events that include the larger school community and the students' extended families, are some practices that might be helpful for schools to establish a connection with the exosystem. Schools could also think about collaborating with neighbourhood partners that are prepared to provide a variety of services within the school (Allen et al., 2018).

5) **Macrosystem level**

The macrosystem level is a representation of more general government policies and legislation. It consists of elements like rules, guidelines, and government-driven projects, in addition to the

specific historical and cultural contexts that each school faces, such as past events, general attitudes, and conditions, as well as language, beliefs, norms and customs. The macrosystem may impact how schools carry out their everyday operations, especially in terms of how they set their priorities and objectives. A student's feeling of belonging may be influenced by the macrosystem layer, although more study is required to support this hypothesis. One example of the government's policies on the education level is shown in Saudi Arabia, where discussions about students' academic performance, teachers' teaching performance, and teachers' salaries have been entwined with passing the test of PEOLT (Professional Educational Occupation License Test). Although it has never been mentioned in the literature that whether a Saudi teachers' inability to obtain the teaching license has any impact on students' academic performance or not, Saudi instructors who are currently teaching in schools are often under constant pressure to pass the test every year. This example reflects the legislative and governmental pressure to place students' academic performance at the macrosystem level above other crucial elements within the school system, such as teachers' wellbeing. Roffey (2012) found that the additional stress on teachers' working environment can have a negative impact on teachers and students' wellbeing. According to Allen et al. (2016), increased teacher stress may negatively influence the student-teacher relationship which is found to be important for fostering students' sense of belonging to school. Allen et al. (2016) further argued that teachers may be more effective educators if their welfare is taken into consideration. This might improve the student-teacher connection, which is a key element in building a sense of school belonging among students. Thus, schools should be aware of how government-driven legislations may affect other socio-ecological levels that are relevant to education.

School environments can enhance or inhibit students' sense of school connectedness. School environment is multi-dimensional; the various aspects or dimensions of school environment are covered in the five levels of the theoretical framework discussed above. High-quality school environments must be established to promote school belonging among students. The following discussion brings them together to look at school environment factors holistically, before focusing on extracurricular activities and their influence on students' sense of belonging to school. El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022) conducted an analytical review of the factors related to school environment that influence students' sense of belonging to their school, and they found that an effective educational environment, safety in school, positive teacher-student relationships, peer interactions, parental school involvement and school extracurricular activities are the most important factors of school climate that influence the development of

school belonging in students. Research shows that participation in extracurricular activities can positively influence students' social bonding to school. For example, using survey research, Martinez and his colleagues (2016) examined how involvement in different types of extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, arts) is associated with students' perceptions of the multiple dimensions of school environment (social-emotional security, adult support, student support, and school connectedness). Their study included 15,004 high school students from 28 schools across 11 states in the United States; the large size of this study contributes to its reliability. The study findings suggest that students involved in sports, clubs and arts activities had more favourable perceptions of school connectedness than those who did not participate. However, students' perceptions vary by activity type, particularly participation in clubs and sport activities, which was associated with higher levels of perceived school connectedness. The study concluded that school extracurricular activities are a great way to promote sense of school community because they include a wide range of people in the school community (parents, coaches, teachers, and others), integrate prosocial education, and strengthen bonds between students and stakeholders at many social-ecological levels.

Ryan and Powelson (1991) stated that social disengagement from school is sometimes a result of insufficient contact with teachers and friendships with peers. El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022) argued that for creating a balanced, healthy school environment that supports students' social and emotional growth, schools should encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities because being a member of school extracurricular programs can provide students with a chance to form social relations outside of the classroom with students, teachers and coaches, and such relationships can satisfy students' desire for social engagement. According to Christison (2013), students are continually looking for a greater sense of belonging and group activities are necessary for providing students with a sense of belonging to the school environment by promoting constructive connections not just with classmates but also with teachers. Through engaging in a favourite activity that is entertaining and interesting, students can forge significant connections with teachers and peers and learn how to manage their emotions.

### 2.9 Potential Negative Impact of Participation in ECA on Students Development

While there are many potential academic benefits that students can gain from participation in extracurricular activities, they can also have a negative academic impact, particularly for those who excessively participate in such activities. Currently there is an emerging theoretical

framework in the existing literature, which is the zero-sum model theorising that participation in organised extracurricular activities has positive outcomes on students' academic performance up until a certain degree beyond which ECA involvement leads to negative academic consequences (Seow & Pan, 2014). Scholars like Fredricks (2012) argued that it is crucial to evaluate the over-scheduled participation in ECA during the high school years on students' academic adjustment for many reasons. One reason is that some organised activities, like school athletics, become more intensely competitive in the years of secondary school and demand more time than they did when students were younger. Another factor is the rise in opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities at schools during this period.

Suleman and Singh (2014) conducted an experimental study to examine the impact of over-scheduled involvement in extracurricular activities on the academic performance of high school students. The study's sample was comprised of 50 male students who were studying in grade ten of high school. To meet the objectives of the study, the researchers used pre and post-test techniques for data collection. The researchers divided the study's participants into two groups, namely the control and experimental groups. In order to compare the academic performance of both groups, the researchers used four chapters taken from chemistry textbooks. Both groups were taught the same chapters in two separate classrooms for almost six weeks. Throughout this experimental period, all groups were involved in a variety of extracurricular activities for about forty minutes during the school day. The experimental group, however, were asked to be involved in two hours after school. Six weeks later, the researchers did a post-test to measure participants' performance in the subject of chemistry. Following analysing the data, it was found that students in the control group performed well in the chemistry test, whereas students in the experimental groups scored an unsatisfactory performance. Suleman and Singh (2014) concluded that too much involvement in extracurricular activities after school time can have a negative impact on students' test scores. Therefore, parents should pay attention to their children during test times and not allow them to spend too long on these activities.

In a correlational study, Johnson and Moulden (2011) examined the relationship between time spent in extracurricular activities outside school time and students' homework performance. The study sample comprised of 33 students. The researchers used a survey to calculate the average grades of the students' homework assignments and record the hours spent on extracurricular activities. The study was carried out over a four week-period. At the beginning of the study, the researchers distributed a questionnaire to the students. Each week, students were asked to complete the questionnaire with information regarding the daily hours spent on

extracurricular activities, types of activities and homework scores in language and mathematic subjects. Each weekend, and for four consecutive weeks, the researchers recorded this information for statistical analysis. When the data was analysed using Pearson correlation test, the researchers found a significant negative correlation between the number of hours spent on extracurricular activities and students' homework performance in languages and mathematics. The study suggested that students can be engulfed by excessive participation in afterschool activities and thus such a level of involvement prevents students from focusing on their schoolwork.

By using longitudinal data, Fredricks (2012) conducted a study to explore the impact of over-involvement in extracurricular activities on wellbeing and academic adjustment in adolescence. The study suggested that partaking in organised extracurricular activities after school hours has a positive correlation with high grades and overall academic performance to a certain extent. However, higher levels of involvement do not lead to correspondingly better advantages because students' psychological and academic adjustment starts to decline along with greater involvement. This study also suggested that teachers should be alert to signs of anxiety in their pupils and, in such cases, should advise them to take part moderately in the activities offered by the school outside of lesson time, as these activities have the potential to help young people mature whilst having a positive impact on their schoolwork.

Not only can over-scheduling participation in ECA impact students' academic' adjustment negatively, it can also impact the students psychologically and physically which could lead to stress, burnout and injuries. By using a self-report survey with 118 American adolescents, Melman and his colleagues (2007) investigated the possibility of a connection between the quantity of regularly scheduled activities adolescents participate in, the duration of these activities, and teenage reports of depression, anxiety, and physical complaints. According to their findings, students are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety when they engage in more activities and longer hours of participation. The findings also showed that adolescents who participated in a moderate number of activities and in a moderate amount of time reported the fewest physical complaints. The study authors further argued that external pressure from parents can be part of the issues if they push their children to be involved in too many activities or by forcing them to participate in an activity that does not match their physical or psychological interests. The authors concluded that to help mitigate the possible detrimental effects of overscheduling participation in ECA, school personnel can talk to parents and stress that children have to relax and spend time with family every day. Also, Melman et al. (2007)

stress the importance that children participated in ECA by choice not by external pressures which could be stressful for them.

### 2.10 Teachers' Participation in Extracurricular Activities

There are many reasons for teachers to partake in school extracurricular activities (ECAs); one such reason is coaching. Winchester et al. (2011) made a study of the profiles of teachers who became involved in high school coaching, and their research found three notable teacher-coach profiles that give some indication of the reasons why teachers taking up coaching in schools. They identified these as:

(1) "The Rookie'

A person who is new to sports coaching and has either limited proficiency or no prior involvement in this field before they became a teacher. They are keen take on the role as a means of integration into a new school, and also to gain coaching experience.

(2) "The Varsity Athlete"

A person who has previously been very involved in a sport and wishes to maintain that involvement.

(3) "The Veteran"

A person who has acquired extensive coaching experience before taking on a teaching role, and who can step in when there is a need.

These three profiles represent a variety of reasons why a teacher may choose to coach, and is something which can also extend to other extracurricular activities. Teachers may take on an extracurricular role as a part of their job when they are hired, or they may enjoy or have their own personal experience of a particular activity and wish to be involved in it at their school.

In addition to the reasons outlined above, the key goals of teaching at the core of the profession are the desire to provide an excellent learning environment and deliver the best student experience. One study found that over 91% of teachers considered extracurricular activity to be essential in schools, with many of them willing to volunteer for a leading role in these if teaching workloads permitted (Whitely & Richard, 2012). Akin (2019) expanded on this by examining the reasons why teachers are willing to give up their own time and take on extra responsibilities for their school. From interviews with 30 teachers, Akin found that they are frequently committed to the goals of the school they work in, and will sacrifice their personal

time to achieve them. The author argues that such commitment is distinctly related to the aim of teachers to create a positive impact on the culture of their school.

A study undertaken by Logan and Scarborough (2008) noted that students have a need for other 'adult relationships' in their lives, beyond their parents and families. This is viewed as an asset that is vital for a student's development and growth, whether in their academic or personal life. Feldman and Matjakso (2005) stated that student participation in ECA activities provides them with an opportunity to identify a role model among their teachers, which enables genuine interaction, constructive feedback, and also the support of a mentor who will encourage and coach a student throughout their journey into adulthood. The authors also argued that involvement in ECA allows children to get to know their teachers and coaches well, and this in turn can foster positive and trustworthy relationships beyond the child's family. It can also be a beneficial influence on a child's development as it can be a bridge to achieving trust and mutual respect. Wilson (2009) however argues that there is a risk of poor coaching, or an activity that is potentially damaging to a student's growth and development. Such an experience could have a negative impact on the student, and therefore cause them to strongly resist participation in future activities. The author further stated that if teachers lack the ability to encourage student participation, the students will quickly lose their motivation.

Teachers' participation in ECAs is not only beneficial to their students, but also to themselves. In one study it was found that teachers who lead the activities felt pride in supporting their students. They saw this as a way to enable the younger generation to achieve their goals, while at the same time reinforcing the purpose of the teaching staff in their educational mission (Tawfik, 2017). Further research by McDonald (2013) studied the perceptions of teachers as to how they might themselves benefit from participation in extracurricular activities. The author found that the respondents saw their involvement as coaches and advisers as beneficial both professionally and personally. Teachers who took on the role of coach or adviser also reported an increase in opportunities for networking with other teachers, administrators, the students and the community, which in turn could increase their interactions with resources and in relationships. Connections formed through time spent together beyond the school day in a change of setting can be different from the usual teacher-student interactions of the classroom. McDonald (2013) further argued that because teachers are necessary to the forming and maintaining of extracurricular activities and can also share their experience and knowledge, best practices in the classroom can be enhanced by a teacher's involvement in both ECAs and pedagogical practice.

Because participation in ECAs can be a positive experience for both students and teachers, it may be that teachers feel they are driven to be involved. Their participation can often mean they take on extra responsibilities and have less time for other activities, which can be a potential drawback. Sutton (2015) built on this by arguing that teacher burnout can be a serious problem in education. The term 'burnout' is used to describe a person who becomes physically, mentally and emotionally fatigued, while feeling they have failed because of their excessive use of energy (Maslach et al., 2001). Although the term can be applied to people in many situations, it clearly applies to teachers due to the demands of the teaching profession. Brown and Roloff (2011) found that teachers can become stressed and exhausted through their involvement in extracurricular activities if they do not adhere to a strict schedule and achieve a balance. The authors also argued that a lack of balance can cause conflict between the roles of classroom teaching and participation in ECAs.

Teachers are regarded as key employees in the implementation of extracurricular activities in schools, and therefore should have the necessary skills and knowledge to lead ECAs for their students. In a study of teachers' level of knowledge and readiness to take on such a role, it was found that having the relevant proficiency and expertise in an extracurricular activity is essential for teachers to be able to manage them (Fang & Ngee, 2013). The authors concluded that effective management and organisation of ECAs programmes can be a decisive factor in their success. It was also suggested that teachers who actively participate in their school's extracurricular activities could be offered promotional incentives or rewards to increase their motivation. An investigation by Muema et al. (2019) examined the influence of such rewards on teachers' involvement in ECAs in public secondary schools, and it was found to be a motivating factor for teachers to sacrifice more of their time in order to coach their students.

## 2.11 Parental Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Parental involvement in a child's life and development is important, and there is a need for parents to recognise their role and adjust their own behaviours in order to encourage positive development for their children in the activities they take part in. A study by Ashbourne and Andres (2015) identified three specific roles played by parents when they suggest extracurricular activities to their children: 1) enforcer, 2) facilitator, and 3) encourager.

The intention of the enforcer parent is to ensure that their child engages in activities that will either be of benefit in their future or that are common childhood activities. They will then push their child to take part in these activities irrespective of the child's own personal interests, and

subsequently express disappointment in their child's performance and progress. However, the actions of an enforcer parent can have a harmful effect. Anderson et al. (2003) noted that such parents may be unaware of how forceful their pressuring behaviours can be, believing that exerting such pressure will increase their child's motivation. However, this has the reverse effect; as parental pressure increases, the child's enjoyment of the activity will decrease.

Parents can also be facilitators. Ashbourne and Andres (2015) noted that parents who act as facilitators will place more trust in their child, believing that the child's own interests provide the necessary motivation for them to put in the required effort and to progress in their activities. However, although allowing a child to drive their own participation in activities may be of benefit to their enjoyment, consideration should also be given to a child's lack of goal orientation. Anderson et al. (2003) argued that although it is vital for a child to make decisions about which activities they want to participate in, there is still a need for parents to play a role in the process of choosing activities as their child may not have the ability to formulate a clear goal towards the activity, they want to take part in and what they aim to achieve.

Ashbourne and Andres (2015) argue that parents who take on the encourager role are more likely to combine their own suggestions with their child's ideas, and will guide them in the growth of their interests and take part in activities they believe will be of benefit to their child's development. It is suggested that parents encourage their children to engage in specific activities to develop abilities and skills that will be of use in their future, but parental encouragement may also be related to activities connected with their own childhood, their memories and family history. Stirrup et al. (2015) noted that some parents encouraged their children to involve themselves in activities they had themselves participated in when they were young, as it had made them happy and enabled them to learn practical skills.

Support from parents can have a great influence on students' engagement in extracurricular activities, however the degree of the parental support can be influenced by different factors. For example, parental support may be dependent on their financial resources. Parker and Horowitz (2015) found that children with parents in the higher income and education bracket were more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities, whereas children from low-income families were less likely to participate than their more advantaged peers. In addition, the participation of a child in extracurricular activities requires not just financial outlay, but also time investment by parents; the provision of transportation, supervision, coaching and their presence during the activities are all important factors in a child's involvement in an ECA.

Strohschein et al. (2008) noted that parental employment can limit the availability of their time, and that there are significantly reduced levels of positive interaction with their children where parents are employed in the labour market, in contrast to the parents who are not.

## 2.12 Constraints to Participation in Extracurricular Activities

A variety of recreational, academic, and social activities are available for students outside the formal curriculum, and students can participate in them during or outside school hours. However, there are several constraints associated with the provision of and participation in such activities. Low students' participation in school extracurricular activities and their poor provision within schools are issues which need further investigation. This section will give background information with regard to barriers that limit students' participation in extracurricular activities and the challenges associated with their provision and implementation in schools. This section will also look at the most appropriate theoretical model that explains these barriers and challenges.

Darling et al. (2005) argued that school based extracurricular activities are classified as one of adolescent leisure activities, but what distinguishes them from other leisure activities is that they are structured in some way to promote a wide variety of positive developmental experiences. Understanding barriers to these activities is an important step to facilitate students' participation in the activities and help schools develop strategies to overcome barriers to their provision. The hierarchical model of leisure activities constraints developed by Crawford et al. (1991) may provide a theoretical framework to better understand obstacles that affect extracurricular activities participation and provision. This model classified these obstacles into three major constraints, namely *structural constraints*, *interpersonal constraints* and *intrapersonal constraints*. Raymore and his colleagues (1993) described leisure constraints as factors that restrain partaking in an activity. However, some researchers have suggested that these constraints are not fixed obstacles and can be overcome when people or organisations that are concerned with providing leisure activities adopt specific strategies and resources (White, 2008). For example, in such a case of extracurricular activities sponsored by schools, Kumar and Bahadur (2004) observed that when schools do not have sufficient items of musical instrument for conducting music activities, the best option to cope with this obstacle is to hire the needed instruments.

### 2.12.1 Structural constraints

According to the hierarchical model of leisure activities constraints suggested by Crawford et al. (1991), *structural constraints* are explained as intervening factors between leisure activities preferences and participation. *Structural constraints* in particular are associated with the physical environment, social, cultural and economic status of people. Examples of these factors include weather condition, weak infrastructure, lack of equipment, financial resources, available time and culture of society (Palen et al., 2010). *Structural constraints* are one of the most frequent problems that constrain a school's ability to provide extracurricular programs for students. As stated by Kumar and Bahadur (2004) when it comes to providing successful extracurricular activities, the lack of suitable facilities and equipment in school is a key barrier.

Schools are unique places where young people spend a considerable amount of time for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values and are therefore supposed to have the ability to provide children with a variety of positive programs and activities that contribute to their academic, physical and psychosocial development (Gomez & Ang, 2007). This ability may be limited for some schools, due to the status of school facilities and equipment. Lawanson and Gede (2011) stated that the ability to implement school activity programs, whether they are academic or non-academic programs, depends mainly on the availability of appropriate equipment and facilities in schools. School facilities are divided into different types, including instructional, recreational and general facilities. Recreational facilities and equipment are associated with sport, art and music classes and other extracurricular activities that serve the school community better. Such facilities incorporate halls, gymnasium, playground, library and theatre (Lawanson & Gede, 2011).

Opening schools for a longer time and using their facilities and infrastructures as centres for carrying out extracurricular programs can expand the benefit gained from money invested in such public buildings. However, heavy use of school buildings means increased wear and tear on their facilities' infrastructures. Grossman et al. (2001) reported that maintaining a school building and its facilities is the most pressing issue facing school administrators as a result of the tight budgets that most schools operate under. Grossman and colleagues (2001) also reported that the use of computer labs, libraries, auditoriums and gyms for after-school use may be restricted by principals since they are responsible for the physical condition of the buildings and in managing the school budget. They can often feel that the facilities will be mistreated by students participating in these activities after school hours.

A comprehensive study was conducted by Kumar and Bahadur (2004) to establish the situation around extracurricular activities in Nepalese schools. A descriptive research design was used, which employed observation, a questionnaire and focus group discussions. Twelve schools from the three districts were randomly selected for the study, with participants including school leaders, teachers, and parents. The results suggested that all research participants recognised the need for extracurricular activities and saw their benefits for the students, but there were factors that limited their availability in the schools. These included lack of facilities, equipment and supplies, lack of trained teachers, insufficient teachers able to participate, teaching overload, lack of finance and the poor socio-economic and educational status of the parents. The study concluded that activities should be focused on the needs, ages and developmental characteristics of the students and the socio-cultural set-up of the community. The researchers also suggested that local facilities outside of the school premises might be used as an alternative.

Another descriptive survey design study in Kenya undertaken by Kisango (2016) looked at extracurricular activities in public secondary schools in order to understand the role of facilities, funding, teachers' participation and parent involvement in establishing an adequate after school program. The study (which used qualitative and quantitative methods) involved students, teachers, and school principals, with 170 students from 17 secondary schools and 17 extracurricular teachers taking part. The qualitative responses were analysed using content analysis, whilst the quantitative data used descriptive statistics. The study showed that most students, 60%, believed that inadequate funding affected their activity in sports and games. Further, 71% asserted that school facilities were inadequate and 76% that their parents did not participate enough in after school activities. The study concluded that better funding was required so that all students be given the benefit of such activities and that schools had a duty to provide extracurricular activities to further pupil development.

Similarly, Kara (2016) explored the views of Turkish secondary school teachers who oversee school extracurricular activities. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview to collect data from 20 Turkish teachers working in state schools. Most of the teachers interviewed indicated that a lack of dedicated spaces and inadequate materials in schools make extracurricular activities difficult tasks to be implemented. Teachers also stressed that in order to implement school activities effectively, the school's leaders must support teachers, particularly when it comes to distributing tasks between teachers, granting permissions and managing teaching overload issues.

Extracurricular sports, in particular, can benefit the students by providing an environment in which structured play can be safely enjoyed. These activities are often popular among students, and most of them are performed after school hours on sport facilities of the school, due to the nature of some activities that require many hours of practice. However, some schools may face difficulties in the secure provision of the extracurricular sport activities; one of the main difficulties is the lack of teachers who have expertise in coaching. For example, Aoyagi et al. (2013) reported that more than half of Japanese extracurricular activity teachers did not have expertise to carry out the extracurricular sport activities provided at their schools. As a way to overcome this issue, some schools resort to recruiting external coaches to support teachers and improve their sport coaching skills. However, hiring external coaches is difficult for a number of reasons. Aoyagi et al. (2013) surveyed 149 Japanese external coaches to examine challenges associated with recruiting external coaches in public high schools. The authors noted that the limited number of athletic coaches in some districts is one of the barriers facing schools. Besides that, the study found low financial incentives and difficulty coaches face in dealing with parents are among the reasons for their reluctance to work in schools.

In a similar study but using a semi structured questionnaire, Mazerolle et al. (2015) examined the barriers that extracurricular sport coordinators face in hiring athletic trainers in public high schools in the United States. Twenty high school sport coordinators from different geographical regions of the United States were randomly selected to participate in the study. The study identified two major barriers perceived by participants; of these, financial constraints were the main factor hindering them from employing athletic trainers. The second barrier was the misconceptions about the role of athletic trainers in schools. For example, most of the participants understand the role of athletic trainers in dealing with emergency situations, for others this role is underestimated and it is believed that secondary school staff have sufficient training to address the medical needs of student.

A different study in Wales, UK, undertaken by Rainer et al. (2015) looked at the experiences of twenty-six sports' coaches who were tasked with providing extracurricular school sporting activities. The study used a socioecological approach to examine the barriers that existed. Four aspects were reviewed: the physical environment, the personal behaviour of the students, the broader social environment and wider policy issues. The results found significant barriers facing the coaches, which included lack of facilities, insufficient senior management support, available time, financial issues and conflicts with the physical education (PE) staff. PE teachers were found to act negatively towards these extracurricular school sporting activities because

they were at odds with their own lesson plans and were prioritised for the use of school facilities. Participants in the study also said that the schools contributed to the lack of enthusiasm for extracurricular programs, particularly for those schools in rural locations, where the students travel considerable distances between home and school, and where additional transportation outside school hours is not available. Adequate funding may also not be available, which hinders the coaches' ability to offer programs that appeal to the students, and in having to resort to the more traditional sports, for example, football and rugby. These may not be seen by students as innovative enough to stay on after school. The study's findings suggested that prior to implementing sports programs designed to encourage physical activity, it is vital that safe and comfortable facilities are identified and that the students themselves are listened to about the nature and scope of the activities they would like to participate in.

A different study by McNeal Jr (1999) investigated how the structure and context of a school determined student participation in extracurricular activities. Data were drawn from a larger study undertaken by the National Center for Educational Statistics and included 5,700 students from 280 high schools. The data examined included the number of students in the school, student/teacher class ratios, academic achievement, climate and the social milieu of the student body. The study found that students who attend large schools or in which climate is a problem (that is where the students do not feel safe) often do not participate in extracurricular activities. Safety is a big issue, where the students may be faced with problems of drugs, vandalism, weapons, and physical and verbal abuse. These situations are assumed to discourage students from engaging with school activities, and it is clear that safety needs to be improved if student participation in extracurricular activities is to increase. Holland and Andre's study (1987) reinforced this view; that students enrolled in smaller schools tend to participate more in extracurricular activities than students in larger schools. A study by McNeal (1999) also found that a school that has an increased emphasis on academic work has no impact on student involvement in extracurricular activities. The study suggested that while some schools place an increasing focus on academic achievement, which may not be healthy for the students, their involvement in activities after school is not necessarily affected. However, schools that divert funding away from extracurricular activities in favour of additional academic work may be detrimentally affecting the students. The strategy may result from a mistaken belief that non-academic work is of less value. The study asserted that structural and contextual factors at the school significantly impact student participation in school activities. These may in turn impact the students' access to sources of human, cultural, and social capital. It is therefore important

that schools increase the provision of extracurricular activities, and the size of the school is an influential factor.

In a study conducted by Berk and Goebel (1987) the size of the school and its association with the provision of and participation in extracurricular school activities were investigated. The study asked 142 students, all of whom attended smaller colleges, to identify their school (name, location, size) and discuss their involvement (little, some, high) in the extracurricular activities in which they participated. The study concluded that, on a linear scale, as school size decreased, participation in extracurricular activities increased. No further explanation was provided from the study. Black (2002) asserted that smaller schools offer better opportunities to become involved in extracurricular activities because more individual attention is paid to the students. The study offered an example whereby, if 15 students are required to form a team, six small high schools will create 90 opportunities, if adequately funded to do so, while one large high school serving as many students would create only fifteen opportunities. Since smaller schools need a higher percentage of their students to complete the team, more students from a broader cross-section of the student population are engaged. This encourages students to mix and get to know other pupils from different economic, racial and cultural backgrounds. However, when Stearns and Glennie (2010) investigated the influence of school size on the availability and breadth of after-school activities, they found that the larger schools offered a more diverse range of activities than the smaller ones. Larger schools also tend to have more rigorous processes, which might mean they are less personable. This may in turn lead to weaker social bonding amongst the pupils, and amongst parents, teachers and the entire school community. The lack of individuality in these schools can lead to poorer academic performance and in students attending after-school activities.

From a larger study in the United States, Crosnoe et al. (2004) collected information from the U.S. National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. They examined responses from 14,966 pupils attending 84 schools and looked at how school size affected how the students participated in extracurricular activities (ECAs). They also looked at how well the students bonded with the school and with their teachers. They surveyed a total of 33 different academic, sporting and cultural activities, including leadership, performing arts and athletic activities. The results consistently showed that as school size increases, student participation in ECAs decreases, and that the relationship between increasing size and reducing participation was linear. A further study was conducted by Roger Barker and Paul Gump (cited in Huling, 1980) when they looked at a large school and compared it with 4 smaller schools in the same US

states. They concluded that: 1) both small and large schools offer broadly the same range of ECAs; 2) students are more likely to get involved in activities when they are in the smaller schools; 3) smaller schools give students more positions of responsibility than the larger schools; and 4) in smaller schools, students enjoy the ECAs more and receive greater encouragement to participate.

Overall, research on the impact of school size on extracurricular activities participation has competing findings. Larger schools tend to offer more varied opportunities that enhance the likelihood that students will be able to find an activity of personal interest (Lay, 2007). Yet Coladarci and Cobb (1996) found that participation was higher among students attending smaller high schools than those attending larger high schools. There is agreement in the research that larger high schools offer a greater variety of activities, which provides greater opportunities for more students to participate, while smaller schools have a narrower range of opportunities, but have students who feel encouraged or compelled to participate in multiple activities throughout the school year (Humann & Griffin, 2014).

Another factor that limits participation in extracurricular activities and their provision in schools is financial constraint. Most schools' funding comes from government, local sources and charitable donations. Financial resources play a substantial role in influencing the quality of education offered to students. High levels of funding in schools are frequently translated into tangible resources, such as smaller class sizes, better technology, good school facilities, and more qualified teachers and extracurricular opportunities for students (Stearns & Glennie, 2010). However, when schools face a lack in their financial resources, they often resort to reducing extracurricular programs in an effort to save money. For example, Watkins (2004) stated that because many local governments in the United States of America face difficult economic circumstances, one of the first victims of a slowing economy are public schools, in which urban high schools look for ways to reduce their expenditures; one of these ways is considering the benefits of eliminating or reconstructing programs that are deemed not fundamental to the school's curriculum, such as extracurricular activities.

However, the reduction in funding does not mean that these important activities should be eliminated entirely. School administrators can establish innovative ideas to retain some funding for extracurricular activities. One of the innovative ideas was discussed by Roth (2003) which is "pay to play" system in which pupils in the public school paid to participate in certain activities, which included extracurricular activities. This was an effort to keep these valuable

programs available for students, recognising their importance in developing physical and mental agility. Instead of abandoning these activities, the students are charged a fee to participate, which is used to fund staffing, equipment and facilities.

In fact, the main mission of public schools is to provide all students, who come from a variety of social, cultural and economic backgrounds, with the same opportunities. This provides a valuable service in societal integration and provides all students with the opportunity to attain a standard degree of education. "Pay to play" runs against the grain with this strategy because it more negatively affects students from poorer families, particularly as participation in extracurricular activities may keep students from lower income households from becoming engaged and motivated. Charging a fee may mean that these activities become available only to the richer households, which may result in a yet more uneven distribution of social and cultural capital (Damelang & Kloß, 2013). It may also increase social isolation in poorer students and damage the spirit of competition among students as a whole (Hoff & Mitchell, 2006; Snellman et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, unequal access to extracurricular activities is increasing as funding becomes tighter; it is low-income family children who suffer first and most, and who paradoxically are most in need of the activities than the children of richer parents. Data from the National Survey of Children's Health was used by Leonard (2017) to look at the disparity in participation in extracurricular activities among children from 12 to 18 years. He discovered a correlation between family income and youth participation in extracurricular activities. Moreover, low-income children participate more in unstructured activities that are solitary in nature, such as TV watching and playing video games. Children from richer families participate in school clubs and societies. The study's author summarised that a richer program of academic and non-academic activities leads to better attainment and results in less 'risky' behaviour in and out of school. It is, therefore, important to find a way of including the lower incomes in extracurricular activities. There is a clear correlation between poverty and decreased learning (Damelang & Kloß, 2013). Knop and Siebens (2018) found the same; that lower income children participate less than children whose parents are wealthier. This is not surprising given that these children also have less time to participate in after school activities; due to lack of financial resources and having additional family obligations. One such obligation might be to hold down a part-time job after school to contribute to the family's budget. These children may also care for younger siblings or have caring responsibilities for family members who are elderly or disabled. They may also lack transportation and live further from school, which further limits

their ability to participate compared with those children who either live closer to school or whose parents, friends or relatives can provide transport to and from these activities. Young people may not have access to their own cars, for age or financial reasons, or both, so they either rely on others or miss the opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities. Gasparovich (2017) studied the effects of transportation access on extracurricular activities in Zagreb. He looked to emphasise the link between transport and participation in these activities using quantitative and qualitative methods. He provided 826 secondary school students with a questionnaire and found that almost half of these secondary school pupils had difficulty participating in after school activities due to problems with transportation. The results showed a clear correlation between participation and transport availability. A study by Little (2007) showed that schools are not, themselves, able to provide safe and reliable transport for pupils attending after-school activities. There are a number of reasons for this: cost, the distance between home and school, and the lack of public transportation, particularly in rural areas. He also concluded that parents may be reluctant to send their children to such activities because their safety cannot be guaranteed, particularly if they live in neighbourhoods that are affected by higher crime rates. However, he did observe some creative solutions that were applied to give children better access to extracurricular activities. Getting travel vouchers from local bus companies and developing a "buddy system" for older youths to escort younger children to and from school have opened up opportunities for more disadvantaged children.

The weather can also impact participation in extracurricular activities, particularly if they are being held outside. Hot weather reduces participation (Hyndman & Chancellor, 2015), and rain acts as a deterrent to extracurricular physical activity among students, as investigated by Harrison et al. (2015). They recruited 283 students from different ages between 9 and 14 years in order to examine how rainfall changed their physical activity pattern. On three occasions between 2007 and 2011, the selected students were asked to wear accelerometers for seven days in order to monitor their daily physical activity. Weather information was compared to the activity results, with the result that bad or wet weather reduced the amount of physical activity engaged in by the students. School leaders responsible for physical activity are advised to provide their pupils with alternative indoor programs on days where there may be extreme weather conditions; bad weather can impact the health of young people, and caution is advised (Rahman, 2017).

### 2.12.2 Intrapersonal constraints

According to the hierarchical model of leisure activities constraints suggested by Crawford et al. (1991), *Intrapersonal constraints* are personal characteristics or states that restrict one's preference for a certain activity. Their hierarchical model outlined a number of key *intrapersonal constraint factors*: (1) individual psychological conditions; (2) lack of knowledge; and (3) lack of interest. It should be noted that sometimes these intrapersonal factors overlap and consequently influence students' participation. For example, Mohamad Sari and Esa (2017) mentioned that when students' knowledge of extracurricular curricular activities is very low because the perception placed on these activities is bored and burdened, this event can lead to a lack of students' interest in getting involved in extracurricular activities and more likely to engage in a non-academic form of activities to fulfil their time.

The lack of interest in ECAs is mostly identified as an intrapersonal factor that constrains students from participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, Kassa (2016) adopted a descriptive research design to examine factors affecting students' participation in extracurricular activities in three secondary schools in the Addis Ababa region. Data were collected from 43 secondary school teachers and 170 secondary school students from three secondary schools, which were purposively sampled. The study found that heavy learning load, lack of interest to participate, absence of motivation and incentives, and the school's emphasis on academic excellence were inhibiting factors for students' participation in extracurricular activities. Kassa (2016) indicated that students' lack of interest in participating in ECAs is because such activities are implemented without a clear plan that meets students' needs and interests. In fact, students need autonomy in their choice of school extracurricular activities, as this will act as an intrinsic motivator. Autonomy is defined as "the necessity of experiencing a sense of choice, willingness, and volition as one behaves" (Deci et al., 2013). When students are given autonomy, they are more likely to be motivated towards the choices they make (Guay et al., 2008). This is related to the 'sense of self' that students might feel when they are given autonomy to choose a particular direction (Guay et al., 2013). The most autonomous form of motivation is intrinsic regulation, and it happens when an activity is engaged in for its own sake rather than as part of a defined program; these activities tend to be more motivational, interesting and enjoyable (Denault & Guay, 2017). Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) suggested that well-structured activities, which are led by teachers or coaches, are more likely to be engaged in by students; unstructured activities are not. Denault and Guay (2017) found that ECAs that are led by teachers in a well-structured manner are more likely to receive

autonomous support from the students, who will be more motivated. As might be anticipated, well-structured after school activities give students the opportunity to exercise their interests and develop additional skills, and their planning is important (Al Kadri et al. 2019).

Lack of knowledge and awareness of ECAs importance is another *intrapersonal constraint* that affects students participating in school ECAs. For example, Greenbank, (2015) examined factors influencing undergraduate students' participation in extracurricular activities. The study sample consisted of twenty-one undergraduates who completed two questionnaires in their first year of study, then they were followed-up by in-depth interviews in their first and final year of study. The author found that many of these students were not participating in ECA because they lacked awareness of the value of ECA for their future work skills. The author concluded that students' values and behaviour influence their decision to engage in ECA, and to change students' attitudes toward ECA, there should be strategies aiming to increase their awareness of the values that can be gained from participating in ECA. The limitation of Greenback's study is its' limited sample because it was based on a relatively small sample of students from one college, so this makes it difficult to generalise the findings of Greenback's study to other studies. Misconceptions about the role of ECAs, can have a detrimental effect on the decision-making behaviour of students. Mohamad Sari and Esa (2017) found that when the students' knowledge of school extracurricular activities is very low and they perceive these activities to be boring and burdensome, it can lead to a lack of students' interest in getting involved in school extracurricular activities.

On the other hand, Slathia (2015) explored the attitude of undergraduated students towards extracurricular activities offered in their collages. A descriptive method was used; the data were collected through a survey from a random sample of 300 students from 8 colleges that were selected randomly. The results revealed that students have a highly positive attitude towards extracurricular activities, therefore it is inferred that the students have awareness about the importance of participation in extracurricular activities for their future and to become useful citizens. In a similar study, Han and Kwon (2018) examine students' perceptions toward the importance of participation in ECA programs on their academic and career development. A total of 2591 students were surveyed. Results revealed that 85% of the students were aware of the ECA programs available in their colleges, with students perceiving the ECA system as beneficial opportunities to their career development. However, students showed moderate attitudes toward participation in these programs. The study's researchers suggested students

will be more interested in participating in ECA programs if the colleges recognize students' achievement in ECA programs.

### 2.12.3 Interpersonal constraints

Crawford and Godbey, (1987) defined *Interpersonal constraints* as resulting from interactions between individuals. In the same way as *intrapersonal constraints*, they can limit preferences for certain activities. They may also stop a person from participating in something. According to Mohamad Sari and Esa (2017), external factors such as parents, teachers, coaches, peers, cultures and skills can work as *interpersonal constraints* for students' decision about participating in school extracurricular activities. For example, an *interpersonal constraint* such as a parent's prescription toward ECAs or disapproval from the parent can prevent a student from participating in his preferred activity. Another example of *interpersonal constraints* is a lack of friends or peer pressure and perceptions, which can also block a student from participating in a particular activity or shift his preference to another activity.

In a report conducted by Terzian et al. (2009) and aimed to understand why adolescents do not participate in out-of-school time programs, fifteen adolescents (theirs aged from 13 to 18 years) participated in two group interviews. The adolescents identified several issues relating to barriers to participation, including issues related to family and peer relationships. For example, in the report, peers' perception is identified as an intrapersonal constraint. According to the report, peer pressure had a significant impact on the decisions they made, and if an activity was not considered 'cool' then it would almost certainly be avoided. Extracurricular activities related to tutoring, or academic improvement programs, were mentioned in respect to peer pressure, where attending such sessions gave the impression that the student was educationally sub-normal. Parent's poor impression of a program is also identified as *interpersonal constraint* to adolescents' participation. According to the report parents played a significant role in dissuading pupil participation; particularly if the after-school program was not focused on improving academic achievement. Non-academic activities were rejected in favour of those that supported the in-school curriculum, such as homework support and tutoring. This may be attributed to the parents' own educational achievements and wanting their children to do better. Moreover, parents' attitudes also predict whether students pursue involvement in extracurricular activities or not. Such attitudes may be shaped by parents' educational achievement. Dunn et al. (2003) found that the higher the standard of education of the parents, the more extracurricular activities were regarded as beneficial to the student's development.

Parents' income is considered to be one of the external factors that has the strongest predictors of youth's participation in extracurricular activities (Xu et al., 2009). According to a report done by Parker and Horowitz (2015) youth of parents with higher income and education are more likely to take part in various after school activities such as structured sports, music, dance, and art activities; while youth from low-income families are less likely than their more advantaged counterparts to participate in extracurricular activities. Besides that, youth participation in extracurricular activities not only requires a financial investment from parents, but also a time investment; the time that parents spend on providing transportation, supervision, and coaching as well as their presence during these activities can all play an important role in children's involvement in extracurricular activities. For example, parental employment may place limitations on a parent's time availability, with significantly lower levels of positive interaction with children among parents who are employed in the labor market relative to parents who are not in the paid labour market (Strohschein et al., 2008). Parental depression may also reduce children's participation in extracurricular activities, with research showing that depressed parents are less likely to monitor their children and are more rejecting of their children than parents who are not depressed (Elgar et al., 2007).

Coaching style may also play a role in the interpersonal constraints that prevent students from participating in ECAs. Rainer et al. (2015) studied twenty-six coaches in Wales using a series of semi-structured interviews, considering the barriers that existed in delivering extracurricular activities in secondary schools. The findings suggested that students prefer to engage in activities that emulate adult behaviour, rather than being under the guidance of a coach in a more structured sporting activity. The study concluded that coaches tended to adopt a traditional and highly structured way of delivering extracurricular activities and that students felt this method did not meet their needs. Whilst coaches may have detailed knowledge and experience of a particular activity, they may not have the broader knowledge of student needs, and hence tend to miss their requirements, particularly in more disadvantaged communities.

Predominant cultural and social norms in a specific society have been found to be an external factor that may affect young people's participation in extracurricular activities. Sultana (2017) conducted a study to examine the attitude of Pakistani students and their parents towards participation in extracurricular activities. The study design was predominantly descriptive, where two surveys were used to collect data from a sample comprised of 50 students and their parents. The study results revealed that female students were less likely to participate in extracurricular activities as much as male students. The study also revealed that parents were

not inclined to allow their daughters to participate in different extracurricular activities, particularly sporting activities, due to the cultural beliefs that parents believe in. Similarly, Ajadi and Kayode (2021) carried out a study on factors that limit female students' involvement in sports within Nigerian schools; the study mainly centred around the socio-cultural determinants of female students who were taking part in sporting extracurricular activities. A total of 310 female students from different secondary schools were asked to respond to a survey' questions. The study revealed that cultural and religious beliefs, as well as gender, served as external factors for hindering female students in participation in sport programs. Similarly, the conclusion by Ajadi and Kayode (2021) suggested that these social barriers should not be allowed to restrain girls from participating in these sporting programs. They also suggested that the sports programs themselves should be modified to encourage the female students to become more involved, thereby reducing gender disparity.

### 2.13 Study Gap

Saudi policymakers consider education as one of the primary resources for leading national socio-economic changes; this resulted in several educational reforms in the Saudi education system. One of the initiatives is promoting the provision of school extracurricular activities in public schools to equip students with the competencies they need to become productive members of society. The literature on the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on youth development is mostly based on studies drawn from countries with a long tradition of participation in organised activities after school time, most notably the USA and some western countries. However, some other educational systems, particularly in developing countries, like the Saudi education system, have just recently paid attention to the role of extracurricular activities as developmental contexts for adolescents. Nowadays, extracurricular programs are becoming more popular in Saudi public schools with the goal of giving students a variety of chances throughout the school day to enhance their growth, including activities that foster academic, personal, social, and recreational development.

