An Examination of the Motivation Factors of Participation in Extracurricular Activities and their Effect on Academic Achievement and the Intention to Pursue Post-Secondary Education

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Abstract: Participation in supervised school-sanctioned extracurricular activities (EA) can benefit students through supportive adult role models, positive school associations and connectedness, and sense of purpose. Evidence regarding the benefits of participating in EA is abundant, and students who participate generally show higher levels of academic achievement, a more positive level of socialization, fewer behavioural incidents, a stronger sense of identity with their school, and will be more likely to continue with a post-secondary education. This study sought to examine relationships between participation in EA and academic achievement, intention to pursue post-secondary education, school climate and connectedness, peer and adult social support, cultural acceptance, and future for employment. A survey was administered to 162 high school seniors. Results indicated that there were several significant relationships between the variables and data suggest that students benefitted in a variety of ways from participation in EA.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, Participation, Academic Achievement, School Connectedness, Post-Secondary Education

1. Introduction

There are numerous reasons why schools from the elementary level to the collegiate level offer extracurricular activities (EAs), but many individuals who promote participation may only have an anecdotal understanding of the benefits that they offer to students. However, there are numerous studies available that demonstrate reliable data regarding positive associations with participation and higher academic achievement (Chan, 2016), stronger sense of school identification and belonging (Ivaniushina, & Aleksandrov, 2015), healthier socialization among peers (Gibbs, Erickson, Dufur, & Miles, 2015), growth and leadership opportunities (Cotter, Pretz, & Kaufman, 2016), and a better school culture and school climate. For students, developing and maintaining a positive attitude towards their education can often be a challenge in and of itself as they are often beset by negativity with regards to school from peers, pop-culture, parents, or any number of other sources (Basttistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1995). By joining and participating in a structured extracurricular activity with other students and supportive adult role models, students can gain a sense of purpose, positive peer associations, and belonging that they may

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otherwise possibly lack in other areas of their lives (Stearns & Glennie, 2010). When a student feels a connection to something larger than himself or herself where they are encouraged by a nurturing adult, they will tend to put forth more effort into the activity and tend to achieve a higher level of success or recognition.

Before any attempt can be made to appeal to students who do not participate there must be a sufficient understanding of these benefits to move forward. While an extracurricular activity itself may not directly influence the understanding of a particular academic curriculum, participation in athletic, artistic, academic/honor society or social EAs may endow a student with skills and knowledge that can yield benefits as that student progresses through their education.

Additionally, such experiences carry over from the school involvement into community involvement (Kiersma, Plake, & Mason, 2011). Students who are involved in EAs that are service-oriented and who work to improve their community tend to remain involved in similar activities throughout their college years. Furthermore, they tend to remain involved in their community in some capacity at a higher rate after their educational career ends. Involvement of this sort may also afford students with greater opportunities for networking through introductions to others who participate in similar activities as well as greater opportunities for personal growth through engagement in community service. (Culic, Iancu, & Pavelea, 2016)

2. Participation Effects on Academics and Classroom Engagement

Students involved in performance art and academic EAs show a pattern of increased classroom engagement which athletics does not (Im, et al., 2016). One possible reason for this difference may be the similarity of the way in which performance art and academic activities are conducted, as they tend to be more like a classroom setting than athletic activities. In these settings, students also acquire skills that translate into deeper learning academically. In a three-year study published by Metsäpelto and Pulkkinen in 2012, academic and working skills such as persistence, concentration, and carefulness were measured using teacher ratings and it was found that students who participated in performing arts or academic clubs scored significantly higher in these categories than students who did not participate. Students involved in performance art and academic activities also showed a strong trend with higher levels of adaptive behavior, academic working skills, and academic attainments.

Students who may not be as motivated by academics and learning, per se, will often continue to work hard to achieve the required scores which many programs have in place to qualify for eligibility to participate in EAs that have a minimum academic score requirement (Bradley & Conway, 2016). Knowing that certain criteria for eligibility are in place in order to be involved with a program in which a student may have a high level of interest will often motivate them to engage and focus. This is especially true when they are encouraged by an adult in a mentorship role who demonstrates an interest in them and their success (Marchetti, Wilson, & Dunham, 2014). In addition, if a student has a desire to continue the involvement in their preferred activity at the college or university level, they know they must not only excel in their chosen activity but also achieve and maintain a required level of academic achievement to qualify for entrance to a higher institution. No studies reviewed showed that participation in athletic EAs was in any way causally linked to higher academic outcomes.

It is interesting to note here that, according to the Metsäpelto and Pulkkinen (2012) study, while non-athletic activities have shown a positive correlation with academic outcomes, they did not show as strong a relationship with improved socialization as athletic activities did. This would seem to indicate that, if a student were to attempt to maximize their amount of benefit, they would need to diversify their participation across several categories of sport, artistic, and academic related EAs but be careful that it does not come at the expense of class-related engagement.

Participation in EAs will require students to miss scheduled classes at times. While it could be argued that this would have a detrimental effect on classroom engagement, any reduction in the amount of learning time in the classroom due to time spent participating in EAs yielded no negative effects on engagement or instructional quality or engagement in the lessons (Bradley & Conway, 2016). Schools will adjust and accommodate time schedules in advance of planned and sanctioned EAs, allowing a teacher to compensate for the missed class time. The exception to this comes from situations that may arise from participation based on an inordinate number of activities. Students can reach a point for diminishing returns if they over-extend their commitments, which could negatively affect classroom engagement (Swanson, 2002). Students should be careful not to overload themselves with too many activities as engagement in several activities of the same nature will not yield a compounded beneficial effect. Students who wish to maximize their benefit should instead attempt to be strategic about how they will become involved.

3. Participation and Identification with School or Sense of Belonging

Studies have shown that students who participated in structured and supervised EAs demonstrated an increase in a favorable view of education and stronger sense of school identification regardless of what the category of EA (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011; Ivaniushina & Aleksandrov, 2015). Positive social experiences and interactions with peers and adults are often a strong motivational factor for students on a personal level as well as on an educational level. Students who associate with peer groups who, as a group, expect to continue to post-secondary education will also tend to take on that same expectation (Gibbs, Erickson, Dufur, & Miles, 2015). We also find that students who engage with peer groups that are college oriented are more likely to enroll in college. Extracurricular Activities will often provide this sort of environment encouraging students to be positive and motivated toward further education.