The majority of research on the impact of school extracurricular programs is mostly focused on the academic benefits of the programs that are offered to the students after the school day, and the personal and social benefits of the school extracurricular programs on students' development have been somewhat overlooked. Besides that, most of the research on the impact of ECA participation on students' development has been conducted quantitatively by using self-report surveys, however the problem exists that the quantitative research has not investigated

the mechanism of how involvement in extracurricular activities influences adolescents' personal and social development. Therefore, there is need for an alternative approach to understand that mechanism. In addition, most of the research focuses on different adolescent populations, and studies conducted in the USA and other western countries, which limits the applicability of their findings to other groups of young people (such as secondary school students) and cultural contexts. There are no known studies about the developmental experiences of Saudi adolescents in participation in ECA. Therefore, the present study makes an important contribution to the existing knowledge by investigating the perceived impact of participation in ECAs on Saudi students' personal and social skills and their school belonging, as well as identifying challenges associated with providing ECAs during school hours

# Chapter Three

# 3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

Research students still find themselves confused in choosing an appropriate methodological approach to deal with the research problem, this confusing state results from a lack of familiarity with the philosophical backgrounds of the major research paradigms; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed (Khaldi, 2017). In this regard, there are three communities of methodologists in the field of social science research: quantitative oriented methodologists, qualitative oriented methodologists, and mixed methodologists (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Based on their philosophical interpretations about the nature of social reality, they are described as positivists, constructivists, and pragmatists. The positivist believes that there is only one social reality that exists independently of human beings' senses, and it is not considered to be meaningful unless it can be verified by applying scientific methods (Gay et al., 2009). Whereas the constructivists reject the idea that there is one social reality that exists independent of human beings' senses; instead, they argue that because human beings have different socio-cultural contexts, each one understands and experiences social reality differently, thus there may be several explanations of social reality (Gay et al., 2009). Based on their different philosophical worldviews, positivists tend to embrace objectivism and rely on quantitative methods to discover the truth of social reality, while constructivists believe in subjectivism and employ qualitative methods to create the meaning of social reality.

Pragmatists, on the other hand, acknowledge that no single standpoint, whether positivism or constructivism, can ever give the entire picture of social reality and instead they believe philosophically in using a range of strategies that work best for interpreting social reality and undertaking research (Saunders et al., 2007). The flexibility of the pragmatic worldview helps to minimise unimethod bias. This is because instead of depending solely on one approach, whether quantitative or qualitative, the researcher uses both to gain a deeper knowledge of the study problem being researched. According to Creswell (2014) pragmatism does not adhere to any particular ideology; as a result, mixed-methods research uses a lot of beliefs from both the quantitative and qualitative domains. Therefore, the appropriate philosophical worldview in this current study is pragmatic, not only because pragmatism supports using mixed methods in research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), but it also allows the researcher to work with study participants from an objective and subjective standpoint, depending on whether they participated in the quantitative or qualitative stage of the study (Graff, 2016).

During the past two decades, the idea of applying mixed methods in research has been accepted by research methodologists as the "third research community" to avoid methodological bias that is inherent either in the quantitative or qualitative research community (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed methods research is described as a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches within research methodology in which a researcher gathers, analyses, and combines both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or multi-stages study to understand a research problem under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The main purpose of mixed methods is to create a methodological synergy by employing the strength aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively understand a phenomenon instead of employing either method alone (Gay et al., 2009). Although the mixed methods approach can be very functional in gaining a deep understanding of any research problem, it is time and effort consuming since it requires extensive data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2012).

Furthermore, while mixed method research design theoretically appears clear, but practically is complex and advanced design (Creswell, 2012). Because the researcher needs to have enough knowledge and skills to become proficient in the research techniques used in both quantitative and qualitative research approaches on the one hand, and he also needs to understand the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches in order to use the design in an effective manner on the other hand (Gay et al., 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). For example, in any mixed methods, the study's researcher needs to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, this can be achieved through using a range of data collection tools such as interviews, questionnaires observations, documents and audio-visual material. In fact, all of the mentioned tools are useful to generate data. However, each signal tool yields to some extent different interpretations on a research problem and has a potential of strengths and weaknesses in terms of validity and reliability. In particular, mixed method researchers need to think about the outcomes of any methodological choices they intend to utilise in their studies.

When a researcher decides to conduct a mixed methods study, the following step is to select a particular design that works best to address the research questions in the study. To decide which design can be appropriate for the study, the researcher needs to be familiar with the principal mixed-methods design types developed by mixed methodologists. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) identified six mixed methods designs that have been widely employed in educational research over the years: 1) convergent parallel, 2) explanatory sequential, 3) exploratory

sequential, 4) embedded, 5) transformative, and 6) Multiphase design. Based on the words of Creswell et al. (2011) the summary of these designs is presented as following:

- **Convergent parallel design**, in this model, the researcher gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, and analyses them individually. Then the conclusions drawn from both analyses are compared to see if they confirm or oppose each other. In this design, both quantitative and qualitative data are almost seen as equal sources of information in the study.
- **Explanatory sequential design**, this model includes a two-stage project in which the quantitative data is gathered and examined in the first stage, and the results produced from the first stage are then used to plan the second qualitative stage. The main purpose of this design is to make the qualitative data to further extend or clarify the initial quantitative results. Within this design the quantitative stage is usually given more importance than the qualitative stage.
- **Exploratory sequential design,** this model involves gathering and analysing qualitative data in the first stage, and then followed by gathering quantitative data to test or generalise results found in the qualitative stage. This design is useful when a researcher wants to identify measures that are unknown to the specific population under study. In this design, the qualitative data is usually given more emphasis than quantitative data.
- **Embedded design**, this model involves collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data within a classical qualitative or quantitative design to improve the overall design. Researchers employ this design when they need to embed supplemental data, either qualitative or quantitative to answer a research question within a study being conducted quantitatively or qualitatively.
- **Transformative design,** in this model the interaction, priority, timing, and mixing of the qualitative and quantitative strands are shaped based on the context of the transformative theoretical framework. Researchers employ this design when they need to address a social issue related to a certain population. This design is more connected to the context than to the methodology; researchers therefore need to have knowledge in theoretical foundations that cover a certain social issue.
- **Multiphase design**, this model is used when a researcher needs to examine a problem through a series of quantitative and qualitative phases over a period of time within a program of study.

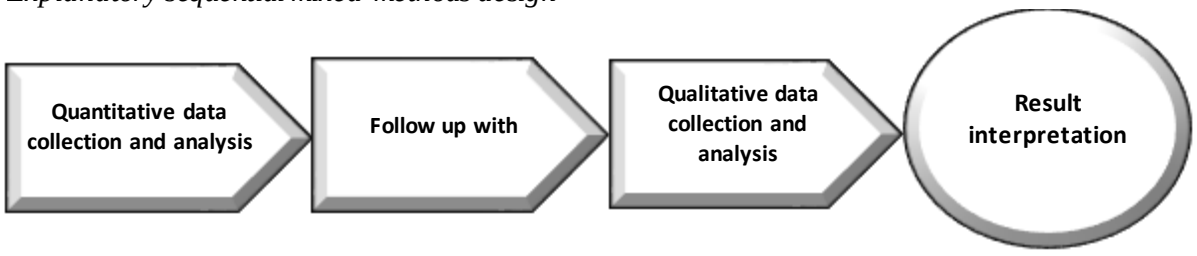
Each single design mentioned above provides a unique model in how quantitative and qualitative methods can fit into the same research study, but it should be noted that not all the types of designs are equally suitable for a certain study. The researcher is therefore advised to think about these designs and then choose the design that is suitable for achieving the study's objectives. In this current study, the explanatory sequential mixed methods design is used, as it provides the best plan for conducting the study. The explanatory sequential design is the most widely used mixed methods design in academic research related to education (Creswell, 2014). Other researchers who have successfully applied this design in their studies include (Ivankova & and Stick, 2007; and Li et al., 2015).

## 3.2 Research Design

The present study aims to explore the perceived impact of introducing school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" on students' personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school. The study also aims to identify the challenges that teachers might face during the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" and to explore their recommendations for overcoming these challenges and for improving the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in schools. The participants are teachers and students at male secondary schools located in Al Riyadh County. The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed to achieve the study aims (see Figure 3.1). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed in two separate but consecutive stages within the same course of study (Cameron, 2009). The justification regarding why this design was used is that the quantitative data and their statistical analysis will give the researcher a general picture of the research problem being investigated in the first stage of data collection. The qualitative data and their interpretation during the second stage would then provide a better understanding of the statistical results by investigating participants' views and their real situations in more depth (Ivankova et al., 2006).

**Figure 3.1**

*Explanatory sequential mixed-methods design*



Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) discussed several advantages and difficulties associated with using the sequential explanatory design in research. The following are some benefits of this design:

1. Because the two procedures are used separately and only one type of data is collected and analysed at a time, its two-stage structure makes it simple to apply by a single researcher. Hence, carrying out the design does not necessitate a research team.
2. The final report might be divided into two sections for ease of writing and reading.
3. This design often attracts quantitative oriented researchers, because its first stage begins with collecting quantitative data.
4. This design allows the researcher to explore the quantitative results in detail by collecting in depth qualitative information about the quantitative results.

As for the difficulties facing the researcher when using this type of mixed method design, are as follows:

1. Researcher should recognise that this design is effort and time consuming since it requires implementing two separate stages. Therefore, adequate time must be allocated for both the quantitative and qualitative stages.
2. Results of the first quantitative stage may not come out as anticipated, which in turn affects the participant selection for the second qualitative stage.
3. The researcher should determine the quantitative results that need further interpretation. Even though this can only be confirmed after the quantitative stage is completed, a strategy to address this issue is by looking at any significant results that come out of the initial quantitative analysis.

To utilise this design in this current study, the researcher firstly used a self-reported survey to investigate the perception of teachers who were involved in the school ECA regarding the biggest challenges that may affect the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" during the school day. After the challenges had been statistically identified, the researcher moved to the second stage, which was applying more in-depth qualitative analysis through interviewing the study's participants (school extracurricular activity leaders) about their experiences in dealing with the challenges reported by teachers and what recommendations they believe were useful in improving the implementation of the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" in Saudi secondary schools. For the rest of the study's aims, students were administered a self-report survey to examine the perceived impact of participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" on students' personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school. In other

word, students were asked to list the developmental skills they think they experienced. During this stage, the survey's results were statistically analysed to identify the skills perceived by students and to determine the relationship between the "One Hour Activity Plan" and students' sense of belonging to school. Based on the statistical results, the researcher subsequently conducted further investigation to expand the results. This involved conducting focus group interviews with some of the students to understand how participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" fostered their personal and social skills and their feeling of belonging to school.

### 3.3 Target Population

Before determining the sample size, it was important to define the study setting and the target population. Identifying the target population in advance allows the researcher to draw a fair representative sample that reflects the characteristics of the entire population (Cohen et al., 2017). Given that consideration, the current study is predominantly centred around boys' secondary schools, within Al Riyadh County. There are 104 secondary schools that are affiliated with the General Administration of Education in Al Riyadh County and are distributed over 14 education districts (see Table 3.1). These schools include 2731 teachers and 38980 students and from this target group, the researcher used students who took part in school extracurricular activities (including sport activity, art activity, science activity and scout activity) as the first target group, since they have enough information regarding their developmental experiences through involving in such activities. Teachers who oversee extracurricular school activities formed a second target group, since they could offer insightful information regarding the challenges encountered in implanting the "One Hour Activity Plan" and could provide information with respect to their role, school facilities, equipment and funding for implementing the plan in schools. They may also have been able to offer an assessment of the extent to which the aims of the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" were achieved.

**Table 3.1**

*The Number of Public Secondary Schools within The General Administration of Education in Al Riyadh County*

| | **Education District name** | **Schools** | **Teachers** | **Students** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | South education district | 11 | 286 | 4114 |
| 2 | Dir'iya education district | 6 | 156 | 2244 |
| 3 | Alraid education district | 9 | 234 | 3366 |
| 4 | Rawabi education district | 5 | 130 | 1870 |
| 5 | Rawdah education district | 8 | 208 | 2992 |
| 6 | Alswidi education district | 9 | 234 | 3366 |
| 7 | East education district | 4 | 106 | 1496 |
| 8 | North education district | 14 | 364 | 5236 |
| 9 | Aziziyah education district | 4 | 102 | 1496 |
| 10 | West education district | 7 | 182 | 2618 |
| 11 | Qurtubah education district | 6 | 156 | 2244 |
| 12 | Middle education district | 10 | 260 | 3640 |
| 13 | Thadiq education district | 4 | 104 | 1496 |
| 14 | Rmah education district | 7 | 182 | 2681 |
| Total | **14 districts** | **104 schools** | **2731 teachers** | **38980 students** |

## 3.4 Sample Size Determination

To come up with reliable results that reflect the actual situation of the study population, the researcher needs to determine a representative sample size for the population being studied prior to data collection. According to Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) sampling is a systematic procedure for selecting a segment that represents the entire population. It is worth noting that the sample size needs to be adequate. However, what is adequate is not exactly specified in the published writings and depending on several issues such as study design, either qualitative or quantitative or mixed design, the predicted response rate of participants, the required level of accuracy and how many variables are included in the study (Cohen et al., 2011). In mixed method studies that particularly involve quantitative and qualitative stages either sequentially or concurrently, the researcher must decide the purpose of his mixed study design in advance, and then the sample size for each stage (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Since the purpose of this mixed study is expansion, which is the findings from the first stage inform the findings of the second stage, utilising a nested sample was deemed appropriate. According to the nested sample, the sample members picked for one study phase reflect a subset of those individuals selected for the other element of the inquiry (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). To apply a nested

sample in this current study, the researcher initially selected sample members for the quantitative stage of the study, next a subgroup was chosen purposively from the same members to participate in the qualitative stage.

Determining the required sampling size for the quantitative and qualitative stages of mixed studies can be a challenging process and not completely free of errors. Even though there are no certain procedures to be followed in determining the sample size, mixed method researchers are recommended to follow a number of strategies that may help to reduce sampling errors and appropriately estimate the required sample size. Some sampling strategies suggest following general guidelines. For example, one of the general guidelines in quantitative research is that the sample needs to be reasonably large, because this will enable researchers to apply more advanced statistics (Cohen et al., 2017). Cohen and colleagues (2007) further argue that a researcher needs at least 30 participants for each variable as a guideline to estimate the required sample size. The quantitative stage of this current study includes two heterogeneous groups namely students and teachers and the required sample size for both groups was calculated prior based on Cohen and colleagues (2017) guideline. In this study, the total number of variables included in the teachers' survey was 4 variables (teacher teaching experience, teacher position in school, teacher role in ECA and the types of ECA teacher is responsible for). Thus the minimum sample size required for teachers' group was 120 participants. On the other hand, the total number of variables included in the students' survey was 9 variables: 3 independent variables (student's grad, type of ECA, the period of participation in ECA) and 6 dependent variables (identity experiences, initiative experiences, basic skills, positive relationships, teamwork and social skills and sense of belonging at school); thus, the minimum sample size that is suitable for the students' group was 270 participants.

In contrast to quantitative studies, small samples are frequently used in qualitative investigations. This is because the main aim of sampling in qualitative studies is to obtain in depth information on a phenomenon that exists in the study population, rather than to reflect the characteristics of the study population as in quantitative studies (Gentles et al., 2015). In spite of the fact that qualitative studies commonly involve the use of small samples, this fact does not imply that researchers should use it as a benchmark in determining the sample size in their studies. In this regard, some methodologists stress that the qualitative sample is not supposed to be too small which makes data saturation difficult to be achieved, at the same time, it is not supposed to be too large, which makes thick data difficult to be extracted (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). In general, the guideline for determining sample sizes in

qualitative research depends on reaching saturation point. That is, when the researcher is no longer able to extract new information from participants being interviewed, if the researcher is still getting new information or themes after four or five interviews, they would conduct more interviews until reaching that point (Teddlie & Yu 2007). Guest et al. (2006) conducted a study aimed at estimating the optimal sample size in interview studies, and concluded that saturation occurred within twelve interviews. Their study was in the context of interviewing 60 women in two African countries. Their conclusion suggests that interviewing 12 teachers in the current study may be a suitable sample size. However, cultural differences and the fact that my study involved group interviews make this hypothesis tentative. Since the qualitative stage of this study is intended to explore teachers' recommendations on improving the implementation of the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools and overcoming the challenges associated with its implementation, the researcher conducted individual interviews with twelve teachers. It is worthy to mention that through the course of interviewing teachers, the researcher noticed that the saturation' point had occurred within the earliest eight interviews; this may have to do with the type of participants. For instance, the selected teachers who participated in the individual interviews were working as ECA leaders in their schools, unlike other normal teachers who do not play a major role in organising ECA. Furthermore, the researcher conducted four focus group interviews with students who participate in school extracurricular activities that are available in boys' secondary schools. The decision to conducting four focus groups in this study was based on practical evidence from a previous study, Guest et al. (2017) conducted a study to identify important themes on a topic within focus groups. They performed a thematic analysis of 40 focus group interviews, and they found a sample size of two to three focus groups was likely enough to capture most of the themes on the topic. In fact, three focus group interviews were scheduled to be conducted, however during the first interview, the researcher faced some challenges in managing the dialogue with students, because the researcher was not well prepared to conduct a team interview. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct an extra interview. For example, in the first group interview the researcher discovered that students may give irrelevant answers if they did not get more clarification about the questions. Another challenge was that some students tried to always talk and dominate the interview and thus may give less chance to the other students to talk about their experiences.

### 3.5 Sampling Techniques

To obtain a representative sample for the current study, cluster random sampling technique was employed. The cluster random sampling technique can be a practical solution for a researcher when his study population is large and spread over a broad geographic area, and additionally when the researcher needs to have a more efficient random sample in respect of time and financial resources. (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The study population consists of the entire boys' secondary schools located in Al Riyadh County, including 38980 students and 2731 teachers. Al Riyadh County is one of the largest counties in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and because of that it would be totally unrealistic to pick teachers and students at random and spend a large amount of time travelling around to examine them. Through cluster sampling technique, the investigator can choose a certain number of schools and examine the entire teachers and pupils within those chosen schools (Cohen et al., 2017).

According to the recent official statistics reported on the website of Ministry of Education, there are 104 secondary schools affiliated with the General Administration of Education in Al Riyadh County and are distributed over 14 education districts. To employ the cluster sampling technique in this study, in the first step, 14 schools were randomly selected based on their location within each education district (see Table 3.1). One rational decision behind that step was to ensure that cluster sampling represents all the characteristics of the study population fairly and does not result in bias or similarities within the needed sample. For example, schools within the north district are characterised with students from high socioeconomic families and new school buildings, unlike schools in the middle district that struggle under the strain of overcrowded classrooms and weakness of their facilities' infrastructure. Therefore, it would be safer to randomly select one school from each educational district instead of selecting more than one school from a specific education district. Next step was dividing the desired sample sizes for the quantitative stage by the number of schools. Firstly, the desired sample size for the teachers' group was 120 participants. By dividing 120 participants among 14 schools, the overall number of teachers that was required from each school to take part in the teachers' survey was 8 participants. Secondly, the desired sample size for the students' group was 270 participants. By dividing 270 participants by 14 schools, the overall number of students that are required from each school to take part in the students' survey was 19 participants. Since paper-based surveys tend to have a lower responses rate than online based surveys, the researcher distributed the surveys of teachers and students in a double amount than the calculated sample size for both groups.

As for the qualitative stage of the current study, the purposive sampling technique seems to be appropriate. The purposive sampling is probably the most frequent sampling type that is widely used in qualitative research, because it can give researchers the flexibility to tailor the required sample based on their specific needs (Cohen et al., 2017). The notion of the purposive sampling lies in selecting a specific number of interviewees or participants who are knowledgeable and eloquent in describing a culture or category to which they belong to (Gentles et al., 2015). This current study includes two heterogeneous groups, namely students and teachers, and the required sample size for each group was calculated prior. Since the qualitative stage of this study was intended to explore teachers' recommendations on improving the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" and overcoming the challenges associated with its implementation, the researcher adopted reputational case sampling to conduct 12 individual interviews with extracurricular activity leaders. Reputational case sampling is a type of purposive samples, in this type, participants are selected purposively because the researcher is aware of their roles and experiences (Cohen et al., 2017). Besides, the same type of sampling was adopted to conduct three focus group interviews with students who have active roles in school extracurricular activities to understand how participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" fostered students personal and social skills and their feeling of belonging to school.

### 3.6 Data Collection Tools

In a study that involves mixed methods design, the researcher often employs multiple tools in gathering information from the selected sample of the study population. These different tools of collecting data can supplement each other and consequently improve the accuracy and consistency of the collected data. However, the choice of study tools mostly relies on several considerations, such as the intent of the study and its nature. This current study intended to explore the perceived impact of introducing the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" on students personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school. The study also aimed to identify the challenges associated with introducing the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools and to explore the recommendations teachers make for overcoming these challenges and improving the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in high schools. Therefore, two types of data collection tools were used in this mixed method study: quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The present study combines gathering both quantitative and qualitative data separately in two stages, quantitative then followed by qualitative. The data collection tools of each stage are described in this section.

### 3.6.1 Instruments of quantitative stage

In the first stage of gathering data, the investigator used two distinctive self-report surveys in the form of paper to collect quantitative data from the study's participants, namely male teachers and boy students who were involved in the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" available in Saudi secondary schools located in Riyadh city.

**First; teachers' survey**

This survey is a self-report measure and aims to identify the challenges encountered by male teachers during the implementation of the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" in boys' secondary schools in Riyadh city (see Appendix A). To prepare a reliable and valid survey able to measure teachers' opinions on the challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan", the researcher followed two steps in the process of designing this self-report survey.

**Step one; conduct a literature review**

In this step, the researcher performed a review of the existing literature, including literature written in Arabic, that focuses on school extracurricular activities and the challenges associated with their provision and implementation in schools. The main reason for this step is to conceptualise the survey's content and relate this content to relevant theory and research in the field. Based on analysing the relevant research (Chalageri & Yarriswami, 2018; Berbada & Panigrahi, 2014; Dima, 2015; Rainer et al., 2015) the researcher identified some useful concepts and items that could be used for developing the survey. Besides that, the researcher also conducted a brainstorm session with a group of teachers through one of the social media channels, in which teachers were asked to identify the potential challenges that may be faced in delivering school extracurricular activities. Teachers' responses and what had been found in the relevant literature were synthesised to generate the survey items. In addition, the researcher employed ecological systems theory to develop the survey and as a theoretical framework guide to recognise the challenges that may affect the implementation of extracurricular activities in school. The ecological systems theory seems appropriate as it provides a relevant framework to understand the complexities associated with the process of implementing school extracurricular activities and how this process is influenced by different personal, social, and environmental contexts such as personal beliefs, school resources and facilities, family socioeconomic background and surrounding community. Based on the ecological systems model, the researcher classified the survey items into five dimensions as follows:

- Dimension one: Focus on challenges related to students and comprise fifteen items.
- Dimension two: Focus on challenges related to teachers and comprise twelve items.
- Dimension three: Focus on challenges related to school administration and comprise eleven items.
- Dimension four: Focus on challenges related to school resources and financial capacity and comprise nine items.
- Dimension five: Focus on challenges related to parents and the local community and comprise fifteen items.

The initial draft of the survey thus consisted of 62 items distributed into five dimensions. The response' format used to assess the questionnaire items was a three-point scale; "Yes", "Sometimes" and "No". It is worthy to note that the survey items were framed in a negative way for several reasons. First, for problem-solving; negative items are intended to prompt teachers to critically evaluate challenges and obstacles they may encounter in their professional roles. This was intended to stimulate discussions on potential solutions and strategies for addressing issues effectively. Second, for identifying issues; negative items in the survey for teachers could help identify specific areas of concern or dissatisfaction within their teaching environment. By focusing on negative aspects, the survey can pinpoint areas needing improvement or intervention. Finally, for constructive feedback; teachers may be more motivated to participate in the survey when presented with negative statements about their educational experiences. This could lead to more meaningful feedback for facilitating improvements in school learning environments and education policies in general.

**Step two; establishing survey validity**

Once the initial draft of the survey had been completed, the next important step was establishing its validity. Survey validity is basically defined as the ability of a survey to measure what is planned to be measured (Gay et al., 2009). There are four types of validity discussed in literature: criterion validity, content validity, construct validity, and face validity (Taherdoost, 2016). For establishing the validity of the teachers' survey, the researcher applied content validity. Content validity refers to the degree to which instrument items represent all aspects of an intended content area (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). It is highly recommended to apply content validity for a new survey that is being developed before collecting data (Taherdoost, 2016). This involves collecting data from content specialists to ensure the survey items are pertinent to the construct being measured and the undesirable items are eliminated (Artino et al., 2014). The process of establishing a survey content validity requires the researcher to

extensively review the relevant literature to extract the related items, followed up with an evaluation by specialists in the same field of the research in order to evaluate each item based on its clarity, readability and relevance to the survey content using a three-point scale; not necessary, useful but not essential, and essential (Taherdoost, 2016). In this process, experts will rate all the survey items and reach a consensus on which items should be excluded from the final survey or which items need to be improved in terms of readability or clarity.

Using experts in the same field of research to systematically review the survey's content can significantly improve the clarity and relevance of the proposed survey's items and generate an agreement about the characteristics that the survey is designed to measure. However, the process of validating an instrument content may take a long time, because it is often dependent on the availability and willingness of the relevant experts who are being asked to take part in this process. In this study, the survey was sent to seven experts in the field of Saudi education who are familiar with the research subject, two of them are working as lecturers in the department of education in King Saud University, and the other five experts are working as school activity inspectors in the General Administration of Education in Al Riyadh County. All the experts were also provided with an assessment form designed by the researcher in order to facilitate the validation process. In this form, experts were asked to provide their feedback on survey content in terms of whether it was relevant or not, the suitability of items to each dimension in the questionnaire, items clarity and the linguistic structure of the phrases.

Based on the received feedback from the experts, two dimensions (the dimension of barriers specific to school administration and the dimension of barriers specific to school resources and financial capacity) were combined in one dimension and renamed the dimension of barriers specific to school resources and administration. In addition, twenty-two items were eliminated from the survey dimensions as follows:

1. Five items were eliminated from the dimension of barriers specific to students; these items were: (students are only interested in their academic studies), (students are taking part in multiple extracurricular activities), (there's a general belief among students that participating in extracurricular activities is not taken into consideration when assessing their academic performance), ( lack of collaboration between students in carrying out extracurricular activities) and (lack in confidence in one's physical ability and reduced self-esteem in some students)

2. Three items were eliminated from the dimension of barriers specific to teachers; these items were: (some teachers utilise the time designated for extracurricular activities to teach their academic subjects instead), (some teachers are under the assumption that extracurricular activities interrupt the school day) and (some teachers fail to facilitate extracurricular activities due to their lack of experience).

3. Seven items were eliminated from the dimension of barriers specific to school resources and administration; these items were: (lack of financial incentives to motivate teachers to participate in running extracurricular activities), (the school is financially incapable of recruiting external instructors and professionals to facilitate sports- and arts-based extracurricular activities), (certain extracurricular activities are financially demanding such as sports tournaments and festivals), (extracurricular activities only take place during the school day), (school administration does not adequately monitor the running of extracurricular activities on a daily basis), (no evaluation of the outcomes of extracurricular activities) and (school administration implements extracurricular activities only superficially as opposed to having meaningful purpose).

4. Seven items were eliminated from the dimension of barriers specific to parents and the local community; these items were: (parents' negative view of extracurricular activities as having a recreational purpose with no valuable impact on students' psychological, social and physical development), (some parents lack awareness about the different kinds of extracurricular activities), (lack of partnership between institutions within the local community in organising school sports tournaments and festivals), (lack of appropriate facilities around the school), (unavailability of public transports in the local community), (the difficulty in acquiring the necessary authorisation to implement certain extracurricular activities) and (the inability of some parents to take part in extracurricular activities with their children given the nature of their work).

The reason why these items removed is because some of them were not essential and have the same meaning. As for the clarity of the items and the language used, eleven items have been revised and edited, because some of them were grammatically wrong and involved misleading interpretation. In addition to that, the responses' format used in the survey was changed from a three-point scale to a five points Likert scale, ranging between (1) strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree. The Likert scale is a useful rating scale when a researcher wants to measure participants' opinion around a particular issue or collect specific information on factors that

contribute to that issue, such as the case with the challenges that teachers encountered during implementation of the school ECA. The five- points Likert scale also gives the survey's respondents more flexibility to precisely reflect their true subjective evaluation on the issue other than using a three-point scale. Afterwards the survey was translated into English and presented to the study supervisors to review the survey and ensure it was workable and formatted correctly. Then the survey was translated back to Arabic by the researcher and sent to an expert in English Arabic translation to make sure the Arabic copy of the survey was translated correctly to be tested later in the pilot study, see Appendix A.

**Participants' demographic information of teachers' survey**

When designing a survey, the researcher needs to collect demographic information about the study participants. This information helps the researcher sort the overall survey's responses data into meaningful data. Additionally, demographic questions help the researcher identify the unique factors that might affect participants' responses about specific issues. The current survey includes five questions designed to obtain demographic information about teachers. These questions concern with the participant's level of education, participant's years of teaching experience, participant's position in school, whether the participant is involved in organising the school ECA or not, and the type of activity the participant is responsible for or involved in.

**Second; students' survey**

This survey pre-existed as a measurement instrument; a slight modification was made to it to achieve the study's purpose (see Appendix B). Hansen and Larson (2005) developed a self-report instrument called 'Youth Experience Survey' (YES 2.0) with the aim of inventorying high school-aged students' developmental experiences gained in different structured extracurricular activities. The youth experiences survey is made up of seven key domains, each domain consists of scales and several items. The first three domains primarily focus on personal development; domain number one is identity experiences, and it consists of two scales namely (identity exploration and identity reflection); domain number two is initiative experiences, and it consists of four scales namely (goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management); domain number three is basic skills, and it consists of three scales namely (emotional regulation, cognitive skills and physical skills). As for the next three key domains of the Youth Experiences Survey, they are aimed to focus on students' social development; domain number four is positive relationships and it comprises two scales namely (diverse peer relationships and prosocial norms); domain number five is team work and social skills and it comprises three

scales namely (group process skills, feedback and leadership and responsibility); domain number six is adult networks and social capital and it consists of three scales namely (integration with family, linkages to community and linkages to work and college). As for the seventh domain, it aims to capture the negative experiences encountered by students during their participation in extracurricular activities, and it contains five scales namely (stress, negative influences, social exclusion, negative group dynamics and inappropriate adult behaviour).

Hansen and Larson (2005) noted that the decision to use all the domains of the YES survey or some of the scales within these domains depends on the study's purpose. This current study is aimed to examine the perceived impact of participation in the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" on the social and personal development of students. It is also aimed at examining the perceived impact of introducing the "One Hour Activity Plan" on students' feeling of belonging to schools. Therefore, the physical skills' scale, which falls within the domain of basic skills is removed because they are not relevant to the study aims. In addition, the domain of number six (adult networks and social capital) is also eliminated for the same reason, and instead a new domain is added to measure the perceived impact of participation in the school ECA "One Hour Activity Plan" on students' feeling of belonging to school. This domain contains two scales namely integration with teachers and peers, and linkage to school, items included in these scales are based on analysing the published literature (Blomfield & Barber, 2010; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Martinez et al., 2016). Besides that, the seventh domain of the YES survey that focuses on the negative experiences was removed because it contains sensitive questions related to sexual harassment and inappropriate adult behaviour which are not culturally appropriate in Saudi Arabia schools. In fact, the researcher was asked by the General Administration of Education in Al Riyadh County to remove these questions because they may cause emotional stress to the participant students if they are asked about such experiences. Instead, the students were given the opportunity to express any negative views about their experiences in participation in ECAs during the team interviews; this step was taken to reduce being heavily opinionated on one side of experiences, (see question 4 in Appendix C). The response format used to assess the survey items was based on a four-point scale; "Yes Definitely", "Quite a Bit", "A Little", "Not at All".

The "Youth Experience Survey" (YES 2.0) is a revised version of the "Youth Experience Survey" (YES 1.0). The revised version (YES, 2.0) is identical to the first version (YES 1.0) in terms of domains, scales and subscales. The difference, however, is that the second version

has a reduced number of items and is supported by stronger psychometric properties. The process of developing the first version (YES 1.0) involved several steps, including: conducting ten focus groups with 55 adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 with the aim of capturing the concepts that adolescents use to describe their experiences in organised extracurricular activities, reviewing the relevant literature, and asking a panel of experts to evaluate the potential items. This process led Hansen and Larson (2002) to generate and finalise 89 items that formed the seven key domains of the first version (YES 1.0). Hansen and Larson (2002) then conducted a pilot study to test the YES survey reliability, a total of 356 students were asked to fill out the YES survey based on their participation in organised extracurricular activities, the results showed that the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the most scales were statistically significant ranging from alpha = .73 to alpha =.94 except two scales were below an alpha of.70 (self-knowledge scale with alpha =.58 and exploration scale with alpha =.63).

Hansen and Larson (2005) then revised the YES survey in order to reword the items and reduce their number on each scale. A total of 22 items were eliminated from the scales. For example, the self-knowledge scale and its items were deleted. The revised version (YES 2.0) was then distributed to a sample of adolescents comprised of more than 2280 students from 19 various high schools. A total of 1822 students completed the survey; their data was then used to test the (YES 2.0) scales. The results showed that the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scales was statistically significant, ranging from alpha =.74 to alpha =.94. Subsequently, Hansen and Larson (2005) conducted an additional study to assess the validity of the revised instrument through examining differences in responses reported by adolescent participants and their leaders in organised extracurricular activities. In this study, participating adolescents filled out the (YES 2.0) based on their experiences in those activities, and then the leader of each activity also filled out the (YES 2.0) for each adolescent depending on what he had noticed about that adolescent's experiences in that activity. The results showed a high degree of agreement between the adolescents' responses and the leaders' responses about the sort of developmental experiences occurring from participants in the activity. The 'Youth Experience Survey' (YES 2.0) has been successfully used in different studies involving adolescents across different categories of organised activities (Hansen & Larson, 2007; Ivaniushina & Zapletina, 2015; Larson et al., Hansen & Moneta, 2006; Wilson et al., Gottfredson & Cross, 2010).

The 'Youth Experience Survey' was developed in an English version; therefore, to ensure that participants (the students of Saudi secondary schools) understand the survey's questions and

are able to fill it out appropriately, the survey was translated into Arabic by the researcher, and then the translated Arabic copy and the original English copy were sent to an expert in both Arabic and English translation in order to compare between both copies and check there were no translation errors. The section of participants' demographic information includes four questions designed to obtain demographic information about students who are involved in the school ECA, these questions concern the student's grade, the student's target activity and the student's length of participation (see Appendix B).

**Piloting teachers and students' survey**

Conducting a pilot study is an important step that should be considered by the researcher before proceeding with the main study to check the validity, reliability, and workability of the study instruments. In this study, the researcher conducted a pilot study with a sample of 18 male teachers and 40 male students from one secondary school located in Riyadh city to ensure that both surveys of teachers and students were clear and reliable on the one hand, and practicing the way of how to approach and recruit the study participants on the other hand. The results of the pilot study showed that there were no issues raised by the participants regarding the clarity of the surveys, where most of them indicated the surveys were not complicated and easy to fill out, and did not take more than ten minutes to be completed.

As for the reliability of the surveys, the researcher conducted a reliability analysis to determine whether both surveys of teachers and students were reliable for data collection. Gay and colleagues (2009), defined reliability as the extent to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring. Reliability in quantitative analysis is specifically concerned with measuring the internal consistency among a survey's items. There are two main techniques for measuring the internal consistency reliability of scales: the alpha coefficient and split-half technique. Both techniques are commonly used to calculate the coefficient of reliability that range between 0 and 1. In the current study, the internal consistency and reliability of teachers and students' surveys were calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, because it is viewed as the most appropriate technique for measuring internal consistency reliability of any Likert scales designed or modified by the researcher (Taherdoost, 2016). Cohen and colleagues (2013) discussed the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient 'α' to be reliable: >0.90= very highly reliable, 0.80–0.90= highly reliable, 0.70–0.79= reliable, 0.60–0.69= minimally reliable, <0.60= low reliability. The results of calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated that the internal consistency for the scales of teachers and students' surveys is reliable, as shown in the Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2**

*Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics of teachers and students' surveys*

| **Dimensions of teachers' survey** | **N of items** | **Alpha value of dimension** | **Alpha value if an item is deleted from the dimension** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dimension of challenges related to students** | 10 | .879 | |
| **Dimension of challenges related to teachers** | 9 | .870 | .871 |
| **Dimension of challenges related to school resources and administration** | 13 | .813 | .816 |
| **Dimension of challenges related to parents and local community** | 9 | .703 | .764 |
| **The teachers 'survey overall reliability** | 41 | .931 | |
| **Dimensions of students' survey** | N of items | Alpha value of dimension | Alpha value if an item is deleted from the dimension |
| **Dimension of identity experiences** | 6 | .716 | .784 |
| **Dimension of initiative experiences** | 12 | .731 | .754 |
| **Dimension of basic skills** | 9 | .699 | .713 |
| **Dimension of positive relationships** | 8 | .768 | |
| **Dimension of teamwork and social skills** | 10 | .786 | .788 |
| **Dimension of sense of belonging to school** | 10 | .887 | |
| **The students' survey overall reliability** | 55 | .913 | |

According to the above table, there were three dimensions of teachers' survey and four dimensions of students' survey where the Cronbach's alpha value for internal consistency reliability will increase if a specific item with a low value is deleted from the target dimension. However, since all values of Cronbach's alpha were above 0.60, the researcher decided to keep all the items of teachers and students' surveys as originally planned. The overall reliability coefficient of both surveys ranged from .913 to .931, which is considered to be very highly reliable; thus the same surveys were used in the main study.

### 3.6.2 Instruments of qualitative stage

In the second qualitative stage of the study, the researcher used two different types of interviews to collect qualitative data from the study's participants, namely male teachers and boy students who are involved in the school ECA available in secondary schools. A semi-structured interview was used with teachers, whereas a focus group interview was used with students.

**Focus group interview**

According to Gay and colleagues (2009) a focus group is described as a planned discussion that includes several individuals who can contribute to the researcher's understanding about his or her research problem. The focus group has an advantage over the individual interview in that it creates more interaction during the interview session, unlike the individual interview which might seem more intimidating to the students (Creswell, 2012). A drawback of conducting a focus group interview is that perhaps it is difficult to find an agreement among the students. Therefore, when using a focus group interview, it is important to ensure that all students have expressed their opinions mutually and the discussion is not dominated by one student **(**Gay et al., 2009). In this current study, the focus group interview was chosen because it gives students the courage to speak freely about their developmental experiences in participating in school extracurricular activities, unlike the individual interviews where the student may hesitate to answer the questions of the interviewer. According to the explanatory sequential design rules, the results of the quantitative instrument were used to plan the qualitative instrument. In this present study, the researcher used the outcome of students' responses on the Youth Experiences Survey to formulate the lead questions of the focus group interview.

The focus group protocol (Appendix C) was comprised of six statements informing the interview's participant of (1) the purpose of the study, (2) information's confidentiality, (3) the participants' rights, (4) consent for audio recording of the interview, (5) thanking participants for their taking part in the interview, and (6) general information about the concept of life skills and the types of positive personal and social skills that fall under the umbrella of the concept. The focus group interview questions were made up of six semi-structured questions asking students to think carefully about their positive and negative developmental experiences in participating in school extracurricular activities.

In these focus group interviews, the researcher followed an ethical approach in collecting data from the participants to ensure the participants' comfort, confidentiality, and the integrity of the research. The key considerations that were taken before collecting the data are as follows:

1- Informed Consent: Prior to participation, students were provided with clear information about the purpose of the focus group, what participation entails, and any potential risks or benefits. They had the opportunity to ask questions and provide informed consent to participate voluntarily.

2- Confidentiality: Students were assured that their responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. The students' identities or specific responses will not be disclosed without their explicit permission. This helped create a safe space for students to express their opinions openly.

3- Privacy: Focus group interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting where the students were likely to feel at ease in sharing their thoughts and experiences. Here all the students were interviewed in the offices of the ECA leaders (without the leaders being present), where discussions could not be interrupted or overheard by others

4- Cultural Sensitivity: the researcher was mindful of cultural norms and sensitivities when conducting focus groups with the students. This included that the discussions were conducted in a manner that aligns with cultural values and traditions of Saudi students.

5- Open Communication: Students were assured that they could speak openly and honestly during the focus group discussions without fear of judgment. Establishing ground rules for respectful communication and active listening during the focus group discussions helped the researcher to foster an environment of trust and openness.

6- Voluntary Participation: Students had the option to participate or decline involvement in the focus group discussions without facing any pressure. Here the researcher respected the students' decisions and ensure that participation was entirely voluntary.
The additional ethical considerations for this study are described in section 3.9 below.

**Semi-structured interview**

This type of interview is conducted with one participant at a time, which is unlike a group interview. In the semi-structured interview, the researcher uses a mix of closed- and open-ended questions, often followed by questions that start with why or how (Newcomer et al., 2015). The aim of semi-structured interviews is not to get answers to predetermined questions but rather to give participants the freedom to convey their perspectives in their own terms (Gay et al., 2009). An advantage of using semi-structured interviews is that the flexibility of its structure allows the researcher to push or encourage the participant, if the researcher is looking for more information or he is finding what the participant is saying is interesting. In other words, the researcher is free to investigate the participant being interviewed for expanding the discussion or following a new query line provided by what the participant says. A disadvantage of using semi-structured interviews is that they are time-consuming and need expertise; another disadvantage is that the presence of the researcher may affect how the participant responds, which may make participant's responses unclear (Creswell, 2012). The researcher therefore is advised to interview a participant who is articulate and not hesitant to talk. For this study, follow-up semi-structured interviews with twelve extracurricular activities supervisors were conducted to provide the best insight about the results that were obtained from the quantitative survey sample distributed to teachers in the first stage of the study. The researcher therefore used the teachers' responses on the quantitative survey that aimed at identifying the challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" to formulate the lead questions of semi-structured interviews.

The semi-structured interview as shown in Appendix D, is comprised of six statements informing the interview's participant of (1) the purpose of the study, (2) information confidentiality, (3) the participant's rights, (4) consent for audio recording of the interview, (5) thanking the participant for his taking part in the interview, and (6) a summary of teachers' responses on the survey that aimed to identify the challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan". The semi-structured interview questions were made up of fourteen semi-structured questions divided into two parts; the first part consisted of eight questions and deeply focused on the challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" that most teachers agreed they faced in their schools. The second part consisted of six questions asking the teacher to reflect on his experience as extracurricular activities supervisor and how the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" be improved. Before asking the questions, the researcher provided the interview participant with a summary of the survey's results (in a

separate paper in the form of graphs) to think about it; the purpose was to obtain in depth information, break the deadlock in this type of interview and make it more interesting for the participant.

### 3.7 Data Collection Procedure

This study involved two sequential stages of data collection (quantitative and qualitative), the quantitative data were collected using different paper-based surveys from male teachers and boy students. Later, the qualitative data were collected using two different methods of interviews: a focus group with boy students and a semi-structured individual interview with male teachers. Before the researcher began visiting schools to collect data from both teachers and students, an approval from the Education Department of Boys in Al Riyadh County was gained to access the selected schools. Throughout the first stage of data collection, fourteen boys' schools were visited by the researcher himself to distribute the survey copies and collect the completed copies. This stage was completed over three weeks' period that started from the twentieth of January and ended on the twentieth of February 2020, in which one school was visited every single day. During the school's visit, the headteacher was given a full explanation about the investigation's purpose and how teachers and students would be approached and recruited in the investigation, also he was given an information sheet attached with a school consent form to be signed. After agreement with the headteacher, 40 male students and 25 teachers from the school were selected randomly. After that, the survey copies, information sheets and consent forms were distributed to the potential participants. Students were provided with oral instructions regarding how to complete the surveys, and then they were asked to complete the surveys in their classrooms or later during the same school day at their own convenience. As for the teachers who agreed to participate in the study, surveys were distributed to them at the beginning of the school day, and they were asked to return it to the headteacher at the end of the school day. All copies of surveys that were distributed to both students and teachers were collected on the same day and then placed in a sealed envelope to maintain confidentiality. Both students and teachers who completed the surveys were asked if they were interested in participating in a follow-up interview for the next visit. Those who agreed to be interviewed were given interview consent forms to be signed. The same procedures were followed in all fourteen schools.

Before the researcher began the stage of collecting qualitative data, the survey's results of both teachers and students' surveys were analysed in order to formulate the interview questions and

decide which quantitative results needed further interpretation and discussion. This step took ten days to complete, during the period from 10 to 21 of February 2020. During the same period, the researcher also contacted the schools that were previously visited in order to organise interviews' schedule with teachers and students who earlier consented to be interviewed. After the interviews' schedule was organised and determined, the researcher started visiting the schools; every day one school was visited. During each visit the researcher first met the ECA supervisor to conduct an interview with him in his office in order to gain an in-depth explanation about the most challenges reported by teachers on the survey that associated with the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in boys secondary schools and how he dealt with these challenges and what recommendations he believed were useful in improving this plan; the interview lasted for about one hour. After that, a focus group interview was arranged during lunch time for thirty minutes with three students to explore their personal experiences in participating school extracurricular activities and how these experiences influenced their personal and social skills and their sense of belonging to school. All the interviews were audio recorded in order to be transcribed afterward, and to make sure that the words of the participants were not being misinterpreted.

### 3.8 Data Analysis Process

Analyzing mixed methods research data can be a challenging process because it involves raw data generated from different sources and by several data collection tools, that need to be analysed by applying both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques within the chosen framework of data analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2011). In this present study, the data analysis process occurred sequentially in two phases using two analytical techniques, wherein the quantitative analysis of the data gathered from surveys preceded the qualitative analysis of the data gathered from interviews.

#### 3.8.1 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative analysis mainly deals with data numerically to explore its properties, and therefore it requires several steps to be done. The first step is preparing and organising the data for analysis; in this step, the researcher needs to determine how to assign numeric scores to the data, evaluate the types of scores to use, select a statistical program that is appropriate for analyzing the data, input the data into the selected program, and then clean up the database for analysis process. Secondly, is analyzing the data; in this step, the researcher conducts different statistical analysis techniques, reports the results that are found after performing the data

analysis, and uses tables and figures for reporting and discussing the key results (Creswell, 2012).

In this current study, the data gathered on teachers and students' surveys were numerically coded, wherein each response category for each question on both surveys was assigned a numerical value. This coding process is an essential step because it enables the researcher to convert the data (behavioral responses) obtained from each respondent into a numeric format that a statistical program can analyse (Pallant ,2011). To facilitate the process of assigning numerical values to responses, the researcher created a codebook. In this codebook all the variables related to teachers and students' surveys and their abbreviated names that were used in the statistical program were listed. The codebook also provides a description of the way in which the researcher assigned numerical values to each variable or response; see Tables 3.3 and 3.4 below for more details.

**Table 3.3**

*The codebook of the students' survey*

| **Variable name** | **SPSS variable name** | **Coding value** |
|---|---|---|
| Survey ID | ID | Identification number assigned to each student' survey from 1 to 447 |
| Grade level of the student | Grade | 1= 10the grade, 2= 11the grade, 3= 12the grade |
| Student ECA type | ECAtype | 1= Sport activities, 2= Art and Culture activities, 3= Science activities, 4= scouting activity |
| Length of Involvement in ECA | ECAlength | 1= Less than one year, 2= One year, 3=Two years, 3= Three years |
| Survey items (Questions) | Q1 to Q55 | 1= Not at all, 2= A little, 3= Quite a bit, 4= Yes definitely |

**Table 3.4**

*The codebook of the teachers' survey*

| Variable name | SPSS variable name | Coding value |
|---|---|---|
| Survey ID | ID | Identification number assigned to each teacher' survey from 1 to 323 |
| Teacher' experience of teaching | T.experience | 1= less than 5 years, 2= from 5 to 10 years, 3= more than 10 years |
| Teacher' position in school | T.position | 1= Headteacher, 2= Teacher, 3= School ECA leader |
| Teacher involvement in organising the ECA | T.involvement | 1= Yeas, 2= No |
| ECA type that the teacher is responsible for | T.ECAtype | 1= Sport activity, 2= Art and culture activity, 3= Science activity, 4= Scouting activity |
| Survey items (questions) | Q1 to Q41 | 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree |

For analysing the study data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used because the researcher is familiar with it, and it is available to be downloaded from the York University IT services website. Beside that the SPSS program includes all the types of statistical analysis techniques that the researcher needed for answering the study questions and hypotheses; it also has the capability to produce graphs and tables that are used in reporting the study results. After downloading the SPSS program, the researcher began the process of entering the data gathered on teachers and students' surveys into the SPSS program. In this process, two SPSS databases were created using the SPSS data editor window, wherein each of the survey variable names were defined and given value labels based on the information of each variable listed on the above codebooks. After that, the scores obtained from each participant for each variable were entered.

When the data entry process was completed, the databases of teachers and students' surveys were assessed for missing values. Usually, missing values in the database occur when a participant does not provide a response to one or more of the survey questions. In some cases, missing values can be occurred when the researcher made mistakes during data entry (Cheema, 2014). Missing values can compromise the results of the study statistical analysis and lead to misleading conclusions when they are not handled appropriately. Creswell, (2012) discussed

several options for handling missing data; one of them is eliminating participants with missing values from the data analysis and including only participants who have complete values in the dataset, unless this action severely reduces the number of overall participants needed for data analysis. This option is particularly advantageous where there are enough participants for data analysis as in the current study. The researcher therefor has managed missing values by eliminating participants (11 participants from the teachers' database and 32 participants from the students' database) with missing values from the data analysis because the large sample allowed the researcher to exclude them without distorting the integrity of the required sample size for data analysis.

Before beginning the data analysis, the distribution of the data gathered on teachers and students' surveys was assessed visually and statistically for normality. The researcher used histograms and the index of skewness and kurtosis to assess whether the data were normally distributed or not. To choose the correct statistical techniques to analyse the data, the researcher considered four areas outlined by Garth (2008) that influence the researcher's choice of analysis: 1) The nature of data the researcher has collected (nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio), 2) Are the data paired or unpaired, 3) Are the data parametric or nonparametric, 4) What is the researcher looking for (description, correlation, differences). By considering these four points, the researcher employed the following statistical analysis shown in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5**

*Statistical analysis choice of quantitative data*

| **Research question** | **Type of data** | **Parametric or nonparametric** | **Type of question** | **Type of analysis** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What challenges do teachers report encountering in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan"? | Ordinal Data | Parametric data | Description and differences | Descriptive analysis (Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. and inferential analysis (One-Way ANOVA and Independent Samples test). |
| What (if any) social and personal skills do students perceive to be gained through participation in "One Hour Activity Plan"? | Ordinal Data | Parametric data | Description and differences | Descriptive analysis (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. and inferential analysis (One-Way ANOVA) |
| To what extent is participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" associated with a reported sense of school belonging among students? | Ordinal Data | Parametric data | Description and differences | Descriptive analysis (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. and inferential analysis (One-Way ANOVA) |

### 3.8.2 Qualitative data analysis

For qualitative data analysis, two main steps were involved: first preparing the data for analysis, second conducting the data analysis to answer the following questions: 'How does participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" influence students' personal and social skills and their sense of belonging to school?', and the second question is 'What strategies do teachers make for overcoming the challenges associated with the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in secondary schools?'. The researcher converted the audio interviews of both teachers and students into textual formats in order to facilitate the process of coding the textual data. Coding is often done manually and with the advancement of software technology, electronic methods of coding data are increasingly used. However, the use of computer software in qualitative data analysis is limited and it does not diminish the researcher's role in synthesising the data and interpreting the meanings that will be extracted from textual data. Therefore, the use of computers in qualitative analysis merely made organisation, reduction and storage of data more efficient and manageable (Wong, 2008). In this current study, manual coding was utilised to facilitate the process of qualitative data analysis, because it can help the researcher to find issues that no other automated technique can identify.

In addition, thematic analysis was employed; here all the transcripts of teachers and students' interviews were thematically analysed using a deductive approach. Terry et al. (2017) noted that the analytical starting point in the deductive approach is more top down, which means the researcher draws on pre-existing theoretical conceptions to provide a basis for seeing the data, coding meanings, and grouping codes to create themes. The approach to deductive coding is illustrated below.

**Example of deductive coding**

Hansen and Larson (2005) identified seven key areas where extracurricular activities influence adolescent personal and social development: initiative skills, teamwork and social skills, positive relationship skills, basic skills, identity skills, social linkages and finally negative experiences of participation.

**List of codes**

1) Initiative skills (goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management)

2) Teamwork and social skills: (feedback, leadership, responsibility, group process skills)

3) Positive relationship skills: (diverse peer relationships and prosocial norms)

4) Basic skills: (emotional regulation, cognitive skills)

5) Identity skills (identity exploration and reflection)

6) Social linkages (linkages to family, school and community)

7) Negative experiences of participation.

**Examples of coded transcripts**

For example, one participant mentioned that;

> In school cycling activity I found it enjoyable and effective in reducing weight gain. Previously, I found other sports boring, but I found cycling more enjoyable. With the help of the activity's leader, I developed a strict cycling schedule to achieve My goals. Within three months of continuous training, I was able to achieve My weight loss and fitness goals.

Another participant explains his experience;

> Being a member of school media club helped me to overcome the fear of speaking to audiences and developed my public speaking skills. In the past, I used to be nervous when I spoke in front of people. But with more participation in that club, I became confident when I talked with people and able to deliver the appropriate sentences and words.

### 3.9 Ethical Considerations

The present study followed the ethical guidelines of York University and the Saudi Ministry of Education to obtain the required ethical approval for conducting this study. This research is focused on secondary schools' boys in Al Riyadh County and the participants are Saudi high school teachers and students who were involved in school extracurricular activities. Before collecting data from the participants, all of them were informed regarding the purpose of the study, and that their involvement in the investigation process was voluntary; thus they had the

right to withdraw at any stage of the study. This study did not involve any risk of harm to the participants, nor did it require sensitive or personal data. The researcher was obligated to maintain a friendly, constructive relationship with the participants during visiting the schools for collecting the data. Moreover, in terms of confidentiality's obligations, the participants' names were anonymised, and they were informed that all data and information will be kept confidential and held in a secure place.

# Chapter Four

# 4 Chapter 4: Data analysis and Findings

## 4.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

This section presents the data analysis results of the quantitative stage of this study. In the quantitative stage, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analysis the quantitative data gathered on teachers and students' surveys. Initially, the data were checked for normality and then descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to describe the trend of the data.

### 4.1.1 Normality test of students and teachers' survey data

Before applying any statistical analysis, it is important to check the distribution of the data; this would provide the researcher with valuable information on how to deal with the data statistically to produce a meaningful analysis. For example, parametric tests such as One-way ANOVA and Independent Samples T-test assume that the distribution of scores on dependent variables is normally distributed, and thus neglecting this assumption may result in violating the tests' validity. A normal distribution of a dependent variable is characterised by the bell-shaped curve; this symmetrical shape of data basically means that the large number of scores lie around the centre of the distribution, with small number of scores lie in between the distribution extremes (Pallant ,2011). However, there are two main chances in which the distribution of frequency scores of the dependent variable can deviate from normal: first when there is lack of symmetry (called skewness) and second when there is 'pointyness' (called kurtosis).

A skewed distribution is often asymmetrical because the most frequent scores tend to be congregated at one extremity of the distribution. According to Field (2009) a skewed distribution can be either skewed to the left (called positive skewness) or to the right (called negative skewness). In the case of positive skewness, the frequent scores tend to be congregated at the left of the distribution. While in the case of negative skewness, the frequent scores tend to be congregated at the right of the distribution. On the other hand, kurtosis is a statistical term used to describe how peaked a distribution is, it refers to the extent to which scores are congregating in the ends (known as the tails) or the peak of a frequency distribution curve (Field, 2009). The distribution curve that has a positive kurtosis is more peaked than normal (this distribution curve is called Leptokurtic). Whereas the distribution curve that has a negative

kurtosis (called Platykurtic) is less peaked than normal distribution curve (Field, 2013; Landau, 2004).

There are several techniques that can be used to check whether a variable has a normal distribution or not. These techniques allow a researcher to inspect the distribution of a variable either visually or statistically. For example, a histogram is used for visually inspecting the normality. The histogram provides the researcher with a visual description about whether scores on a variable are normally distributed or if there are any outlying scores. On the other hand, skewness and kurtosis index is used for statistically assessing the normality. The index of skewness and kurtosis takes the value zero for a distribution that is ideally normal, and any value above or below 0 then indicates the distribution is deviated from the normal shape (Field, 2009; Landau, 2004). In fact, what is the acceptable value of skewness and kurtosis for a distribution to be at least approximately normal is not clear in the literature. Nevertheless, some statisticians such as George and Mallery (2019), suggested the values for skewness and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable.

While it is practical to use visual assessment for checking the suitability of data, however it is highly recommended to combine both statistical and visual techniques to avoid subjectivity in visual techniques (Field, 2009). Therefore, in this present study both techniques are used to check whether the data on dependent variables from the students' survey have normal distributions or not. Firstly, the histograms are used to visually inspect the data of the following dependent variables: identity exploration skills, initiative skills, basic skills, positive relationships skills, teamwork and social skills and sense of belonging to the school (these are composite variables and created by adding up the scores across a range of questions). Secondly the skewness and kurtosis values of all the dependent variables are calculated using SPSS program. The visual inspection shown in Figure 4.1, indicates that the shapes of the distributions for all the dependent variables data are reasonably normal. As for the results of the statistical inspection that are shown in Table 4.1, they indicate that the skewness and kurtosis values of the same dependent variables data are within the acceptable range of -2 to +2 as recommended by George and Mallery (2019). Therefore, it is appropriate to use parametric tests for analysing the data of students' questionnaire in this study.

**Figure 4.1**

*Histograms for the dependent variables of the students' survey data*

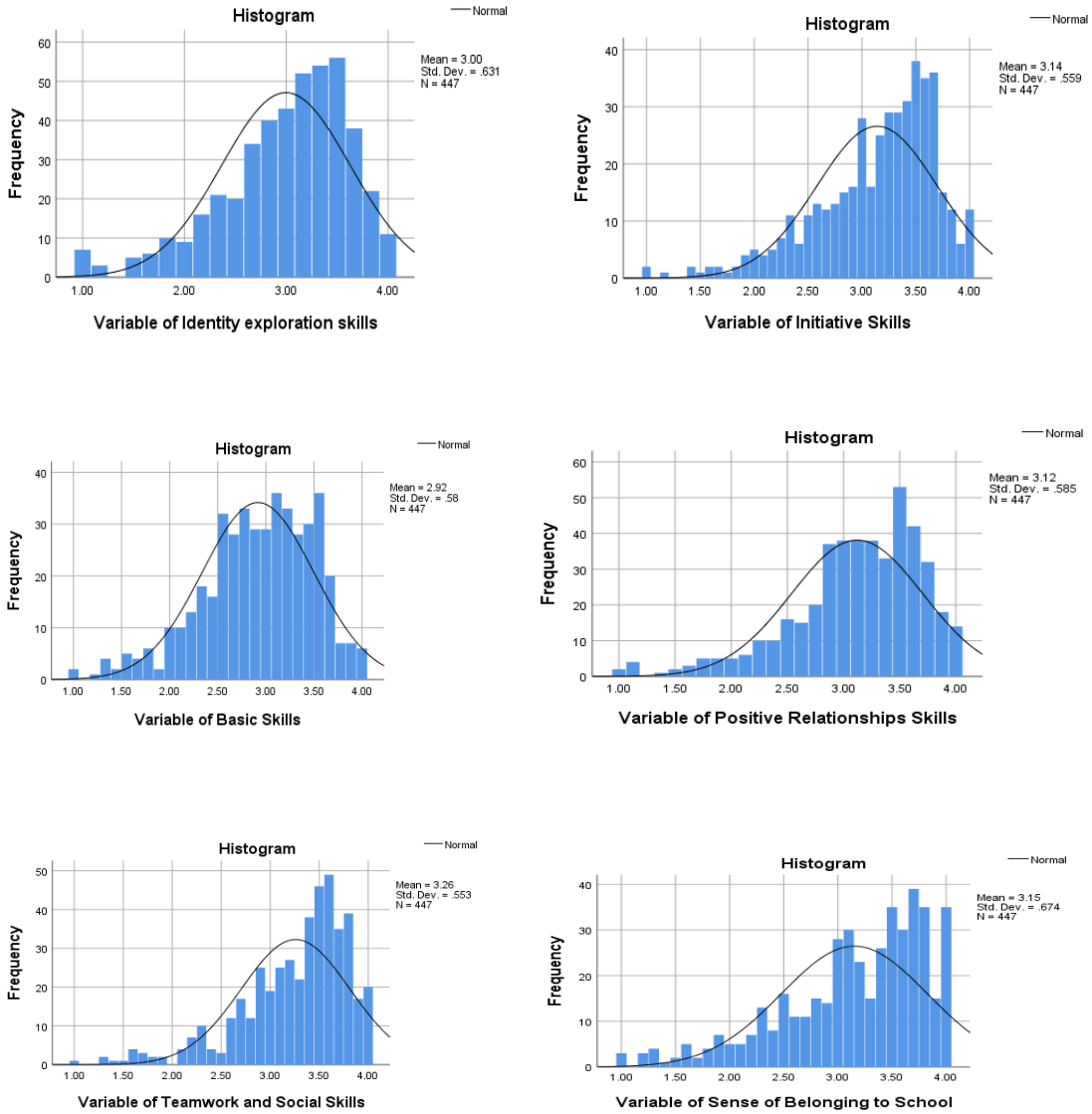


**Table 4.1**

*Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables of the students' survey data*

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Variable of identity exploration | 447 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 2.9963 | .63095 | -.930 | .115 | .751 | .230 |
| Variable of initiative skills | 447 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1402 | .55870 | -1.022 | .115 | 1.017 | .230 |
| Variable of basic skills | 447 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 2.9180 | .58009 | -.621 | .115 | .218 | .230 |
| Variable of positive relationships | 447 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1202 | .58506 | -1.057 | .115 | 1.269 | .230 |
| Variable of teamwork and social skills | 447 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.2586 | .55282 | -1.213 | .115 | 1.549 | .230 |
| Variable of sense of belonging to school | 447 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1517 | .67412 | -.965 | .115 | .464 | .230 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 447 | | | | | | | | |

In addition, the data on variables in the teachers' survey have been checked visually and statistically for normality. Firstly, histograms are used to visually inspect the data of the following variables: 1) challenges related to students; 2) challenges related to teachers; 3) challenges related to school resources and administration; 4) challenges related to parents and local community. Secondly, the skewness and kurtosis values of all these data are calculated using the SPSS program. The data visualisation presented in Figure 4.2, indicates that the shapes of the distributions for all the data for these variables appear to be good approximations of normality. The statistical inspection results shown in Table 4.2, indicate that the skewness and kurtosis values of the same data are within the acceptable range of -2 to +2 as recommended by George and Mallery (2019). It is therefore appropriate to use parametric tests such as One-Way ANOVA and Independent Samples T-test for analysing the data from the teachers' survey.

**Figure 4.2**

*Histograms for the dependent variables of the teachers' survey data*

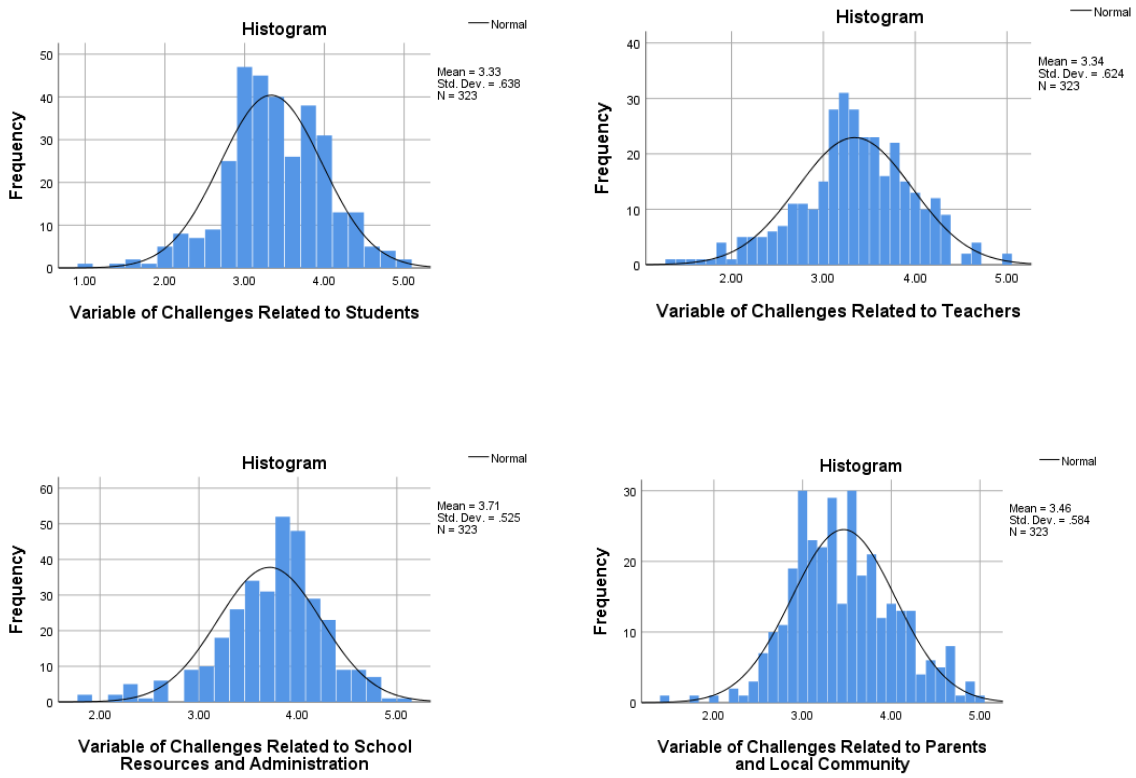



**Table 4.2**

*Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables*

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Challenges Related to Students | 323 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3319 | .63779 | -.236 | .136 | .563 | .271 |
| Challenges Related to Teachers | 323 | 1.33 | 5.00 | 3.3406 | .62424 | -.354 | .136 | .418 | .271 |
| Challenges Related to School Resources and Administration | 323 | 1.85 | 5.00 | 3.7133 | .52467 | -.729 | .136 | 1.213 | .271 |
| Challenges Related to Parents and Local Community | 323 | 1.44 | 5.00 | 3.4620 | .58425 | .165 | .136 | .098 | .271 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 323 | | | | | | | | |

### 4.1.2 Results of Students' Survey

This section contains the results of descriptive and inferential statistics obtained from analysing the data gathered on the students' survey. The survey was undertaken with students from 14 secondary boy's schools located in different areas of Riyadh city in order to determine: 1) what social and personal skills do students perceive to be gained through participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan", and 2) to what extent is participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" associated with a reported sense of school belonging among students. The results presented in this section are firstly concerned with the students' demographic information. Secondly, the descriptive results of students' responses on the survey phrases that are included in each dimension of the survey are: identity exploration skills, initiative skills, basic skills, positive relationships skills, teamwork social skills and the dimension of the sense of belonging to the school. Thirdly, the inferential results of testing the hypotheses are presented.

**Students' Demographic Information**

The first part of the students' survey collected demographic information about the male high school students who were involved in school extracurricular activities "One Hour Activity Plan". This part sought to collect personal information of the survey participants, such as educational stage, type of school extracurricular activity that the student was involved in, and the length of participation in the chosen activity. The descriptive results of the students' survey presented in Table 4.3, show 447 male high school students responded to the survey, 27.3% tenth graders (n=122), and 40% eleventh graders (n=179) and 32.7% twelfth graders (n=146). The results found that most of the students are involved in science activity (n=221) by 49.4%, followed by sport activity (n=127) by 28.4%, while scout activity got the lowest number of participants' rate (n=25) by 5%, followed by art and culture activity (n=74) by 16.6%. As for the length of participation in ECA, the results show that nearly half of the students stated that they (n=196, 43.8%) have less than one year of participation length, over one-quarter of students (n=116, 23.7%) stated that they have one year of participation length, less than one-quarter of students (n=83, 18.6%) stated that they have two years of participation length, and finally over one tenth of students (n=62, 13.9%) stated that they have three years of participation length.

**Table 4.3**

*Summary of the students' demographic information*

| Demographic variables | Categories | Rank | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students educational stage | Grade eleven | 1 | 179 | 40% |
| | Grade twelve | 2 | 146 | 32.7% |
| | Grade ten | 3 | 122 | 27.3% |
| Type of school based extracurricular activity students involved in | Science activity | 1 | 221 | 49.4% |
| | Sport activity | 2 | 127 | 28.4% |
| | Art and culture activity | 3 | 74 | 16.6% |
| | Scout activity | 4 | 25 | 5% |
| Length of participation in the chosen activity | Less than one year | 1 | 196 | 43.8% |
| | One year | 2 | 116 | 23.7% |
| | Two years | 3 | 83 | 18.6% |
| | Three years | 4 | 62 | 13.9% |

## The descriptive results of the students' survey data

The second part of the survey was intended to determine what personal and social skills are perceived by students to be gained through participation in school-based extracurricular activities "One Hour Activity Plan" such as science, sport, scout, art and culture activities, and also to assess if participation in the same activities is associated with a reported sense of school belonging among students. The second part of the survey includes 55 phrases grouped into seven dimensions identified earlier. Students were requested to rate the phrases of each dimension based on their developmental experiences in the chosen activity, by selecting from one of four choices ranging from 4 = yes definitely to 1 = not at all. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of each dimension's phrases were tabulated to determine which phrases have the highest or lowest average; see results in Tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9.

**Table 4.4**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of students' identity exploration' skills*

| Statements | | Yes definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Identity Exploration:** | | | | | | | | |
| 1. I tried doing new things | N | 212 | 165 | 36 | 34 | 3.241 | .895 | 1 |
| | % | 47.4 | 36.9 | 8.1 | 7.6 | | | |
| 2. I tried a new way of acting around people | N | 185 | 161 | 65 | 36 | 3.107 | .933 | 2 |
| | % | 41.4 | 36.0 | 14.5 | 8.1 | | | |
| 3. I do things in this activity I do not get to do anywhere else | N | 166 | 125 | 67 | 89 | 2.823 | 1.135 | 5 |
| | % | 37.1 | 28.0 | 15.0 | 19.9 | | | |
| **Identity Reflection:** | | | | | | | | |
| 4. I started thinking more about my future because of this activity | N | 193 | 134 | 67 | 53 | 3.044 | 1.027 | 3 |
| | % | 43.2 | 30.0 | 15.0 | 11.9 | | | |
| 5. This activity got me thinking about who I am | N | 150 | 136 | 70 | 91 | 2.771 | 1.121 | 6 |
| | % | 33.6 | 30.4 | 15.7 | 20.4 | | | |
| 6. This activity has been a positive turning point in my life | N | 180 | 134 | 81 | 52 | 2.988 | 1.025 | 4 |
| | % | 40.3 | 30.0 | 18.1 | 11.6 | | | |
| **The composite Mean for the scale*** | | | | | | | 2.99 | |
| **Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale** | | | | | | | .670 | |

*** This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [ (3.24+ 3.10+ 2.82+ 3.04+ 2.77+ 2.98 = 17.95) 17.95 / 6 = 2.99]**

Table 4.4 shows descriptive statistics for students' responses on the scale of identity exploration skills. Students have rated several phrases related to the identity exploration skills. The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 1: *I tried doing new things* (M = 3.24, SD = .895). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. This question also has the smallest standard deviation, indicating that there is less diversity of opinion than for other questions. Followed by the phrase number 2: *I tried a new way of acting around people* (M = 3.10, SD =.933). The lowest average is awarded to phrase number 5; *This activity got me thinking about who I am* (M = 2.77, SD =1.121). The second to lowest is phrase number 3; *I do things in this activity I do not get to do anywhere else* (M = 2.82, SD =1.135). The composite Mean for the scale is (M = 2.99) which indicates that the trend of students' opinions on experiencing the skill of identity exploration through their participation in school extracurricular activities tends to be positive since the Mean of scale lies in the interval (2.5 – 3.25) according to a 4 points Likert scale. In other words, very close to agreeing "quite a bit".

**Table 4.5**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of initiative skills*

| Statements | | Yeas definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Goal setting:** | | | | | | | | |
| 7. I set goals for myself in this activity | N | 183 | 162 | 61 | 41 | 3.089 | .952 | 6 |
| | % | 40.9 | 36.2 | 13.6 | 9.2 | | | |
| 8. I learned to find ways to achieve my goals | N | 165 | 171 | 74 | 37 | 3.038 | .930 | 11 |
| | % | 36.9 | 38.3 | 16.6 | 8.3 | | | |
| 9. I learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans | N | 190 | 142 | 75 | 40 | 3.078 | .973 | 8 |
| | % | 42.5 | 31.8 | 16.8 | 8.9 | | | |
| **Effort:** | | | | | | | | |
| 10. I put all my energy into this activity | N | 233 | 143 | 54 | 17 | 3.324 | .830 | 1 |
| | % | 52.1 | 32.0 | 12.1 | 3.8 | | | |
| 11. I learned to push myself | N | 226 | 150 | 57 | 14 | 3.315 | .812 | 2 |
| | % | 50.6 | 33.6 | 12.8 | 3.1 | | | |
| 12. I learned to focus my attention | N | 213 | 148 | 59 | 27 | 3.223 | .895 | 4 |
| | % | 47.7 | 33.1 | 13.2 | 6.0 | | | |
| **Problem solving:** | | | | | | | | |
| 13. I observed how others solved problems and learned from them | N | 190 | 143 | 70 | 44 | 3.071 | .986 | 9 |
| | % | 42.5 | 32.0 | 15.7 | 9.8 | | | |
| 14. I learned about developing plans for solving a problem | N | 164 | 174 | 73 | 36 | 3.042 | .923 | 10 |
| | % | 36.7 | 38.9 | 16.3 | 8.1 | | | |
| 15. I used my imagination to solve a problem | N | 189 | 121 | 94 | 43 | 3.020 | 1.009 | 12 |
| | % | 42.3 | 27.1 | 21.0 | 9.6 | | | |
| **Time management:** | | | | | | | | |
| 16. I learned about organizing time and not procrastinating | N | 195 | 154 | 58 | 40 | 3.127 | .953 | 5 |
| | % | 43.6 | 34.5 | 13.0 | 8.9 | | | |
| 17. I learned about setting priorities | N | 221 | 140 | 63 | 23 | 3.250 | .883 | 3 |
| | % | 49.4 | 31.3 | 14.1 | 5.1 | | | |
| 18. I practiced self-discipline | N | 182 | 158 | 77 | 30 | 3.100 | .916 | 7 |
| | % | 40.7 | 35.3 | 17.2 | 6.7 | | | |
| **The composite Mean for the scale*** | | | | | | 3.139 | | |
| **Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale** | | | | | | .842 | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [ (3.089+ 3.038+ 3.078+ 3.324+ 3.315+ 3.223+ 3.071+ 3.042+ 3.020+ 3.127+ 3.250+ 3.100= 37.677 / 12 = 3.139)].**

Table 4.5 shows descriptive statistics of students' responses on the scale of initiative skills. Students have rated several phrases related to the initiative skills. The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 10: *I put all my energy into this activity* (M =3.324, SD =.830). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. Followed by the phrase number 11: *I learned to push myself* (M =3.315, SD =.812). The lowest average is awarded to phrase number 15: *I used my imagination to solve a problem* (M =3.020, SD =1.009), this question also has the largest standard deviation, indicating that there is more diversity of opinion than for other questions. The second to lowest is phrase number 8: *I learned to find ways to achieve my goals* (M = 3.038, SD= .973). The composite Mean for the scale is (M =3.139) which indicates that the trend of students' opinions on experiencing the initiative skills (such as goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management) through their participation in school extracurricular activities tends to be positive since the mean of the scale lies in the interval (2.5 – 3.25) according to a 4 points Likert scale. In other words, very close to agreeing "quite a bit".

**Table 4.6**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of students' basic skills*

| Statements | | Yeas definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Emotional regulation:** | | | | | | | | |
| **19. I learned about controlling my temper** | **N** | **180** | **133** | **77** | **57** | **2.975** | **1.042** | **4** |
| | **%** | **40.3** | **29.8** | **17.2** | **12.8** | | | |
| **20. I became better at dealing with fear and anxiety** | **N** | **183** | **151** | **63** | **50** | **3.044** | **.999** | **3** |
| | **%** | **40.9** | **33.8** | **14.1** | **11.2** | | | |
| **21. I became better at handling stress** | **N** | **182** | **155** | **71** | **39** | **3.073** | **.954** | **2** |
| | **%** | **40.7** | **34.7** | **15.9** | **8.7** | | | |
| **22. I learned that my emotions affect how I perform** | **N** | **166** | **141** | **76** | **64** | **2.915** | **1.053** | **6** |
| | **%** | **37.1** | **31.5** | **17.0** | **14.3** | | | |
| **Cognitive skills:** | | | | | | | | |
| **23. In this activity I have improved my academic skills (reading, writing, math, etc.)** | **N** | **163** | **117** | **91** | **76** | **2.821** | **1.104** | **8** |
| | **%** | **36.5** | **26.2** | **20.4** | **17.0** | | | |
| **24. In this activity I have improved skills for finding information** | **N** | **166** | **128** | **194** | **49** | **2.919** | **1.018** | **5** |
| | **%** | **37.1** | **28.6** | **23.3** | **11.0** | | | |
| **25. In this activity I have improved my computer/internet skills** | **N** | **133** | **110** | **82** | **122** | **2.568** | **1.178** | **9** |
| | **%** | **29.8** | **24.6** | **18.3** | **27.3** | | | |
| **26. In this activity I have improved my artistic/creative skills** | **N** | **150** | **138** | **94** | **65** | **2.834** | **1.050** | **7** |
| | **%** | **33.6** | **30.9** | **21.0** | **14.5** | | | |
| **27. In this activity I have improved my communication skills** | **N** | **202** | **133** | **71** | **41** | **3.109** | **.983** | **1** |
| | **%** | **45.2** | **29.8** | **15.9** | **9.2** | | | |
| **The composite Mean for the scale*** | | | | | | **2.917** | | |
| **Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale** | | | | | | **.720** | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [(2.975+3.044+3.073+2.915+2.821+2.919+2.568+2.834+3.109= 26.258) 26.258 / 9= 2.917]**

Table 4.6 shows descriptive statistics of students' responses on the scale of the basic skills. Students have rated several phrases related to the Basic skills. The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 27: *In this activity I have improved my communication skills* (M =3.109, SD =.983). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. Followed by the phrase number 21: *I became better at handling stress* (M = 3.073, SD = .954). The lowest average is awarded to phrase number 25: *In this activity I have improved my computer/internet skills* (M = 2.568, SD = 1.178), this question also has the largest standard deviation, indicating that there is more diversity of opinion than for other questions. The second to lowest is phrase number 23: *In this*

*activity I have improved my academic skills; reading, writing, math, etc.* (M = 2.821, SD = 1.104). The composite Mean for the scale is (M=2.9180), which indicates that the trend of students' opinions on experiencing the basic skills (such as emotional and cognitive skills) through their participation in school extracurricular activities tends to be positive since the mean of the scale lies in the interval (2.5 – 3.25) according to a 4 points Likert scale. In other words, very close to agreeing "quite a bit".

**Table 4.7**

*Descriptive statics for the scale of students' positive relationship skills*

| Statements | | Yes definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Divers peer relationships:** | | | | | | | | |
| 28. I made new friends from other classrooms | N | 276 | 87 | 40 | 44 | 3.331 | .996 | 2 |
| | % | 61.7 | 19.5 | 8.9 | 9.8 | | | |
| 29. I learned that I had a lot in common with students from different backgrounds | N | 171 | 164 | 77 | 35 | 3.053 | .931 | 5 |
| | % | 38.3 | 36.7 | 17.2 | 7.8 | | | |
| 30. I got to know someone from a different ethnic group | N | 165 | 129 | 87 | 66 | 2.879 | 1.068 | 8 |
| | % | 36.9 | 28.9 | 19.5 | 14.8 | | | |
| 31. I made friends with someone from a different social class (someone richer or poorer) | N | 188 | 111 | 62 | 86 | 2.897 | 1.149 | 7 |
| | % | 42.1 | 24.8 | 13.9 | 19.2 | | | |
| **Prosocial norms:** | | | | | | | | |
| 32. I learned about helping others | N | 266 | 114 | 50 | 17 | 3.407 | .833 | 1 |
| | % | 59.5 | 25.5 | 11.2 | 3.8 | | | |
| 33. I was able to change my school or community for the better | N | 154 | 160 | 85 | 48 | 2.939 | .981 | 6 |
| | % | 34.5 | 35.8 | 19.0 | 10.7 | | | |
| 34. I learned to stand up for something I believed was morally right | N | 242 | 121 | 53 | 31 | 3.284 | .926 | 3 |
| | % | 54.1 | 27.1 | 11.9 | 6.9 | | | |
| 35. We discussed morals and values | N | 233 | 101 | 69 | 44 | 3.170 | 1.021 | 4 |
| | % | 52.1 | 22.6 | 15.4 | 9.8 | | | |
| **The composite Mean for the scale*** | | | | | | 3.120 | | |
| **Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale** | | | | | | .732 | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [(3.331+3.053+2.879+2.897+3.407+2.939+3.284+3.170=24.96) 24.96/8= 3.120]**

Table 4.7 shows descriptive statistics of students' responses on the scale of the positive relationship skills. Students have rated several phrases related to the positive relationship skills.

The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 32: *I learned about helping others* (M =3.407, SD =.833), In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. This question also has the smallest standard deviation, indicating that there is less diversity of opinion than for other questions. Followed by the phrase number 28: *I made new friends from other classrooms* (M =3.331, SD = .996). The lowest average is awarded to phrase number 30: *I got to know someone from a different ethnic group* (M =2.879, SD =1.068). The second to lowest is phrase number 31: I *made friends with someone from a different social class; someone richer or poorer* (M =2.897, SD =1.149). The composite mean for the scale is (M=3.120) which indicates that the trend of student's opinions on experiencing positive relationships skills (such as positive peer relationships and prosocial behaviours) through their participation in school extracurricular activities tends to be positive since the Mean of the entire scale lies in the interval (2.5 – 3.25) according to a 4 points Likert scale. In other words, very close to agreeing "quite a bit".