Through participation in EAs, students develop not only a stronger sense of self-confidence, but also a healthier level of social development and sense of well-being that further develop healthier interpersonal skill and improved school engagement (Chan, 2016). Interactions with peers and adults who work toward a common goal in a school environment will help students develop social skills that may affect not only their classroom academics but also a wide variety of other areas in life that a student will encounter (Kiersma, Plake & Mason, 2011). These social skills can have a demonstrable effect on educational quality and are associated with higher educational expectations, attendance rates, and accumulation of social capital that tends to have a mediating effect on college attendance (Morris, 2016). The socializing effect of participation in EAs can create a positive experience where the student is motivated to continue to seek out further educational experiences and higher educational levels (Gibbs, Erikson, Durfur & Miles, 2015).

Making a connection with an adult who is in a mentor role outside of the classroom will also make a significant impact on student's educational experience (Borkar, 2016). Additionally, the adult mentor becomes a facilitator of student-to-student social interaction by modelling and guiding positive behaviors. One study determined that students who participated in a structured extracurricular activity where the aim was to develop a skill or ability and where all activities were scheduled and supervised by an experienced adult showed significantly higher levels of self-esteem and a stronger sense of belonging in school (Ivaniushina & Aleksandrov, 2015). They also showed a higher overall satisfaction with their school experience than students who did not participate. Interestingly, students who participated in unstructured or unsanctioned activities where participation and schedules were not predetermined, or activities were unsupervised by an experienced adult showed no significant difference in levels of self-esteem or sense of belonging in school than did students who did not participate. The interaction with the adult and the structure were key in this study to demonstrating a meaningful benefit to the student. Schools need to consider these factors when approving an EA to offer students.

3. Length of Participation and Perceptions of Education

Aside from the motivation and encouragement students receive from mentoring adults, the comradery and recognition a student gets from participating will often translate into a more favorable and worthwhile view of education which, in turn, will tend to lead to higher scores or grades (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011). This trend is stronger when a student becomes involved in earlier grades. The sooner they start, the stronger this favorable view becomes (Im, Hughes, Cao, & Kwok, 2016). If a student becomes involved at a younger age, the positive associations they make with their chosen activity will translate into more favorable views and concepts of not only their school but of the value of education. Other variables such as age, circumstances, and frequency and duration of the activities will influence to what degree a student favorably views education. Studies have noted that when compared to students who do not participate or infrequently participate in EAs, students who have been involved longer and participate more will tend to see the value of education more favorably to a significant degree (Borkar, 2016; Gibbs, Erickson, Durfur & Miles, 2015; Im, Hughs, Cao & Kwok, 2016; Morris 2016). Further, a school that can create conditions that are conducive to students developing a more favorable view of education will see, over time, how this view will become part of the school culture. This will lend itself to a more positive school environment that has a positive correlation to motivation and desirable student behaviors (Anderson, Hamilton & Hattie, 2004)

4. Participation and Family Circumstances

The study by Swanson (2012) indicates a strong positive correlation between family background and participation. Findings from the study indicated that students who come from families of middle and higher SES tend to show much higher participation rates, as they tend to have better access to resources. Indeed, higher SES families have significantly higher expectations of participation than lower or even middle SES families. Thus, students of families in lower SES ranges tend to miss many of the benefits that students from higher SES families receive.

EAs are not only time consuming but can be costly as well. Although the Swanson (2012) study determined that time constraint had a minor effect on involvement by a student, other factors, and resources

available to that same student may limit the extent they are able to participate. This limitation of time and resources can extend to the family as well. Lower SES students will often hold part-time or full-time jobs during the time they are attending school to help their family with expenses, which in turn hinders their ability to participate in EAs. In addition, as the number of children in a lower SES family increases, participation from children in that family significantly decreases.

Family culture and background can also influence participation. A 2017 study of Latino students determined that parents of middle class Mexican American students granted a greater deal of autonomy to their students in decision-making as compared to parents of other ethnicities found in the United States (Inoa, 2017). Results showed that parents of the students involved in the study were generally supportive of their student's choices when they decided to participate but were more likely to seek out opportunities for their students to engage in activities outside of school when what schools offered was either unavailable or their students were ineligible. In this sense, parental involvement can benefit a student with support or allow them an alternative when they are ineligible, which renders the incentive for academic achievement much less significant.

5. Predictors of College and Community Involvement

Participation in EAs can also be used as predictors of future involvement in college, business, or community activities and/or associations. Students who hold some sort of leadership position within their club or group will often go on to leadership positions within other organizations or companies later (Kiersma, Plake & Mason, 2011). While this may not have an immediate effect on a student's high school experience, post-secondary institutions or potential employers may weigh this as a factor when deciding about accepting a student's application. A study in 2016 determined that there was a strong positive correlation between students who were involved in leadership positions in EAs while enrolled in college and higher attainment of positions within their chosen industry after graduation (Cotter, Pretz & Kaufman, 2016). Students who attain a leadership position within their EA while in high school can lead and learn from mistakes in a much more forgiving and nurturing setting than what they will encounter after graduation. Skills and experiences gained because of their position and involvement give them an advantage over students who do not participate since non-participatory students will have limited opportunity to develop or enhance leadership skills by only attending classes.

6. Participation and School Culture and Climate

Positive school climates promote student development and learning environments based on trust, safety, fairness, and respect (Grace & Harrison, 2015). Further, a positive school climate is associated with a range of outcomes including improved attendance, a decrease in behavioral issues, and an increased motivation to learn (Martinez, Coker, McMahon, Cohen & Thapa, 2016). An investigation into self-reported reasons students gave about why they participate found that students will often choose to occupy their time by becoming involved in an EA as a means of keeping themselves from being involved with at-risk behaviors. Further, they recognize EAs as an opportunity to better themselves and their chances for future opportunities (Ebie, 2005).

Many EAs will promote these values in their participants, meaning, schools have a valuable incentive in the promotion of participation by school in their students, as it will lead to a more favorable and positive school climate. The relationship building aspect of participation in EAs will yield benefits for not just the individual student but for the school. Schools that consistently received a higher rating in the category of school climate tended to have students who demonstrated higher achievement (MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009). Higher levels of involvement by both students and staff coupled with strong relationships in and out of the classroom results in higher motivation levels by all involved. Strong leadership plays a key factor in this success. Unless activities are guided by strong and positive leadership, perceived benefits of participation in EAs will not be as significant (Martinez, et al., 2016)

When the question of limitations of a school's ability to offer EA's based on geographic location arose, the findings were surprising. Regional location of a school based on urban, suburban, or rural environments does not tend to be a factor limiting participation in EAs insofar as offered opportunities (Stearns & Glennie, 2010). Studies of schools in urban, suburban, and rural environments show that there is no significant difference in the number of activities offered, but types of activities may differ according to location with higher numbers service and academic activities in urban and suburban areas whereas rural areas tend to have a higher number of vocational related activities. School size may be a limiting factor simply due to availability of not only teachers to take on coaching and advising roles in EAs but the availability of the number of students needed to make up teams of clubs in smaller schools. Athletic programs are affected by this to a higher degree than the other categories of activities.

After examining available research that appears to indicate that participation in structured and organized Extracurricular Activities benefits students and contributes to an increase in perceptions of education and positive school climate with limited adverse effects, it becomes difficult to make an argument against participating, and yet, there are students who do not either due to circumstances or choice. Does one group have a statistically significant advantage over the other, and can we determine if participation or lack thereof has a causal link to this advantage?

7. Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the motivational factors of high school students who choose to or choose not to participate in Extracurricular Activities. Evidence regarding the benefits of participating in Extracurricular Activities is abundant, and students who participate generally show higher levels of academic achievement, a more positive level of socialization, fewer behavioral incidents, a stronger sense of identity with their school, and will be more likely to continue with a post-secondary education. All these conditions are motivational factors that can positively influence a student's chances for success during high school. Therefore, attempting to understand what motivates a student to choose to participate in school sanctioned Extracurricular Activities, or more significantly, choose not to participate in school sanctioned Extracurricular Activities will help schools identify potential issues that may affect or influence student achievement and success. Additionally, there needs to be an examination of the benefits gained from participation as compared to students who do not participate to determine if there is a significate difference in achievement or perceptions of education or school connectedness between the two groups.

1. The study seeks to determine whether there is a correlation between the motivational factors and academic achievement according to student GPAs and the intention to pursue post-secondary education.
2. Will there be a statistically significant difference in both academic achievement and intention to seek post-secondary education between students who choose to participate and students who choose not to participate in Extracurricular Activities? It is predicted that the differences will vary according to category of activity (Athletic, Academic, or Social) with Academic more likely to show a significant difference.
3. Does the number of Extra Curricular Activities show a positive correlation to academic achievement according to GPA?
4. Will there be a statistically significant difference in responses to the questions regarding student attitudes and opinions toward school and education between participants in Extracurricular Activities and non-participants?
5. Will there be a statistically significant difference in responses to the questions regarding student attitudes and opinions toward education and school connectedness when results are categorized by student demographics such as gender, ethnicity, and employment status?

It was expected that results from this study would provide insight into the academic and social capital of students that will enable schools and institutions to plan and respond according to areas of need or effectiveness regarding the planning and implementation of school-sanctioned activities. Additionally, it is hoped that the collected data will provide justification and rationale for decisions intended to improve overall educational quality and experience for all students.

8. Method

8.1 Contextual Factors

The high school where the survey was administered for the study is in the Northern Metro Atlanta/North Georgia area. It was chosen because of its availability and accessibility as well as the diversity of its student population. As of 2016, the school population according to the Student Demographics page of the school system's website was 69.37% White, 20.82% Hispanic, 4.12% Black, 2.26% Asian, 2.67% Multi-racial, and .75% American Indian. Of that, 4.11% of the population is ESOL, 1.28% is EL/Monitored, and 29.26% of the student population is enrolled in free or reduced lunch. The high school in the study has the highest population of poor students out of five high schools within the county. The gifted population at the high school as of 2016 was 16.86% which is close to the district wide total of 17.95% and ranks it third out of the five high schools for gifted student eligibility (Forsyth County Schools, 2017).

Most recent total average SAT scores, as of 2016, across all high schools within the county were 1585 which is higher than the state average of 1459 and higher than the national average of 1484. Countywide scores for SAT Verbal were 531, SAT Math were 539, and SAT Writing were 515. All these scores were higher than statewide averages, which were SAT Verbal 493, SAT Math 490, and SAT Writing 476. The high school used in the study had SAT scores of 1511 with SAT Verbal 510, SAT Math 512, and SAT Writing 489 which are all above the statewide and national averages.

8.2 Participants

The study surveyed 426 12th grade seniors who attended the high school during the 2017-2018 school year who may or may not have participated in athletic, academic, or social extracurricular activities and may or may not be enrolling in a form of post-secondary education. Of that, 162 completed surveys were collected. The survey included a section explaining to students that participation was voluntary and that no personal or identifying information would be collected. The survey included a question to determine if the participant was in 11th or 12th grade, as students will sometimes be placed in classes designated for seniors at this high school due to credits taken while enrolled in other school systems. Surveys were taken online via the website, Survey Monkey, during the Advanced Composition class that all senior students must take as part of the core classes required for graduation. The link for the survey was posted on the school's online learning platform, ItsLearning, to which each student has access.

8.3 Materials and Measures

The survey consisted of five parts, demographics, school climate and connectedness, peer social support, adult social support, and cultural acceptance. The 35-question survey was put together with a combination of questions from the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 (2016) and a survey used in study conducted the University of Middle Tennessee (Johnston, 2013) on the effects of extracurricular activities on academic performance and retention in the Middle Tennessee State University Horse Science Program. The survey took between five to ten minutes to complete.

Demographic information and the questions were multiple choice and included questions regarding gender, ethnicity, GPA, whether they currently held employment, plans after they graduate, and information about whether other family members have attended college. Demographics were further separated into non-participants and participants in EAs. Participation was broken down by number of, and types of extracurricular activities, and positions, if any, held within the extracurricular activity. Questions separated activities into athletic, academic, artistic, or social, and students checked all that applied from a complete list of official school activities provided by the school.

At the time of the survey, students may not have been certain about their plans after graduation, so questions used a Likert scale to measure items such as whether students planned to continue to post-secondary education. Questions also covered the types of post-secondary institutions students planned on applying to or had applied to (i.e. I plan on applying to a four year college, I plan on applying to a trade school, I plan on applying to the military…) as well as the number of colleges or institution applied to or already accepted to, any amount of time they may have intended to spend before beginning their post high school plan, and whether or not they planned on working full or part time. The survey also included a write-in section if none of the questions applied to a student's plan.

The last part used a Likert scale gauging student attitudes toward extracurricular activities, post-secondary education, sense of belonging at the school, and feelings about prospects for their future. This section included space for the student to add any comments or reasons they felt would be pertinent to the material in the survey. The answer choices included "other" as needed and provided space for the student to fill in their answer.

8.4 Procedures

Participating respondents completed a confidential survey using only their student ID numbers to ensure that the survey was not repeated. The Survey was online using the online survey program, Surveymonkey, and respondents' identities were kept confidential. Students entered their student ID number, which ensured that the survey was not repeated. An explanation of the survey and how its results would be used was provided at the beginning of the survey. Surveys were taken at a predetermined time in the senior English Language Arts class in which all seniors must be enrolled. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix.

9. Results

The study sought to examine the effects and benefits of participation in extracurricular activities and attempt to determine if there were factors that would influence a student's decision in whether they would choose to participate. The study also sought to determine if participation in extracurricular activities had an influencing effect on students' post-graduations plans.