**Table 4.8**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of students' teamwork and social skills*

| Statements | | Yes definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group process skills:** | | | | | | | | |
| 36. I learned that working together requires some compromising | N | 277 | 127 | 25 | 18 | 3.483 | .777 | 1 |
| | % | 62.0 | 28.4 | 5.6 | 4.0 | | | |
| 37. I became better at sharing responsibility | N | 274 | 120 | 40 | 13 | 3.465 | .776 | 2 |
| | % | 61.3 | 26.8 | 8.9 | 2.9 | | | |
| 38. I learned to be patient with other group members | N | 270 | 122 | 36 | 19 | 3.438 | .814 | 3 |
| | % | 60.4 | 27.3 | 8.1 | 4.3 | | | |
| 39. I learned how my emotions and attitude affect others in the group | N | 211 | 130 | 70 | 36 | 3.154 | .963 | 7 |
| | % | 47.2 | 29.1 | 15.7 | 8.1 | | | |
| 40. I learned that it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them | N | 219 | 125 | 56 | 47 | 3.154 | 1.007 | 8 |
| | % | 49.0 | 28.0 | 12.5 | 10.5 | | | |
| **Feedback:** | | | | | | | | |
| 41. I became better at giving feedback | N | 234 | 145 | 50 | 18 | 3.331 | .829 | 4 |
| | % | 52.3 | 32.4 | 11.2 | 4.0 | | | |
| 42. I became better at taking feedback | N | 222 | 146 | 59 | 20 | 3.275 | .856 | 6 |
| | % | 49.7 | 32.7 | 13.2 | 4.5 | | | |
| **Leadership and responsibility:** | | | | | | | | |
| 43. I learned about the challenges of being a leader | N | 257 | 102 | 49 | 39 | 3.290 | .975 | 5 |
| | % | 57.5 | 22.8 | 11.0 | 8.7 | | | |
| 44. Others in this activity counted on me | N | 169 | 157 | 66 | 55 | 2.984 | 1.009 | 10 |
| | % | 37.8 | 35.1 | 14.8 | 12.3 | | | |
| 45. I had an opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers | N | 216 | 95 | 60 | 76 | 3.008 | 1.140 | 9 |
| | % | 48.3 | 21.3 | 13.4 | 17.0 | | | |
| **The composite mean for all the scale*** | | | | | | 3.258 | | |
| **Cronbach Alpha coefficient for all the scale** | | | | | | .802 | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [ (3.483+ 3.465+ 3.438+ 3.154+ 3.154+ 3.331+ 3.275+ 3.290+ 2.984+ 3.008= 32.582) 32.582/ 10= 3.258 ]**

Table 4.8 shows the descriptive statistics of students' responses on the scale of teamwork and social skills. Students have rated several phrases related to teamwork and social skills. The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 36: *I learned that working together requires some compromising* (M =3.483, SD =.777), In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. This

question also has low standard deviation, indicating that there is less diversity of opinion than for other questions. Followed by the phrase number 37*; I became better at sharing responsibility* (M =3.465, SD = .776). The lowest average is awarded to the phrase number 44: *Others in this activity counted on me* (M =2.984, SD =1.009). The second to lowest is phrase number 45: *I had an opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers* (M =3.008, SD =1.140). The composite Mean for the scale is (M =3.258) which indicates that the trend of students' opinions on experiencing teamwork and Social skills (such as group process skills, feedback skills, leadership skills and responsibility skills) through their participation in school extracurricular activities tends to be more positive since the Mean of the scale lies in the interval (3.25 - 4) according to a 4-point Likert scale. In other words, very close to agreeing "Yes definitely".

**Table 4.9**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of sense of students' belonging to the school*

| Statements | | Yes definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Integration with teachers and peers:** | | | | | | | | |
| **46. Because of my extracurricular activity I have started to show respect my teachers** | **N** | **310** | **83** | **21** | **33** | **3.498** | **.888** | **1** |
| | **%** | **69.4** | **18.6** | **4.7** | **7.4** | | | |
| **47. Because of my extracurricular activity I have built good relationship with teachers** | **N** | **258** | **120** | **44** | **25** | **3.366** | **.875** | **2** |
| | **%** | **57.7** | **26.8** | **9.8** | **5.6** | | | |
| **48. Because of my extracurricular activity I have built good relationship with my peers' school** | **N** | **202** | **136** | **79** | **30** | **3.140** | **.937** | **4** |
| | **%** | **45.2** | **30.4** | **17.7** | **6.7** | | | |
| **connection to school:** | | | | | | | | |
| **49. Because of my extracurricular activity I have increased my desire to stay in school** | **N** | **195** | **134** | **58** | **60** | **3.038** | **1.050** | **8** |
| | **%** | **43.6** | **30.0** | **13.0** | **13.4** | | | |
| **50. Because of my extracurricular activity I feel like I belong to my school** | **N** | **182** | **144** | **60** | **61** | **3.000** | **1.043** | **10** |
| | **%** | **40.7** | **32.2** | **13.4** | **13.6** | | | |
| **51. Because of my extracurricular activity I feel comfortable at my school** | **N** | **187** | **136** | **69** | **55** | **3.017** | **1.032** | **9** |
| | **%** | **41.8** | **30.4** | **15.4** | **12.3** | | | |
| **52. Because of my extracurricular activity I am more willing to comply with school rules** | **N** | **193** | **154** | **59** | **41** | **3.116** | **.958** | **5** |
| | **%** | **43.2** | **34.5** | **13.2** | **9.2** | | | |
| **53. Because of my extracurricular activity I feel school day is more enjoyable** | **N** | **184** | **150** | **80** | **33** | **3.085** | **.938** | **6** |
| | **%** | **41.2** | **33.6** | **17.9** | **7.4** | | | |
| **54. Because of my extracurricular activity I regularly attend my school** | **N** | **195** | **142** | **56** | **54** | **3.069** | **1.020** | **7** |
| | **%** | **43.6** | **31.8** | **12.5** | **12.1** | | | |
| **55. Because of my extracurricular activity, I feel so proud to be member of this school** | **N** | **220** | **130** | **56** | **41** | **3.183** | **.976** | **3** |
| | **%** | **49.2** | **29.1** | **12.5** | **9.2** | | | |
| **The composite Mean for all the scale** | | | | | | **3.151** | | |
| **Cronbach Alpha coefficient for all the scale** | | | | | | **.879** | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [ (3.498+3.366+3.140+3.038+3.000+3.017+3.116+3.085+3.069+3.183=31.512) 31.512/ 10= 3.151 ]**

Table 4.9 shows descriptive statistics of students' responses on the scale of sense of belonging to the school. Students have rated several phrases related to the sense of school belonging. The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 46: *Because of my extracurricular activity I have started to show respect my teachers* (M =3.498, SD =.888). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. Followed by the phrase number 47: *Because of my extracurricular activity*

*I have built good relationship with teachers* (M =3.366, SD =.875), followed by the phrase number 55: *Because of my extracurricular activity, I feel so proud to be member of this school* (M =3.183, SD = .976). The lowest average is awarded to the phrase number 50: *Because of my extracurricular activity I feel like I belong to my school* (M =3.000, SD=1.043), This question also has the highest standard deviation, indicating that there is more diversity of opinion than for other questions. The second to lowest is phrase number 51: *Because of my extracurricular activity I feel comfortable at my school* (M =3.017, SD =1.032). The composite Mean for the scale is (M =3.151) which indicates that the trend of students' opinions on developing a sense of school belonging through their participation in school extracurricular activities tends to be positive since the Mean of the entire scale lies in the interval (2.5 – 3.25) according to a 4 points Likert scale. In other words, very close to agreeing "quite a bit".

**The inferential results of the students' survey data**

The second analysis performed on the students' survey data was inferential statistics to answer research questions 1 and 2: *What (if any) social and personal skills do students perceive to be gained through participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan"? To what extent (how) do students perceive the impact of participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" on their sense of school belonging?*. Firstly, One Way ANOVA is performed to identify any significant differences between participants' social and personal skills; this identifies dependent variables by their type of activity and participation length level (independent variables). The following hypotheses were tested:

H1. There is a statistically significant difference between students in their social and personal skills they think they have gained through participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" according to the target activity.

H2. There is a statistically significant difference between students in their social and personal skills they think they have gained through participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" according to participation length.

Secondly, One-way ANOVA is conducted to investigate the differences between participants' perceptions on the sense of school belonging (dependent variable) by their type of activity and participation length level (independent variables). The following hypotheses were tested:

H1. There is a statistically significant difference between students in their reported sense of school belonging according to the type of activity.

H2. There is a statistically significant difference between students in their reported sense of school belonging according to the length of participation.

**Differences between students' groups based on the target activity.**

One Way ANOVA is conducted to identify the significance of the target activity on the participants perceived personal and social skills. Students are divided into four groups according to their target activity (group1: sport activity, group 2: art and cultural activity, group 3: science activity, group 4: scout activity). Table 4.10 shows a summary obtained from the ANOVA output results, and any significant results with value $p< 0.05$ level are marked with a star. Several perceived personal and social skills (dependent variables) were ranked significantly differently across the four groups. For example, the participants in different activities have scored significantly differently on their perceived personal and social skills; initiative skills [ $F(3.443) = 8.028$, $p = 001$ ]; positive relationship skills [ $F(3.443) = 5.654$, $p = 001$ ]; teamwork and social skills [ $F(3.443) = 4.311$, $P = .005$ ]. On the other hand, identity exploration skills; [ $F (3.443) = 1.845$, $p = .138$] and basic skills; [ $F (3.443) = .743$, $p = .527$] did not significantly differ between the four groups.

**Table 4.10**

*One-Way ANOVA results of the groups' social and personal skills based on the target activity*

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable of Identity exploration skills | Between Groups | 2.191 | 3 | .730 | 1.845 | .138 |
| | Within Groups | 175.358 | 443 | .396 | | |
| | Total | 177.549 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of Initiative skills | Between Groups | 7.18 | 3 | 2.393 | 8.028 | .000* |
| | Within Groups | 132.036 | 443 | .298 | | |
| | Total | 139.215 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of basic skills | Between Groups | .751 | 3 | .250 | .743 | .527 |
| | Within Groups | 149.327 | 443 | .337 | | |
| | Total | 150.079 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of positive relationships skills | Between Groups | 5.630 | 3 | 1.877 | 5.654 | .001* |
| | Within Groups | 147.032 | 443 | .332 | | |
| | Total | 152.662 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of teamwork and social skills | Between Groups | 3.867 | 3 | 1.289 | 4.311 | .005* |
| | Within Groups | 132.438 | 443 | .299 | | |
| | Total | 136.304 | 446 | | | |

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The ANOVA test only provides information about whether there are significant differences between the groups or not. However, it does not provide any specific information on how groups differ from each other. Therefore, Tukey's test was performed to understand where those significant differences lie between the groups. The Tukey results presented in Table 4.11, show that initiative skills, positive relationship skills and teamwork and social skills differ significantly between the four groups; participants in sport activity (group 1; M=3.1831, SD=.55367 ), science activity (group 3; M=3.1995, SD=.52419) and scouting activity (group 4; M=3.2367, SD=.59594) have significantly higher reported levels of development of their initiative skills through participation than those who participated in art and culture activity group 2 (M =2.8570, SD =.57859). Participants in sport activity (group 1; M =3.1516, SD =.51554), science activity (group 3; M =3.1635, SD =.59059) and scouting activity (group 4; M =3.2950, SD =.53507) have a significantly higher reported levels of development of their

relationship skills through participation than those who participated in art and culture activity (group 2; M =2.8784, SD =.64038). Participants in sport activity (group 1; M =3.3346, SD =.46195) and science activity (group 3; M =3.2787, SD =.54310) have a significantly higher reported levels of development of their teamwork and social skills than those who participated in art and culture activity (group 2; M =2.8784, SD =.64038). In the contrary, participants in scouting activity (group 4; M =3.2920, SD =.62844) does not differ significantly from the other groups in terms of teamwork and social skills after the Tukey test is performed.

**Table 4.11**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for Differences Between Groups on Initiative Skills Based on The Target Activity*

| | | Mean | | | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **(I) Students target of ECA** | **(J) Students target of ECA** | **Difference (I-J)** | **Std. Error** | **Sig.** | **Lower Bound** | **Upper Bound** |
| Sport activity | Art and Culture activity | .32609* | .07984 | .000 | .1202 | .5320 |
| | Science activity | -.01640 | .06079 | .993 | -.1732 | .1404 |
| | Scouting activity | -.05360 | .11945 | .970 | -.3616 | .2544 |
| Art and Culture activity | Sport activity | -.32609* | .07984 | .000 | -.5320 | -.1202 |
| | Science activity | -.34249* | .07332 | .000 | -.5316 | -.1534 |
| | Scouting activity | -.37968* | .12629 | .015 | -.7054 | -.0540 |
| Science activity | Sport activity | .01640 | .06079 | .993 | -.1404 | .1732 |
| | Art and Culture activity | .34249* | .07332 | .000 | .1534 | .5316 |
| | Scouting activity | -.03719 | .11520 | .988 | -.3343 | .2599 |
| Scouting activity | Sport activity | .05360 | .11945 | .970 | -.2544 | .3616 |
| | Art and Culture activity | .37968* | .12629 | .015 | .0540 | .7054 |
| | Science activity | .03719 | .11520 | .988 | -.2599 | .3343 |

***. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.**

**Table 4.12**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for the differences between groups on positive relationship skills based on the target activity*

| (I) Students target of ECA | (J) Students target of ECA | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound | 95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sport activities | Art and Culture activities | .27320* | .08425 | .007 | .0559 | .4905 |
| | Science activity | -.01189 | .06415 | .998 | -.1773 | .1535 |
| | Scouting activity | -.14343 | .12605 | .666 | -.4685 | .1816 |
| Art and Culture activity | Sport activity | -.27320* | .08425 | .007 | -.4905 | -.0559 |
| | Science activity | -.28508* | .07738 | .001 | -.4846 | -.0855 |
| | Scouting activity | -.41662* | .13327 | .010 | -.7603 | -.0729 |
| Science activity | Sport activity | .01189 | .06415 | .998 | -.1535 | .1773 |
| | Art and Culture activity | .28508* | .07738 | .001 | .0855 | .4846 |
| | Scouting activity | -.13154 | .12156 | .701 | -.4450 | .1820 |
| Scouting activity | Sport activity | .14343 | .12605 | .666 | -.1816 | .4685 |
| | Art and Culture activity | .41662* | .13327 | .010 | .0729 | .7603 |
| | Science activity | .13154 | .12156 | .701 | -.1820 | .4450 |

***. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level**.

**Table 4.13**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for the differences between groups on teamwork and social skills based on the target activity*

| (I) Student target of ECA | (J) Student target of ECA | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound | 95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sport activity | Art and Culture activity | .27789* | .07996 | .003 | .0717 | .4841 |
| | Science activity | .05591 | .06088 | .795 | -.1011 | .2129 |
| | Scouting activity | .04265 | .11963 | .984 | -.2659 | .3512 |
| Art and Culture activity | Sport activity | -.27789* | .07996 | .003 | -.4841 | -.0717 |
| | Science activity | -.22198* | .07343 | .014 | -.4114 | -.0326 |
| | Scouting activity | -.23524 | .12648 | .247 | -.5614 | .0909 |
| Science activity | Sport activities | -.05591 | .06088 | .795 | -.2129 | .1011 |
| | Art and Culture activity | .22198* | .07343 | .014 | .0326 | .4114 |
| | Scouting activity | -.01327 | .11537 | .999 | -.3108 | .2843 |
| Scouting activity | Sport activity | -.04265 | .11963 | .984 | -.3512 | .2659 |
| | Art and Culture activity | .23524 | .12648 | .247 | -.0909 | .5614 |
| | Science activity | .01327 | .11537 | .999 | -.2843 | .3108 |

***. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.**

**Differences between students' groups based on the length of participation.**

One Way ANOVA test is conducted to identify the significance of the participation length on the participants perceived personal and social skills. Students are divided into four groups according to their length of participation (Group1: less than one year, Group 2: one year, Group 3: two years, Group 4: three years). Table 4.14, shows a summary obtained from the ANOVA output results, and any significant results with value $p < 0.05$ level are marked with a star. The ANOVA test indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the four groups in their basic skills [F (3.443) = 4.096, p = 007]. On the other hand, identity exploration skills; [F (3.443) = .685, p = .070], initiative skills [F (3.443) = 8.028, p = .561], positive relationship skills [F(3.443) = 1.321, p = 267] and teamwork and social skills [ F(3.443) = 2.209, P = .086 ] do not significantly differ between the four groups.

**Table 4.14**

*One-Way ANOVA results of groups social and personal skills based on the participation length*

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable of identity exploration skills | Between Groups | 2.806 | 3 | .935 | 2.371 | .070 |
| | Within Groups | 174.743 | 443 | .394 | | |
| | Total | 177.549 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of initiative skills | Between Groups | .643 | 3 | .214 | .685 | .561 |
| | Within Groups | 138.571 | 443 | .313 | | |
| | Total | 139.215 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of basic skills | Between Groups | 4.051 | 3 | 1.350 | 4.096 | .007* |
| | Within Groups | 146.028 | 443 | .330 | | |
| | Total | 150.079 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of positive relationships skills | Between Groups | 1.354 | 3 | .451 | 1.321 | .267 |
| | Within Groups | 151.308 | 443 | .342 | | |
| | Total | 152.662 | 446 | | | |
| Variable of teamwork and social skills | Between Groups | 2.009 | 3 | .670 | 2.209 | .086 |
| | Within Groups | 134.295 | 443 | .303 | | |
| | Total | 136.304 | 446 | | | |

**Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.**

**Table 4.15**

*Results of Tukey HSD Test for the differences between groups on skills based on the participation length*

| (I) Length of Involvement in ECA | (J) Length of Involvement in ECA | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound | 95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| less than one year | one year | -.08542 | .06922 | .606 | -.2639 | .0931 |
| | two years | -.23237* | .07519 | .011 | -.4263 | -.0385 |
| | three years | -.20214 | .08366 | .075 | -.4179 | .0136 |
| one year | less than one year | .08542 | .06922 | .606 | -.0931 | .2639 |
| | two years | -.14695 | .08415 | .301 | -.3640 | .0701 |
| | three years | -.11672 | .09180 | .582 | -.3534 | .1200 |
| two years | less than one year | .23237* | .07519 | .011 | .0385 | .4263 |
| | one year | .14695 | .08415 | .301 | -.0701 | .3640 |
| | three years | .03023 | .09638 | .989 | -.2183 | .2788 |
| three years | less than one year | .20214 | .08366 | .075 | -.0136 | .4179 |
| | one year | .11672 | .09180 | .582 | -.1200 | .3534 |
| | two years | -.03023 | .09638 | .989 | -.2788 | .2183 |

***. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.**

The Tukey results presented in the above Table 4.15, show that participants of Group 3 (M=3,0598, SD=.5327) have a significantly higher basic skills than participants of Group 1 (M=2.8265, SD=.59757).

**Differences in the perceived sense of school belonging among students based on their type of activity and the length of participation.**

One Way ANOVA is performed to identify any significant differences between students' responses on their perceived sense of belonging to school according to their target activity. Students are divided into four groups according to their target activity (group1: sport activity, group 2: art and cultural activity, group 3: science activity, group 4: scout activity). The ANOVA results presented in Table 4.16, indicate there is no statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the four groups in their reported sense of belonging to school.

**Table 4.16**

*One-Way ANOVA Test for the differences between groups on the perceived sense of school belonging based on the target activity*

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 2.556 | 3 | .852 | 1.886 | .131 |
| Within Groups | 200.121 | 443 | .452 | | |
| Total | 202.676 | 446 | | | |

In addition, One Way ANOVA is also performed to identify any significant differences between students' responses on their perceived sense of belonging to school according to their target activity. Students are divided into four groups according to their participation length (Group1: less than one year, Group 2: one year, Group 3: two years, Group 4: three years). The ANOVA results presented in Table 4.17, indicate there is no statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the four groups in their reported sense of belonging to school.

**Table 4.17**

*One-Way ANOVA Test for the differences between groups on the perceived sense of school belonging based on the participation length*

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | .133 | 3 | .044 | .097 | .962 |
| Within Groups | 202.543 | 443 | .457 | | |
| Total | 202.543 | 446 | | | |

### 4.1.3 Results of the teachers' survey

This section contains the results of descriptive and inferential statistics obtained from analysing the data gathered on the teachers' survey. The survey was undertaken with male teachers from 14 secondary boy's schools located in different areas of Riyadh city in order to determine: Firstly, what challenges do teachers report encountering in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan". The results presented in this section are primarily focused on the demographic information of teachers. Secondly, the descriptive results of teachers' responses on the survey' phrases that are included in each dimension of the survey. Thirdly, the inferential results of testing the hypotheses.

**Teachers' demographic information**

The first part of the survey collected demographic information about the male teachers, whether those involved in organising the "One Hour Activity Plan" or not. This part sought to collect personal information of the survey participants, such as teacher experience of teaching, teacher position in school, is teacher involved in organising school extracurricular activities in his school or not, and the type of activity is teacher responsible for. The demographic descriptive results of teachers' survey presented in Table 4.18, show 323 male teachers responded to the survey; 92.6% work as a teacher (n = 299), and 4.3% work as school ECA leader (n = 14), and 3,1% work as a headteacher (n = 10). Over half of the participants (n =168, 52%) stated that they have more than ten years of teaching experience, and 30.7% of participants (n = 99) stated that they have five to ten years of teaching experience, while only17.3% of participants (n = 56) stated that they have less than five years of teaching experience. Most of the participants (n = 268, 83%) indicated that they are involved in organising the "One Hour Activity Plan", while one quarter of participants (n=55, 15%) indicated that they do not play a role in organising the "One Hour Activity Plan". The descriptive results indicate that 34.4% of teachers are involved in organising art and culture activity, and 33.7% of them are involved in organising sport activity. While less teachers are involved in organising sport activity by 19.2% and scout activity by 12.7%.

**Table 4.18**

*Summary of teacher participants' demographic information*

| Demographic variables | Categories | Rank | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant experience | More than ten years | 1 | 168 | 52% |
| | From five to ten years | 2 | 99 | 30.7% |
| | Less than five years | 3 | 56 | 17.3% |
| Participant position in school | Teacher | 1 | 299 | 92.6% |
| | School ECA leader | 2 | 14 | 4.3% |
| | Headteacher | 3 | 10 | 3.1% |
| Is participant involved in organizing school extracurricular activities in his school or not | Yes | 1 | 268 | 83% |
| | No | 2 | 55 | 15% |
| Type of activity is participant responsible for | Art and culture activity | 1 | 111 | 34.4% |
| | Sciences activity | 2 | 109 | 33.7% |
| | Sport activity | 3 | 62 | 19.2% |
| | Scout activity | 4 | 41 | 12.7% |

## The descriptive results of the teachers' survey data

The second part of the teachers' survey was designed to determine the challenges that affect the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in Saudi secondary schools. This part includes 41 phrases grouped into four dimensions. Teachers were requested to rate phrases of each dimension based on their self-assessment (dimension one challenges related to students, dimension two challenges related to teachers, dimension three challenges related to school resources and administration, and finally dimension four challenges related to parents and local community). The phrases score ranging from 5 = strongly agree (high challenge) to 1= strongly disagree (no challenge), and other phrases' score are falling in between. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of each dimension's phrases were tabulated to determine which phrases have the highest or lowest average; see results in Tables 4.19, 4.20, 4.21, and 4.22.

**Table 4.19** *Descriptive Statistics for the Scale of challenges related to students*

| Statements | | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Students in my school lack awareness about school ECA | N | 35 | 134 | 55 | 67 | 14 | 3.448 | 1.119 | 5 |
| | % | 16.4 | 41.5 | 17 | 20.7 | 4.3 | | | |
| 2. Students in my school lack interest in getting involved in ECA as they are not academically required | N | 49 | 176 | 45 | 42 | 11 | 3.650 | .999 | 3 |
| | % | 15.2 | 54.5 | 13.9 | 13 | 3.4 | | | |
| 3. Students in my school are reluctant to get involved in ECA believing that they impact negatively on their academic performance | N | 25 | 121 | 96 | 63 | 18 | 3.222 | 1.027 | 6 |
| | % | 7.7 | 37.5 | 29.7 | 19.5 | 5.6 | | | |
| 4. Having to provide different variety of ECA to meet students' preferences makes it difficult to school to provide them | N | 65 | 111 | 95 | 38 | 14 | 3.541 | 1.072 | 4 |
| | % | 20.1 | 34.4 | 29.4 | 11.8 | 4.3 | | | |
| 5. Students in my school lack the skills that allow them to participate in certain ECA | N | 26 | 62 | 75 | 142 | 18 | 2.801 | 1.068 | 10 |
| | % | 8 | 19.2 | 23.2 | 44 | 5.6 | | | |
| 6. Students in my school avoid participating in ECA because of their personal dispositions and introverted personality | N | 32 | 76 | 109 | 96 | 10 | 3.074 | 1.024 | 8 |
| | % | 9.9 | 23.5 | 33.7 | 29.7 | 3.1 | | | |
| 7. Students in my school lack the ability to choose ECA that are best suited to their preferences and skills | N | 30 | 98 | 58 | 126 | 11 | 3.031 | 1.097 | 9 |
| | % | 9.3 | 30.3 | 18 | 39 | 3.4 | | | |
| 8. Students in my school avoid engaging in ECA believing that engagement is a waste of time and it interferes with their priorities | N | 29 | 84 | 112 | 85 | 13 | 3.096 | 1.018 | 7 |
| | % | 9 | 26 | 34.7 | 26.3 | 4 | | | |
| 9. Students in my school lack the motivation to engage in ECA as they are not counted in student' academic progress report | N | 69 | 159 | 42 | 46 | 8 | 3.721 | 1.028 | 2 |
| | % | 21.1 | 49.2 | 13 | 14.2 | 2.5 | | | |
| 10. The type of ECA that my students want to participate in is not on offer in school | N | 86 | 109 | 93 | 25 | 10 | 3.730 | 1.035 | 1 |
| | % | 26.6 | 33.7 | 28.8 | 7.7 | 3.1 | | | |
| The composite Mean for all the scale* | | | | | | | 3.331 | | |
| Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale | | | | | | | .810 | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [(3.448+ 3.650+ 3.222+ 3.541+ 2.801+ 3.074+ 3.031+ 3.096+ 3.721+ 3.730= 33.314) 33.314/ 10= 3.331]**

Table 4.19 shows descriptive statistics for teachers' responses on the scale of challenges related to students. Teachers have rated several challenges encountered by them with regard to students during the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan". The summarised results indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 10: *The type of ECA that my students want to participate in is not on offer in school* (M = 3.730, SD =1.035). In other words, this is

the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. Followed by the phrase number 9: *Students in my school lack the motivation to engage in ECA as they are not counted in student's academic progress report* (M = 3.721, SD =1.028). The lowest average is awarded to the phrase number 5: *Students in my school lack the skills that allow them to participate in certain ECA with* (M =2.801, SD =1.068), this statement also has the highest standard deviation, indicating that there is more diversity of opinion than for other statements. The second to lowest is phrase number 7: *Students in my school lack the ability to choose ECA that are best suited to their preferences and skills* (M =3.031, SD =1.097). The composite Mean for the scale is (M =3.331), which indicates that the trend of teachers' responses on dimension one (the challenges related to students) tends to be "neutral" since the Mean 3.3319 of the entire dimension lies in the interval (2.60-3.40) according to the 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 4.20**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of challenges related to teachers*

| Statements | | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. I have excessive workload which prevent me to lead ECA in my school | N | 174 | 107 | 23 | 15 | 4 | 4.337 | .892 | 1 |
| | % | 53.9 | 33.1 | 7.1 | 4.6 | 1.2 | | | |
| 12. I have never been provided with training opportunities/ workshops that equip me with the ability to lead ECA in my school | N | 74 | 186 | 37 | 18 | 8 | 3.928 | .887 | 2 |
| | % | 22.9 | 57.6 | 11.5 | 5.6 | 2.5 | | | |
| 13. I am reluctant to do work (such as leading ECA) for which I receive no incentives | N | 93 | 96 | 87 | 36 | 11 | 3.693 | 1.104 | 3 |
| | % | 28.8 | 29.7 | 26.9 | 11.1 | 3.4 | | | |
| 14. I do not know the appropriate mechanism for organizing ECA in my school | N | 48 | 153 | 70 | 42 | 10 | 3.578 | .994 | 4 |
| | % | 14.9 | 47.4 | 21.7 | 13.0 | 3.1 | | | |
| 15. I am doubtful of the impact of extracurricular activities on students | N | 13 | 25 | 44 | 173 | 68 | 2.201 | .990 | 9 |
| | % | 4.0 | 7.7 | 13.6 | 53.6 | 21.1 | | | |
| 16. I do not want to lead the ECA in my school, because I believe that the ECA are a waste of the school day | N | 20 | 65 | 101 | 105 | 32 | 2.801 | 1.065 | 8 |
| | % | 6.2 | 20.1 | 31.3 | 32.5 | 9.9 | | | |
| 17. I think there is a lack of collaboration between teachers in conducting ECA | N | 54 | 142 | 61 | 54 | 12 | 3.532 | 1.069 | 5 |
| | % | 16.7 | 44.0 | 18.9 | 16.7 | 3.7 | | | |
| 18. Engagement in ECA has been imposed on me with no regards to my opinion | N | 24 | 61 | 116 | 94 | 28 | 2.873 | 1.054 | 7 |
| | % | 7.4 | 18.9 | 35.9 | 29.1 | 8.7 | | | |
| 19. I am reluctant to get involved in organizing ECA because they interrupt the school day | N | 35 | 91 | 99 | 73 | 25 | 3.117 | 1.1139 | 6 |
| | % | 10.8 | 28.2 | 30.7 | 22.6 | 7.7 | | | |
| The composite Mean for the scale* | | | | | | | 3.340 | | |
| Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale | | | | | | | .790 | | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [(4.337+ 3.928+ 3.693+ 3.578+ 2.201+ 2.801+ 3.532+ 2.873+ 3.117= 30.06) 30.06/ 9= 3.340]**

Table 4.20 shows descriptive statistics for teachers' responses on the scale of challenges related to teachers' themselves. Teachers have rated several challenges related to them during the implementation of the ECA "One Hour Activity Plan". The summarised results presented in the table above indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 11: *I have excessive workload, which prevents me from leading ECA in my school* (M =4.337, SD =.892). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. Followed by the phrase number 12: *I have never been provided with training opportunities or workshops that equip me with the ability to lead ECA in my school* (M =3.928, SD =.887). The lowest average is awarded to phrase number 15: *I am doubtful of the impact of extracurricular activities on*

*students* (M=2.201, SD=.990). The second to the lowest is phrase number 16: *I do not want to lead the ECA in my school because I believe that the ECA are a waste of the school day* (M =2.801, SD1.065). The composite Mean for the scale is (M =3.340) which indicates that the trend of teachers' responses to dimension two (the challenges related to teachers themselves in implementing "One Hour Activity Plan") tends to be "neutral" since the Mean of the scale lies in the interval (2.60 - 3.40) according to the 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 4.21**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of challenges related to school resources and administration*

| Statements | | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20. There is a shortage of teachers in my school | N | 86 | 83 | 100 | 47 | 7 | 3.600 | 1.094 | 8 |
| | % | 25.7 | 25.7 | 31.0 | 14.6 | 2.2 | | | |
| 21. Unavailability of a step-by-step guideline for implementing ECA in my school | N | 79 | 195 | 28 | 18 | 3 | 4.018 | .799 | 6 |
| | % | 24.5 | 60.4 | 8.7 | 5.6 | .9 | | | |
| 22. Lack of enough time to conduct ECA during the school day | N | 146 | 96 | 37 | 41 | 3 | 4.055 | 1.076 | 4 |
| | % | 45.2 | 29.7 | 11.5 | 12.7 | .9 | | | |
| 23. School administration in my school is more invested in the academic aspect of schooling rather than ECA | N | 32 | 60 | 150 | 76 | 5 | 3.117 | .931 | 11 |
| | % | 9.9 | 18.6 | 46.4 | 23.5 | 1.5 | | | |
| 24. Unavailability of specialized school clubs or groups that organize and set up ECA (e.g. sports club, arts clubs, STEM club, etc.) | N | 61 | 114 | 58 | 80 | 10 | 3.421 | 1.143 | 10 |
| | % | 18.9 | 35.3 | 18.0 | 24.8 | 3.1 | | | |
| 25. School administration in my school is reluctant to incorporate / implement ECA as it interferes with the learning process | N | 30 | 90 | 107 | 76 | 20 | 3.105 | 1.060 | 12 |
| | % | 9.3 | 27.9 | 33.1 | 23.5 | 6.2 | | | |
| 26. School administration in my school is reluctant to implement ECA out of concern for school facilities getting damaged | N | 13 | 41 | 114 | 119 | 36 | 2.616 | .978 | 13 |
| | % | 4.0 | 12.7 | 35.3 | 36.8 | 11.1 | | | |
| 27. Lack of appropriate facilities in my school (e.g. halls, fields, etc.) to conduct extracurricular activities | N | 124 | 114 | 28 | 43 | 14 | 3.900 | 1.177 | 7 |
| | % | 38.4 | 35.3 | 8.7 | 13.3 | 4.3 | | | |
| 28. Budget allocated for extracurricular activities in my school is insufficient | N | 191 | 84 | 35 | 11 | 2 | 4.396 | .858 | 1 |
| | % | 59.1 | 26.0 | 10.8 | 3.4 | .6 | | | |
| 29. Increase of the student population in my school | N | 144 | 93 | 48 | 31 | 7 | 4.040 | 1.084 | 5 |
| | % | 44.6 | 28.8 | 14.9 | 9.6 | 2.2 | | | |
| 30. Lack of the appropriate equipment and resources needed for ECA such as sports art tools, music instruments, etc. | N | 199 | 64 | 34 | 20 | 6 | 4.331 | 1.014 | 2 |
| | % | 61.6 | 19.8 | 10.5 | 6.2 | 1.9 | | | |
| 31. My school's facilities are not adequate for implementing ECA (e.g. old school building or rented.) | N | 90 | 82 | 65 | 69 | 17 | 3.492 | 1.247 | 9 |
| | % | 27.9 | 25.4 | 20.1 | 21.4 | 5.3 | | | |
| 32. No school coach available for school trips and visits (e.g. visits to museums, sports and science centres) | N | 152 | 106 | 40 | 20 | 5 | 4.176 | .976 | 3 |
| | % | 47.1 | 32.8 | 12.4 | 6.2 | 1.5 | | | |
| The composite Mean for the scale* | | | | | | | | 3.713 | |
| Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale | | | | | | | | .755 | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [(3.600+ 4.018+ 4.055+ 3.117+ 3.421+ 3.105+ 2.616+ 3.900+ 4.396+ 4.040+ 4.331+ 3.492+ 4.176= 48.267) 48.267/ 13= 3.713]**

Table 4.21 shows descriptive statistics for teachers' responses on the scale of challenges related to school resources and administration. Teachers have rated several challenges they encountered during the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan. The summarised results presented in the table above indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 28: *Budget allocated for extracurricular activities in my school is insufficient* (M =4.396, SD =.858). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. Followed by the phrase number 30: *Lack of the appropriate equipment and resources needed for ECA such as sport-art tools, music instruments, etc.* (M =4.331, SD =1.014). The lowest average is awarded to the phrase number 26: *School administration in my school is reluctant to implement ECA out of concern for school facilities getting damaged* (M=2.616, SD=.978). The second to the lowest is phrase number 25: *School administration in my school is reluctant to incorporate or implement ECA as it interferes with the learning process* (M= 3.105, SD=.978). The composite Mean for the scale is (M=3.713) which indicates that the trend of teachers' responses to dimension three (the challenges related to school resources and administration) tends to be "agree" since the Mean 3.713 of the scale lies in the interval (3.40-4.20) according to the 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 4.22**

*Descriptive statistics for the scale of challenges related to parents and local community*

| Questions | | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33. There is a lack of partnership between parents and the school in choosing ECA that are best suited to the students | N | 57 | 85 | 95 | 80 | 6 | 3.331 | 1.088 | 5 |
| | % | 17.6 | 26.3 | 29.4 | 24.8 | 1.9 | | | |
| 34. Some parents believe that involvement in ECA drains their children physically | N | 21 | 92 | 109 | 90 | 11 | 3.068 | .978 | 8 |
| | % | 6.5 | 28.5 | 33.7 | 27.9 | 3.4 | | | |
| 35. Some parents believe that involvement in ECA drains their children mentally | N | 16 | 59 | 129 | 103 | 16 | 2.863 | .939 | 9 |
| | % | 5.0 | 18.3 | 39.9 | 31.9 | 5.0 | | | |
| 36. Some parents believe that taking part in ECA affects their children's academic performance negatively | N | 37 | 149 | 96 | 31 | 10 | 3.532 | .926 | 4 |
| | % | 11.5 | 46.1 | 29.7 | 9.6 | 3.1 | | | |
| 37. Some Parents believe that a student's task in school is only to obtain knowledge | N | 47 | 72 | 134 | 61 | 9 | 3.269 | 1.017 | 6 |
| | % | 14.6 | 22.3 | 41.5 | 18.9 | 2.8 | | | |
| 38. Parents in financial difficulties are unable to meet the expenses of their children's participation in certain extracurricular activities | N | 58 | 62 | 77 | 119 | 7 | 3.139 | 1.161 | 7 |
| | % | 18.0 | 19.2 | 23.8 | 36.8 | 2.2 | | | |
| 39. There is a lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECA in schools | N | 118 | 153 | 39 | 9 | 4 | 4.151 | .829 | 1 |
| | % | 36.5 | 47.4 | 12.1 | 2.8 | 1.2 | | | |
| 40. There is a lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in extracurricular activities | N | 57 | 149 | 98 | 15 | 4 | 3.743 | .844 | 3 |
| | % | 17.6 | 46.1 | 30.3 | 4.6 | 1.2 | | | |
| 41. There is a difficulty in attracting members of local community to be volunteers in organising ECA in schools | N | 114 | 132 | 65 | 6 | 6 | 4.058 | .8914 | 2 |
| | % | 35.3 | 40.9 | 20.1 | 1.9 | 1.9 | | | |
| The composite Mean for the scale* | | | | | | | | 3.461 | |
| Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale | | | | | | | | .781 | |

***This composite mean is calculated by adding the means of all the scale items together and then the derived sum is divided by the total number of questions: [(3.331+ 3.068+ 2.863+ 3.532+ 3.269+ 3.139+ 4.151+ 3.743+ 4.058= 31.154) 31.154/9= 3.461]**

Table 4.22 shows descriptive statistics for teachers' responses on the scale of challenges related to parents and local community. Teachers have rated several challenges they encountered during the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan. The summarised results presented in the table indicate that the highest average is awarded to the phrase number 39: *There is a lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECA in schools* (M =

4.151, SD =.829). In other words, this is the statement with which they most agreed, as a cohort. This question also has the smallest standard deviation, indicating that there is less diversity of opinion than for other questions. Followed by the phrase number 41: *There is a difficulty in attracting members of local community to be volunteers in organising ECA in schools* (M =4.058, SD =.891). The lowest average is awarded to the phrase number 35: *Some parents believe that involvement in ECA drains their children mentally* (M = 2.863, SD =.939), The second to lowest is phrase number 34: *Some parents believe that involvement in ECA drains their children physically* (M =3.068, SD = .978). The composite Mean for the scale is (M =3.461) which indicates that the trend of teachers' responses to dimension four (the challenges related to parents and local community) tends to be "agree" since the Mean of the entire scale lies in the interval (3.40 - 4.20) according to the 5-point Likert.

**The inferential results of the teachers' survey data**

The second analysis performed on the teachers' survey data applied inferential statistics to answer research question 1: *What challenges do teachers report encountering in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan"?*. Firstly, One Way ANOVA is performed to identify any significant differences between teachers' responses on their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" based on teachers' experience of teaching, teachers' position in schools and the type of activities teachers are responsible for. The following hypotheses were tested:

H1. There is a statistically significant difference between teachers in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" according to their teaching experience.

H2. There is a statistically significant difference between teachers in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" according to their position in school.

H3. There is a statistically significant difference between teachers in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" according to their type of activity they are responsible for.

Secondly, an Independent Samples t-test is performed to identify any significant differences between teachers on their reported challenges based on whether they are involved in organising the program of "One Hour Activity Plan" or not. The following hypothesis was tested:

H4. There is a statistically significant difference between teachers in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" according to their organisation role in "One Hour Activity Plan".

**Differences between teachers in their reported challenges according to the teaching experience**

The One Way ANOVA is performed to identify any significant differences between teachers' responses on their reported challenges encountering in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan". Teachers are divided into three groups based on the teaching experience (group1: less than 5 years' experience, group 2: from 5 to 10 years' experience, group 3: more than 10 years' experience). The ANOVA results presented in Table 4.23, indicate there is no statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the three groups in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan".

**Table 4.23**

*One-Way ANOVA Test for differences between groups in their reported challenges according to the teaching experience*

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable of Challenges Related to Students | Between Groups | .235 | 2 | .118 | .288 | .750 |
| | Within Groups | 130.746 | 320 | .409 | | |
| | Total | 130.982 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Teachers | Between Groups | 1.100 | 2 | .550 | 1.415 | .244 |
| | Within Groups | 124.377 | 320 | .389 | | |
| | Total | 125.477 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to School Resources and Administration | Between Groups | .386 | 2 | .193 | .699 | .498 |
| | Within Groups | 88.253 | 320 | .276 | | |
| | Total | 88.639 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Parents and Local Community | Between Groups | .509 | 2 | .254 | .744 | .476 |
| | Within Groups | 109.404 | 320 | .342 | | |
| | Total | 109.913 | 322 | | | |

**Differences between teachers in their reported challenges according to position in schools.**

The One Way ANOVA is performed to identify any significant differences between teachers' responses on their reported challenges encountering in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan". Teachers are divided into three groups based on their position in school (group1: headteachers' group 2: teachers, group 3: ECA supervisors). The ANOVA results presented in the blow Table 4.24, indicate there is no statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the three groups in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan".

**Table 4.24**

*One-Way ANOVA Test for differences between groups in their reported challenges according to the school position*

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable of Challenges Related to Students | Between Groups | .516 | 2 | .258 | .633 | .532 |
| | Within Groups | 130.466 | 320 | .408 | | |
| | Total | 130.982 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Teachers | Between Groups | 1.288 | 2 | .644 | 1.659 | .192 |
| | Within Groups | 124.189 | 320 | .388 | | |
| | Total | 125.477 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to School Resources and Administration | Between Groups | .686 | 2 | .343 | 1.247 | .289 |
| | Within Groups | 87.954 | 320 | .275 | | |
| | Total | 88.639 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Parents and Local Community | Between Groups | .734 | 2 | .367 | 1.076 | .342 |
| | Within Groups | 109.179 | 320 | .341 | | |
| | Total | 109.913 | 322 | | | |

**Differences between teachers in their reported challenges according to the type of activities they are responsible for**

The One Way ANOVA is performed to identify any significant differences between teachers' responses on their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan". Teachers are divided into four groups based on the type of activities they are responsible for (group1: sport activity, group 2: art and culture activity, group 3: science activity, group 4: scout activity). The ANOVA results presented in Table 4.25, indicate there

is no statistical difference ($p < 0.05$) between the four groups in their reported challenges encountered in the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan".