9.1 GPA and Motivational Factors

To determine if there was a correlation between the motivational factors and academic achievement according to GPA and the intention to pursue post-secondary education, several analyses were run. A Pearson Correlation was run between GPA and School Connectedness and was found to be statistically significant $p = .02$, $r = .182$. There was a positive correlation, and students who reported a higher GPA tended to report a higher degree of school connectedness. A Pearson Correlation analysis between GPA and Peer Connectedness was not statistically significant $p = .42$ indicating no relationship between the two categories. A Pearson Correlation analysis between GPA and Adult Social Support was statistically significant $p = .01$, $r = .202$. There was a positive correlation and students who reported a higher GPA tended to report a higher degree of Adult Social Support. A Pearson Correlation was run between GPA and Cultural Acceptance and was not statistically significant $p = .142$ indicating no relationship between the two categories.

9.2 GPA and Post-Graduation Plans

An ANOVA was run with Post Graduation plans as the grouping variable and GPA as the dependent variable. Results were statistically significant $p < .001$. Pairwise comparisons showed that all were significantly different except for plans to attend Trade School and to enlist in the Military. Mean GPA of students who indicated plans to attend a four-year college or university was highest followed by "get a job" and "enter the work force." Means and standard deviations for GPA according to Post Graduation plans and comparisons can be found in Tables 1, 2 and 3 below.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Post-Graduation plans with GPA as the dependent variable

Post-Grad Plans	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Go to Trade School	2.52	1.411	31
Go to 4-year College/University	4.25	1.325	102
Join a branch of the Military	2.86	1.574	7
Get a job and enter the Work Force	3.50	1.679	12
Other	2.90	1.101	10
Total	3.72	1.537	162

Table 2: ANOVA Post-Graduation plans and academic achievement with GPA as the dependent variable

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	86.628[a]	4	21.657	11.570	.000	.228
Intercept	697.626	1	697.626	372.704	.000	.704
Post-Grad Plans	86.628	4	21.657	11.570	.000	.228
Error	293.872	157	1.872			
Total	2625.000	162				
Corrected Total	380.500	161				
a. R Squared = .228 (Adjusted R Squared = .208)						

Table 3: Significance and Confidence Intervals for Post-Graduation plans with GPA as the dependent variable

(I) Post-Grad Plans	(J) Post-Grad Plans	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Go to Trade School	Go to 4-year College/University	-1.739*	.281	.000	-2.293	-1.185
	Join a branch of the Military	-.341	.573	.552	-1.472	.790
	Get a job and enter the Work Force	-.984*	.465	.036	-1.903	-.065
	Other	-.384	.498	.442	-1.367	.599
Go to 4-year College/University	Go to Trade School	1.739*	.281	.000	1.185	2.293
	Join a branch of the Military	1.398*	.535	.010	.342	2.454
	Get a job and enter the Work Force	.755	.418	.073	-.070	1.580
	Other	1.355*	.453	.003	.459	2.250
Join a branch of the Military	Go to Trade School	.341	.573	.552	-.790	1.472
	Go to 4-year College/University	-1.398*	.535	.010	-2.454	-.342
	Get a job and enter the Work Force	-.643	.651	.325	-1.928	.642
	Other	-.043	.674	.949	-1.375	1.289
Get a job and enter the Work Force	Go to Trade School	.984*	.465	.036	.065	1.903
	Go to 4-year College/University	-.755	.418	.073	-1.580	.070

	Join a branch of the Military	.643	.651	.325	-.642	1.928
	Other	.600	.586	.307	-.557	1.757
Other	Go to Trade School	.384	.498	.442	-.599	1.367
	Go to 4-year College/University	-1.355*	.453	.003	-2.250	-.459
	Join a branch of the Military	.043	.674	.949	-1.289	1.375
	Get a job and enter the Work Force	-.600	.586	.307	-1.757	.557
Based on estimated marginal means						
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.						
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).						

9.3 Effects of Participation on GPA

The study sought to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in academic achievement according to GPA between students who choose to participate in Extracurricular Activities and students who choose not to participate in Extracurricular Activities. Students were divided into three categories: Participants, Non-Participants, and Mixed Participation consisting of students who had at one time participated but did not participate consistently through all four years of high school. Additionally, the study sought to determine if the category of Extracurricular Activity had an influencing effect of academic achievement according to GPA. Categories of Extracurricular Activities were Academic, Social, and Athletic. Analysis included ANOVA and Independent Samples T-Tests.

An ANOVA was run with participant status as the grouping variable and GPA as the dependent variable. Results were statistically significant $p = .032$, and pairwise comparisons showed a statistically significant difference between Participants and Non-Participants $p = .009$ with Participants having a higher GPA but no other group comparisons were statistically significant. Means, Standard Deviations, and significances can be found below in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations between Participation and GPA as the dependent variable

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: GPA			
Participation	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Non-Participant	3.12	1.728	26
Participant	4.08	1.336	49
Mixed Participation	3.68	1.537	85
Total	3.71	1.535	160

Table 5: Significance for Participation Status and GPA as the dependent variable

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: GPA						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	16.024[a]	2	8.012	3.506	.032	.043
Intercept	1675.680	1	1675.680	733.327	.000	.824
Participation	16.024	2	8.012	3.506	.032	.043
Error	358.751	157	2.285			
Total	2580.000	160				
Corrected Total	374.775	159				
a. R Squared = .043 (Adjusted R Squared = .031)						

Table 6: Pairwise Comparisons between Participation Status with GPA as the dependent variable

Pairwise Comparisons					
Dependent Variable: GPA					
(I) Participation	(J) Participation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]
					Lower Bound
NonParticipant	Participant	-.966*	.367	.009	-1.691
	Mixed Participation	-.567	.339	.096	-1.236
Participant	NonParticipant	.966*	.367	.009	.242
	Mixed Participation	.399	.271	.143	-.136
Mixed Participation	NonParticipant	.567	.339	.096	-.102
	Participant	-.399	.271	.143	-.935

Dependent Variable: GPA		
(I) Participation	(J) Participation	95% Confidence Interval for Difference
		Upper Bound
NonParticipant	Participant	-.242
	Mixed Participation	.102
Participant	NonParticipant	1.691
	Mixed Participation	.935
Mixed Participation	NonParticipant	1.236
	Participant	.136

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

An Independent Samples T-Test was run for GPA according to Participants in Academic Extracurricular Activities and those who did not participate in Academic Extracurricular Activities, and results were statistically significant $p < .001$ with higher mean GPAs for participants of Academic Extracurricular activities. Means and Standard Deviations are below in Table 7. Independent Samples T-Test results are below in Table 8.