**Table 4.25**

*One-Way ANOVA Test for the differences between groups in their reported challenges according to the type of the activities they are responsible for*

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable of Challenges Related to Students | Between Groups | 1.104 | 3 | .368 | .904 | .439 |
| | Within Groups | 129.877 | 319 | .407 | | |
| | Total | 130.982 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Teachers | Between Groups | .807 | 3 | .269 | .688 | .560 |
| | Within Groups | 124.670 | 319 | .391 | | |
| | Total | 125.477 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to School Resources and Administration | Between Groups | .288 | 3 | .096 | .347 | .791 |
| | Within Groups | 88.351 | 319 | .277 | | |
| | Total | 88.639 | 322 | | | |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Parents and Local Community | Between Groups | .232 | 3 | .077 | .225 | .879 |
| | Within Groups | 109.681 | 319 | .344 | | |
| | Total | 109.913 | 322 | | | |

**Independent Samples t-test result.**

The Independent Samples t-test is performed to identify any significant differences between teachers on their reported challenges in dimensions one to four (challenges related to students, challenges related to teachers, challenges related to school resources and administration, and challenges related to parents and local community) that are encountered in implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan". Teachers are divided into two groups based on whether they are involved in organising the program of the "One Hour Activity Plan" or not (group1: yes, they are involved, group 2: no, they are not involved). Table 4.26, shows a summary obtained from the independent Samples t-test output results, and any significant results with value $p< 0.05$ level are marked with a star. The Independent Samples results indicate that the Mean of challenges related to teachers differs between group 1 with ($M = 3.3213$, $SD = .62348$, $n = 286$) and group 2 with ($M = 3.3836$, $SD = .70731$, $n = 55$) at the .05 level of significance ($t = -3.026$, $df = 321$, $p< .003$). On the other hand, the results show that the challenges related to students, challenges related to school resources and administration and the challenges related to parents and local community do not significantly differ between the two groups

**Table 4.26**

*Independent Samples Test for the differences between groups in their reported challenges according to their role in organising the "One Hour Activity Plan"*

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Students | Equal variances assumed | 1.235 | .267 | -.660 | 321 | .510 | -.06237 | .09450 | -.24828 | .12354 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.607 | 72.223 | .546 | -.06237 | .10270 | -.26708 | .14234 |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Teachers | Equal variances assumed | 3.679 | .056 | -3.026 | 321 | .003 | -.27616 | .09126 | -.45571 | -.09662 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.736 | 71.216 | .008 | -.27616 | .10095 | -.47745 | -.07488 |
| Variable of Challenges Related to School Resources and Administration | Equal variances assumed | .079 | .778 | -.607 | 321 | .544 | -.04722 | .07774 | -.20017 | .10573 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.641 | 82.278 | .523 | -.04722 | .07366 | -.19375 | .09930 |
| Variable of Challenges Related to Parents and Local Community | Equal variances assumed | 2.676 | .103 | -1.447 | 321 | .149 | -.12494 | .08634 | -.29481 | .04492 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.324 | 71.889 | .190 | -.12494 | .09438 | -.31309 | .06320 |

## 4.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

This section presents the analysis of the qualitative data gathered through teacher and student interviews. All the transcripts of the teachers and students' interviews were coded manually and thematically analysed using a deductive approach as shown in the methodology's chapter section 3.8.2.

### 4.2.1 Analysing and presenting students' interviews data

There were twelve secondary school students who agreed to take part in four focus group interviews. All of them had participated in school extracurricular activities. The participants were asked to respond to questions aimed at exploring their personal experiences in relation to participation in school extracurricular activities and its impact (if any) on students' personal and social skills and their sense of belonging to school. All the focus group interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then thematically analysed using the deductive approach. The approach of deductively analysing the data tends to be more top-down, which means the researcher applies predetermined theoretical concepts to the data as organisational tools for grouping codes into themes. Here the transcripts of the students' interviews were read and then analysed deductively by assigning codes to transcribed text. Then the codes were grouped into key areas driven by knowledge from the literature and the researcher's theoretical interests. In this regard, Hansen and Larson (2005) identified eight key areas where extracurricular activities influence adolescent personal and social development: 1) initiative skills (goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management); 2) teamwork and social skills (feedback, leadership, responsibility, group process skills); 3) positive relationship skills (diverse peer relationships and prosocial norms); 4) basic skills (emotional regulation, cognitive skills); 5) identity skills (identity exploration and reflection); 6) social linkages (linkages to family, school and community); 7) negative experiences of participation; and 8) barriers and facilitators to participation in ECAs. These are discussed below in the order of most to least frequently mentioned by the participants. To illustrate students' views on whether and how ECAs can support their development, some students' stories are presented and discussed, in addition to the thematic analyses.

**The first key area** to be identified is initiative skills (goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management), which were often mentioned when the students discussed their developmental experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. Initiative skills were perceived as the most outcomes of extracurricular participation and they were

mentioned 25 times by the participant students during the focus group interviews. When I asked the interviewed students if they agree or not, that school extracurricular activities can help young people in developing the following skills: goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management, they appeared to be excited to share their experiences of how they develop these skills through their involvement in school extracurricular activities. For example, one of the participants included in his story of participation in school theatre the following words:

> *Yes, I agree with them. Among some of the activities that require continuous practice, training, and determination from the students is doing some theatrical performances particularly plays related to national occasions. For example, sometimes we are asked to perform a play and it must be done within a week, this force us to set timetable plan for practice. And so, we must adhere to it for the final theatre show appear wonderful. But performing without planning or any prior training, surely our performance will be disorganized, and we will appear inappropriately on stage.*

In this story, the student motioned that they were asked to perform a play related to one of the national occasions and it should be done in a particular time, and because they have limited time they agreed to create a time plan and put their best effort doing practising to make a good theater show. This story can tell how participating in the school theatre offers experiences that could help students to develop the skills of directing their effort and managing their time, which are identified under the theme of initiative.

For some, taking part in school extracurricular activities were highlighted as transformative life-experience and attractive opportunity to learn skills such as setting goals and solving problems. For example, one participant mentioned that:

> *In school cycling activity I found it enjoyable and effective in reducing weight gain. Previously, I found other sports boring, but I found cycling more enjoyable. With the help of the activity's leader, I developed a strict cycling schedule to achieve my goals. Within three months of continuous training, I was able to achieve my weight loss and fitness goals.*

This story also highlights the importance of offering students with a variety of activities to meet their preferences and developmental needs. Students' responses about initiative skills (goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management skills), are tabulated below, in Table 4.27.

**Table 4.27** *A list of student statements coded under the theme of initiative skills*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| **Goal Setting** | • My participation in the school cycling activity helped me greatly, how to set and achieve my own goals to solve a problem that I suffer from.<br>• I developed a plan that included a strict cycling schedule to lose weight and get fit.<br>• But performing without planning or any prior training, surly our performance will be disorganized. |
| **Effort** | • But after a period of time and with repeated participation, I became bolder.<br>• Among some of the activities that require continuous practice, training, and determination from the students is doing some theatrical performances.<br>• We made a great effort to serve pilgrims |
| **Problem solving** | • To solve those problems, we suggested that.<br>• But with the psychological support from the activity supervisor, I have overcome this problem.<br>• That help students to know how to plan, collaborate, and resolve conflicts collectively.<br>• Through my experience in the Small Seller Program, I learned how to solve problems. |
| **Time management** | • That helped me to learn how to be persistent and organized in my time.<br>• Every day I allocated a certain time for memorizing until I was able to participate in that competition.<br>• This force us to set timetable plan for practice.<br>• This activity taught me how to manage my time effectively. |

**The second key area**, teamwork and social skills (feedback, leadership, responsibility, group process skills) was identified as the students discussed their developmental experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. This key area mentioned almost 20 times by the interviewed students, meaning that this is the second important social outcome of ECAs participation from the students' perspective. For example, one of the participants included in his story how taking part in the school newspaper's activity helped him to experience and develop the skills of taking responsibility and working in team:

> *Through my participation in the school newspaper's activity, I practiced the skill of planning, taking responsibility and teamwork, in that we used to meet each other at the beginning of each term in school library to plan the school newspaper in terms of its scientific and literary content. We also used to distribute tasks between us, for example, students who have experience in using computers are responsible for designing the school newspaper, while other students are responsible for photographing events and activities that take place inside or outside the school, collecting school news and writing the content of the school newspaper.*

In this story the student explains that their group process skills such as collaboration were enhanced by working as part of a team in the activity of school newspaper. This story highlights the potential value of providing students with well-designed activities that aim to enhance students' social skills.

Some students also talked about the skills of leadership and responsibility, which they were able to acquire and develop through the extracurricular activities they took part in. For example, one participant shared:

> *Because I usually present in school radio, I became the leader of this activity and responsible for organizing it on daily basis with my friends, working as a leader of the school radio made me responsible for distributing tasks among students based on their experiences and their preferences of topics. Working as leader also taught me how it is important is building a good relationship with my friends to make our work successful.*

The student explains how active participation in school radio activity has influenced his leadership and responsibility skills in the long term. This story emphasises that engaging in activities more frequently and for longer durations would result in more significant consequences for students' social development. Students' responses about teamwork and social

skills: (feedback, leadership, responsibility, group process skills) are tabulated below, in Table 4.28.

**Table 4.28**

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of teamwork and social skills*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| **Group process skills** | • I learn some skills such a working in team and determination.<br>• This way of working helped me to understand the nature of teamwork and how to be an effective member in my working group.<br>• during football match you should adhere to your team rules and forget the problems that.<br>• As a group, we search about the causes of this issue and then propose solutions for it. working in groups helped me to know the importance of teamwork, sharing responsibility with others, and being a positive member of your group. |
| **Leadership** | • I became the leader of this activity and responsible for organizing it.<br>• working as leader also teach me how it is important is building a good relationship with my friends to make our work successful.<br>• I became the member whom the activity leader relies on to take over my group in terms of siting plans, distributing the tasks between us and so on.<br>• being leader means that you must be considerate with your group, good listener to their opinions and willing to take the responsibly. |
| **Responsibility** | • students who have experience in using computers are responsible for designing the school newspaper.<br>• This also helped me to develop the sense of responsibility.<br>• we will be responsible for that in the end.<br>• I practiced the skill of planning and taking responsibility. |
| **Feedback** | • one of the things I learned from this activity is being leader means that you must be considerate with your group, good listener to their opinions and willing to take the responsibly for your group. |

**The third key area** is positive relationship skills (diverse peer relationships and prosocial norms) which was recognised as the students discussed their developmental experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. This key area was mentioned 15 times during the interviews with students, meaning that this them is the third social outcome of ECAs participation from the students' perspective. For example, one of the students included in his story of participation the following words which were identified as falling under this key area:

> *School extracurricular activities have more freedom than the activities that are performed in the classroom… This freedom makes it easier for students to be more interactive and closer to each other… during the time of ECA activities there is plenty of time to share your information and thoughts with other students about a particular issue… This will certainly help you to understand and accept the others' values and culture values.*

The above story shows that extracurricular activities can offer a flexible environment in which students can have more time to interact with and create relationships with peers outside the classroom setting that tend to be more academic and less fun. The story also reveals that students not only increased their social interactions but also developed deep understanding of their peers' thoughts, culture, and values. Students' responses about positive relationship skills: (diverse peer relationships and prosocial norms) are tabulated below, in Table 4.29.

**Table 4.29**

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of Positive relationship skills*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| **Diverse peer relationships** | • The school trips and visits to museums or other places helped me to build good relationships with students from other classes.<br>• I built relation with a group of students from other classes.<br>• I built a network of friends, some of them from my schools and other than my school, being connected with them helps me to be more social and positive in my life. |
| **Prosocial norms** | • This will certainly help you to understand and accept the others culture.<br>• But there are some situations require you to show your colleagues that you're grateful to have them on your activity.<br>• Helping students to find the materials they look for.<br>• I always explained to him these difficult lessons. |

**The fourth key area** is basic skills: (emotional regulation, cognitive skills) which was identified as the students discussed their developmental experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, one of the interviewed students included in his story of participation in the school ECA the following words, which were identified as falling under this key area:

> *Being a member of school media club helped me to overcome the fear of speaking to audiences and developed my public speaking skills. In the past, I used to be nervous when I spoke in front of people. But with more participation in that club, I became confident when I talked with people and able to deliver the appropriate sentences and words.*

The student identified public speech anxiety as a challenge, but he felt that his emotional and communication skills were significantly developed because of his constant participation in school media club. Another student shared the same experience of how he had built his self-confidence through school theatre*:*

> *I am one of those students who have the dread of standing up and speaking in front of others; especially when I was in middle school, I always refused to participate in*

*students talk program during morning assembly. But the fear's intensity has become less since I began to participate in school theatre program with a group of students from different classes. At first, I used to perform simple theatrical roles, for example, repeating some words or literary texts such as poetry during the theatrical performance, but after a period I started impersonating various characters in some drama plays as this helped me to express my personality freely and break the fear barrier of talking in front of people.*

The results from the above stories highlight the importance of considering the factor of consistent participation in school extracurricular activities as a contributor to long-term positive change in students' emotional regulation skills such as building one's self-confidence. Students' responses about basic skills: (emotional regulation, cognitive skills) are tabulated below, Table in 4.30.

**Table 4.30**

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of basic skills*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| **Emotional regulation skills** | • Build my confidence and speak without hesitation in public.<br>• But the fear' intensity has become less when I began to participate theatre program.<br>• The unnoticeable things are increasing the confidence in myself, improving the way I talk to people and becoming more informed culturally and scientifically.<br>• I learned how to how to control my nerves and calm my temper.<br>• I gained many experiences such as how to control myself in difficult situation. |
| **Cognitive skills** | • Which reflected positively on my literacy skills such as reading and speaking skills.<br>• This developed my skill in terms of communicating with people, understanding their way of thinking.<br>• We asked to do works such as designing logo, picture and doing video montage. |

**The fifth key area** is identity skills (exploration and reflection in relation to one's own identity), which was identified as the students discussed their developmental experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, a participant included in his story of participation the following words, which were identified as falling under this key area: "*These activities are also a good way for students to discover their hidden talents…. the various activities provided by the school helped me to discover myself"*. This result highlights the importance of offering students a variety of different ECA activities without limiting the ECA provision to specific activities, as expanding the provision of extracurricular activities

can provide a platform for students to explore their passions and interests that is not offered during classrooms. It is noteworthy that identity skills are the least frequently mentioned by the interviewees, with only eight comments coded to this theme. Students' responses about identity skills (identity exploration and reflection) are tabulated below, in Table 4.31.

**Table 4.31**

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of identity skills*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| **Identity exploration** | • The various ECA activities provided by the school helped me to discover myself.<br>• These activities also are a good way for students to discover their hidden talents.<br>• They can help students to understand themselves, discover their country and culture.<br>• Participating in school ECA activities opens a door for student to discover new things. |
| **Identity reflection** | • I consider it as a unique experience in my life.<br>• This helped me to express my personality freely. |

**The sixth key area** is social linkages (linkages to teachers and school), which was pointed out as the students discussed their experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, one of the students included in his story of participation the following words which were identified as falling under this key area:

> *ECA activities make the school closer to students because they create a parental atmosphere. For example, teachers in the classroom give you educational content because their time is limited. While in the ECA activities, there is a great opportunity for students to get along with teachers and gain benefit from their life experiences that would be useful for students' life matters.*

This story highlights the importance of having social linkages with other adults in students' lives, beyond their parents and families. In this story teachers-students' relationship during the ECAs were viewed as an asset that is vital for a student's development personal life. From different perspectives, one interviewed student specifically noted how important school extracurricular activities have been in influencing students' social bonding to school, according to his experience in ECAs:

> *School environment is mostly boring, but certainly the ECA activities have a big role to make its environment more enjoyable and attractive… imagine you are sitting in your class from the start of the school day until home time… this will make you feel*

*bored and distracted from the lessons given to you, unlike when there are some activities in which you enjoy participation in with colleagues who have the same interests.*

Students' responses about social linkages (linkages to family, school, and community) are tabulated below, in Table 4.32.

***Table 4.32***

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of social linkages*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| **Students' social linkages to school** | • Social activities make the school atmosphere more fun and break down the psychological barriers between teachers and students.<br>• Such activities break the routine of the school day and give you refreshing to carry the rest of the school day.<br>• ECA activities make the school closer to students because they create a parental atmosphere.<br>• That make the school day more exciting.<br>• |
| **Social linkage to teachers** | • participation in ECA activities has a major role in strengthening students' relationship with teachers and creating a comfortable school environment.<br>• This helps students to know more about the personalities of their teacher.<br>• Participation in these activities helped me to be respected in my school and build good relationships with teachers and students. |
| **Social linkage to students' community** | • This activity raised my social awareness on the major challenges faced our community and encouraged me to do my best to protect my community and make it better. |

**The seventh key area** is negative experiences of participation, which was recognised as the students discussed their experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, one of the students mentioned that he got exposed to bullying because of participation in ECAs: "*one of the negative experiences that occurred to me was being bullied by some students who did not have a goal for participation, I think they were jealous of me because I have had active role in that activity"*. One possible explanation for this story is jealousy among peers. The student describes himself as a popular member in the activity he involves in, this popularity has triggered the feelings of jealousy from other students, by whom he eventually ends up being verbally bullied. Being bullied because of peer jealousy in ECAs is the most negative experience students have faced in ECAs and it was mentioned more than three times during the interviews.

Another negative experience shared by students is being forced to participate in more than one activity. For example, one student shared the following experience: "*sometimes we are asked to participate in more than one activity, and the larger the number of participations in the ECA*

*activities the more we distract from our study, and that will have negative affect our academic performance"*. The student expressed his concern that over-scheduling in school ECA could impact his academic level. In fact, pushing students to be involved in too many activities is not common practice in Saudi schools, and it was mentioned once during the interviews, but forcible practice like this can not only impact the student's academic performance but it can also impact the student physically and emotionally, which could lead to burn-out. Therefore, balance in ECAs of the student's choice is recommended. Students' responses about the negative experiences of participation are tabulated below, in Table 4.33.

**Table 4.33**

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of negative experiences of participation*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| Being bullied because of peer jealousy | • The negative experiences occurred to me was being bullied by some students who did not have a goal for participating<br>• tart shouting insults at me, and that negative reaction affected me badly<br>• Some students when see you participating in whatever activity he starts to hate you I don't know why. |
| **Over-scheduling in school ECA** | • But some students who participate in sporting activities need constant training and that may affect their academic performance because of their frequent absence from school.<br>• we are asked to participate in more than one activity, and the large number of participations in the ECA activities the more we distract from our study and that will have negative affect our academic performance. |

**The eighth key area** is barriers and facilitators to participation, which was identified as the students discussed their experiences around participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, one of the participants included in his story of participation the following words, which were identified as intrapersonal barrier: *"some of my colleagues do not want to participate in some of the activities provided by the school because these activities are not among their personal interests"*. Students need to be provided with activities that suit their interests as this will act as an intrinsic motivator. Another intrapersonal barrier is academic pressure. Here's what one of the participants said:

> *I think one of the most important reasons for students' reluctance to participate in the activities is the lack* of *rewards such as academic incentives for participation .... other reason is academic stress and feeling anxious about grades...believe me no sane student wants to waste his study time at the expense of participating in activities that count nothing when it comes to his grades.*

It appears that academic anxiety can play an important role in discouraging students from participating in ECAs. From my experience as a teacher, Saudi secondary schools have demanding learning environments due to the abundance of assignments, the wide range of courses that need to be studied and tested, and the pressure from parents for students to achieve to the best of their academic abilities to secure a place in university. The student also discussed some of the incentive ways that may help in encouraging students to participate in ECAs such as academic incentives. For example, one participant shared this suggestion: "*I think no student like to participate in an activity which is not of his personal interest, unless there is an incentive such as grades being counted in his academic progress report"*. Students' responses about barriers and incentives to participation are tabulated below, in Table 4.34.

**Table 4.34**

*A list of student statements coded under the theme of barriers and incentives to participation.*

| Sub-themes | Statements coded under the sub-themes |
|---|---|
| Barriers | • Because these activities are not among their personal interests and there are no academic incentives for participation<br>• Extracurricular activities offered in schools are limited and not counted in the students' academic progress report, so this discourages students to participate.<br>• Some of the activities provided in schools are boring and do not meet the students' personal interests.<br>• I do not want to participate in these activities because they do not suit me. |
| Facilitator | • But there are incentives offered to the participants, such as a thank certificates.<br>• There are no grades are counted to us in the final academic report. |

### 4.2.2 Analysing and presenting teachers' interviews data

The presented findings are constructed from analysing twelve semi-structured interviews conducted separately with twelve secondary school teachers to answer the following question: what strategies do teachers make for overcoming the challenges associated with the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools?. All interviewed teachers are responsible for overseeing the ECAs in their school. During the interviews participants were asked to respond to questions aimed at exploring their personal experiences on challenges for providing extracurricular activities, and how they have overcome them in their schools. All twelve semi-structured interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and then thematically analysed using deductive approach. This analytical approach is particularly useful

when there is a pre-established theoretical model that can be used to understand the data in the context of this model.

In this current study, factors affecting the provision of extracurricular activities in schools can be understood by the model of hierarchical leisure constraints as suggested by Crawford et al., (1991). According to the hierarchical model of leisure constraints there are many factors that affect the provision of school extracurricular activities: (1) structural constraints which are concerned with school facilities and financial resources; (2) intrapersonal constraints which are concerned with teachers, parents, culture and community surrounding school; and (3) interpersonal constraints which are concerned with students. These constraints are commonly conceptualized as intervening factors in the implementation of ECAs in schools. However, Crawford et al. (1991) noted that these constraints are not fixed obstacles and can be overcome when people or organisations that are concerned with providing leisure activities adopt specific strategies and resources. Here the transcripts of the teachers' interviews were read and then analysed deductively by assigning codes to transcription text. The codes were grouped into four themes driven by the hierarchical model of leisure constraints:

1) strategies to deal with challenges related to schools.

2) strategies to deal with challenges related to teachers.

3) strategies to deal with challenges related to parents and the local community.

4) strategies to deal with challenges related to students.

In this analysis, I use tables to display the data analysis in more detail. I started by identifying the analytical starting point which is the challenges associated with the implementation of school extracurricular activities and then I matched strategies to each challenge separately; finally, I give an example of statements coded under each strategy used by the ECAs leaders to overcome the challenges they faced in their schools.

**Theme 1**: strategies to deal with challenges related to schools.

The first theme that was constructed is strategies to deal with the challenge of structural constraints. According to the hierarchical model of leisure constraints, structural constraints in extracurricular activities are resulting from barriers that lie outside of the concerned individual. These barriers often hinder the school's ability to provide the ECAs due to issues like lack of financial resources and facilities, and time constraints. These constraints can prevent students

from taking part in ECAs despite their interest. In this study, structural constraints such as lack of budget, facilities, equipment, time and transportation means are the first-ranked challenges reported by teachers that affect ECAs implementation in Saudi secondary schools. Identifying useful strategies for addressing these structural constraints are crucial for promoting the provision of extracurricular activities in schools.

Lack of budget is the most commonly reported structural barrier schools face when implementing ECAs. During the interviews, ECA leaders addressed the issue of managing the expenses associated with running the ECAs. They point out different strategies that they have devised in order to keep these activities alive and are provided to students at a minimum cost. Here is a quote from one of the interviewed ECA leaders, which explains how his school suffers from a lack of budget to run the ECA, and how they managed to overcome this challenge in his school by collecting financial donations from parents and teachers, according to him:

> *As you know, all government schools are funded by the Ministry of Education. For example, the school's operational budget is 33 thousand riyals per year for a school with 650 students, this amount of money is not enough to cover the school expenses for a year, let alone the operating expenses of these activities. In order to cover this financial deficit, we sometimes contact parents to support the school financially so that we can carry out some activities. Also, sometimes we receive some donations from teachers to sponsor some activities.*

Another ECA leader discussed the idea of carrying out inexpensive ECAs, he stated that: "*as much as possible, I try to provide ECA that are not financially expensive so that the ECA continue to be provided throughout the school year"*. In extreme cases some schools have resorted to limit the provision of ECAs and reduce the number of students, here are some comments from the participants:

> *In fact, we cannot implement the ECA in daily basis because it requires more money and effort. Therefore, we decided to provide them for two days a week.....the higher the number of students, the higher the cost of providing the ECA activities. Therefore, we have no choice rather than reducing the number of participating students.*

It is clear from the above quotes that school financial resources play a substantial role in influencing the quality of implementing ECA, in which schools face lack in their financial resources, they resort to reduce the provision of extracurricular programs in an effort to save money. Indeed, lack of school funds does not mean that these activities should be reduced

entirely. School administrators can establish innovative ideas to retain some funding in extracurricular activities. One of the innovative ideas is using some money from the school's canteen to finance the ECA budget, here is a quote from one of the ECA leaders saying that:

> *In fact, there is no budget allocated for the ECAs, but the school principal has the authority to allocate part of the school budget for the ECAs, but the problem is that it is not enough. This does not mean that we stand idly by, so sometimes we use the financial resources of school cafeteria.*

Based on the examples above, we may infer that the financial aspect influences not only the appearance of these activities in schools, but also their nature and quality. As a result, without enough financial resources, schools will continue to struggle and may be forced to reduce their availability, depriving many students of the developmental chances that these activities may provide. ECA leaders' responses on strategies to deal with the challenge of the lack of budget for running ECAs are quoted in Table 4.35.

**Table 4.35**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to schools (lack of budget for running ECAs)*

| Challenges related to schools | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of budget for running ECA** | Carrying out inexpensive ECA | As much as possible, I try to provide ECA that are not financially expensive so that the ECA continue to be provided throughout the school year. |
| | Reducing students' number | The higher the number of students, the higher the cost of providing the ECA activities. Therefore, we have no choice rather than reducing the number of participating students. |
| | Collecting financial donations from parents and teachers. | To get more funds we sometimes communicate with parents if they are willing to support the school financially so that we can carry out some activities.<br><br>Mostly we receive some funds support from parents who are well financially. Sometimes we receive some donations from teachers for sponsoring some activities such as religious activities.<br><br>Sometimes I also pay from my own account to buy prizes for students who excel in the ECA. |
| | Relying on school' canteen to finance the ECA budget. | Now we rely on school's own resources such as the school' canteen to finance the ECA budget.<br><br>We do not have sufficient financial resources to support the ECA, and most of the financial support comes from the school canteen and teachers' donations. |
| | Limiting ECA provision. | In fact, we cannot implement the ECA daily because it requires more money and effort. Therefore, we decided to provide them for two days a week.<br><br>To be frank, we reduced the number of days of providing the ECA from 5 to 3 days, and we also cancelled some costly ECA. |

The second reported structural barrier that schools face in implementing ECAs is a lack of appropriate facilities, equipment, and tools for running ECAs. The study also shows that the ECA leaders did not stand idly by but rather tried several strategies to overcome that challenge, such as using the facilities of the public sports centres, borrowing equipment from other schools, buying cheap or used equipment and tools, and renting facilities and tools that are not available in schools. Here are some cited responses from ECA leaders during the interviews, detailing how they attempted to overcome the challenge of inadequate school facilities and equipment:

> *Our school lacks a suitable playground, so we occasionally utilize the facilities of the public sports centre. Since we don't have gymnastics tools, we borrow them from other*

*schools. I also rent some tools to carry out cultural activities, such as loudspeakers, lighting tools, and other tools…. Sometimes we buy used equipment and tools, such as table tennis and some art tools for drawing and coloring.*

Schools, being unique spaces where young individuals dedicate significant time to learning and growth, should offer a range of enriching programs and activities that foster their academic, physical, and psychosocial growth. However, it is evident from the experiences of ECA leaders that this ability may be limited for some Saudi secondary schools due to the status of school facilities and equipment. Students in these schools may not fully benefit from the availability of such facilities and equipment, which could hinder their overall development. ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with the challenge of a school's lack of appropriate facilities, equipment, and tools for running ECAs are presented in Table 4.36.

**Table 4.36**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to schools (Lack of appropriate facilities, equipment and tools for running ECAs)*

| **Challenges related to schools** | **Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes).** | **Examples from transcripts** |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of appropriate facilities, equipment and tools for running ECA | Borrowing tools and equipment from other schools. | In our school we do not have gymnastics tools and equipment, so I borrow them from other schools. I Also, rent some tools to carry out cultural activities, such as loudspeakers, lighting tools and other tools. |
| | Buy cheap or used equipment and tools | We try as much as possible to use the tools available in the school to continue providing the ECA. Also, sometimes we get some discount on sports equipment and tools from sports shops in exchange for advertising them inside the school.<br><br>Sometimes we buy used equipment and tools such as table tennis and some art tools for drawing and colouring. |
| | Renting facilities and tools that are not available in schools. | we often rent the equipment and tools needed for carrying out the ECA.<br><br>We do not have a swimming pool in school to practice swimming, so we rent a swimming pool and students want to practice swimming have to pay money for that. |
| | Use the facilities of the public sports centres | there is no suitable playground, so sometimes we use the facilities of the public sports centre.<br><br>In fact, we are lucky, because the Ministry established a club in the school called the Neighbourhood Club, which serves the people of the neighbourhood. This club is fully equipped, and we benefit from its tools and equipment. |

The third reported structural barrier that is faced by schools is lack of transportation, particularly when it comes to school trips or visits. In fact, most of the public schools of boys in Saudi Arabia are not provided with buses like girls' schools. This forced many boys' schools that have limited financial resources to rely on unsafe transportation means such as teachers' cars as a strategy to overcome the challenge of a lack of school buses. One of the participants commented on this issue:

> *Unfortunately, the absence of a school bus is something that will always be an issue for us. We used to be able to hire buses, but things are very tough anymore. The cost of hiring a bus to transport 25 kids has risen to 500 riyals, which is a significant sum that the school cannot afford if there are many trips in a week, as you are aware that transportation rates have climbed. Consequently, we have been forced to cut down on the number of students and rely on teachers' private cars.*

Although the option of using teachers' cars in school trips appears to be a common practice among ECA leaders who were interviewed, it poses risks to the lives of students if an accident occurs. Another disadvantage of this practice is reducing the number of students who want to participate in such trips or activities that are organised outside school. The result suggests that long-term solutions rest in the capacity of the education' ministry to provide schools with buses or any other safe transportation means. Without reliable and affordable ways to transport students, ECAs activities will become less viable. ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with the challenge of lack of transportation means quoted in Table 4.37.

**Table 4.37**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to schools (Lack of school coach available for school trips and visits)*

| Challenges related to schools | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of school coach available for school trips and visits** | Renting a bus | Sometimes we rent a bus to transport students if the visit or trip is useful for students.<br><br>There are some private schools that rent their buses at lower prices than transportation companies.<br><br>There is cooperation between us and the private school near to our school, in which we can use their bus for symbolic price. |
| | Use teachers' cars | If the number of students is few, I use my own cars to transport the students.<br><br>As you know, there is no transportation means for secondary school students, as it is in primary schools. So, if we have a school trip, we should reduce the number of students participating in the trip and then pick them up in our own cars.<br><br>Most of the visits we carry out have a limited number of students so that I can transport them in my own car.<br><br>The school does not have a bus for transportation, so we often rely on our own cars to transport the students. |

Lack of time during the school day is the last documented structural barrier that schools face when implementing ECAs. This barrier has compelled some schools to either provide activities at the end of the school day or restrict their offerings to just two days per week. For example, one interviewed participant noted that:

> *I think that the idea of holding one-hour activity during the middle of the school day is a challenging task due to time limitations. There will be chaos throughout the school day and many issues among students if just one hour is allotted. Nonetheless, we found that after school, children would benefit most from forming clubs based on their interests.*

Another participant commented on this issue: "*In fact, we have suffered from this problem in the past, but in agreement with parents, we have extended the school day for two additional hours during only Wednesday and Thursday, so we can deliver these activities during those days"*. Clearly, some schools are having trouble accommodating such activities throughout the school day due to scheduling conflicts. Students and teachers may experience stress, school expenses may rise, and children may be delayed in returning home if the provision of ECAs is

limited throughout the school day. So, it is best to let schools decide how to implement such activities. ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with the challenge of lack of sufficient time for conducting ECA during the school day are presented in Table 4.38.

**Table 4.38**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to schools (Lack of sufficient time and place for conducting ECA during the school day)*

| **Challenges related to schools** | **Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes).** | **Examples from transcripts** |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of sufficient time for conducting ECA during the school day** | Running ECA clubs and groups at the end of the school day | the most appropriate solution that we have applied is running ECA clubs at the end of the school day.<br><br>The appropriate procedure that I applied is running ECA groups such as a group of sports, scientific, artistic, religious, and cultural ECA.<br><br>dividing the students into small groups based on their inclination, for example the students who want practice theatre they can join drama group and so on. |
| | Take advantage of the break time to carry out some ECA | In agreement with parents, we extended the school day for one additional hour on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday so we can provide more ECA.<br><br>Sometimes, I take advantage of the long break time to carry out some ECA.<br><br>We also extended the break time from 20 to 45 minutes so students can practice their favorite activities. |
| | Extending school day | I often try to find the right time to carry out ECA, for example, during Wednesday and Thursday, we carry out some ECA because the school day ends at one clock PM, so we can extend the school day for another hour to carry out more ECA. |

**Theme 2**: strategies to deal with challenges related to parents and the local community.

The second theme that was constructed is strategies to deal with the challenge of intrapersonal constraints. In the hierarchical model of leisure constraints, interpersonal constraints are defined as resulting from less cooperation from other people or organisations that are surrounding the individual. This theme was constructed as the participants explained their experiences of overcoming the challenge related to parents and the local community, such as lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs, difficulty in attracting parents and members of local community to be volunteers for organising ECA in schools, and lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECAs. Here is a quote from one of the interviewed ECAs leaders, which explains why there is a lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECA and how his school dealt with that, according to the participant:

> *The issue of lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECA is resulting from low levels of parent' engagement with school, some of them have never visit school and see what activities are offered for their children.*

He also provided an example of a strategy to address this challenge, stating:

> *The school plays a significant role in educating parents about these activities through social media channels and through end-of-year parties, where parents are invited to witness their children's achievements in these activities. This makes parents feel proud of what their children have done and motivates them to continue. Therefore, we consistently encourage parents to observe their children's progress in the ECA*.

It is not surprising that inadequate communication between the school and parents can lead to parents becoming less involved in school life, potentially influencing students' participation in ECAs. Therefore, an effective communication with families can make a significant difference to what can be achieved with regards to students' development. ECA leaders' responses on strategies to deal with the challenge of lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECA are quoted in Table 4.39.

**Table 4.39**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to parents and the local community (Lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECA)*

| Challenges related to parents and the local community | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECA** | Building strong personal communication with individual parents | If I see the student has a strong desire to participate in this activity, I communicate with his parent and give him comprehensive details about the activity and the risks associated with participation.<br><br>When I see the student is talented in a particular activity, but his father does not want him to participate, I contact his father and ask them to come to school and understand the reasons.<br><br>I always try to explain to the parents the reasons why the students should participate in ECA and what are the benefits that students will gain from participation.<br><br>We stress on inviting parents to see what their sons are doing in ECA.<br><br>I remember we had a visit to a university, and I distributed participation consent papers to students. One of the students however came to me and said my father refused to agree, I spoke to his father, and I advised him that the visit is important for his son because it helps him learn about university life and the appropriate specialization programs for him. |
| | Giving more details on ECA to parents. | Full datils should be written in parental consent form of ECA participation such as contact numbers, explaining what the ECA activity is about and the name of teacher responsible for the ECA activity, this gives the parents comforts about their son's participation. |
| | Building mutual trust between parents and school | The student' guardian cannot allow his son to participate in the ECA unless he trusts in the academic performance of his son's school, so we have a good reputation with parents, and they trust in all the activities we offer to their children.<br><br>If the guardian trusts in his son school learning environment and activities provided in, he definitely not objects his son participation. |
| | Using school' social media platforms and school parties to highlight students' achievements in ECA | The school has a great role in educating parents about these activities through social media channels as well as through parties that take place at the end of the year in which parents are invited and watch the results of their children in those activities.<br><br>When a student's guardian attends the closing ceremony of ECA and sees his son presenting a poem, doing theatrical performance, or seeing his son is honored because of his achievement ECA, makes him feel proud of what his son has done. |

Another reported intrapersonal challenge that schools face in implementing ECAs is a lack of contribution from institutions in the local community. ECAs leaders shared different effective strategies for engaging local organisations to support schools financially. One of these interesting strategies is building mutually beneficial relationships with private companies. According to one participant:

*The support provided by private companies is very limited and does not live up to our expectations... However, our school is in contact with some companies to be official sponsors for some of the cultural and sports activities held in school. Sometimes we find cooperation and support from them if we advertise for their products in school.*

It is clear that schools that engage effectively with their local organisations are more likely to get better support. ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with the challenge of lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs are quoted in Table 4.40.

**Table 4.40**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to parents and the local community (Lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs)*

| **Challenges related to parents and the local community** | **Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes).** | **Examples from transcripts** |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECA** | Contacting the government organisations | As for the government institutions, there is cooperation from them according to their available capabilities. For example, when there are activities related to awareness campaigns we communicate with the relevant authorities and often receive support from them. |
| | Contacting the private companies | To get support from local community organizations, you should promote your school and asked for support. For example, during the past year, we agreed with one of the famous sport clubs to sponsor some talented students in football and provide them with care in terms of training and transportation cost.<br><br>We are in constant contact with many companies to sponsor some cultural and sports activities that take place in school. |
| | Building a mutually beneficial relationship | Sometimes we get financial support and cooperation from companies if we advertise for them in school.<br><br>Many private and public sector companies have the desire to provide support, but they also need from us highlighting their support in the media<br><br>Near to us is a private school, and we have mutual cooperation in implementing some ECA. |
| | Promoting the concept of social responsibility engagement among private sector institutions toward schools | The problem is that these companies do not have awareness of community partnership. If they had awareness, we would get support from them.<br><br>I personally contacted several companies from the private sector to help in building multi-use hall in school, but unfortunately what we get are unfulfilled promises. Therefore, I hope the Ministry of Education urge private companies to participate in supporting schools. |

**Theme 3**: strategies to deal with challenges related to teachers.

The hierarchical model of leisure constraints defined interpersonal constraints as resulting from less interactions between individuals such as teachers. In this study teachers' reluctance to play a role in ECA is the third-ranked challenge reported by teachers that affect ECAs implementation in schools. In fact, teachers can not be blamed for not being able to interact well with the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs, because there are several barriers that make them unwilling to take a role in organising ECAs in their schools. Among these main barriers identified by the study participants are teachers' workload, teachers' lack of knowledge, teachers' lack of training opportunities for leading ECAs and insufficient collaboration among teachers for carrying out the ECAs.

In this present study, a large number of teachers who participated in the survey indicated that excessive teaching workload is the main barrier that prevents them from leading ECAs; when this result was discussed more with ECA leaders one of them stated: "*Yes, I face difficulty in recruiting teachers to manage ECA activities in the school... most of them apologized because they say we are overwhelmed with teaching duties, and we do not have time to lead extra responsibilities"*. It is clear that Saudi teachers are burdened with teaching obligations which prevent them from taking extra roles such as supervising the ECA in their schools. To facilitate teachers' role in leading school extracurricular activities, the ECAs leaders adopted several strategies. One of the shared strategies used for addressing the challenge of teachers' excessive workload is assigning the tasks of leading ECA to teachers based on their level of teaching responsibilities and using non-teaching staff as ECA organisers. Here are the words of an ECA leader who adopted this strategy:

> *We distribute the tasks of leading these activities fairly among teachers according to their teaching load…for example, the teacher with the less teaching load is given some of the tasks of leading these activities. Also, we sometimes seek help from school staffs who do not have teaching tasks, such as librarian and the school social counsellor to lead these activities.*

ECA leaders' responses on strategies to deal with challenge of teachers' workload are quoted in Table 4.41.

**Table 4.41**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to teachers (teachers' workload)*

| Challenges related to teachers | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Teachers' excessive workload** | Reducing non-teaching tasks for the participating teachers in ECA | To encourage teachers to do more school administration has reduced non-teaching tasks for teachers.<br><br>Giving them some incentives, such as reducing their non-teaching tasks |
| | Reducing teaching tasks for the participating teachers in ECA | All teachers' teaching tasks are reduced so they can have time to lead the ECA clubs.<br><br>Among the incentives is the reduction of their teaching duties. |
| | Assigning the tasks of leading ECA to teachers based on their level of teaching responsibilities. | we fairly distribute the tasks of leading ECA among the teachers according to their teaching shares. For example, teacher with Low teaching shares is given extra tasks of leading ECA.<br><br>The tasks of leading the ECA are distributed equitably among teachers, where each activity has a leader, these teachers are exempted from some non-teaching tasks such as the daily supervision of break time and students enter and exit.<br><br>Teachers who have less teaching responsibilities are asked to lead some ECA activities according to their inclinations.<br><br>The task of leading ECA groups is often assigned to teachers who have less teaching shares.<br><br>Our policy depends on distributing the tasks of leading ECA to the willing teachers who have less teaching tasks. |
| | Using non-teaching staff as ECA leaders | Sometimes the tasks of leading ECA are assigned to some school staff who do not have teaching tasks, such as the librarian and school psychology adviser. |

The second most identified barrier that may prevent Saudi teachers from leading roles in ECAs is teachers' lack of knowledge, skills, and training opportunities for leading ECAs. When this result was investigated more through interviewing the ECAs leaders, they mainly attributed it to the poor role of ECAs leaders. One ECA leader who was interviewed best summarised this idea in his comments:

> *Training opportunities exist for teachers who want to lead school extracurricular activities, but it is possible that some teachers do not know about them because of the ECA leaders' negligence of their role to update teachers about these training opportunities. In fact, teachers who wish to participate in organizing activities are not*

*required to attend courses on how to manage and lead activities, because this is the role of the activity leader, he is responsible of distributing the tasks of leading activities among teachers based on their skills…for example, if a teacher approaches me and says that he wants to lead a certain activity, first I evaluate him to see whether he is suitable to lead that activity or not. If I feel he has the desire to lead that activity, I train him on how to organize that activity, provide him with all the materials related to the activity, and provide him with a suitable course from the courses provided by the education department*.

The above quote also provides an illustration of a strategy to address the issue of teachers lacking the necessary knowledge, skills, and training to lead extracurricular activities (ECAs). This strategy involves the ECA leaders recognising their responsibility in managing activities within their schools. It begins by carefully selecting the most suitable teacher for the role and subsequently equipping them with the necessary skills and training to effectively lead the activity. Table 4.42 below, shows a full analysis of the interviews to identify the strategies used by the ECA leaders to deal with the challenge of teachers' lack of skills, knowledge, and training opportunities for leading ECAs.

**Table 4.42**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to teachers (teachers' lack of skills, knowledge and training opportunities for leading ECAs)*

| Challenges related to teachers | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Teachers' lack of skills, knowledge and training opportunities for leading ECAs** | Making sure that training is available. | Any teacher who wants to lead a specific ECA activity can find the appropriate training programs provided by Education Department.<br><br>I also provide him with an appropriate training offered by the Department of Education.<br><br>Any ECA to be implemented in the school, there must be a meeting between the school activity ECA leader and the teachers to discuss the mechanism for carrying out this activity<br><br>For me, any training opportunity related to the ECA, I directly inform teachers about it and whoever want it can register in it. |
| | Making sure that teachers are equipped with information and skills needed for leading ECA is available for teachers. | The ECA leader is responsible for training school' teachers on how to lead ECA and inform them about any training courses held by the education' ministry that related to ECA.<br><br>The ECA leader is responsible for explaining the mechanism of ECA implementation to teachers who will lead the ECA and overcoming any obstacle that teachers may face.<br><br>When we start providing a new activity, there must be a plan printed on paper and given to the teacher, showing the activity' objectives, the way of the activity' implementation and the expected time course for its implementation. |
| | Improving ECA leader-teachers communication | Any point that is not clear in the ECA plan, the teacher can inquire me about it and find sufficient information.<br><br>Teachers can contact the ECA leader in their school and get the information on how to implement a specific school ECA.<br><br>In our school, we have ECA activity committee, The ECA activity committee holds meeting at the beginning of each semester to distribute tasks among teachers, determine the appropriate activities and the mechanism for their implementation. |

Teachers' lack of motivation in ECAs is the third reported interpersonal barrier that influences the provision of the activities in Saudi secondary schools. Although Saudi teachers are not obligated to participate in ECAs, the Ministry of Education considers them to be the preferred staff for leading these activities. This preference is based on the belief that teachers' involvement in ECAs can have beneficial impacts on students and schools, which may serve as motivation for teachers to participate. However, this study revealed that Saudi teachers are less motivated to carrying out the ECAs because there are no incentives to encourage teachers' involvement. According to one of the participants:

*in fact, leading ECA is voluntary and not mandatory for teachers, and even there is nothing mentioned in the ECA plan that was approved by the Ministry of Education about what incentives should be offered to teachers who want to lead the ECA activities, you find some teachers lack willingness to lead the ECA.*

He further elaborated on how they managed to attract teachers to take part in ECAs by saying:

*But there are incentives offered by the school administration to encourage teachers to participate in organizing the ECAs, such as giving them certificates of thanks, exempting them from supervision during the examination period, and exempting them from supervision tasks at the end of the school day.*

The previous quote is an example of a challenge related to teachers (teachers' lack of motivation in ECAs in organising ECAs). It is also an example of a participant explaining how that challenge arises: firstly, because organising ECA is not mandatory, and secondly, no incentives are given to participating teachers. The quote also gives an example of a strategy to overcome the challenge, which is offering teachers incentives (such as certificates of thanks and exemption from non-teaching duties) to encourage them to lead the ECA in their school. ECA leaders' responses on strategies to deal with the challenge of teachers' lack of motivation to organise ECAs are quoted in Table 4.43.

**Table 4.43**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to teachers (teachers' lack of motivation in organise ECAs)*

| Challenges related to teachers | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Teachers' lack of motivation in organising ECAs** | Use incentives to encourage teachers to lead the ECA | Our school administration often gives the participant teachers some material and non-material incentives in appreciation of their efforts in organizing the school ECA.<br><br>Providing rewarding incentives give the teachers desire to lead the ECA, such as tickets to one of the tourist cities in the Kingdom.<br><br>The school principal often motivates the teachers in various ways, such as praising them, giving them thanks certificate some gift vouchers.<br><br>The school administration has set a monthly award given to teachers who excel in leading ECA.<br><br>Among the incentives is the reduction of their teaching duties.<br><br>Giving them some incentives, such as reducing their non-teaching tasks<br><br>Among the incentives provided by the school administration to teachers who doing extra roles other than teaching tasks is giving them additional points to be counted in their performance evaluation.<br><br>We motivate teachers to lead the ECA by giving them thank certificates, online purchase vouchers and highlighting their role in ECA on social media. |

**Theme 4**: strategies to deal with challenges related to students.

The fourth theme, strategies to deal with challenges related to students, was constructed as teachers explained their experiences of attempting to overcome the challenges related to students, such as students lack of motivation to engage in ECAs as they are not academically required, students' ECA preferences, and students' lack of awareness of ECA importance. These are the most common challenges identified by teachers with regard to students during the implementation of ECA "One Hour Activity Plan". According to one of the participants:

> *I can say that half of the students do not have sufficient awareness of the importance of the ECA activities. So, in my school, we usually explain the benefits of participating in such activities, and we stimulate students to participate.*

This quote illustrates a concern from teachers that many children are perceived to lack awareness that participation in ECA activities is important, which is considered an interpersonal constraint. The quote is also an example of a teacher noting that they aim to stimulate participation and gives one strategy for doing so (explaining the benefits to children).

It is clear that students' behaviour and values have an impact on their choice to participate in ECA; efforts to modify students' attitudes about ECA should focus on raising their understanding of the benefits that ECA may provide to increase their participation. Table 4.44 shows a full analysis of the interviews to identify strategies that ECA leaders used to deal with the challenge of students' lack awareness of ECA importance.

**Table 4.44**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to students (Students lack awareness of ECA importance)*

| **Challenges related to students** | **Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes).** | **Examples from transcripts** |
|---|---|---|
| **Students lack knowledge and awareness of ECA importance** | Explain and highlight the importance through publicity. | In my school we usually explain the benefits of participating in such activities and we stimulate students to participate.<br><br>I hanged some posters on the school walls explaining the ECA objectives and its importance for the students' development.<br><br>I also distributed leaflets to the students about ECA.<br><br>I use social media platforms such as Twitter and WhatsApp effectively in promoting ECA among students.<br><br>The solution is highlighting the role of ECA in enhancing and developing students' abilities and through the school social media such as twitter and snapchat.<br><br>Any ECA that will be held I announces about it in school's Twitter, or I send WhatsApp messages on students' mobiles to let them know. |
| | Celebrate participation to highlight the value that it given to participation and to encourage it. | Holding a celebration day at the end of the school year in which teachers and students who participated in ECA activities are honoured, this celebration gives a message to all students about the importance of participation in school ECA activities. |

Students' personal preference for certain ECA activities is another intrapersonal constraint that influences the Saudi students' participation in ECAs. When I discussed the results of the teachers' survey, which shows that 60% of the participant teachers indicated that the type of ECA that their students want to participate in is not on offer in their schools, teachers shared many strategies to overcome this challenge. One strategy is to base the provision of ECA on the most frequently requested ECA. Here are the words of the ECA leaders who adopted this strategy: "*I acknowledge this challenge, but I can't confidently claim that I have successfully overcome it. While meeting all student needs is challenging, we strive to offer activities that the students primarily request"*. The implementation of these activities without prior planning could be one potential explanation for students' lack of interest in their schools' offerings. Therefore, it is advisable to evaluate the interests of students prior to initiating extracurricular

programs. This can be accomplished by conducting a survey of students' preferences, which can then be used to organise the most popular activity.

Another example of strategy used by ECA leaders to meet students' preferences is directing students to activities that correspond to their interests outside of school hours. For example, one participant commented on this issue:

> *Our school offers many activities, but some of them can not be carried out during the school day due to scheduling conflicts and school physical limitations. For instance, the one activity plan includes sports like swimming and horseback riding, which are well-liked pastimes offered only at summer centres during the school break. For instance, there is not a swimming pool for students to use within the school. Assume for the moment that the pool exists. Do you believe that exercising for an hour is sufficient? Naturally, no. As a result, we sometimes need to carry out certain activities after school, particularly on weekends. For instance, we have arranged for students who like to practice athletics and swimming to have access to one of the Ministry of Sports' branches.*

The participant explains that the school lacks the necessary facilities and time to implement some of the students' preferred activities, such as swimming. Consequently, he was compelled to direct students who expressed interest in participating in this activity to a sports centres that operated outside of the school day. This story demonstrates that meeting students' preferences for activities requires consideration of several interrelated factors, including time and the readiness of school facilities. The leader of the activity is proper in his action; he advised the students to enroll in one of the sports centers to fulfill their interests, rather than denying them access to their preferred activities. Students need autonomy in their choice of school extracurricular activities, as this will act as an intrinsic motivation to unleash their talents. Table 4.45 shows a full analysis of the interviews to identify strategies that ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges of students ECA preferences.

**Table 4.45** *ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to students (Students ECAs preferences)*

| Challenges related to students | Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes). | Examples from transcripts |
|---|---|---|
| **Students ECA preferences** | Directing students to activities that correspond to their interests. | Students who want to practice swimming and athletics activities, we offer them membership in one of the branches of the Ministry of Sports.<br><br>If we see a student is talented in a particular sport, for example swimming, we support him and communicate with athletic clubs that have an interest in this activity to sponsor the student. |
| | Base provision on the most frequently requested ECA. | The ECA' provision is based on the most requested activities by students.<br><br>We try to offer the ECA that are popular among students. |
| | ECA activities diversification | We try to offer ECA that serve the growth of the student in all aspects, including the academic aspect. This diversity attracts students and motivates them to participate in the ECA, especially the scientific activities and exhibitions that are held outside the school.<br><br>We try as much as possible to diversify the ECA based on the desires of the students and the capabilities of the school. For example, in each term different type of sports and cultural activities are provided.<br><br>Every week, we offer ten different ECA programs, including sports, entertainment, scientific and cultural programs, we try to present these programs in an interesting way which makes students enjoy participation.<br><br>we try to provide students with ECA that are not only entertaining but also have academic benefits. |
| | Take advantage of the facilities of public sports centre. | Sometimes we use the public sports centres near to the school to carry out some activities that are difficult to be provided in the school |
| | Exchanging experiences of ECA provision | Because we do not have this type of activity, I contacted with a scout leader in another school to help me set up a scouting activity in our school and train students. |

Students' lack of motivation to engage in ECAs as they are not academically required is the most intrapersonal constraint that influences the Saudi students' participation in ECAs. This result is based on the teachers' responses to the survey of challenges related to students. When this challenge was discussed with one of the ECA leaders and how he faced it, he provided the following comment:

> *Yes, I face this challenge with some students, to the point that some of them bargain with me and insist that they will not participate unless their participation is linked to their academic grades. This is due to their focus on finding any activity that will help them raise their academic level average by any means. To overcome this challenge, I*

*agreed with the school's teachers to link students' participation in activities to the subjects they teach. Thereby any student who participates in clubs. For example, the science club is given grades in science subjects such as math or chemistry, provided that the participant student is an active member of the club and has made notable contributions either at the school level or within the educational district*.

The above story demonstrates that the constant pressure to achieve high academic performance results in some Saudi secondary students being less motivated to participate in ECAs and frequently insisting on participating in activities that will raise their academic grade point average. This result is supported by other stories from the ECA leaders. For example, one participant discussed his experience with this issue*:*

*I agree with the teachers' opinion on this point, as I also face this challenge with my school students. For example, when there is an activity that requires a group of students to implement it, they always ask me what the reward will be for our participation, and when I tell them that the reward will be certificates of appreciation and in-kind prizes such as a calculator and some school supplies, I find that some of them do not want to participate. As you know, the mentality of a secondary school student is different from that of an elementary school student; for example, a symbolic gift affects an elementary school student and motivates him to participate, unlike a high school student who is always keen on activities that raise his academic average. Among the solutions that I followed, after discussing it with the school principal, is allocating three grades for students participating in activities, and it is calculated based on the type of activity they practice. For example, students participating in scientific activities and representing the school in scientific competitions get three academic grades in any scientific subjects (chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics) that their teachers see as weak academically, and so on with the rest of the activities.*

These stories also illustrate how the ECA leaders managed to encourage the reluctant students to take part in school extracurricular activities. One of the most mentioned strategies used by the ECAs leaders is giving the participant students extra academic marks. Table 4.46 shows a full analysis of the interviews to identify the strategies used by the ECA leaders to deal with the challenge that students lack motivation to engage in ECAs as they are not academically required.

**Table 4.46**

*ECA leaders' responses on strategies used to deal with challenges related to students (Students' reluctance to participate in ECA)*

| **Challenges related to students** | **Strategies for addressing the challenge (Codes).** | **Examples from transcripts** |
|---|---|---|
| **Students' reluctance to participate in ECA** | Use of extrinsic rewards for participation (e.g. bonus points). | One of the solutions that I have seen is effective for motivating students is to give them bonus points due to their participation. |
| | Use incentives for encouraging participation. | Students can be attracted to participate by some incentives as this will encourage them to participate.<br><br>We also honour the distinguished students in the ECA activities with valuable prizes during school morning assembly, as this motivates other students to participate and interact. |
| | Adding marks on behavioural engagement reports of ECA participants. | Give the student who excel in the ECA activity more marks in their behavioural engagement report.<br><br>we give them additional marks in their skills of school engagement and interaction. |
| | Give the ECA participants extra academic marks. | Any student who participates in ECA clubs, for example, the science club, is given extra marks in one of his scientific subjects.<br><br>Any student who has amazing participation in the ECA is given additional marks.<br><br>I made an agreement with teachers to send them a list of participants in the ECA, including information about the type of ECA, the number of times the students participated and their achievements. Any student, the teachers think he deserves extra academic marks for his participation is given. |

# Chapter Five

# 5 Chapter 5: Discussion

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter probes into a detailed discussion of the findings related to the "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) ECAs within the context of secondary boys' schools in Saudi Arabia. The preceding chapter explored the program's potential impact through data analysis and examination of student and teacher experiences. This analysis shed light on OHAP's effectiveness, including the opportunities it presents for students' social and personal development and their sense of belonging within the school community, and its associated challenges. In the current chapter, I engage in a comprehensive discussion, drawing connections between the research questions, data analysis, the selected theoretical frames, and the broader context of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in secondary education. Synthesising these elements, will help to draw conclusions to identify the key themes and implications for Saudi education policymakers, educators, and future researches in the field of ECAs.

## 5.2 Perceptions of Saudi secondary school students towards the "One Hour Activity Plan"

Historically, the attitude of Saudi secondary schools towards extracurricular activities (ECA) has been somewhat conservative and limited. The primary emphasis in Saudi secondary schools has traditionally been on academic subjects, with a strong focus on core subjects like mathematics, science, and religious studies. Extracurricular activities were often seen as secondary or non-essential. The range of ECAs offered was relatively narrow, with a focus on traditional sports and religious activities. Activities that were considered non-traditional or unconventional were less likely to be offered or encouraged (Alfnifie, 2012). There was often limited support from the Saudi Ministry of Education for ECAs, with a stronger focus on achieving academic excellence and meeting educational standards. Many schools allocated limited resources, such as time, funding, and facilities, to support extracurricular activities. This often resulted in a lack of structured programs and opportunities for students to engage in diverse skill-building activities (Alfnifie 2012). However, in recent years, there has been a shift towards recognising the importance of holistic education, which includes a balanced approach that integrates academic learning with extracurricular activities (Saudi Economic Vision 2030, 2021). In 2017 the Ministry of Saudi Education designed a plan called "One Hour Activity" aimed to promote students' participation in extracurricular activities sponsored by schools. This

plan is part of broader educational reforms aimed at enhancing students' overall development, fostering self-independence, adaptability and creativity, and preparing students for a dynamic and globalised world.

One of the study's objectives is to explore the perceived impact of introducing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs on students personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school. The findings on the perceived impact of school extracurricular activities on the student developmental experiences are discussed in six separated parts, including: experience initiative skills, experience teamwork and social skills, experience positive relationship skills, experience basic skills, experience identity exploration skills and experience a sense of belonging to the school. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) is utilised in this discussion to explore the link between participation in these activities and adolescent development. According to the theory the microsystems (such as home and school and neighbourhood) have the strongest impact on a growing individual and can create developmental experiences which can be extremely beneficial in nurturing, or conversely be damaging to the child's development. The discussion shows that extracurricular activities organised by schools (microsystem) can be seen as a positive developmental change in the lives of many students in Saudi secondary schools. The students who participated in the current study perceived school ECA as rich contexts for experiencing various personal and social skills.

### 5.2.1 Focus on initiative

The ability to initiate and solve problems is fundamental to human development for several reasons. However, many problems require collaboration and communication with others in agreement with the theory of ecological systems, which posits that human development is interactional and dynamic. The results revealed that students reported high frequencies of experiencing opportunities to practice their initiative skills, such as goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management skills. According to the ecological systems theory, microsystems are at the most proximal ecological level with which students directly interact. School extracurricular activities represent one of these microsystems, and they encompass different types of activities, such as sports, art, academic clubs and cultural activities. However, certain types of activities can be associated with more changes than others. In this current study, students who participated in ECA sport, scouting and science activities have higher self-reported levels of development of their initiative skills than those who participated in art and

culture activities. For example, one participant recognised participation in ECA individual sports as a stimulating developmental context for cultivating the skills of goal setting and problem solving, according to him:

> *The school ECA cycling activity helped me greatly on how to set and achieve my own goals to solve a problem that I have been suffered from, which is weight gain. In the past, I had no interest in performing any sporting activity that would improve my fitness level and lose weight because most of them are boring. But I found in the ECA cycling activity something different from other sports activities that it is more enjoyable and can help me to improve my fitness level and reduce my weight, so I decided to participate in this activity. With the help of this activity leader, I developed a plan that included a strict cycling schedule to reduce my weight and get fit. Within three months of continuous training, I was able to achieve my goals.*

Hansen et al. (2003) argued that when adolescents' activities are structured to involve prolonged challenge, adolescents can develop the skills for working toward goals, which comprise problem solving, developing plans, and using time effectively. The above example illustrates that the nature of sport's structure that involve challenges and focusing on accomplishments facilitates adolescents' development of skills for pursuing goals. This present result is consistent with previous research. Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) found that students involved in individual sports have better skills of goal setting, because they are constantly aimed at achieving specific results, overcoming challenges and increasing self-determination, which promotes the development of goal setting skills in students.

Larson (2000) argued that participation in extracurricular activities can promote the development of initiative in youth that involves skills such as setting individual goals, assessing what is needed to achieve the goals, and then actively directing attention and effort toward fulfilling the goals. This is because these activities are structured, optional, and challenging which make them a stimulating environment for developing the initiative skills. Students participate in such activities because they are amused by doing so and consider the challenge and skills encountered in the activities to be worthy. Innate interest in challenging tasks is an important factor for learning and acquiring new skills (Cordova & Lepper, 1996). The process of skill' acquisition that accrues in extracurricular activities requires the students to draw up challenging individual and group goals regarding the activity, and then develop and practice strategies on a regular basis to meet such goals (Mahoney et al., 2003). The theorist

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described this process as an iterative experience; as a person's abilities increase and develop over time, new challenging goals are set for the future tasks. Therefore, this process may use beyond the setting of extracurricular activities, where the ECAs participants may be better able to set ambitious goals for their future either in education or work.

### 5.2.2 Focus on teamwork and social skills

The second often reported developmental skills that can be cultivated through ECA participation are teamwork and social skills, which include feedback, leadership, responsibility, and group process skills. These social competencies aim at promoting an individual's ability to collaborate with other team members to achieve the team goals (Marasi, 2019). In agreement with ecological systems theory, extracurricular activities organised by school represent one microsystem, that offers a range of different developmental opportunities. In this study, academic clubs and sports teams are reported to be useful developmental contexts to provide direct interaction opportunities for students with peers, these interactions are crucial for developing teamwork and social skills. According to the statistical analysis of students' survey data, participants in sport activity (M =3.3346, SD =.46195) and science activity (M =3.2787, SD =.54310) have a significantly higher reported levels of development of their teamwork and social skills than those who participated in art and culture activity (M =2.8784, SD =.64038). This shows that ECA sport and ECA academics are felt to provide optimal contexts for experiencing skills related to teamwork than other ECA activities such as scouting, art and cultural activities. This finding is supported by the qualitative results of the interviewed students who, further elaborated on this finding. For example, one participant discussed his experience in science club to learn about leadership and responsibility, he mentioned that:

> *The way this activity works helped me to understand the nature of teamwork and how to be an effective member in my working group. By persevering and interacting positively with my colleagues, I became the member whom the activity leader relies on to take over my group in terms of setting plans, distributing the tasks between us...being leader means that you must be considerate with your group, a good listener to their opinions and willing to take the responsibly for your group.*

ECA sport was also seen as an avenue for learning about group process skills such as collaboration with other team members and resolving conflicts. One participant noted that: "*during football match you should adhere to your team rules and forget the problems that*

*happened between you and another member of your team to win the match"*. These examples explain how the development of teamwork operates in group activities to enhance skills such as leadership, working with others collaboratively and sharing responsibilities. Sociologists in the field of organised youth activities such as Dworkin et al. (2003) theorised that learning occurs through collaborative participation in activities that involve shared interests, which is believed to encourage students to work with each other, to handle other's mistakes peacefully, to share feedback, and to divide responsibilities to achieve the group's goals. Expanding outer in the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems is the mesosystem, which involves the interconnections between various microsystems, such as home, school, and community (see Figure 2.1). ECAs can strengthen these connections by involving students in activities that bridge these settings. For instance, a student participating in a school science club may have interactions with teachers, community experts, and parents during competitions or exhibitions. These experiences help students learn how to navigate different social environments, reinforcing the social skills and teamwork learned in one context through their application in another.

The result of the present study is consistent with previous research. Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) surveyed 3367 students in grade 9 who were involved in a range of organised extracurricular activities. They found that group-based extracurricular activities (such as team sports and performing dance and theatre) contribute to the development of teamwork skills in participants. This is because these activities involve competition between teams and require participants working together in a team. In contrast, Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) found activities that do not involve on-stage performance such as fine arts and vocational activities have less impact on the development of teamwork skills, their results are consistent with the results of the present study. This is because these types of activities tend to be strictly an individual activity and do not involve working in a group to accomplish a task. The result of the present study also confirms the finding made by Alfnifie (2012), who found that social skills can be cultivated through participation in academic clubs. This is because academic clubs require students to collaborate in science competitions either in schools or outside, discuss topics related to their projects and take leadership roles. Hughes and Jones (2011) explained that team is something different from any other group of people. This is because the team is comprised of individuals who share several specified characteristics: first, they have a shared collective identity; second, they have common aims; third, they are interdependent in terms of their target outcomes or assigned duties and finally, each one has distinctive roles within the

team. From the above discussion it can be argued that school extracurricular activities that involve teamwork, such as football and academic clubs can serve as a platform for learning social skills because students are given greater opportunities for interactions, taking role within a team, and working collaboratively to reach the team's goals.

### 5.2.3 Focus on positive relationship skills

The third most often reported developmental skills that students felt to be cultivated through ECA participation are positive relationship skills such as peer relationships and prosocial norms and behaviours. More specifically, the results indicate that participation in ECA sport, scouting and science activities are more likely to extend peer networks and promote interpersonal relationships than participation in ECA art and cultural activities. Statistical analysis of students' survey data indicated that participants in sport activity (M =3.1516, SD =.51554), science activity (M =3.1635, SD =.59059) and scouting activity (M =3.2950, SD=.53507) have significantly higher reported levels of development of their relationship skills through participation than those who participated in art and culture activity (M =2.8784, SD =.64038). One participant commented on his experiences in ECA sport with the following words:

> *During my participation in school ECA sports competitions that are held between schools, I built a network of friends, some of them from my school and others than my school; being connected with them helps me to be more social and positive in my life.*

However, this finding does not imply that participation in ECA art and cultural activities prevent students from expanding their friendship' network; rather, it is likely that students participating in art and cultural activities are more likely to be attached with friends within the same activities they involve. Previous studies supported this finding. For example, Schaefer and colleagues (2011) found that adolescents who involved in ECA sports were likely to have friendships within ECA sports members and friends who did not participate in sports, whereas those who were involved in arts programs tended to have friendships within the realm of the arts program. This study also reveals that students who participated in school ECA did not only form new peer' relationships but also developed deep understanding of their peers' thoughts, culture, and values. One participant mentioned that: "*during ECA there is plenty of time to share your information and thoughts with other students about a particular issue. This will certainly help you to understand and accept the other values and culture"*. These results confirm previous research showing that school ECA increased social interactions, expanded

peers' networks, and deepened understanding of peers (Dworkin et al., 2003). The notion of interpersonal relationship involves social and emotional connections between two or more individuals. The present results suggest that participation in school extracurricular activities can promote the development of interpersonal relationships between students. For example, one of the participants in this current study noted that:

> *Participation in scientific activities such as visiting scientific exhibitions is not limited to students who are scientifically distinguished, low achiever students also can participate in them too. This gives an opportunity for students from both academic levels to know and help each other in overcoming the difficulties they face in their life or study.*

Mahoney et al. (2003) showed that interpersonal relationship is a fundamental asset in healthy youth development. They argued that it is necessary for youth to socialise with peers to build their identity, youth who have meaningful interpersonal relationships tend to show empathy, relate to others, have less mood swings, and display control over their emotions.

Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) state that a large part of a student's day is spent in microsystems such as school. The students come into contact with members of school staff and their fellow students, each of whom has their own distinct character, outlook and nature. These types of traits either allow, encourage or discourage interpersonal relationships and actions within the immediate environment. Extracurricular activities sponsored by school often involve interactions between peers, mentors, and role models. Students observe the behaviours of others and learn by imitation. When positive relationship skills, such as empathy, communication, and conflict resolution, are modelled by mentors and older peers, younger students can learn and replicate these behaviours. Positive reinforcement and constructive feedback in ECAs settings encourage desirable behaviours. When students exhibit positive relationship skills, such as cooperation and support, they receive praise and recognition. This positive reinforcement strengthens these behaviours, encouraging students to continue practicing and refining their positive relationship skills. Through participation in ECA, students experience real-life situations where they must engage with peers and resolve conflicts. These experiences provide opportunities to practice and develop positive relationship skills, such as empathy and problem-solving, in a safe and supportive environment.

### 5.2.4 Focus on basic skills

The fourth most often reported developmental skills that students felt to be cultivated through ECA participation are basic skills such as cognitive skills and emotional regulation skills. In this study, longer participation in school ECA has been found to be a predictor for more enhancement in students' cognitive and emotional skills. More specifically, the results indicate that students with two years' participation in school ECA have higher self-reported levels of development of their cognitive and emotional skills (M =3.0598, SD =.5327) compared to those who participated for less than one year (M =2.8265, SD =.59757). This finding has been triangulated with the student interviews. For example, one participant felt that his emotional and communication skills were significantly developed because of his constant participation in school media club, according to him:

> *Being member of school media club helped me to overcome my fear of speaking to audiences and developed my speaking skills. In the past, I used to be nervous when I speak on front of people. But with more participation in that club, I became confident when I talk with people and able to deliver the appropriate sentences and words*.

The participant particularly identified public speech anxiety as a challenge, an interpersonal constraint highlighted in the hierarchical leisure constraints model, that can be improved by being constantly involved in the media club. This result poses an important question which is how and why regular involvement in school ECA can be related to better developmental adjustment. The literature can give a clue to answer the question. According to Mahoney and colleagues (2006) consistent involvement in organised activities in adolescence is likely to relate to more positive developmental results than occasional participation because it takes time to create supportive relationships with adults and peers, to learn socially appropriate behaviour, and to build socioemotional and intellectual skills. The study's result is supported by other researchers: Fredricks and Eccles (2006) found that young people with greater involvement in extracurricular activities are more likely to exhibit better academic, psychological, and behavioural adjustment than those with a lesser amount of participation. Gilman et al. (2004) hypothesise that there are four aspects of extracurricular activity that ecological systems theory addresses; one of them is encouraging the development of an individual's strengths and positive psychosocial characteristics. Youth who actively participate in extracurricular activities are encouraged to challenge their own abilities, and when their mastering attempts are seen as effective, they feel good about themselves.

### 5.2.5 Focus on identity exploration skills

The fifth most often reported developmental skills that can be cultivated through ECA participation are identity exploration skill. Identity exploration is a critical skill that involves the process of investigating and understanding various aspects of oneself, including personal beliefs, values, interests, and goals. This skill is particularly important during adolescence and young adulthood, a period when individuals are actively shaping their identities. During identity exploration, individuals often experiment with different roles, activities, and behaviours. This experimentation allows them to experience and evaluate various aspects of life, helping them to identify what resonates with their true selves (Ajrouch et al., 2015).

The result reveals that there is no significant difference in students' reported skills of identity exploration regardless of the type of ECA activities students involved in. For example, one participant saw the variety of ECA activities offered in his school as a rich source for encouraging one's self- discovery. He mentioned that: "*the various activities provided by the school helped me to discover myself"*. From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, involvement in a variety of different activities in the early years of an individual's life has a positive impact upon their identity construction and formation later in adulthood (Eccles et al., 2003). This result highlights the importance of offering students a variety of different ECA activities and without limiting the ECA provision to specific activities, as variety provides more freedom to explore and express identity options than limited activities. This result is consistent with the finding of prior research; Ivaniushina and Zapletina (2015) hypothesised that fine arts activities contribute more to identity work than other ECA activities. However, they found that the identity work was significantly connected to all types of ECA activities (the results of the present study did not cross the threshold of statistical significance). The result of the present study, however, contradicts Hansen et al.' s work (2003): they found identity exploration skills differed based on the type of the ECA activities, particularly that sports and faith-based activities are perceived to provide more experiences for young people's development.

### 5.2.6 Focus on sense of belonging to school

Another reported contribution of participation in school ECA is that it may enhance students' sense of belonging to their school. Ecological systems theory emphasises the multiple layers of influence that shape an individual's development, from immediate personal interactions to broader societal contexts, acknowledging the dynamic and interrelated nature of these systems.

It helps to explain how individuals form a sense of belonging based on their membership in social groups, such as a school community. ECAs provide opportunities for students to connect with teachers and peers who share similar interests, fostering a sense of school identification. For example, when students who feel disconnected with their school environment involve in activities like sports teams, debate clubs, or cultural groups, they have more opportunities to interact with peers and mentors in a collaborative environment. These positive interactions contribute to a sense of acceptance and belonging, reinforcing their connection to the school community.

The current study's results show a positive trend in students' perceptions of developing a sense of school belonging through participation in school ECA. Of the students who participated in school ECA activities, 78% indicated that participation in these activities made them feel so proud to be members of their schools, and around 85% of students indicated that participation in school ECA activities helped them to build good relationships with teachers. Within the ecological system levels is the microsystem level which is concerned with students' relationships with teachers, peers and parents. Students spend much of their time at school interacting with teachers and this interaction can be a key to understanding students' belonging or disaffection from school. For example, one participant specifically noted how important school extracurricular activities had been in helping him to build a good relationship with teachers, he said that:

> *One of the most important factors that increase students' connection with school is the availability of a comfortable school environment that is based on a good relationship with teachers. Based on my personal experience, participation in ECA activities has a major role in strengthening students' relationship with teachers and creating a comfortable school environment.*

He further gave a clear example of this:

> *I remember when our school set up a neighborhood club offers a range of artistic, cultural and sports activities and many teachers and students participated in it. In fact, the club made me feel that we are one family. I have good relationship with teachers who oversaw the club activities, and I am still in touch with them, even though some of them are no longer teaching in our school.*

Additionally, three quarters of participants indicated that participation in ECA activities made their schools more enjoyable; some students cited reasons associated with that feeling such as

a reduction in psychological barriers between teachers and students, and academic pressures on students. One interviewed participant mentioned that: "*participation in school ECA activities such as ECA sports has a positive role in school environment, as it creates enjoyable atmosphere and relieves student's academic pressures"*. Martinez and his colleagues (2016) found that participation in extracurricular activities is associated with greater school connectedness: they particularly found that students who participated in sports and arts reported higher levels of school attachment than those who did not participate in these activities. The result of this current study is consistent with the findings of Martinez and his colleagues (2016), the result, however, reveals that school belonging was not significantly associated either with specific activity contexts or with length of ECA participation. Neel and Fuligni (2013) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate how school sense of belonging changes over the course of high school years; they found that students' sense of school belonging tends to decline over the teenage years. They also found that the years in which students had a higher sense of school's belonging were also the years in which they felt that the school was more enjoyable. Their study emphasised the importance of fostering a sense of school belonging in high school students for better academic engagement during the high school years.

Ryan and Powelson (1991) stated that social disengagement from school is sometimes a result of insufficient contact with teachers and friendships with peers. El Zaatari and Maalouf (2022) argued that for creating a balanced, healthy school environment that supports students' social and emotional growth, schools should encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities because being a member of school extracurricular programs can provide students with a chance to form social relations outside of the classroom with students, teachers and coaches, and such relationships can satisfy students' desire for social engagement. According to Christison (2013) students are continually looking for a greater sense of belonging and group activities are necessary for providing students with a sense of belonging to the school environment by promoting constructive connections not just with classmates but also with teachers. Through engaging in a favourite activity that is entertaining and interesting, students can forge significant connections with teachers and peers and learn how to manage their emotions. In conclusion, by utilising the principles of the ecological systems theory, ECAs can effectively contribute to enhancing the sense of belonging to the school. Through diverse engagement, social interaction, group cohesion, and leadership opportunities, students can foster a strong and positive connection to the school community.

## 5.3 Challenges Facing the Implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan"

The second purpose of this study is to identify the challenges that are associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in Saudi secondary schools and to explore the strategies that may be useful to overcome the challenges for better implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in public secondary schools. The discussion shows that teachers report that there are several challenges that influence the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs, and that there are potential strategies for overcoming them. The challenges have been analysed under four main themes: 1) school-related challenges, 2) teacher-related challenges, 3) student-related challenges and 4) challenges related to parents and local communities. Factors affecting students' participation in extracurricular activities can be understood by the hierarchical leisure constraint model suggested by Crawford et al. (1991). According to the hierarchical model of constraints there are many factors that affect youth's involvement in extracurricular activities: (1) structural constraints (such as lack of facilities and finances); (2) interpersonal constraints (such as culture pressure and lack of encouragement from parent); and (3) intrapersonal constraints (such as lack of knowledge and interest in an activity). These constraints are commonly conceptualised as intervening factors in students' ECA participation and preferences (Mohamad Sari & Esa, 2017).

### 5.3.1 Challenges related to schools

According to the hierarchical leisure constraints model, the structural constraints are the primary factors that hinder the provision of ECAs in schools. The survey results show that these challenges related to schools are the highest-ranked challenges reported by teachers that specifically affect ECA implementation in Saudi secondary schools with (M = 3.713). These challenges include budget, facilities, transportation issues. Meanwhile, results of the ECA leaders' interviews provide further information on how teachers try to overcome these barriers, revealing that ECA leaders adopted different strategies to deal with those challenges to sustain the ECA availability in their schools.

Over 85% of participants indicated that the budget allocated for ECA in their schools is insufficient (M =4.396, SD =.858). Strategies reported by teachers for addressing this challenge include carrying out inexpensive ECA, limiting the number of students to whom activities are offered, collecting financial donations from parents and teachers, and using income from schools' canteens to subsidise the ECA budget. These are the most cited strategies by ECA

leaders to overcome the lack of budget for running school ECAs. For example, one interviewed participant noted that:

> *We do not mainly depend on the ECA budget that comes from the department of education because it is not enough and we often receive it late at the end of the first semester, most of the money however comes from the school canteen and teachers' financial donations.*

The result from the present study is consistent with the result from a previous study. Dima (2015) explored perspectives of 30 principals on the factors affecting the school extracurricular activities provision in public schools; the author found 85% of the principals agreed that funding plays a major role for a successful ECAs implementation in schools. Dima (2015) concluded that keeping the ECAs activities requires funding, and without good funds from the government, they will not be properly implemented. However, Bua and Adzongo (2014) argued that to help schools meet financial demands and run their ECA programs smoothly, the schools' principals are advised to find other financial resources (such as school canteen income and financial donations) to generate money instead of waiting for government' funding.

The readiness of school facilities and equipment support the delivery of not only curricular programmes but also the extracurricular. School facilities refer to areas that are either inside the school building, including gymnasium, halls, lab, library and theatre or outdoors like football, basketball and volleyball playgrounds, and swimming pool. Whereas equipment includes expendable and non-expendable tools such as computers, tables, speakers, and music, art and sport tools. Over 80% of the participants in this present study reported that their schools lack appropriate facilities and equipment for running ECAs ($M = 4.331$, $SD = 1.014$). The study also shows that the ECA leaders did not stand idly by, but rather tried several strategies to overcome that challenge, such as using the facilities of the public sports centres, borrowing equipment from other schools, buying cheap or used equipment and tools and renting facilities and tools that are not available in schools. Here are some cited responses from ECA leaders during the interviews on how they attempted to overcome the challenge of inadequate school facilities and equipment:

> *In our school there is no suitable playground, so sometimes we use the facilities of the public sports centre…. we do not have gymnastics tools, so I borrow them from other schools. I also, rent some tools to carry out cultural activities, such as loudspeakers, lighting tools and other tools.*

The availability of good physical facilities has been found to be associated with better academic performance and personality development in students (Naz et al, 2012). Extracurricular activities offered in schools that have inadequate facilities remain unattractive to students (Okero, 2014). Students in such schools may miss the benefits of extracurricular activities, especially their contribution to students' academic and socio-personal adjustment. Sulaiman et al (2017) argued that the availability of necessary physical facilities and resources in schools has a huge impact on extracurricular activities, they concluded that relevant authorities should keep improving school facilities to ensure active participation in extracurricular activities.

Lack of transportation is another challenge to the ECA provision in schools. The statistical results of the survey's data reveal that almost 80% of participants reported that their schools do not have buses for trips and visits (for example, visits to museums, scientific sites and sports centres) (M = 4.176, SD = .976). This result is supported by statements collected from the interviewed ECA leaders who also explained their attempts to overcome the challenge. For example, one of the participants commented on this issue and attributed it to the lack of provision of school transport services for boys by the relevant authority. He said that: "*The problem is that the secondary schools for boys are not provided with buses to transport students like secondary schools for girls. So, we have only two options, either rent a bus or transport students by our own cars"*. However, the participant expressed his concern that using teachers' cars is not a safe option: "*If we decide to use our own' cars, we will be accountable for their safety if something happens to them during the trip"*. Although the option of using teachers' cars in school trips appears to be a common practice among ECA leaders (it was widely reported by interviewees), it has another disadvantage, which is reducing the number of students who can participate in such trips. For example, one interviewee commented on this issue: "*If we have a trip, we should reduce the number of students who want to participate in the trip so we can accommodate them in our cars"*. He also further elaborated around the option of renting a bus, saying that is an expensive option: *"Sometimes we rent a bus if the visit or trip is useful for students, and this however costs a huge amount of money"*. For some schools, renting a bus seems like a practical and safe option; however some schools cannot afford its costs and therefore charge students. One participant ECA leader said that: "*Sometimes we collect money from students to cover transportation costs"*. However, this practice is likely to deprive a number of students who may be unable to pay the transportation fees of participation in these trips. Without reliable and affordable ways to transport students, ECAs activities will become less viable. And as ECA leaders continue to work toward creative solutions to their

transportation issues, the evidence suggests that long-term solutions rest in the capacity of the education ministry to shoulder the financial responsibility. In conclusion, structural constraints are reported to be the primary challenges that limit the provision of ECAs in Saudi secondary schools. This highlights the need for action from policymakers to develop more effective strategies to support schools that lack physical and financial resources for ECA provision.

### 5.3.2 Challenges related to parents and local communities

Crawford and Godbey (1987) defined interpersonal constraints on leisure activities as those resulting from external factors, such as parents, teachers, coaches, peers, cultures and surrounding community. Intrapersonal constraints may also be inhibiting, but a lesser degree than structural constraints. The results of the teachers' survey show that challenges related to parents and local communities are the second-ranked challenges reported by teachers that affect the ECAs' implementation in schools (M = 3.461). These challenges include, for them, lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs, difficulty in attracting parents and members of the local community to be volunteers for organising ECAs, and lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in ECAs. Meanwhile, the results of the following up interviews with teachers provide further information on how these challenges may be overcome, revealing that ECA leaders have adopted different strategies to deal with those challenges to sustain the ECA availability in their schools.

Almost 84% of teachers indicated that there is a lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs in their schools (M =4.151, SD = .829). Strategies reported by interviewed teachers for addressing this challenge include contacting the government organisations and private companies operating in their local communities, building a mutually beneficial relationship with those private companies, and promoting school-community partnerships. These are the most frequently cited strategies by ECA leaders to overcome the lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs. For example, the challenge of funding ECAs programs has forced some schools to try to find private sponsorship to run their ECAs. In this respect, one interviewed participant explained his experience of securing a sponsor for some sport-talented students in his school, he said that:

> *To get support from local organizations, you should promote your school and ask for support; during the past year, we agreed with one of the famous sport clubs to sponsor some talented students in football and provide them with care in terms of training and transportation cost*.