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviations between the participation groups with GPA as the dependent variable

Group Statistics					
	Academic Participation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GPA	No Academic Participation	85	3.01	1.393	.151
	Academic Participation	77	4.51	1.294	.147

Table 8: Independent Samples T-Test between participation groups with GPA as the dependent variable
Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
					Lower
GPA	Equal variances assumed	.000	-1.495	.212	-1.913
	Equal variances not assumed	.000	-1.495	.211	-1.912

An Independent Samples T-Test was run for GPA according to Social Extracurricular Activities Participants and those who did not participate in Social Extracurricular Activities, and results were statistically significant $p = .018$ with higher means for participants of Social Extracurricular activities. Means and Standard Deviations are found below in Table 9. Independent Samples T-Test results are found below in Table 10.

Table 9: Means and Standard Deviations between Social Extracurricular Activities participation groups with GPA as the dependent variable

Group Statistics					
GPA	Social Participation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	No Soc Part	79	3.43	1.533	.173
	Soc Part	83	4.00	1.498	.164

Table 10 Independent Samples T-Test between Social Extracurricular Activities participation groups with GPA as the dependent variable, Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
					Lower
GPA	Equal variances assumed	.018	-.570	.238	-1.040
	Equal variances not assumed	.018	-.570	.238	-1.040

An Independent Samples T-Test was run for GPA according to Athletic Extracurricular Activities Participants and those who did not participate in Athletic Extracurricular Activities, and results were not statistically significant $p = .404$.

The study sought to determine if the number of Extracurricular Activities participated in by students would be positively correlated to academic achievement according to GPA. A Pearson Correlation was run and indicated statistically significant positive correlation $p = .001$, $r = .444$ with those with higher academic achievement being more likely to engage in a greater number of Extracurricular Activities. Means and Standard Deviations are below in Table 11. Pearson Correlation results are below in Table 12.

Table 11: Means and Standard Deviations between the number of extracurricular activities and academic achievement

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GPA	3.72	1.537	162
Number of EAs	2.38	1.915	162

Table 12: Correlation between the number of extracurricular activities and academic achievement with GPA

Correlations			
		GPA	Number of EAs
GPA	Pearson Correlation	1	.444**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Number of EAs	Pearson Correlation	.444**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

9.4 Attitudes and Opinions Based on Participation

The study sought to determine whether there would be a statistically significant difference in responses to questions regarding student attitudes and opinions toward education and school between participants in Extracurricular Activities and Non-Participants. Attitudes and opinions toward education and school were categorized according to the following constructs: School Connectedness, Peer Social Support, Adult Social Support, and Cultural Acceptance. Participation was divided into three categories: Participants, Non-Participants, and Mixed Participation consisting of students who had at one time participated but did not participate consistently through all four years of high school.

An ANOVA was run with participation as the grouping variable and School Connectedness as the dependent variable with no statistically significant differences between all three categories of Participants $p > .05$. An ANOVA was run with participation as the grouping variable and Peer Social Support as the dependent variable with no statistically significant differences $p > .05$. However, when Pairwise comparisons were analyzed, both Participants $p = .026$ and Mixed Participation $p = .026$ reported a significantly higher level of Peer Social Support than non-participants $p = .026$. Means and Standard Deviations are below in Table 13. Pairwise Comparison results are below in Table 14.

Table 13: Means and Standard Deviations between the Participation Grouping and Peer Social Support as the dependent variable

Estimates				
Dependent Variable: Peer Social Support				
Participation	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Non-Participant	3.200	.103	2.997	3.403
Participant	3.486	.075	3.338	3.633
Mixed Participation	3.464	.057	3.351	3.576

Table 14: Pairwise Comparisons between Means and Standard Deviations between the Participation Grouping and Peer Social Support as the dependent variable, Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Peer Social Support					
(I) Participation	(J) Participation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]
					Lower Bound
Non-Participant	Participant	-.286*	.127	.026	-.536
	Mixed Participation	-.264*	.117	.026	-.495
Participant	Non-Participant	.286*	.127	.026	.035
	Mixed Participation	.022	.094	.813	-.163
Mixed Participation	Non-Participant	.264*	.117	.026	.032
	Participant	-.022	.094	.813	-.208

An ANOVA was run with participation as the grouping variable and Adult Social Support as the dependent variable with no statistically significant differences between all three categories of Participants $p > .05$. An ANOVA was run with participation as the grouping variable and Cultural Acceptance as the dependent variable with no statistically significant differences $p > .05$. However, when Pairwise comparisons were analyzed, there was a statistically significant difference between Participants and Mixed Participation $p = .038$ with participants reporting significantly higher cultural acceptance. Means and Standard Deviations are below in Table 15. Pairwise Comparisons results are below in Table 16.

Table 15: Means and Standard Deviations between the Participation Grouping and Cultural Acceptance as the dependent variable

Estimates				
Dependent Variable: Cultural Acceptance				
Participation	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Non Participant	3.012	.116	2.782	3.242
Participant	3.178	.085	3.010	3.345
Mixed Participation	2.954	.064	2.827	3.081

Table 16: Pairwise Comparisons between Participation Grouping and Cultural Acceptance as the dependent variable

Pairwise Comparisons Dependent Variable: Cultural Acceptance					
(I) Participation	(J) Participation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]
					Lower Bound
Non-Participant	Participant	-.166	.144	.251	-.451
	Mixed Participation	.057	.133	.667	-.205
Participant	Non-Participant	.166	.144	.251	-.119
	Mixed Participation	.223*	.107	.038	.013
Mixed Participation	Non-Participant	-.057	.133	.667	-.320
	Participant	-.223*	.107	.038	-.434

9.5 Attitudes and Opinions Based on Demographic Information

The study sought to determine whether there would be a statistically significant difference in responses to questions regarding attitudes and opinions toward education and school when results were categorized by student demographics including gender, ethnicity, and employment status. Further, the study sought to determine if job status would have a statistically significant effect on academic achievement according to GPA. Attitudes and opinions toward education and school were categorized according to the following constructs: School Connectedness, Peer Social Support, Adult Social Support, and Cultural Acceptance. Gender was divided into female and male. Ethnicity was categorized as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, White or Caucasian, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Native American, and Other. Employment Status was categorized according to Part-time, Full-time or Not Employed.

Gender. An Independent Samples T-Test was run using gender as the grouping variable and School Connectedness as the dependent variable with no statistically significant difference between females and males $p = .09$, Peer Social Support as the dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p = .417$, Adult Social Support as the dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p = .98$, and Cultural Acceptance as the dependent variable with no statistically significant difference between females and males $p = .8$.