In fact, most of ECA leaders agreed that getting a private sponsor for school ECA activities can be hard, but they also agreed that there are some private companies who are interested in sponsoring the ECAs in return for a commercial benefit. In this regard, one participant stressed on the importance of building a mutually beneficial relationship between schools and private companies saying that: "*Sometimes we get financial support and cooperation from companies if we advertise for them in school"*. Abueg (2021) argued that one way to potentially keep ECAs programs alive and save the school money would be to seek out companies' sponsorship. It appears that schools that make an active connection with their local organisations are often successful in forging reciprocal relationships that could be used to improve their situation including the ECA provision. On the other hand, one of the participants accused local businesses of not being interested in providing support for school activities because they are unaware of their responsibility toward schools saying that*: "The problem is that these companies do not have awareness of community partnership. If they had awareness, we would get support from them"*. In fact, building school-community partnerships needs steps from schools first, because they need support not the other way around. Kladifko (2013) stated that one of the most neglected opportunities by schools is that of building school community partnerships, he further argued that schools that communicate with their external communities in some organised way enhance their chances of getting better public support.

Another interpersonal constraint is the parents' attitudes toward ECAs. Parents can play supportive or discouraging roles in their children's engagement in ECAs. The statistical results of the survey's data reveal that almost 64% of participants reported that parents do not encourage their children to participate in ECAs with (M = 3.743, SD = .844). This result was investigated more through interviewing some ECAs leaders, and it was mostly traced to parents' concerns about safety and safeguarding issues during their children's involvement in ECAs, and to parents' negative attitude toward ECA participation - that participation may affect students' academic performance negatively. The interviewed ECAs leaders also reported strategies to deal with this challenge including building strong personal communication with individual parents, giving more details on ECAs to parents, building mutual trust between parents and school, and using school social media platforms and school parties to highlight students' achievements in ECAs. For example, one participant commented that:

> *Parents are often reluctant to let their children engage in the ECAs especially those activities that are held outside the school, such as scouting activities and sports. This is because of their fears that their children may be harmed. But if I see the student has*

*a strong desire to participate in these activities, I communicate with his parent and give him comprehensive details about the activity and the risks associated with participation, as this gives the parents comforts about their son's participation*.

Another participant commented on the issue of parents' concerns that participation in ECAs may lower their children's academic performance saying that:

*I believe that parents' concern is due to the ignorance of some parents about the ECA organised by school. The school has a great role in educating parents about these activities through school social media channels as well as through parties that take place at the end of the school academic year in which parents are invited to watch the results of their children who are involved in those activities*.

This present result is consistent with the results of Topuz' (2020) study, which examined parents' views towards ECA sports and found that their attitudes play a key role in determining children's engagement in ECA sports; parents who are aware of the contribution of ECA sports activities to the physical and social development of the child, support their children to take part in the ECA sports activities. However, parents who firmly believe that involvement in ECA sports is unnecessary and that it jeopardises the student's school performance, have a negative attitude towards the ECA sports activities. Topuz (2020) concluded that awareness seminars should be organised to improve parents' attitudes and to inform them about the physical, emotional, and social benefits that children may gain from being involved in these activities.

Lack of contribution from members of the local community to support ECA in schools is perceived to be another interpersonal constraint that schools face. Getting parents and local community members involved in school can have a profound effect on school success to achieve its tasks. Parents and community members can help schools in many ways, such as leading non-formal educational activities. In this present study, over 76% of the survey participants reported that their schools face difficulty engaging members of the local community to be volunteers for organising ECAs (M = 4.058, SD = .8914). Strategies used by interviewed ECAs leaders for addressing this challenge include keeping close contact with parents and local community members, and encouraging them to take part in ECAs, using incentives to encourage parents and community members to take part in leading ECAs, and keeping close contact with the school's former students. For example, some of the interviewed participants noted that building strong communication between the school and community members is a major reason for parents for volunteering in school ECA, such as:

*I have to say that poor communication between the school and parents is one of the reasons why some parents are not aware of the ECA activities, I remember we held an open activity day inside the school, we sent invitation cards to parents, and there was a presence from them, and they supported us in carrying out that activity*.

Another participant stressed the importance of establishing a good school community relationship saying that; "*We have good contact with the neighbourhood council, most of whose members are retired; they have experiences in many disciplines, and we benefit from them in carrying out some ECA in the school"*. The core of their stories is that communicating with parents and community members regularly and providing them with updated information of what is going on the school is felt to be an important way to encourage them to be more involved in the life of a school. Another important reported strategy to get parental and community members involved in school's ECAs is using incentives. In this regard, one participant commented on this strategy saying that: "*Incentives also have a major role in encouraging parents to provide continuous support for the school in the future, like certificates of thanks that are given to them due to their efforts in serving the school"*. In fact, honouring parents and community members who support the school is not only a way of thanking them, but it is critical for sustaining their engagement in the school's activities in the future. Keeping in touch with former students is another important strategy used by ECA leaders to increase the involvement of the local community members in ECAs. For example, one participant commented on that: "*We have a close contact with some of the past students who offer some courses such as the first aid course and other activities"*. LaBahn (1995) argued that former students may value the opportunity to give something back to their past school, and the best way to make the most of their experiences is by inviting them to get involved in school events. Overall, enhancing school communication with families and community members is essential in order to construct a strong collaboration that enables teachers to plan and facilitate any school activities, and to achieve desired outcomes for all involved (Barrera & Warner, 2006).

From another theoretical perspective, ecological systems theory can explain how challenges from parents and local communities affect the implementation of extracurricular activities (ECA) in Saudi secondary schools. This involves examining the various levels of environmental influence that interact and impact this process. Parental attitudes and involvement are crucial, from the microsystem upwards. If parents do not value ECAs or prioritise academic achievements over extracurricular activities, they may not support their children's participation. This can lead to lower student engagement in ECAs. The mesosystem

involves the interactions between different microsystems, such as the relationship between home and school. Effective implementation of ECAs requires coordination between parents and schools. If parents are not cooperative or do not align with the school's ECA goals, it can lead to scheduling conflicts and lack of student participation. The exosystem includes external environments that indirectly influence the individual, such as parents' workplaces and community resources. Availability of community resources, such as sports facilities, cultural centres, and clubs, can enhance the range of ECAs. Limited community resources can restrict the variety and quality of ECAs offered by schools. Economic conditions of the local community can impact the funding and resources available for ECAs. Communities with limited financial resources may struggle to support extracurricular programs. The macrosystem encompasses broader cultural and societal influences, including cultural values, economic policies, and educational norms. In KSA, there may be a strong cultural emphasis on academic achievement over extracurricular involvement. This cultural priority can affect parental attitudes towards ECAs.

### 5.3.3 Challenges related to teachers

Another interpersonal constraint that may hinder the provision of ECAs is teachers' role. According to the surveyed teachers, teachers-based challenges include teacher's reluctance to organise ECAs, teachers' excessive workload, and teachers' lack of skills and knowledge for leading ECAs. The survey results show that these challenges related to teachers are the third-ranked challenges reported by teachers that affect ECAs implementation in schools. Meanwhile, the interviews' results provide further information on how ECA leaders try to overcome these barriers, revealing that the ECA leaders had adopted different strategies to deal with those challenges to keep the ECAs available in their schools.

In the context of Saudi schools, teachers are regarded as key players in the implementation of extracurricular activities in their schools. Although Saudi teachers' participation in ECAs is not compulsory, they are still seen by the Ministry of Education as the preferred staff for leading the ECAs; this view is held because it is believed that teachers' participation in ECAs can have positive effects on students and schools, which is something that teachers may feel encouraged to do. However, approximately 61% of the survey participants in this present study indicated that there is a lack of cooperation from teachers in conducting the ECAs in schools (M =3.532, SD =1.069). This result is also supported by statements collected from the interviewed ECA leaders. For example, one interviewee sad that: "*for me as ECA leader, I can*

*say that the cooperation from teachers in organizing the school ECA is limited and many of them are reluctant to lead activities beyond the curriculum"*. This lack of cooperation from teachers' side is because teachers leading school extracurricular activities is optional and they are not part of the teachers' official job duties. For example, one ECA leader mentioned that:

> *In fact, leading these activities is not obligatory on teachers, and there is nothing in the "one activity plan" ECA that was approved by the education ministry clarifying who is responsible for leading these activities and what are the incentives that should be given to teachers who are active in these activities, so that is why some teachers do not want to be involved in them.*

To encourage teachers to take part in school extracurricular activities, the interviewed ECA leaders suggested different strategies; these include using incentives, building a collaborative work environment, dividing ECA tasks equally between teachers and developing teams of ECA teachers with different specialisms. For example, one interviewed participant highlights the role of using incentives to get teachers interested in leading ECAs. He mentioned that:

> *Among the incentives that could be provided to teachers who are doing extra roles other than teaching tasks is giving them additional points to be counted in their job performance evaluation. This incentive has a positive impact on the teachers, which makes them contribute effectively in leading ECA activities.*

Another participant emphasised the importance of building a collaborative work environment as a strategy to encourage teachers to do more in the ECAs. He stated that: "*I always try to explain to teachers that their role in organizing the school ECA stem from voluntary and ethical principle for the benefit of the students, not from a mandatory principle, in some cases this works with them"*. Panigrahi and Geleta (2012) investigated factors that affect the implementation of extracurricular activities in secondary schools; they found that lack of incentive and reward affects teachers' desire to participate in these activities. They concluded that school leaders should pay attention to this issue by giving adequate support and incentives for teachers.

According to the survey's results of the present study, 87% of the teachers indicated that excessive teaching workload is preventing them from leading ECAs (M =4.337, SD =.892). This means a large number of Saudi teachers find themselves with either no time or little energy for leading extra activities in their schools because of increasing teaching workload. For example, one interviewed ECA leader stated that: "*I face difficulty in recruiting teachers to*

*manage ECA activities in the school... most of them apologized because they say we are overwhelmed with teaching duties, and we do not have time to lead extra responsibilities"*. This statement suggests that some teachers were willing to be involved in organising ECAs, but at the same time felt they were overburdened with teaching commitments. Whiteley and Richard (2012) conducted a study to investigate whether or not teachers who have a full teaching workload were willing to volunteer to participate in extracurricular activities. They found that for over 70% of teachers who said that they did not have enough preparation time over the full school year, their workloads became unmanageable, which prevented them from supervising school extracurricular activities.

According to Sutton (2015) many teachers nowadays are increasingly under pressure to get involved in activities that lie outside of their assigned teaching workload. This is because they are sometimes judged by the volume of the activities that they get involved in. When teachers' teaching schedule become more crammed with additional time commitments, such as supervising extracurricular activities in their schools, this can create issues for teachers. Sutton (2015) further argued that teachers who have to manage ECAs with limited time available in their teaching timetable can be negatively affected; one effect that can come from engaging too much in ECAs is burnout which is considered a serious problem in education. To support teachers to cope with the workload of engaging in ECAs and encourage them to lead a role in implementing ECAs, the participants of this present study suggested different strategies. For example, one interviewed participant stressed that the supervision of the ECAs is assigned to teachers who have the lowest teaching workload, saying that: "*We distribute the tasks of leading ECAs fairly among teachers, according to their teaching workload; teachers with the lowest workload is given some ECAs"*. Using non-teaching staff as ECAs organisers is also another strategy that could be used for promoting extracurricular activities in schools; one participant commented on that saying: "*Sometimes the tasks of leading ECAs are assigned to some school staff who do not have teaching tasks, such as the librarian and the social counsellor"*. Among the strategies that may be helpful in increasing teachers' role in managing ECAs is reducing teaching tasks for teachers who have a position in ECAs; here is how one participant phrased this*: "All teachers' teaching tasks are reduced so they can have time to lead the ECA clubs"*. Building from the above discussion, heavy teaching workload is reported to represent a barrier to teachers' engagement in ECAs, but when teaching workload is managed properly, teachers can find a chance to engage actively in school extracurricular activities.

Lack of knowledge and skills needed for implementing ECAs is another reported barrier that can prevent teachers from being involved in ECAs. According to the statistical results of the survey's data over 80% of participants reported that they have never been provided with training opportunities or workshops that equip them with the ability to lead ECA in their schools (M =3.928, SD =.887). This result was investigated more through interviewing some ECAs leaders and it was mainly attributed to the poor communication between teachers and ECAs leaders. For example, as previously stated, one interviewed ECA leader argued that:

> *Training opportunities exist for teachers who want to lead school extracurricular activities, but it is possible that some teachers do not know about them because of the ECA leaders' negligence of their role to update teachers about these training opportunities.*

To address this challenge, most of the interviewed participants agreed on the importance of improving ECAs leaders- teachers' communication and making sure that training opportunities and information needed for leading ECAs is available for teachers. For example, one interviewed participant noted that: "*The ECA leader is responsible for training teachers on how to lead ECAs and inform them about any training courses held by the education' ministry that related to ECAs"*. The survey results of the present study also show that 62% of the participants claim to not know the appropriate mechanism for organising ECAs in their school. This means that teachers' competency of knowledge, planning, leading, and evaluating school extracurricular activities may be low, which can have implications for students' participation in ECAs. According to Salamuddin et al. (2011) teachers are a key factor in the implementation of school extracurricular activities, and if teachers are not able to plan varied and interesting activities that fit the students' needs, it will discourage the students from getting involved in the activities. To solve this problem, most of the interviewed ECA leaders in this present study agreed that prior planning set by ECA leaders is a vital step to help teachers carry out the ECAs confidently and effectively. For example, one of the interviewees noted that: "*When we start providing a new activity, there must be a plan printed on paper and given to the teacher, showing the activity's objectives, the way the activity is implemented and the expected time course for its implementation"*. This result is consistent with Fang and Ngee's (2013) study, which investigated teachers' knowledge and readiness towards their involvement in school extracurricular programmes. They found that having relevant knowledge and skills in extracurricular programmes is an important element to help teachers in managing them, and

they concluded that the ability to manage and organise extracurricular programmes effectively is a major factor in determining the success of the programmes in schools.

Teachers' participation in ECAs is thought to have developmental benefits for students. Logan and Scarborough (2008) noted that students have a need for other 'adult relationships' in their lives, beyond their parents and families. This is viewed as an asset that is vital for a student's development and growth, whether in their academic or personal life. Feldman and Matjakso (2005) stated that student participation in ECA activities provides them with an opportunity to identify a role model among their teachers, which enables genuine interaction, constructive feedback, and also the support of a mentor who will encourage and coach a student throughout their journey into adulthood. The authors also argued that involvement in ECA allows children to get to know their teachers and coaches well, and this in turn can foster positive and trustworthy relationships beyond the child's family. It can also, they argue, be a beneficial influence on a child's development as it can be a bridge to achieving trust and mutual respect (Feldman & Matjakso, 2005). To achieve these benefits of teachers' involvement in ECAs, strategies to lower the barriers should be considered by Saudi policymakers in order to encourage Saudi teachers to take roles in implementing ECAs in their schools.

Overall, using the model of hierarchical leisure constraints to examine how challenges from teachers affect the implementation of extracurricular activities (ECA) in Saudi boys' schools reveals a complex interplay of factors. Teachers' heavy workloads, time constraints, and lack of motivation can significantly hinder their ability to plan and supervise ECAs effectively. Providing incentives and professional development could mitigate these challenges, enhancing teachers' skills and engagement. Furthermore, the relationship between teachers and school administration is crucial. Insufficient administrative support and poor collaboration among teachers can lead to poorly organised ECAs. Consequently, strengthening administrative backing and fostering teamwork among teachers are vital strategies to improve coordination and resource allocation.

### 5.3.4 Challenges related to students

According to the hierarchical model of leisure activities constraints Crawford et al. (1991), intrapersonal constraints are personal characteristics or states that restrict one's preference for a certain activity. The model outlined a range of key intrapersonal constraint factors: (1) individual psychological conditions; (2) lack of knowledge; and (3) lack of interest. These constraints are commonly conceptualised as intervening factors in students' ECA participation

and preferences. The survey results show that intrapersonal challenges related to students (M = 3.331) such as students' reluctance to participate in ECAs, students' ECAs preferences and students' lack of awareness of the ECAs' importance are the fourth-ranked challenges reported by teachers that affect the ECAs' implementation in schools. Meanwhile, the results of the follow up interviews with teachers provide further information on how they attempt to overcome these challenges, revealing that ECA leaders in secondary schools have adopted different strategies to deal with those challenges in order to promote students' participation in school extracurricular activities.

Over 70% of the surveyed teachers who participated in this present study reported that students in their schools lack interest in getting involved in ECAs (M =3.650, SD = .999) as they are not counted in students' academic progress reports. This result was discussed in more depth with a group of students during the interviews, and it appears that academic anxiety can play an important role in discouraging students from participating in school extracurricular activities. For example, one participant commented on that: "*Believe me no sane student wants to waste his study' time at the expense of participating in activities that count nothing when it comes to his grades"*. The constant pressure of achieving high academic performance makes some of the Saudi secondary students less motivated to take part in ECAs and often insistent on participation in activities that help them to raise their academic grade point average. For example, one ECA leader commented on that saying that: *"Some students bargain with me and insist that they will not participate unless they get extra mark as result of their participation"*. An explanation of his result may be that Saudi students of secondary school age are often under constant pressure to get high grades to get places in universities; therefore, they do not want to be overloaded with extra activities that may distract them from focusing on their study. Wilks (2008) defines academic stress as a condition where a student is overloaded with academic demands that exceed the student's academic adaptation energy. According to Fathiyah (2022) secondary schools have the most stressful learning environments that are overloaded with many assignments, with large numbers of subjects to be studied and examined, and teacher-parent pressure on students to show their best academic performance. Fathiyah (2022) further argued that academic anxiety is one of the most common issues occurring during secondary school that can decline students' involvement in school activities.

On the other hand, ECA leaders who participated in the interviews discussed multiple strategies used by them to encourage the reluctant students to take part in school extracurricular activities, including the use of extrinsic rewards for participation (such as bonus points). One of the

interviewees indicated this*: "One of the solutions that I have seen is effective for motivating students is to give them bonus points due to their participation"*. Interview participants also discussed the use of incentives for encouraging students participating in ECAs. For example, one of the interviewees noted that: "*Students can be attracted to participate by some incentives as this will encourage them to participate"*. Incentives are material or nonmaterial rewards that can be used to promote an individual or group to behave in a certain way. Incentives for school extracurricular programs may be in the form of activities (such as school food parties, field trips and recreation activities) or in the form of rewards (such as financial rewards, gifts, and certificates of thanks and appreciation). Collins et al. (2008) argued that incentives can promote students to become interested in school activities that they might not have been interested in at first, and that incentives can also stimulate them to remain participated in these activities.

Adding marks to behavioural engagement reports of ECA participants is another strategy reported by the ECA leaders who participated in the interview. For example, one participant stated that: "*Student who excel in the ECA activities are given extra marks in their reports of school behavioural engagement"*. Among the strategies reported by ECA leaders that may be helpful in increasing students' participation in ECAs is giving the ECA participants extra academic marks. For example, one of the ECA leaders mentioned that:

> *I made an agreement with teachers to send them a list of participants in the ECA, including information about the type of ECA, the number of times the students participated and their achievements, and any student, the teachers think he deserves extra academic marks for his participation is given.*

The majority of ECA leaders who were interviewed in this study believe that students deserve academic credit in return for their participation in ECAs, because they believe that these activities can contribute to students' overall development including the academic aspect because some of the extracurricular activities sponsored by schools can be related to the curriculum such as scientific clubs and competitions. This practice however may go against the policy of the Saudi Ministry of Education regarding the ECAs, because the policy did not address the point of whether students' participation in ECAs involved academic grades or not. In fact, there has been controversial debate in the literature about whether or not students involved in school ECA should be credited academic grades; some educational experts stated that the answer depends on the context of the activities. For example, if the school

extracurricular activity is aligned with curriculum objectives, then students are eligible to gain extra academic grades and vice versa (Bartkus et al, 2012).

Students' personal preference for certain ECA activities is another intrapersonal constraint that may influence students' participation in ECAs. According to the survey's results of the present study, 60% of the teachers indicated that the type of ECA that their students want to participate in is not on offer in their schools (M =3.730, SD =1.035). When this result was discussed in depth with some of the ECA leaders during the interview, most of them agreed that providing a variety of different ECAs to meet students' preferences is difficult to be applied on the ground for several overlapping reasons that have to do with the policy of implementing ECAs and the state of schools' infrastructure facilities. Yes, there are many ECA activities that could be provided to students in schools, but at the same time there are determining factors that may prevent implementing some of them during the school day, such as time and the school facilities. For example, among the extracurricular sport activities that listed in the "One Hour Activity Plan" for school ECAs are swimming and horse riding. These activities need specialised sports facilities to be carried out. The question is how a school can provide swimming activities where there is no swimming pool inside the school to practice swimming activities. Let us suppose that a swimming pool is available in the school, is one-hour sufficient time to practice this activity? In fact, several ECA leaders participated in the present study felt that one hour is too little time for such an activity. For example, one participant argued that the idea of carrying out One-hour activities during the middle of the school day is a difficult idea to implement, as one hour is not enough and it will disrupt the school day and create countless problems. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that lack of school facilities and the limited time that is allocated for practicing the ECA in schools are often responsible for not providing a particular ECAs that may be highly preferred by some students.

According to Sivan et al (2019) extracurricular activities are recognised as "self-defining activities" that represent students own free choice. This is because there are a wide variety of psychological, social, learning, physical, spiritual needs that make students willing to commit and invest effort in their selected activities. Therefore, the provision of extracurricular activities should be in line with students' preferences, needs and age (Nashwan & Moham'd 2020). To meet students' preferences in school extracurricular activities, the ECA leaders applied different strategies. The first strategy is basing the ECA provision on the most frequently requested ECA. This strategy may be fair because it meets the preferences of a large number of students for the particular activity. For the rest of the students, they can be directed to

activities that correspond to their interests. For example, if students want to practice swimming and athletics activities, they could be offered membership in one of the branches of the Ministry of Sports. The second strategy mentioned is to diversify the provision of ECA activities. For example, ten different ECA programs (sports, scientific and cultural programs) are offered every week in an interesting way which makes students enjoy participation. It is also possible to take advantage of the facilities of public sports centres near to schools to organise some ECA activities that can be difficult to implement in schools given the lack of suitable facilities.

According to the result of the present study, lack of knowledge and awareness of ECA importance with (M =3.448, SD =1.119) is the remaining intrapersonal constraint on students participating in ECAs. This result is consistent with previous research. For example, Greenbank (2015) examined factors influencing undergraduate students' participation in extracurricular activities. The study sample consisted of twenty-one undergraduates who completed two questionnaires in their first year of study, then they were followed-up by in-depth interviews in their first and final year of study. The author found that many of these students were not participating in ECA because they lacked awareness of the value of ECA for their future work skills. Greenbank (2015) concluded that students' values and behaviour influence their decision to engage ECA, and to change students' attitudes to ECA, there should be strategies aiming to increase their awareness of the values that can be gained from participating in ECA. In another study, Mohamad Sari and Esa (2017) found that when the students' knowledge of school extracurricular activities is very low and they perceive these activities to be boring and burdensome, it can lead to a lack of students' interest in getting involved in school extracurricular activities. It also makes these students more likely to engage in non-school-organised activities to occupy their time. The results of the present study suggest different strategies that can be used to increase students' awareness about the importance of school ECA participation. Teachers' suggested strategies include explaining and highlighting the importance of ECAs through publicity such as distributing leaflets to the students about ECAs; highlighting the role of ECAs in enhancing and developing students' abilities; using school social media such as twitter and snapchat as channels for communication. And finally, another recommended strategy is celebrating participation in ECAs to highlight the value that is given to participation and thereby encourage it.

Overall, the hierarchical model of leisure activities constraints provides a comprehensive framework to understand and address student-related challenges in implementing ECAs in Saudi secondary schools. Students' lack of interest, motivation, and the pressure of academic

workloads are primary barriers. Addressing these challenges by designing engaging programs, balancing academic and extracurricular schedules, and promoting positive peer influence could enhance participation. Furthermore, limited parental support and ineffective communication between parents and schools can negatively impact student involvement in ECAs. Enhancing parental involvement through education programs and maintaining regular communication could foster a supportive environment for ECAs. By considering intervening factors in students' ECA participation and preferences, schools can seek to create an environment that supports and encourages student participation in ECAs, enhancing their overall development and engagement.

# Chapter Six

# 6 Chapter 6: Conclusion

## 6.1 Introduction

This study investigated the potentials and limitations associated with the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs within the context of secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the study explored the potential of "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in enhancing students' personal and social skill development, and a sense of belonging within the school community from the lenses of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). On other hand the model of hierarchical leisure constraints suggested by Crawford et al. (1991) is utilised to identify the challenges that are associated with introducing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs and explore the strategies that may be useful to overcome the challenges for better implementation of the ECAs in public secondary schools. This concluding chapter synthesises the key findings of the study, and it includes some focus on the program's applicability in the context of Saudi Arabia's girls' schools (Grades 10-12). By considering both the strengths and limitations of "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs, this chapter aims to provide valuable insights for Saudi policymakers, educators, and future research endeavours. Ultimately, the goal is to create an evidence-informed roadmap for the successful implementation of OHAP, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience that addresses the specific needs and aspirations of boy students preparing for university entrance.

## 6.2 Study Problem

The secondary education system in Saudi Arabia faces a critical concern: a substantial proportion of students (85%) do not participate in extracurricular activities (ECAs) despite their supposed value in fostering student development. While acknowledging the potential benefits of ECAs, research by Alfnifie (2012) suggests that many Saudi high schools lack robust programs that cater to students' developmental needs, interests, and core skills. This is further supported by the National Transformation Program report (NTP, 2016) which highlights a low participation rate of only 15% in extracurricular activities. In response to these concerns, the Saudi Ministry of Education implemented the "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) in 2017 with the aim of increasing student engagement in school-sponsored ECAs. However, the long-term impact of OHAP on student development and the challenges associated with its implementation remain relatively unexplored. This research addresses this knowledge gap by focusing on two key areas:

1. Student development and belonging: This strand of the research aims to explore the perceived impact of OHAP on students' personal and social development, along with their sense of belonging within the school community.

2. Implementation challenges and strategies: This area of investigation focuses on identifying the challenges faced by schools in implementing OHAP, and explores the strategies employed by ECA leaders to overcome these obstacles and ultimately improve the program's implementation in Saudi secondary schools.

By investigating these aspects, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and ECA leaders. These insights can be used to enhance the design and implementation of OHAP, ultimately fostering a more well-rounded educational experience for students in Saudi Arabia's secondary schools.

## 6.3 Study Conclusion

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, human development takes place in interactional and dynamic contexts that exert influence upon development. Extracurricular activities can be one of the microsystems that young people can choose to fulfill their developmental needs. The study's results show that Saudi secondary school boys assess their participation in the "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) as providing a rich environment for experiencing several personal and social skills. The most commonly reported skills by students that are developed during their participation in ECAs are skills of initiative such as goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management skills. More specifically, students who participated in ECA sport, scouting and science activities have higher self-reported levels of development of their initiative skills than those who participated in art and culture activities. The second often most reported developmental skills that students think can be cultivated through ECA participation are teamwork skills which include feedback, leadership, responsibility, and group process skills. The findings suggest that ECA sport and ECA academics provide optimal contexts for experiencing skills related to teamwork than other ECA activities such as scouting, art and cultural activities. The third most often reported developmental skills that students felt to be cultivated through ECA participation are positive relationship skills such as peer relationships and prosocial norms and behaviours. More specifically the results indicate that participation in ECA sport, scouting and science activities are felt to be more likely to extend peer networks and promote interpersonal relationships than participation in ECA art and cultural activities. The fourth most often reported developmental

skills that students felt to be cultivated through ECA participation are basic skills such as cognitive skills and emotional regulation skills. In this study, longer participation in school ECA has been found to be a predictor for more perceived enhancement in students' cognitive and emotional skills. More specifically, the results indicate that students with two years' participation in school ECA have higher self-reported levels of development of their cognitive and emotional skills than those who participated for less than one year. This result may have important implication on better cognitive and emotional development in students. Schools therefore are advised to facilitate and encourage long-term participation in school extracurricular activities among students. Identity exploration is the fifth reported developmental skill that can be cultivated through ECA participation. The quantitative result reveals that there is no significant difference in students' reported skills of identity exploration regardless of the type of ECA activities students involved in. The qualitative result, however, stresses on the importance of offering students a variety of ECA activities and without limiting the ECA provision to specific activities, as variety provides more freedom to explore and express identity options than limited activities.

Another reported contribution of participation in school ECA is that it may positively enhance students' sense of belonging to their school. Even though the study result reveals that students' school belonging was not significantly associated either with specific activity contexts or with length of ECA participation, the trend of students' perceptions on developing a sense of school belonging through participation in school ECA tends to be positive. For example, in this study, involvement in school extracurricular activities is described by students as an enjoyable experience. Early longitudinal research focusing on school belonging suggested that students' sense of school belonging tends to decline over the teenage years, and that the years in which students had a higher sense of school's belonging were also the years in which they felt that the school was more enjoyable (Neel & Fuligni, 2013). This result underscores that extracurricular activities participation may serve as an indirect factor for fostering students' sense of school belonging by making the school environment more enjoyable.

The second objective of this study was to identify the challenges that need to be addressed for successful implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs. By applying Crawford et al.'s (1991) hierarchical model of leisure constraints, the study found that the structural constraints (including school budget and facilities, availability of time, and transportation issues) are the highest-ranked challenges reported by teachers that specifically affect ECAs implementation in Saudi secondary schools. In fact, budget insufficiency represents a considerable problem for

schools when it comes to implementing ECAs. This is often a concern for the activities that require special material. Strategies reported by teachers for addressing the lack of budget for running school ECAs include carrying out inexpensive ECAs, limiting the number of students to whom activities are offered, collecting financial donations from parents and teachers, and using income from schools' canteens to subsidise the ECA budget. It should be noted that the strategy of limiting student numbers, which is used by some schools as a solution to address the budget shortages, is not practically fair because it can deprive a large number of students from the benefits that can be gained from participation. Research suggests that participation in extracurricular activities may have positive effects on students' academic and social development and their sense of belonging to school. If, indeed, participation in school extracurricular activities can lead to these developmental benefits, then the availability of ECAs to all students becomes an important equity issue that should be considered by schools and education stakeholders in particular the ministry of education to ensure that all students should have the opportunity equally to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities particularly during their time at school. Therefore, adequate budget available for "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs to use is extremely important for keeping these activities accessible for all students. In other words, without good funds from the Ministry of Education, the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs will not be properly implemented and achieve its goals as planned.

The availability of necessary physical facilities and resources in schools has a huge impact on extracurricular activities. Lack of appropriate facilities and equipment is found to be an issue that hinders the ability of Saudi secondary schools from providing ECAs. To mitigate this issue, schools included in this study tried different creative strategies, such as using the facilities of the public sports centres, borrowing equipment from other schools, buying cheap or used equipment and tools and renting facilities and tools that are not available in schools. In fact, the readiness of school facilities and equipment support the delivery of not only curricular programmes but also the extracurricular. It has been found that students' willingness of participation in school extracurricular activities depends on the availability of the necessary facilities and equipment. Extracurricular activities offered in schools that have suitable facilities and equipment are more attractive to students than those activities provided in schools without the appropriate facilities and equipment. The question is how can we avoid this problem from happening in Saudi secondary schools, the answer however lies in the hand of the education ministry officials to look at schools that struggle from inadequate facilities and tools and to provide them with needed facilities and equipment including sport, art and music

tools, playgrounds, and halls for conferences and indoor activities. So, this can make a huge difference in schools' ability to conduct the school extracurricular activities effectively and to improve the students' engagement. If the situation continues as it is without the existence of suitable facilities and equipment, unfortunately such activities will remain unattractive, and students in such schools may miss the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities.

Transportation also seems to be an issue faced by ECA leaders in boys' schools when it comes to planning for school trips or field visits; this is because (as they reported) the secondary schools for boys are not provided with buses unlike girls' secondary schools, and most of the schools are suffering from tightening budgets. The issue of transportation has left schools with two options, either reducing the number of students and transporting them by teachers' private cars, or imposing fees on students to cover the costs of transport for those who wish to participate in the trips, if the number of students is big. The two options used by schools as a means for overcoming the issue of lack of transportation can have negative consequences, which are recognised by the ECA Leaders. The transportation of students by teachers' private cars for extracurricular activities should be avoided because it is a comparatively unsafe way and could involve transportation risks. Charging students to cover ECAs transportation cost can also have a negative consequence, which is decreasing the participation rate of students, because this practice deprives a number of students who may be unable to pay the transportation fees from participation in these extracurricular school trips. ECA policy states that students should have the right to have equal access to extracurricular activities regardless of their socio-economic background. Without reliable and affordable ways to transport students, ECAs activities will become less viable, especially for the students whose families cannot afford the transportation fees. Therefore, long-term solutions rest in the capacity of the education' ministry to shoulder the financial responsibility.

Lack of time during the school day is the final reported structural barrier that schools face in implementing ECAs. Some ECA leaders reported that their schools are having trouble accommodating such activities throughout the school day. Perhaps, the idea of integrating the ECAs into the school timetable is theoretically applicable, but in practice, it is a challenging task because it can lead to disrupting established lessons, causing stress for teachers and students, rising school expenditures, and children being delayed in coming home. As a result, it is ideal to allow schools to determine when and how to conduct such activities.

The current study data show that the intrapersonal constraints related to parents and local communities are the second-ranked challenges reported by teachers that affect the ECAs' implementation in schools. More specifically, lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECAs is the biggest challenge faced by schools that is related to parents and local communities. Strategies reported by interviewed ECA leaders for addressing this challenge include contacting the government organisations and private companies operating in their local communities, building a mutually beneficial relationship with those private companies, and building and promoting school-community partnerships. The conclusion drawn from the results is that lack of active connection between schools and local authorities and businesses is the main reason why some schools do not receive support from such organisations, but when schools build strong connections with their local organisations in organised ways, they can successfully get support. Therefore, the mechanisms by which schools connect with their external environments are crucial in this case. In fact, active connections among schools and local community businesses can add value for all the parties. For example, the challenge of funding ECAs programs has forced some schools to seek out private companies to sponsor their ECAs in return for a commercial benefit such as advertisement. It appears that schools that make an active connection with their local organizations are often successful in forging reciprocal relationships that could be used to improve their situation including the ECA provision. Building and promoting social responsibility in business organizations is another cited strategy used by ECA leaders to overcome the lack of contribution from private sector institutions in the local community to support ECAs. The majority of the interviewed ECA leaders reported that private-sector organisations are less engaged with schools when it comes to supporting schools in organising ECAs than their counterparts in the public sector, because such organisations do not have the awareness about the importance of their social responsibility toward schools. Although the support provided by some private institutions is very limited and does not meet schools' expectations, most ECA leaders are positive about how willing such institutions are to provide more support, and they believe that can be increased through promoting the concept of social responsibility engagement among private sector institutions. Currently, promoting such concept is less rooted in Saudi education policy. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should actively play a role in supporting social responsibility efforts and campaigns that aimed to increase private- sector engagement in schools' issues.

Getting parents and local community members involved in school can have a profound effect on school in achieving its objectives. Parents and community members can help schools in many ways, including leading and supporting non-formal educational activities. However, the study results show that lack of engagement from parents and local community members to be volunteers for organising ECAs is the second challenge faced by Saudi secondary schools that is related to parents and local communities. One of the strategies used by interviewed ECAs leaders for addressing this challenge is keeping close contact with parents and local community members. The conclusion is that poor communication between school and parents is found to be a main reason why some parents are not aware of the ECA activities that are provided to their children in schools. Therefore, communicating with parents and community members regularly and providing them with up-to-date information of what is going on school is an important way to encourage them to be more involved in the life of a school, particularly their children's extracurricular activities. Another important reported strategy to get parental and community members involved in a school's ECAs is using incentives. The results suggest that using incentives such as certificates of thanks is not only a way of thanking them, but it is critical for sustaining their support and engagement in school extracurricular activities in the long term. Keeping in touch with former students is another important strategy used by ECA leaders to increase local community members' involvement in ECAs. Schools can benefit from some former students who may value the opportunity to give something back to their past school, and the best way to make the most of their experiences is by inviting them to get involved in school events. Overall, enhancing school communication with families and community members is essential in order to construct a strong collaboration that enables ECA leaders to plan and facilitate any school activities and to achieve desired outcomes for all involved.

The study results indicate that teachers report interpersonal constraints as the third most significant set of challenges affecting the implementation of ECAs in schools. Schools report that the biggest challenge they face is teachers' excessive workload. The majority of ECA leaders who were interviewed expressed difficulty in recruiting teachers to manage ECA activities, citing their overwhelming teaching duties and lack of time for extra responsibilities. This result indicates that while some Saudi teachers are willing to participate in organising ECAs, their high teaching workload often leaves them with insufficient time or energy to lead additional activities in their schools. It is critical to consider that if teachers, particularly those who have limited time available in their teaching timetable, are involved in activities that lie

outside of their assigned teaching workload, their teaching schedule may become more crammed and unmanageable; this can cause undesirable outcomes on overall teachers' performance. Engaging in excessive ECAs can lead to teachers' burnout, a serious issue that can negatively impact their teaching performance and health (Sutton, 2015). To support teachers to cope with the workload of engaging in ECAs and encourage them to take on lead roles in implementing ECAs, the participants of this present study suggested different strategies. One of the strategies that teachers believe can be effective in this case is distributing the tasks of leading ECAs fairly among teachers, according to their teaching workload. For example, a teacher with the lowest workload could be given some ECAs. Using non-teaching staff such as librarian and school social counsellor as ECAs organisers is also another strategy that teachers suggest could be used for promoting extracurricular activities in schools. Finally, among the strategies that may be helpful (according to teachers themselves) in increasing teachers' roles in managing ECAs is reducing teaching tasks for teachers who have a position in ECAs. However, it is important that schools' principals must weigh the value of reducing teachers' teaching tasks and letting them leave their classrooms to have position in ECAs against any risks that may negatively affect teaching quality or students' academic performance as a result of that practice. Overall, heavy teaching workload is reported to represent a barrier to teachers' engagement in ECAs, but when teaching workload is managed properly by schools' leaders, teachers can find a chance to engage actively in school extracurricular activities. Whiteley and Richard (2012) suggest that teachers are less likely to participate in extracurricular activities when they have little time. Therefore, providing teachers with more time could attract more teachers to organise school extracurricular activities.

In addition to interpersonal challenges related to teachers, lack of knowledge and skills needed for implementing ECAs is another reported barrier that can prevent teachers from being involved in ECAs. According to the statistical results of the survey's data, over 80% of participants reported that they have never been provided with training opportunities or workshops that equip them with the ability to lead ECA in their schools. In fact, training opportunities exist for teachers who want to lead school extracurricular activities, but it is possible that some teachers might be blocked from attending the training opportunities because of their classroom teaching commitments, or maybe they do not know about them for some reasons. When this result was investigated more through interviewing some ECAs leaders, it was mainly attributed to the poor communication between teachers and ECAs leaders. For example, it was found that some ECA leaders sometimes fail to make sure teachers are updated

about any information related to ECAs or about any training opportunities that are provided by the Education Department. According to the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs that are approved by the Ministry of Education, ECA leaders are responsible for training teachers on how to lead ECAs, informing them about any training courses held by the education' ministry that related to ECAs, and overcoming any obstacle that teachers may face. To address this challenge, most of the interviewed participants agreed on the importance of improving ECAs leader- teachers communication and making sure that training opportunities and information needed for leading ECAs is available for teachers.

The survey's results of the present study also show that 62% of the study participants claim that they do not know the appropriate mechanism for organising ECAs in their school. This means that Saudi teachers' knowledge and competency regarding planning, leading, and evaluating school extracurricular activities may be low, which can have implications for students' participation in ECAs. It has been argued that teachers are a key factor in the implementation of school extracurricular activities, and if teachers are not able to plan varied and interesting activities that fit the students' needs, it will discourage the students from getting involved in such activities. To solve this problem, most of the interviewed ECA leaders in this present study agreed that prior planning by ECA leaders is a vital step to help teachers carry out the ECAs confidently and effectively. The "One Hour Activity Plan" stipulates that the ECA leaders are primarily responsible for planning, supervising, and evaluating the implementation of ECA programs, and the successful implementation of school extracurricular activities cannot be achieved without excellent planning and management from the ECA leaders. Therefore, ECA leaders should play an active role in managing school extracurricular activities by guiding teachers as they conduct the activities and helping them over any obstacles that they may face by advising them on what to do and how to do it. Overall, improving teachers' knowledge and competency and knowledge for planning, leading and evaluating school extracurricular programs is felt to be a major factor in determining the success of such programs in schools.

Lack of cooperation from teachers in conducting the ECAs is another reported challenge related to teachers. Most of the ECA leaders interviewed in this study indicate that cooperation from teachers in organising school ECA is limited, and many of the teachers are often reluctant to lead extra activities beyond the curriculum, for reasons other than their heavy teaching workloads. According to the ECA Leaders, this lack of cooperation from teachers is typically because teachers' leadership of school extracurricular activities is optional, and the activities

are not part of the teachers' official job duties. Even though there is nothing mentioned in the "One Hour Activity Plan" for ECAs that is approved by the Ministry of Education explaining the role of teachers in leading these activities and what are the incentives that should be offered to teachers who are actively engaged in school extracurricular activities, the Ministry of Education still sees teachers as the preferred staff for leading such activities which may be considered by some teachers to be unfair. In fact, most of the ECA leaders agreed that the Ministry of Education should realise that teaching is a more stressful and challenging job than other jobs and involves heavy workloads, so it is ethically assumed that any teacher who takes over extra duties, such as leading ECAs, should be rewarded with financial or at least non-financial incentives. For example, among the non-financial incentives used by the ECA leaders that could be offered to teachers who are doing extra roles other than teaching tasks is giving them additional points to be counted in their job performance evaluation. Another mentioned financial factor that can drive teachers to coach in school extracurricular activities is paying teachers extra money. According to the ECA leaders these incentives can have positive impact on the teachers, which makes them contribute effectively in ECA activities. Other suggested strategies that could be used for encouraging teachers to take part in school extracurricular activities include building a collaborative work environment among teachers, dividing ECA tasks equally between teachers and developing a team of ECA teachers with different specialisms. Overall, in my opinion, teachers should be encouraged to contribute to the success of school extracurricular activities by taking part in leading them, because this contribution can influence students' life in a way that is valuable beyond the classroom. Teachers also should be rewarded by schools' principals for their participation in school extracurricular activities because this can also influence teachers' performance in such activities, which would inspire students' active participation in school extracurricular activities.