Race/Ethnicity. An ANOVA was run with Race/Ethnicity as the grouping variable and School Connectedness as the dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p = .056$. However, when Pairwise comparisons were analyzed, there was a statistically significant difference between Hispanic and White students, $p = .046$, with Hispanic students having higher school connectedness, a significant difference between White students and American Indian or Native American, $p = .03$, with White having a higher School Connectedness, a significant difference between Hispanic and American Indian or Native American, $p = .005$, with Hispanic students having a higher School Connectedness, and a significant difference between Other and American Indian or Native American, $p = .047$, with Other students having a higher School Connectedness. Due to the small sample size of Other $n = 7$ and American Indian $n = 4$, definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from these results. Information for Means, Standard Deviations, and Significance can be found below in Tables 17, 18, and 19.

Table 17: Attitudes and opinions toward School Connectedness when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Black or African American	3.00	.551	6
White/Caucasian	2.98	.557	102
Hispanic	3.19	.472	39
Other	3.06	.718	7
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.67	1.026	3
American Indian or Native American	2.35	.929	4
Total	3.01	.573	161

Table 18: Attitudes and opinions toward School Connectedness when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Black or African American	3.000	.230	2.546	3.454
White/Caucasian	2.978	.056	2.868	3.088
Hispanic	3.191	.090	3.013	3.369
Other	3.057	.213	2.637	3.477
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.667	.325	2.025	3.308
American Indian or Native American	2.350	.281	1.794	2.906

Table 19: Pairwise Comparisons of Attitudes and opinions toward School Connectedness when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

(I) Race/Ethnicity	(J) Race/Ethnicity	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Black or African American	White/Caucasian	.022	.236	.926	-.445	.489
	Hispanic	-.191	.247	.440	-.679	.296
	Other	-.057	.313	.855	-.676	.561
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.333	.398	.403	-.453	1.119
	American Indian or Native American	.650	.363	.076	-.068	1.368
White/Caucasian	Black or African American	-.022	.236	.926	-.489	.445
	Hispanic	-.213*	.106	.046	-.422	-.004
	Other	-.079	.220	.719	-.514	.355
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.311	.330	.347	-.340	.962
	American Indian or Native American	.628*	.287	.030	.061	1.195
Hispanic	Black or African American	.191	.247	.440	-.296	.679
	White/Caucasian	.213*	.106	.046	.004	.422
	Other	.134	.231	.563	-.322	.590
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.524	.337	.122	-.142	1.190
	American Indian or Native American	.841*	.295	.005	.257	1.425
Other	Black or African American	.057	.313	.855	-.561	.676
	White/Caucasian	.079	.220	.719	-.355	.514
	Hispanic	-.134	.231	.563	-.590	.322
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.390	.388	.316	-.377	1.158
	American Indian or Native American	.707*	.353	.047	.010	1.404
Asian or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	-.333	.398	.403	-1.119	.453
	White/Caucasian	-.311	.330	.347	-.962	.340
	Hispanic	-.524	.337	.122	-1.190	.142
	Other	-.390	.388	.316	-1.158	.377

	American Indian or Native American	.317	.430	.462	-.532	1.166
American Indian or Native American	Black or African American	-.650	.363	.076	-1.368	.068
	White/Caucasian	-.628*	.287	.030	-1.195	-.061
	Hispanic	-.841*	.295	.005	-1.425	-.257
	Other	-.707*	.353	.047	-1.404	-.010
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.317	.430	.462	-1.166	.532
Based on estimated marginal means						
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.						
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).						

An ANOVA was run with Race/Ethnicity as group variable and Peer Social Support as the dependent variable and results were statistically significant p =.007. Pairwise comparisons showed a significant difference between American Indian or Native American and every other group: American Indian or Native American and Black or African American p < .001, American Indian or Native American and White p =.001, American Indian or Native American and Hispanic p =.001, American Indian or Native American and Other p = .001, American Indian or Native American and Asian or Pacific Islander p = .013. American Indian or Native American students had the lowest mean at 2.55 while all other groups had similar means. Due to the small sample size of American Indian students n = 4, definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from these results. Information for Means, Standard Deviations, and Significance can be found below in tables 20, 21, and 22.

Table 20: Attitudes and opinions toward Peer Social Support when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Black or African American	3.83	.197	6
White/Caucasian	3.41	.526	102
Hispanic	3.47	.499	39
Other	3.57	.423	7
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.53	.416	3
American Indian or Native American	2.55	.681	4
Total	3.43	.529	161

Table 21: Attitudes and opinions toward Peer Social Support when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Black or African American	3.833	.209	3.421	4.245
White/Caucasian	3.411	.051	3.311	3.511
Hispanic	3.474	.082	3.313	3.636
Other	3.571	.193	3.190	3.953
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.533	.295	2.951	4.116
American Indian or Native American	2.550	.255	2.045	3.055

Table 22: Pairwise comparisons of Attitudes and opinions toward Peer Social Support when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

(I) Race Ethnicity	(J) Race Ethnicity	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Black or African American	White/Caucasian	.423	.215	.051	-.001	.847
	Hispanic	.359	.224	.111	-.084	.802
	Other	.262	.284	.358	-.300	.823
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.300	.361	.408	-.414	1.014
	American Indian or Native American	1.283*	.330	.000	.632	1.935
White/ Caucasian	Black or African American	-.423	.215	.051	-.847	.001
	Hispanic	-.064	.096	.510	-.254	.126
	Other	-.161	.200	.422	-.555	.234
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.123	.299	.683	-.714	.469
	American Indian or Native American	.861*	.260	.001	.346	1.375
Hispanic	Black or African American	-.359	.224	.111	-.802	.084
	White/Caucasian	.064	.096	.510	-.126	.254

	Other	-.097	.210	.644	-.511	.317
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.059	.306	.848	-.664	.546
	American Indian or Native American	.924*	.268	.001	.394	1.454
Other	Black or African American	-.262	.284	.358	-.823	.300
	White/Caucasian	.161	.200	.422	-.234	.555
	Hispanic	.097	.210	.644	-.317	.511
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.038	.353	.914	-.658	.735
	American Indian or Native American	1.021*	.320	.002	.389	1.654
Asian or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	-.300	.361	.408	-1.014	.414
	White/Caucasian	.123	.299	.683	-.469	.714
	Hispanic	.059	.306	.848	-.546	.664
	Other	-.038	.353	.914	-.735	.658
	American Indian or Native American	.983*	.390	.013	.212	1.754
American Indian or Native American	Black or African American	-1.283*	.330	.000	-1.935	-.632
	White/Caucasian	-.861*	.260	.001	-1.375	-.346
	Hispanic	-.924*	.268	.001	-1.454	-.394
	Other	-1.021*	.320	.002	-1.654	-.389
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.983*	.390	.013	-1.754	-.212
Based on estimated marginal means						
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.						
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).						

An ANOVA was run with Race/Ethnicity as grouping Variable and Adult Social Support as the dependent variable and results were not significant p = .25. Pairwise comparisons showed that none were significantly different except for American Indian or Native American and Black or African American p = .013 with Black or African American having higher Adult Social Support and American Indian or Native American and Hispanic p = .046 with Hispanic having higher Adult Social Support.

An ANOVA was run with Race/Ethnicity as grouping Variable and Cultural Acceptance as the dependent variable. Results were significant p = .017. Pairwise comparisons showed that Black or African American, White, Hispanic, and Other were not significantly different while American Indian or Native American and Asian or Pacific Islander were significantly different from all other categories but each other: American Indian or Native American and Black or African American p = .007, American Indian or Native American and White p = .006, American Indian or Native American and Hispanic p = .007, American

Indian or Native American and Other p = .007; Asian or Pacific Islander and Black or African American p = ..022, Asian or Pacific Islander and White p = .028, Asian or Pacific Islander and Hispanic p = .032, Asian or Pacific Islander and Other p = .0247. All groups except for American Indian or Native American and Asian or Pacific Islander had similar means. Due to the small sample size of American Indian or Native American n = 4, and Asian or Pacific Islander n = 3, definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from these results. Means and standard deviations can be found below in Table 23. Pairwise comparison results can be found below in Table 24.

Table 23: Means and standard deviations of Attitudes and opinions toward Cultural Acceptance when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

Descriptive Statistics			
Dependent Variable: Cultural Acceptance			
Race Ethnicity	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Black or African American	3.25	.226	6
White/Caucasian	3.05	.544	102
Hispanic	3.05	.647	39
Other	3.21	.667	7
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.30	1.015	3
American Indian or Native American	2.23	.685	4
Total	3.03	.597	161

Table 24: Pairwise Comparisons of Attitudes and opinions toward Cultural Acceptance when results were categorized according to Race or Ethnicity

Pairwise Comparisons					
Dependent Variable: Cultural Acceptance					
(I) Race/Ethnicity	(J) Race/Ethnicity	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]
					Lower Bound
Black or African American	White/Caucasian	.197	.244	.420	-.284
	Hispanic	.196	.254	.442	-.306
	Other	.036	.323	.912	-.602
	Asian or Pacific	.950*	.410	.022	.140

	Islander				
	American Indian or Native American	1.025*	.374	.007	.285
White/Caucasian	Black or African American	-.197	.244	.420	-.678
	Hispanic	-.001	.109	.993	-.217
	Other	-.161	.227	.478	-.609
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.753*	.340	.028	.082
	American Indian or Native American	.828*	.296	.006	.244
Hispanic	Black or African American	-.196	.254	.442	-.699
	White/Caucasian	.001	.109	.993	-.215
	Other	-.160	.238	.501	-.631
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.754*	.348	.032	.067
	American Indian or Native American	.829*	.305	.007	.227
Other	Black or African American	-.036	.323	.912	-.673
	White/Caucasian	.161	.227	.478	-.286
	Hispanic	.160	.238	.501	-.310
	Asian or Pacific Islander	.914*	.400	.024	.124
	American Indian or Native American	.989*	.364	.007	.271
Asian or Pacific Islander	Black or African American	-.950*	.410	.022	-1.760
	White/Caucasian	-.753*	.340	.028	-1.424
	Hispanic	-.754*	.348	.032	-1.440
	Other	-.914*	.400	.024	-1.705
	American Indian or Native	.075	.443	.866	-.800

	American				
American Indian or Native American	Black or African American	-1.025*	.374	.007	-1.765
	White/Caucasian	-.828*	.296	.006	-1.412
	Hispanic	-.829*	.305	.007	-1.430
	Other	-.989*	.364	.007	-1.708
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.075	.443	.866	-.950

Job Status. An ANOVA was run with Job Status as the grouping variable and GPA as dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p > .05$ in the three categories of Unemployed, Part-time Job, and Full-time Job according to academic achievement as defined by GPA. An ANOVA was run with Job Status as the grouping variable and School Connectedness as dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p > .05$, Peer Social Support as dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p > .05$, and Job Status as the grouping variable and Cultural Acceptance as dependent variable with no statistically significant difference $p > .05$ in the three categories of Unemployed, Part-time Job, and Full-time Job.

10. Discussion

10.1 Participation Groups, Motivational Factors, and Academic Achievement

The purpose of this study was to attempt to determine what factors, if any, outside of the scope of regular classroom instruction would have a significant influence on a student's chances for success academically and help them to choose a course of action that would be beneficial to them after graduation. The first step was to focus on the extracurricular activities provided by the school and try to determine if they were indeed beneficial as previous studies claimed. Next, could we determine to what extent this participation would be an influencing factor and in which EA categories? Participation in Extracurricular Activities did show a significant influencing effect on higher Academic Achievement with students in the participants category having higher mean GPAs than those in the non-participants category or students in the mixed-participation category (mixed-participation meaning they did not participate during their entire four years of high school). However, Academic and Social EAs, but not Athletic EAs, appeared to have an influencing effect on Academic Achievement when GPA was compared according to participation status, which is supported by prior research (Im, et al., 2016). The results do not necessarily indicate that participation alone in Academic and Social EAs are causal to higher Academic Achievement. Since several EAs in these categories have either GPA requirements or service requirements, it could be that students who are more academically inclined are drawn to participation in these endeavors. The results raise more questions, and further studies are required to decide about whether these EAs have an influencing factor on achievement. Athletic EAs, which tend to be more physical rather than mental, did not have the same relationship with GPA. All three categories of EAs would have a supportive adult influence so this could also be ruled out as a factor. Job Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender had no significant relationship with

Academic Achievement, so it stands to reason the yet to be identified influencing factor within Academic and Social EAs needs to be researched.

Interestingly, the study did determine that participation in multiple EAs resulted in a significant positive correlation to GPA. Previous research (Swanson, 2002) supported these results, but the findings of this study could not substantiate the claims of a point of diminishing returns. All we can surmise would be more involvement led to more academic success. However, the implications of these results need to be examined in detail before drawing further conclusions.

10.2 Participation Groups and Attitudes and Opinions toward School and Education

The results would tend to indicate that while participation in EA's may affect Academic Achievement depending on the category, participation overall influences more favorable levels of perceptions in three of the four categories used to measure perceptions of school climate: those being School Connectedness, Peer Social Support, and Cultural Acceptance. This supports prior research that indicates participation in structured EAs resulted in an increase in favorable views of both school and education (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011; Ivaniushina & Aleksandrov, 2015). The fact that there were no statistically significant differences in Adult Social Support between the various groups should be considered considering the similar means reported from all the survey respondents. This may indicate that a large percentage of the students who participated in the survey perceive favorable levels of Adult Social Support.