The current study data show that the interpersonal challenges related to students are the fourth-ranked challenges reported by teachers to affect the ECAs' implementation in schools. More specifically, students' reluctance to participate in ECAs is the biggest perceived challenge faced by schools that is related to students. In this study students' reluctance to participate in extracurricular activities is attributed to intrapersonal constraints. According to the hierarchical leisure constraints model suggested by Crawford et al. (1991) intrapersonal constraints refer to students' psychological states such as students' lack of knowledge of ECAs and students' lack of interest in a given ECA activity. The surveyed teachers who participated in this present study reported that over 70% of students in their schools lack interest in getting involved in ECAs as

they are not counted in students' academic progress reports. When this result was discussed in in-depth interviews with a group of ECA leaders and students, it appears that academic anxiety can play an important role in discouraging students from participating in school extracurricular activities. For example, most of the interviewed students indicated that they do not want to waste their study time in favour of participating in activities that count nothing when it comes to their academic grades. The ECA leaders' point of view is also consistent with students' opinion, as they agreed that Saudi students of secondary school age are often under constant academic pressure to get high grades to get places in universities, therefore they do not want to be overloaded with extra activities that may distract them from focusing on their study, and they are often insistent on participation in activities that help them to raise their academic grade point average. This means, according to teachers, that constant pressure of achieving high academic performance makes some of the Saudi secondary students less motivated to take part in ECAs. According to Fathiyah (2022) secondary schools have the most stressful learning environments that are overloaded with many assignments, with large numbers of subjects to be studied and examined, and teacher-parent pressure on students to show their best academic performance. This type of environments is often associated with academic anxiety in students who accordingly may decrease their motivation for participating in school non-academic activities.

It has been argued that participation in school extracurricular activities can help students decrease the academic stress they may experience by creating an atmosphere of joy in the school learning environment. If that is the case, then students should be encouraged to join extracurricular activities. To motivate students to take part in school extracurricular activities, ECA leaders who participated in the interviews reported multiple strategies including the use of extrinsic rewards for participation (such as bonus points), and the use of material or nonmaterial incentives (such as school food parties, field trips and recreation activities, financial rewards, gifts, and certificates of thanks and appreciation). Research shows that incentives can promote students to become interested in school activities that they might not have been interested in at first, which stimulate the participant to continue with the activity for a longer period (Collins et al, 2008). It should be noted that some incentives may work for some participants and others may not, because the value of incentives varies based on participants' age and interests. For example, according to Collins and colleagues (2008) leadership opportunities (such as taking part in planning ECAs), financial incentives (such as cash, gift certificates and school-store coupons) and special field trips have been found to be

effective in engaging older students in ECAs. However, while incentives stimulate students to participate in ECAs which may in turn maximise the benefits of ECAs involvement on participants' development, incentives should be used sparingly. Research suggests that if incentives are used excessively, participants may begin to rely on incentives alone as a motivator for participation. Therefore, incentives should be used primarily to stimulate students' interest in participating in ECAs, and then the use of incentives should be restricted when the participants begin intrinsically enjoying the components of taking part in ECAs, such as experiencing new skills, exploring one's abilities, discovering hidden talents and building new friendship with peers and adults.

Adding marks to behavioural engagement reports of ECA participants is another strategy reported by the ECA leaders who participated in the interview to sustain students' participation in ECAs. For example, students who regularly attend ECA activities can be given extra marks on their reports on school behavioural engagement. Moreover, among the strategies reported by ECA leaders that may be helpful in increasing students' participation in ECAs is giving the ECA participants extra academic marks. The majority of ECA leaders who were interviewed in this study believe that students deserve academic credit in return for their participation in ECAs. This is because they believe that these activities can contribute to students' overall development, including the academic aspect, and because some of the extracurricular activities sponsored by schools can be related to the curriculum such as scientific clubs and competitions. However, this practice may go against the policy of the Saudi Ministry of Education regarding the ECAs, because the policy did not address the point of whether students' participation in ECAs should be reflected in academic grades or not. In fact, there has been controversy in the literature about whether school ECA involved academic credit or not. In this regard, some educational experts stated that the answer depends on the context of the activities. For example, if the school extracurricular activity is aligned with curriculum objectives, then students can be offered extra academic grades and vice versa (Bartkus et al, 2012). Promoting students' participation in extracurricular activities sponsored by schools has been an important agenda in the policy of Saudi education in recent years due to the social, personal and academic benefits that it may have on students' development. Since crediting students with academic grades has been shown in this current study to be regarded by teachers as an effective strategy to encourage student participation in school extracurricular activities, it is thus recommended that the Ministry of Education allow schools to credit ECAs participants with extra academic grades. The actual effectiveness of this strategy could then be assessed.

Students' personal preference for certain ECA activities is another intrapersonal constraint that may influence students' participation in ECAs. According to the survey results of the present study, 60% of the teachers indicated that the type of ECA that their students want to participate in is not on offer in their schools. The majority of the interviewed ECA leaders agreed that providing a variety of ECAs to meet students' preferences is difficult to be applied on the ground for several overlapping reasons that have to do with the policy of implementing ECAs and the state of schools' infrastructure facilities. For example, among the activities that listed in the "One Hour Activity Plan" for school ECAs is riding horses. To my knowledge equestrian sport is one of the most expensive sports and is typically practiced in places other than schools such as horses' clubs because it requires certain types of equipment and facilities, and long hours of practice to master the equestrian skills. Providing such activity in schools can be difficult practically. So, it would be better to provide this type of extracurricular activities either after school times during the school week or at weekends in places that are well-equipped with the facilities needed to practice this activity.

To meet students' preferences in school extracurricular activities, the ECA leaders applied different strategies. The first strategy is basing the ECA provision on the most frequently requested ECA. This strategy may be considered fair because it meets the preferences of a large number of students for a particular activity. For the rest of the students, they can be directed to activities that correspond to their interests. For example, if students want to ride horses or practice water activities, they could be offered membership in one of the branches of the Ministry of Sports. It is also possible to take advantage of the facilities of public sports centres near to schools to organise some ECA activities that can be difficult to implement in schools given the lack of suitable facilities. Overall, the provision of extracurricular activities should be in line with students' preferences, needs and age. This is because there is a wide variety of psychological, social, learning, physical, and spiritual needs that make students willing to commit and invest effort in their selected activities (Sivan et al, 2019).

The present study's results indicate that the remaining intrapersonal constraint on students participating in ECAs is a lack of knowledge and awareness of the importance of ECAs. Research shows that when the students' knowledge of school extracurricular activities is very low and they perceive these activities to be boring and burdensome, it can lead to a lack of students' interest in getting involved in school extracurricular activities. It also makes these students more likely to engage in non-school-organised activities to occupy their time. Greenbank (2015) argued that students' values and behaviour influence their decision to

engage in ECAs, and that to change students' attitudes to ECA, there should be strategies aiming to increase their awareness of the benefits that can be gained from participating in ECA. The results of the present study suggest that different strategies could be used to increase students' awareness about the importance of school ECA participation. Teachers' suggested strategies include explaining and highlighting the importance of ECAs through publicity such as distributing leaflets to the students about ECAs; highlighting the role of ECAs in enhancing and developing students' abilities; and using school social media such as Twitter and Snapchat as channels for communication. And finally, another recommended strategy is celebrating participation in ECAs to highlight the value that is given to participation and thereby encourage it.

## 6.4 Summary of the Study Conclusion

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory children's development is influenced not only by the context of their home, but also by other ecological contexts such as their school and its characteristics. Extracurricular activities are one of the school's characteristics that is designed to enhance the overall children' development. The study's results demonstrate that Saudi secondary school boys see their involvement in the ECA as giving a rich developmental opportunity for experiencing a variety of personal and social skills. However, the perceived skills gained by participation in ECA depend on the type of activities and their duration. The most commonly reported skills are initiative skills (such as goal setting, effort, problem solving and time management skills) and teamwork skills (such as feedback, leadership, responsibility). According to the perception of students, such skills are attributed to participation in sport and science activities rather than other ECAs such as scouting, art and cultural activities. Furthermore, lengthier engagement in school ECA is linked in the data to a greater reported improvement in students' cognitive and emotional abilities. More precisely, the findings show that students who have engaged in school ECA for two years had greater self-reported levels of cognitive and emotional skill development than those who have only participated for one year. In line with Ecological Systems Theory, these findings are consistent with how a belief that positive changes in school environment can positively contribute to children's social and personal development. Therefore, education policymakers and schools should consider placing a higher emphasis on using research results to design high quality ECAs that are likely to foster positive developmental changes in children in the long term, and provide professional development for school staff to positively and effectively lead children's development.

Students' perceptions regarding their sense of belonging within the school due to ECA also presented a mixed picture. The ECA programs have the potential to facilitate connection with peers who share similar interests, especially if activities are diverse and cater to a wide range of student preferences. However, the one-hour time frame might limit opportunities for forming deep and lasting connections compared to longer-term extracurricular activities. Furthermore, a well-designed ECA with inclusive activities can send a message that the school values students' interests beyond academics, potentially fostering a sense of being valued. However, student perceptions of belonging ultimately depend on the quality and inclusivity of the activities offered within the program. If activities are not perceived as engaging or cater only to a limited range of interests, they might not effectively promote a sense of belonging for all students.

The research identified several potential challenges associated with implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) within secondary schools. Scheduling conflicts emerged as a primary concern, with fitting the one-hour activity seamlessly into the existing timetable proving difficult. This could disrupt established lesson plans or necessitate complex classroom transitions, potentially impacting the flow of the school day. Teacher preparedness and heavy teaching workloads was another key finding. Teachers might require additional training and support to effectively facilitate engaging activities within the shorter timeframe dictated by OHAP. Furthermore, managing student behaviour in a potentially less formal setting compared to traditional classrooms could present challenges. Catering to diverse student needs also emerged as a potential hurdle. Accommodating students with varying interests, skills, and learning styles within a single activity could be difficult. This might necessitate offering multiple activity options to ensure all students have opportunities to participate meaningfully. Finally, the research identified potential resource limitations. Schools might require additional resources to implement OHAP effectively, such as dedicated spaces for activities, additional materials, and potentially even extra staff to supervise larger groups of students during the one-hour sessions. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for ensuring the smooth operation and overall success of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools.

Key meanings from the study's findings regarding:

- Policy makers: The Ministry of Education should consider using research results to design high quality ECAs, and make sure schools have sufficient financial resources,

as this will help the schools to develop their infrastructure needed for implementing ECAs.

- Schools: schools should consider using better strategies to motivate teachers toward taking part in organising school extracurricular activities, such as paying teachers extra money or reducing teaching tasks for teachers who want a lead role in such activities.
- Teachers: Teachers should be offered training and workshops on organising school extracurricular activities in order to increase their participation and readiness levels.
- Students: It is important that the extracurricular activities are organised by schools be tailored to children's choices, requirements, and ages. Specifically, this is due to the fact that children have a broad range of psychological, social, educational, physical, and spiritual needs that motivate them to commit to and put forth effort in the activities that they choose to participate in.
- Parents: keep close contact with parents and provide them with up-to-date information of what is going in school is an important way to encourage them to be more involved in the life of school, particularly their children's extracurricular activities.

## 6.5 Study Limitations

This study is explanatory sequential in design and largely quantitative in nature. This design facilitated the collection of extensive quantitative data from a diverse sample of participants, comprising 323 teachers and 447 students, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The design was also useful to explore the quantitative results in more detail through interviewing the study's participants to investigate their views about the unexpected results that arose from analysing the survey data. The study was carried out in fourteen secondary schools located in different areas of Riyadh city (the capital city of Saudi Arabia) to achieve two objectives. The first objective is to explore the perceived impact of introducing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs on students' personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school. The participants were only male students rather than a mix of boys and girls; this is because it was hard for the researcher to get access to Saudi girl schools as a result of cultural constraints. This thus may place limitations on the generalisation of the study results in terms of the type of gender and cultural context the study was carried in. Another limitation is that participating students were asked to provide self-reported responses on questions related to their developmental experiences of participation in school extracurricular activities, and what they reported may not mirror their actual experiences. In

other words, participants reported that time management skill had been developed as a result of involvement in ECAs, and as there were no experimental measures taken to measure their actual experiences (such as pre post measures of participants' time management skill before and after participation in ECAs) participants' responses were based on their perceptions and may be affected by different factors such as personal biases, self-exaggeration and the mood of participants at the time they provided their responses on the survey. The survey was distributed to students who participate in school extracurricular activities and the study data is only collected from students who participate in ECAs and does not include data from non-participating students. Therefore, respondents are likely to have positive attitudes towards the outcomes of participation in such activities, in comparison to students who do not participate. Therefore, it is possible that these data taken from participating students may contain biases. For example, students who are attracted to extracurricular activities may be more socially confident than their counterparts. These limitations call for further studies with different designs such as the use of experimental or longitudinal designs to confirm the developmental benefits students reported in this study, and also to look at school extracurricular activities in other student populations, countries and cultural contexts.

The second objective of this study is to identify the challenges that are associated with introducing the "One Hour Activity Plan" ECAs in Saudi secondary schools and to explore the strategies that may be useful to overcome the challenges for its better implementation. Using the explanatory sequential design in this study showed good utility for identifying the perceived barriers and strategies during the implementation of ECA in schools. For example, the quantitative results that came out from the teachers' survey regarding the challenges affecting the implementation of ECAs helped the researcher guide the interviews' questions for identifying the strategies used by ECA leaders to overcome the challenges. Given that the study as carried out in boys' schools, the participants were only male teachers. Thus, this may place limitations on the generalisation of the study results on Saudi girls' secondary schools because there are differences between boys' and girls' schools in terms of facilities and the types of ECAs provided in these schools. This limitation calls for further research regarding the challenges that may be associated with implementing ECAs in girls' schools.

## 6.6 Study Implications

The "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) shares some common ground with traditional extracurricular activities (ECAs) but also possesses distinct characteristics. Both approaches aim to engage students beyond core academics, fostering interests and knowledge development. Additionally, both can contribute to student development by offering opportunities to learn new skills and build a sense of belonging within the school community through connecting with peers who share similar interests.

However, key difference exists. The most prominent distinction lies in time commitment. OHAP's one-hour format is considerably shorter than traditional ECAs, which is integrated in the daily school schedule. This difference in time translates to a more structured format for OHAP activities due to the limited timeframe, while traditional ECAs often offer more flexibility in activity design and scheduling. Consequently, the depth of exploration within a particular topic or skill might be limited in OHAP compared to longer-term ECAs that allow for sustained engagement. Furthermore, implementing OHAP effectively might necessitate additional teacher training on facilitating engaging activities within a shorter time constraint and managing student behaviour in a potentially less formal setting. Finally, scheduling OHAP seamlessly within the existing school timetable can be challenging, whereas traditional ECAs often have more flexibility for scheduling outside core academic hours.

In essence, OHAP offers a structured, shorter option for student engagement, potentially facing scheduling challenges. Traditional ECAs provide a wider range of time commitment options, potentially more flexible activity design, and may allow for deeper exploration of interests. The optimal approach depends on factors like school resources, student developmental needs, and desired learning outcomes. A combination of OHAP and traditional ECAs could provide a well-rounded extracurricular program, catering to both shorter, focused sessions and opportunities for in-depth exploration of specific interests.

Implementing the "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) effectively in Saudi Arabia's secondary schools requires acknowledging the country's specific context. Here, concerns arise regarding existing educational inequalities and the intense academic pressures faced by students in grades 10-12 (typically 15-18 year olds) who are preparing for crucial university entrance exams. Unequal access to quality extracurricular activities (ECAs) based on factors like location, school resources, and even gender (girls' schools often having fewer options) necessitates a

sensitive approach to OHAP implementation. Ensuring all schools have the resources and support to offer engaging OHAP activities is vital to mitigate these inequalities.

While the current study on the "One Hour Activity Plan" (OHAP) can offer valuable insights, its generalisability requires consideration for application in different contexts. For instance, the study focused on male students, and understanding OHAP's impact on girls in Saudi Arabia's segregated schools would necessitate a separate study focused on their unique social and personal development experiences and activity preferences. Cultural considerations are also important. Activities within OHAP might require adaptation to suit Saudi Arabia's cultural context, and parental and community expectations might influence student perceptions and preferred formats. Therefore, developing gender-specific activities that cater to girls' interests and cultural norms is crucial. Examples include incorporating elements of Islamic art, calligraphy, or cultural heritage alongside traditional options. Furthermore, involving parents and community leaders in the design process fosters a sense of ownership and ensures activities align with community expectations for girls' education.

On a broader scale, some findings hold value across educational systems. Challenges like scheduling conflicts, teacher workload and training, and catering to diverse students' needs might be relevant globally. Similarly, the potential benefits of fostering social and personal development and a sense of belonging could apply in various contexts. However, successful implementation will depend on factors like school size, resources, existing of high quality extracurricular programs, and student demographics. Future research should consider these factors when adapting the OHAP model for different countries.

Building on this foundation, future research can explore several promising avenues. One crucial direction is investigating OHAP's impact on girls' schools, particularly in Saudi Arabia or similar contexts. Understanding female student experiences, preferred activity formats, and potential challenges is vital. Additionally, investigating the long-term impact of OHAP on student personal and social development, academic achievement, and career choices through longitudinal studies would be valuable. Furthermore, research on effective training and support strategies for teachers facilitating OHAP activities and managing student behaviour is needed. Exploring how the optimal design and implementation of OHAP might differ for younger versus older secondary school students is another avenue for future inquiry. Finally, investigating ways to integrate OHAP activities with academic subjects to create a more holistic learning experience holds promise. By pursuing these research directions, scholars can

gain a deeper understanding of how to design and implement effective extracurricular programs like OHAP in diverse educational contexts worldwide, fostering student engagement, social and personal development, and a strong sense of belonging within the school community.

## 6.7 Study Recommendations

Building upon the study's findings and acknowledging the unique approach of Saudi secondary boy schools in providing school extracurricular activities, this study offers specific recommendations for Saudi policymakers. These recommendations also address the cultural sensitivities and contribute to the ongoing scholarship on ECAs in diverse settings.

Schools are advised to diversify the provision of school extracurricular activities from the traditional sports, art, scouting and cultural activities that most schools invest in to academic focused activities such as science clubs (for example engineering, astronomy, biology, chemistry and computing clubs), symposiums, public speaking club and debate club. These should be emphasised because of the limited finances required by such activities and the positive contributions that they may provide to the students' academic skills which are needed for higher education and citizenship.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education should encourage schools to extend the provision of extracurricular activities beyond the regular bell schedule, because fitting the ECAs that need a longer time for practice seamlessly into the daily school schedule can be difficult; as they will extend the length of the school hours, raise the school expenses, and teachers and students may feel stressed. So, it is best to give schools greater autonomy in deciding which activities to offer and when, in response to the local context.

An important theme emerging from the research is how the intense focus of students on academic performance can overshadow the importance of ECAs in fostering well-rounded development. Those in charge of designing OHAP need to navigate this challenge. Activities that demonstrably connect to academic subjects or enhance skills valued for higher education can be particularly valuable in this context. Despite these hurdles, OHAP has the potential to act as a bridge. By offering engaging, well-designed activities within a manageable timeframe, OHAP can encourage participation in ECAs without adding excessive time commitments. This can be particularly beneficial for students who might otherwise be discouraged from extracurricular activities due to the pressure to excel academically.

To address student perceptions of ECAs as a waste of time, education policymakers could develop activities that demonstrably connect to academic subjects, to showcase the supposed value of ECAs in complementing classroom learning. Additionally, conducting culturally sensitive research on the long-term impact of ECAs on both male and female students in Saudi Arabia could highlight any benefits beyond immediate academic gains, such as career aspirations, soft skill development, and overall wellbeing. Disseminating these findings to parents, students, and teachers can emphasise the broader value of ECAs.

In addition, the study explored the potential of a credit system for ECA participation. Policymakers could develop a credit system tailored to the Saudi context through consultation with parents, teachers, and education experts. The focus of this system should be on skill development and recognition of knowledge gained through ECA participation, aligning with the importance placed on skill development within Saudi Arabia's educational system. Piloting the credit system in select schools before nationwide implementation allows for evaluation and refinement based on feedback from stakeholders.

This study contributes to scholarship by emphasising the importance of cultural context in designing and implementing ECA programs. It highlights the unique challenges faced by secondary boys' schools in Saudi Arabia and the need for gender-specific approaches. Furthermore, exploring students' perceptions and the potential for a credit system offers valuable insights for future research on student motivation and engagement in ECAs across various cultural contexts. Through implementing these recommendations and considering the cultural context, policymakers can create an OHAP program that fosters student skill development, and students' sense of belonging to schools.

### 6.8 Study Contribution to the Field of ECAs

In some western countries such as the USA, youth has a long history of involvement in extracurricular activities outside school time and its developmental significance is widely recognised by researchers. For example, in their most notable study Larson and colleagues (2006) used a self-report survey to identify what developmental experiences (including the development of emotion regulation, identity, initiative skills, teamwork and social skills) youth encounter in organised activities outside school settings such as sports, performance and fine arts, organisations, service activities, community-oriented activities and faith-based youth groups. They found that participants in faith-based activities reported higher rates of experiences related to identity, emotional regulation and interpersonal development compared

to those involved in other activities. Service activities were reported to be associated with the experiences related to the development of teamwork, positive relationships, and social capital. While sports emerged as an avenue for fostering the development of initiative skills, Larson et al. (2006) also reported these to be associated with high stress among participants. The authors conclude that each organised activity can provide a unique context for specific developmental experiences. However, the findings are limited to self-reported data that are taken from American youth who participated in activities organised by non-educational organisations which limits the generalisability of findings to other cultures, groups of young people and to other forms of ECAs such as those provided directly by schools. Therefore, there is a need to study what children from different cultures and settings can learn from taking part in ECAs available in their schools, and to employ more inclusive methodology. Another aspect that was not addressed in the study of Hansen and his colleagues is the duration of participation. Consequently, our understanding of the developmental consequences of prolonged engagement in certain activities is limited.

The current study adds to the knowledge of the extracurricular activity ecosystem by focusing on the potentials and limitations of providing ECAs to students during the school day. More specifically, the study's goal is to investigate the perceived impact of participation in such activities on students' personal and social skills and their school belonging, and to identify challenges associated with implementing ECAs during the school day. The study is the first study conducted in the population of Saudi secondary students. Therefore, it is interesting to build knowledge and compare the study's results with the results obtained by other Western researchers in the field of adolescent development through ECAs. The study shows ECAs that are organised during school time can provide a wide variety of developmental experiences which may be translated into better socioemotional adjustment in students. For example, longer participation in school ECA is found to be a predictor for more perceived enhancement in students' cognitive and emotional skills. More specifically the results indicate that students with two years' participation in school ECA have higher self-reported levels of development of their cognitive and emotional skills than those who participated for less than one year. This result may help teachers and school social counselors who are interested in using ECAs as an intervention strategy for students who are at-risk of psychosocial difficulties. The study also shows that certain activities have distinct qualities in comparison with others, making them ideal environments for experiencing specific skills, a finding which is consistent with the work of Larson and colleagues (2006). For example, students who participated in sports and science

activities reported higher rates of experiences related to initiative and teamwork skills compared to those who participated in scouting, art and cultural activities. This result emphasises on the importance of offering students a variety of ECAs, as variety provides more freedom to explore a range of skills as opposed to limited ECAs. Another reported contribution of participation in ECAs during the school time is that it may enhance students' sense of belonging to their school. However, student perceptions of belonging depend on the quality and inclusivity of the activities offered within school. If activities are not perceived as engaging or cater only to a limited range of interests, they might not effectively promote a sense of belonging for all students.

From a different aspect, the study revealed some possible problems related to delivering extracurricular activities during school hours. Scheduling issues surfaced as a predominant worry, since integrating school ECAs into the current school schedule proved challenging. This may break established lesson plans or require intricate classroom changes, thereby affecting the flow of the school day. Another key finding concerns teachers' heavy teaching workloads and preparedness. Teachers might require additional training and support to effectively organise ECAs during school time. School should consider to not pressurise teachers particularly those who have limited time available in their teaching timetable to involve in activities that lie outside of their assigned teaching workload, because that can cause undesirable outcomes on overall teachers' performance. Schools also should make sure that teachers are equipped with knowledge and competency regarding planning, leading, and evaluating ECAs, because if they are not ready to plan varied and interesting activities that fit the students' needs, this will discourage the students from getting involved in such activities. Finally, the study identified potential resource limitations. Schools might require additional resources to implement ECA effectively, such as extra funds, dedicated physical facilities for activities, additional materials, and potentially even extra staff to supervise larger groups of students during the one-hour sessions. Failure to address these challenges is likely to result in such activities, remaining unattractive, and students in such schools may miss the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities. Overall, despite the challenges that Saudi schools faced in integrating ECAs during the school day, it remains a distinctive experience that demonstrates the necessity of using all available means to ensure that education is effective in children's development. This section has highlighted and summarised the key contributions that the current study has made to the empirical knowledge base regarding ECAs, extending

prior research and encompassing new contexts, to be of relevance internationally to researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

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# Appendix A. Teachers' survey


**Teachers Survey**

Dear teacher,

My name is Faisal Al Mashari and I am a PhD student at the University of York. As part of my studies I am conducting a research study entitled **"Views of Saudi teachers and students on being involved in school based extracurricular activities at secondary schools"**. The study aims to identify the challenges associated with introducing "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools. First, I would like to thank you for taking part in this survey. In the survey, you will go through list of challenges that may be encountered in implementing school extracurricular activities, and all what you need is to rate them based on your personal experience. The survey that will take about 10 minutes to be completed.

**Section one**; general information

Please tick the appropriate box for you

A. How long have you been as a teacher?
   Less than 5 years ( ) From 5 to 10 years ( ) More than 10 years ( )

B. What is your position in school?
   Headteacher ( ) Teacher ( ) School extracurricular activities supervisor ( )

C. Are you involved in organising the programme of extracurricular activities in your school?
   Ys ( ) No ( )

D. What kind of activities are you responsible for?
   Sport activity ( ) Art activity ( ) Science activity ( ) Scout activity ( )

**Section two:** understanding teachers' perception about challenges associated with the implementation of extracurricular activities in school

Dear teacher, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements that relate to possible challenges associated with the implementation of extracurricular activities in your school.

| No. | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dimension one. Focus on challenges related to students** | | | | | | |
| 1. | Students in my school lack awareness about extracurricular activities | | | | | |
| 2. | Students in my school lack interest in getting involved in ECA as they are not academically required | | | | | |
| 3. | Students in my school are reluctant to get involved in ECA believing that they impact negatively on their academic performance | | | | | |
| 4. | Having to provide activities to meet students' preferences makes it difficult to school. | | | | | |
| 5. | Students in my school lack the skills that allow them to participate in certain extracurricular activities | | | | | |
| 6. | Students in my school avoid participating in ECA because of their personal dispositions and introverted personality | | | | | |
| 7. | Students in my school lack the ability to choose extracurricular activities that are best suited to their preferences and skills | | | | | |
| 8. | Students in my school avoid engaging in ECA believing that engagement is a waste of time and it interferes with their priorities | | | | | |
| 9. | Students in my school lack the motivation to engage in ECA as they are not accounted in student' academic progress report. | | | | | |
| 10. | The type of ECA that my students wants to participate in is not on offer in school | | | | | |

| No. | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dimension two. Focus on challenges related to teachers. Please think about yourself.** | | | | | | |
| 11. | I have excessive workload which prevent me to lead ECA in my school | | | | | |
| 12. | I have never been provided with training opportunities/ workshops that equip me with the ability to lead ECA in my school | | | | | |
| 13. | I am reluctant to do work for which I receive no incentives | | | | | |
| 14. | I don't know the appropriate mechanism for organising ECA in my school | | | | | |
| 15. | I am doubtful of the impact of extracurricular activities on students | | | | | |
| 16. | I believe that ECA are a waste of the school day | | | | | |
| 17. | I think there is a lack of collaboration between teachers in conducting ECA | | | | | |
| 18. | Engagement in ECA has been imposed on me with no regards to my opinion. | | | | | |
| 19. | I am reluctant to get involved in organising ECA because they interrupt the school day | | | | | |

| No. | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dimension three. Focus on challenges related to school resources and administration** | | | | | | |
| 20. | There is a shortage of teachers in my school | | | | | |
| 22. | Unavailability of a step-by-step guideline for implementing ECA in my school | | | | | |
| 23. | Lack of sufficient time to conduct ECA during the school day | | | | | |
| 24. | School administration in my is more invested in the academic aspect of schooling rather than extracurricular activities | | | | | |
| 25. | Unavailability of specialized school clubs or groups that organise and set up extracurricular activities (e.g. sports club, arts clubs, STEM club, etc.) | | | | | |
| 26. | School administration in my school is reluctant to incorporate / implement ECA as it interferes with the learning process | | | | | |
| 27. | School administration in my school is reluctant to implement ECA out of concern for school facilities getting damaged | | | | | |
| 28. | Lack of appropriate facilities in my school (e.g. halls, fields, etc.) to conduct extracurricular activities | | | | | |
| 29. | Budget allocated for extracurricular activities in my school is insufficient | | | | | |
| 30. | Increase of the student population in my school | | | | | |
| 31. | Lack of the appropriate equipment and resources needed for extracurricular activities (sports equipment, art tools, music instruments, etc.) | | | | | |
| 32. | My school's facilities are not adequate for implementing ECA (e.g. old school building or rented.) | | | | | |
| 33. | No school coach available for school trips and visits (e.g. visits to museums, sports and science centres) | | | | | |

| No. | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dimension four. Focus on challenges related to parents and the local community** | | | | | | |
| 34. | There is a lack of partnership between parents and the school in choosing ECA that are best suited to the students | | | | | |
| 35. | Some parents believe that involvement in ECA drains their children mentally | | | | | |
| 36. | Some parents believe that involvement in ECA drains their children physically | | | | | |
| 37. | Some parents believe that taking part in ECA affects their children's academic performance negatively | | | | | |
| 38. | Some Parents believe that a student's task in school is only to obtain knowledge | | | | | |
| 39. | Parents in financial difficulties are unable to meet the expenses of their children's participation in certain extracurricular activities | | | | | |
| 40. | There is a lack of contribution from institutions in the local community to support ECA in schools | | | | | |
| 41. | There is a lack of encouragement from parents for their children to engage in extracurricular activities | | | | | |
| 42. | There is a difficulty in attracting members of local community to be volunteers in organising ECA in schools | | | | | |

# Appendix B. Students' survey

**Students survey**

**Dear student,**

My name is Faisal Al Mashari and I am a PhD student at the University of York. As part of my studies I am conducting a research study entitled **"Views of Saudi teachers and students on being involved in school based extracurricular activities at secondary schools"**. First, I would like to thank you for taking part in this survey. Second, I want to know what difference (if any) that you think participation in extracurricular activities makes to your development and to your feelings of belonging to your school. In this survey, you will be presented with range of developmental experiences that you may have learned or encountered during participation in these activities. All you need to do is to rate them based on your personal experiences. This survey will take about 10 minutes to be completed

**Section one**; general information

Please tick the appropriate boxes for you

A. What grade are you in?
   grad 10 ( ) grad 11 ( ) grad 12 ( )

B. What type of extracurricular activities are you involved in?

   Sport activity ( ) Art and culture activity ( ) Science activity ( ) Scout activity ( )

C. How long have you been involved in that activity?

   Less than one year ( ) One year ( ) Two years ( ) Three years ( )

**Section two:** Understanding students' perception about the impact of participation in "One Hour Activity Plan" on their personal and social development and their feeling of belonging to school.

Dear student, based on your current or recent participation in school extracurricular activity, please rate whether you have had the following experiences.

| No. | | Yes, definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain Number one**; Focus on Identity Experiences | | | | | |
| Identity exploration: | | | | | |
| 1. | I tried doing new things | | | | |
| 2. | I tried a new way of acting around people | | | | |
| 3. | I do things in this activity I don't get to do anywhere else | | | | |
| Identity reflection: | | | | | |
| 4. | I started thinking more about my future because of this activity | | | | |
| 5. | This activity got me thinking about who I am | | | | |
| 6. | This activity has been a positive turning point in my life | | | | |

| No. | | Yes, definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain Number two**; Focus on Initiative Experiences | | | | | |
| Goal Setting: | | | | | |
| 7. | I set goals for myself in this activity | | | | |
| 8. | I learned to find ways to achieve my goals | | | | |
| 9. | I learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans | | | | |
| Effort: | | | | | |
| 10. | I put all my energy into this activity | | | | |
| 11. | I learned to push myself | | | | |
| 12. | I learned to focus my attention | | | | |
| Problem solving: | | | | | |
| 13. | I observed how others solved problems and learned from them | | | | |
| 14. | I learned about developing plans for solving a problem | | | | |
| 15. | I used my imagination to solve a problem | | | | |
| Time management: | | | | | |
| 16. | I learned about organizing time and not procrastinating (not putting things off) | | | | |
| 17. | I learned about setting priorities | | | | |
| 18. | I practiced self-discipline | | | | |

| No. | | Yes, definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain Number three**; Focus on Basic Skills | | | | | |
| Emotional regulation: | | | | | |
| 19. | I learned about controlling my temper | | | | |
| 20. | I became better at dealing with fear and anxiety | | | | |
| 21. | I became better at handling stress | | | | |
| 22. | I learned that my emotions affect how I perform | | | | |
| Cognitive skills: | | | | | |
| 23. | In this activity I have improved my academic skills (reading, writing, math, etc.) | | | | |
| 24. | In this activity I have improved skills for finding information | | | | |
| 25. | In this activity I have improved my computer/internet skills | | | | |
| 26. | In this activity I have improved my artistic/creative skills | | | | |
| 27. | In this activity I have improved my communication skills | | | | |

| No. | | Yes, definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain Number Four**; Focus on Positive Relationships | | | | | |
| Diverse peer relationships: | | | | | |
| 28. | I made new friends from other classrooms | | | | |
| 29. | I learned that I had a lot in common with students from different backgrounds | | | | |
| 30. | I got to know someone from a different ethnic group | | | | |
| 31. | I made friends with someone from a different social class (someone richer or poorer) | | | | |
| Prosocial norms: | | | | | |
| 32. | I learned about helping others | | | | |
| 33. | I was able to change my school or community for the better | | | | |
| 34. | I learned to stand up for something I believed was morally right | | | | |
| 35. | We discussed morals and values | | | | |

| No. | | Yes, definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain number Five**; Focus on Team Work and Social Skills | | | | | |
| Group process skills: | | | | | |
| 36. | I learned that working together requires some compromising | | | | |
| 37. | Became better at sharing responsibility | | | | |
| 38. | I learned to be patient with other group members | | | | |
| 39. | I learned how my emotions and attitude affect others in the group | | | | |
| 40. | I learned that it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them | | | | |
| Feedback: | | | | | |
| 41. | I became better at giving feedback | | | | |
| 42. | I became better at taking feedback | | | | |
| Leadership and responsibility: | | | | | |
| 43. | I learned about the challenges of being a leader | | | | |
| 44. | Others in this activity counted on me | | | | |
| 45. | I had an opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers | | | | |

| No. | | Yes, definitely | Quite a bit | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain number Six**; Focus on the sense of belonging at school | | | | | |
| Integration with teachers and peers: | | | | | |
| 46. | Because of my extracurricular activity I have started to show respect my teachers | | | | |
| 47. | Because of my extracurricular activity I have built good relationship with teachers | | | | |
| 48. | Because of my extracurricular activity I have built good relationship with my peers' school | | | | |
| Linkage to school: | | | | | |
| 49. | Because of my extracurricular activity I have increased my desire to stay in school | | | | |
| 50. | Because of my extracurricular activity I feel like I belong to my school | | | | |
| 51. | Because of my extracurricular activity I feel comfortable at my school | | | | |
| 52. | Because of my extracurricular activity I am more willing to comply with school rules | | | | |
| 53. | Because of my extracurricular activity I feel school day is more enjoyable | | | | |
| 54. | Because of my extracurricular activity I regularly attend my school | | | | |
| 55. | Because of my extracurricular activity, I feel so proud to be member of this school. | | | | |

# Appendix C. Students' interview

**Appendix C**

**Qualitative Instrument:**

**Students Focus Group Protocol and Questions**

Focus group Interview No:

Date of interview:

**Introduction:**

**1-** My name is Faisal Al Mashari and I am a PhD student at the University of York. As part of my studies, I am conducting a research study entitled "Views of Saudi teachers and students on being involved in school based extracurricular activities at secondary schools". First, I would like to thank you for taking part in this focus group interview. Second, I want to know how students engage in school extracurricular activities. During the interview you will be asked questions related to your experiences of participation in school extracurricular activities. For example, what have you learned from participation in these activities, how participation in such activities influence your' personal and social skills and your sense of belonging to school.

**2-** Be confident that this interview is confidential and will not be shared with anyone except the researcher and the study supervisor.

**3-** please be informed that participation in this interview is voluntary and all information you provide through the interview is anonymous therefore it will not be possible to withdraw your information after data collection is completed.

**4-** I am going to record this interview in order to be transcribed later. This also will help me to concentrate during the interview and get an accurate explanation of responses to the questions.

**5-** Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and sharing your opinion with me, let start.

**********

**6-** First, I would like to explain the concept of life skills, according to The World Health Organization life skills are “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. There are several number of personal and social skills that fall under this concept, such as decision-making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication skills, interpersonal relationship skills, empathy, coping with emotions, coping with stress, goal setting, negotiation skills, teamwork and sense of responsibility. learning theses skills supports students' personal and social growth. There are many ways to learn these skills. One of these methods is to participate in extracurricular activities that are provided in schools. I would like to know more about your positive and negative developmental experiences in participating in these activities in your school.

**Focus Group Questions:**

1- Do you think participating in school extracurricular activities has a positive impact in developing your personal and social skills? Do you agree with that?
2- What social and personal skills have you learned from participating in your school extracurricular activity? How have you developed these skills? Can you give me an example?
3- Do you believe that being involved in school extracurricular activities increase your connection to school? Explain how or why not.
4- Have you encountered negative experiences during your participation in school extracurricular activity "One Hour Activity Plan"? for example have you been tired or stressed by being involved in your target activity, have you felt pressured by peers to do something you did not want to do or morally wrong, have you felt that you socially excluded in your target activity because of your social background, have the activity leader or other students in your target activity made inappropriate comments on you.
5- Are you satisfied with the extracurricular activities provided in your school? if not why?
6- Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you.

**********

# Appendix D. Teachers' interview

**Teacher Semi-Structured Interview Protocol and Questions**

Semi-structured Interview No:

Date of interview:

**Introduction:**

**1-**My name is Faisal Al Mashari and I am a PhD student at the University of York. As part of my studies, I am conducting a research study entitled "Views of Saudi teachers and students on being involved in school based extracurricular activities at secondary schools". The study aims to explore teachers' recommendations on improving the implementation of "One Hour Activity Plan" in secondary schools and their roles in overcoming the challenges associated with implementing "One Hour Activity Plan". First, I would like to thank you for taking part in this interview. Second, during the interview you will be asked questions related to your experiences of organising school extracurricular activities. For example, what barriers have you encountered in providing these activities, how have you dealt with them and what suggestions can be made for improving school extracurricular activities.

**2-** Be confident that this interview is confidential and will not be shared with anyone except the researcher and the study supervisor.

**3-** please be informed that all information you provide through the interview is anonymous therefore it will not be possible to withdraw the information after data collection is completed.

**4-** I am going to record this interview in order to be transcribed later. This also will help me to concentrate during the interview and get an accurate explanation of responses to the questions.

**5-** Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and sharing your opinion with me,

**********

**6-** I distributed a survey to 323 teachers and its goal was to identify the challenges associated with implementing "One Hour Activity Plan". After analysing the survey, I found many challenges facing schools in implementing the plan, including those related to students, teachers, school administration, and the financial capabilities of the school. Since you are a supervisor of extracurricular activity in your school, could you please have a look at the following graphs that are drawn from the survey results and give me comments on these challenges and how you dealt with them to activate the implementation of extra-curricular activities in your school.

**Questions of semi-structured interview**

Now, I would like to know your opinion on the challenges for providing extracurricular activities and how you have overcome them in your school. Let's begin with the following:

*Challenges related to students:*

1- Do you face any of these challenges in your school, or any similar challenges related to students? If yes, which ones?

2- Have you been able to overcome any of these challenges that you have faced? If "Yes", how did you do that? Give an example. If "no", why not?

*Challenges related to teachers:*

1- Do you face any of these challenges in your school, or any similar challenges related to students? If yes, which ones?

2- Have you been able to overcome any of these challenges that you have faced? If "Yes", how did you do that? Give an example. If "no", why not?

*Challenges related to related to school administration and financial resources:*

1- Do you face any of these challenges in your school, or any similar challenges related to students? If yes, which ones?

2- Have you been able to overcome any of these challenges that you have faced? If "Yes", how did you do that? Give an example. If "no", why not?

*Challenges related to parents and the local community:*

1- Do you face any of these challenges in your school, or any similar challenges related to students? If yes, which ones?

2- Have you been able to overcome any of these challenges that you have faced? If "Yes", how did you do that? Give an example. If "no", why not?

**General questions about the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in schools and its impact on students personal and socials development and their connection to school:**

1- Some people think that extracurricular activities can help to develop children's personal and social skills. From your experience, do you agree with this? Please explain your answer.

2- Some people think that extracurricular activities can help young people feel more connected to their school. From your experience, do you agree with this? Please explain your answer.

3- Are you satisfied with the level the of the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in your school? Explain your answer.

4- Can you think of any recommendations that you think are appropriate to improve the "One Hour Activity Plan" in your school or in schools in general? If "yes", what are those recommendations? If "no", is that because it doesn't need improving or because you are not sure how?

5- Do you have a message that you would like to send to the ministry of education or schools about the implementation of the "One Hour Activity Plan" in schools in general? If "yes", what is your message?

6- Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you.

*********