Although the number of survey respondents in several Race/Ethnicity categories was too small to draw conclusions from responses, further surveys would be required to validate or refute results that were statistically significant that appeared to indicate a less favorable view of school and education. This could be difficult simply because schools in the area may not have enough students in the categories needed for further study. A qualitative study of the Attitudes and Opinions toward School and Education may be a better option for examining such conditions.

10.3 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The results should be interpreted within the context of limitations of the study. Since the survey was voluntary, it is possible that the results could be indicative of students who are already inclined to involvement and participation in school activities although the sample size was large enough to indicate answers should be considered valid. Further, since GPA was self-reported and not confirmed through school records there exists the possibility of falsification or inflation of actual GPAs. The anonymous nature of the survey made it impossible to verify such information. Since the survey was administered toward the earlier part of the second semester of the academic year, Post-graduation plans should not be viewed as certainty of which direction the student may go after graduation. Additionally, socio-economic status would have been an important factor to consider, but due to current FERPA law, such information could only be obtained through written permission by a parent or guardian (ed.gov, 2018).

The findings of higher levels of Academic Achievement for participants in Academic and Social EAs but not Athletic suggests that closer examination of Academic and Social EAs is warranted to determine if there are factors that can be identified that could possibly be considered causal to achievement or if this is due to the predisposition of the students who participate in them. In addition, the extent of involvement

through participation in multiple EAs needs to be examined further. Although the data indicates that more participation correlates with higher academic achievement, such results could be misleading and should not be viewed to increase a student's GPA simply through adding more activities to their schedule. Further research is needed to determine causation and at what point multiple EAs begin to become detrimental to Academic Achievement, if such a condition exists.

Self-reported GPA had a surprising relationship with Post-Grad plans. Not surprisingly, students who planned to attend a four-year college or university had the highest mean GPA. However, the next highest mean GPA group was reported by the students who indicated they would get a job and join the workforce. This brings up questions about attitudes and opinions toward post-secondary education, which was not included as part of this study. Many of the students in the second highest mean category could still qualify for acceptance to a Post-Secondary institution of some sort so further research is needed to determine the rationale for such a choice.

11. Conclusion

The study confirmed prior research that indicated participation in Extracurricular Activities was indeed beneficial when measured by Academic Achievement and favorable attitudes and opinions toward school and education. However, categories of EAs will have varying influence on these benefits and the extent to which they are significant. Students who start out and remain involved in EAs may receive the greatest amount of benefit. Schools that can engage students and promote involvement in rising ninth graders will have a greater chance of creating a positive school climate and an academically successful student body. Encouraging and supporting the adult staff members in efforts to be engaged outside of the traditional classroom environment in mentoring roles in EAs will likely also yield benefits in student attitudes and achievements.

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Appendix

Demographic Questions

1. Grade
- 11th
- 12th

2. Gender
- Male
- Female

3. Ethnicity
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White or Caucasian
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Native American

Other

4. How would you describe your cumulative high school GPA?
Less than 2.00
- 2.00 – 2.49
- 2.50 – 2.99
- 3.00 – 3.24
- 3.25–3.49
- 3.50–3.74
- 3.75 or greater

5. After graduation, I plan to…

- Go to a Trade School
- Go to a Technical School
- Go to a four-year College/University
- Join a branch of the Military
- Get a job and enter the workforce

Other _____

6. Are you going to be the first person in your family to attend college?

- No
- Yes
- I do not know

7. If you are not participating in Extra Curricular Activities this year, please check the reasons below or provide your own explanation.

- not enough time
- family responsibilities
- activity of choice not available
- restricted from participation
- friends do not participate
- job
- other_____

8. Are you currently or have you ever participated in Extra-Curricular Activities?

- Yes
- No

9. If you answered "Yes" to either of the two previous questions, check all that apply. If “No” then leave blank.

Clubs and Organizations

- Academic Bowl
- Bass Fishing Club
- Beta Club (10-12th Grades)
- Chamber Singers
- Color Guard & Winter Guard
- Dance Team
- DECA
- Drama Club/Thespians/Honor Thespians-Masquers
- Dungeons & Disports
- Euro Club
- FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes)
- FCCLA (Family Career Community Leaders of America)
- Literary Magazine
- FLOOD
- Forsyth Central Indoor Drumline
- Garden Club
- HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America)
- Humane Society
- Interact Club

- International Club
- Junior Civitan
- Key Club
- Marching Band
- Math Team
- Mock Trial Team
- Model UN
- NABT Bio Club
- National Art Honor Society
- National English Honor Society
- National Honor Society
- National Technical Honor Society
- Native Speakers Club
- Newspaper - Central Way
- Robotics Club
- Science Olympiad
- SGA (Student Gay Alliance)
- Simple Charity
- Skills USA Club
- SmART Club
- Spanish Honor Society
- Student Council (Central Ambassadors)
- TARC (Rocketry)
- Tri-M Music Honor Society
- TSA (Technology Student Association)
- Ultimate Frisbee
- VEX
- Volleyball (Boys)
- Y-Club
- Yearbook
- Football
- Football Cheer
- Softball
- Volleyball
- Other Activity

Athletics

- Baseball
- Boys Golf
- Boys Lacrosse
- Boys Soccer
- Boys Tennis
- Boys Track & Field

- Girls Golf
- Girls Lacrosse
- Girls Soccer
- Girls Tennis
- Girls Track & Field
- Gymnastics
- Basketball Cheer
- Boys Basketball
- Dance Team
- Girls Basketball
- Swim & Drive
- Wrestling
- Competitive Cheer
- Cross Country

10. How many hours a week do you spend on extracurricular activities?

- 0-3
- 4-7
- 8-9
- 10 or more

11. How many times have you been referred to the school office or for discipline reasons this school year?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

12. How many hours per week, *on average*, do you spend studying?

- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10-12
- 13 or more

13. Do you currently hold a paid job? If so, is it part-time or full-time?

- Part-time
- Full-time
- No, I do not have a paid job

14. If you are not involved in extracurricular activities, which of the following statements is mosttrue? Please select all that apply.

- I prefer not to be involved
- I would like to be involved but I:
- Commute too far
- Must work too many hours
- Need to spend time studying
- Have too many family responsibilities

School Climate

School Connectedness

15. I like school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

16. Most days I look forward to going to school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

17. I feel like I fit in at my school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

18. I feel successful at school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

19. I feel connected to others at school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

Peer Social Support

20. I get along with other students at school.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

21. I know a student at my school that I can talk to if I need help (e.g., homework, class assignments, projects…).
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

22. I know a student at my school that I can talk to if I am feeling sad or down.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

23. I have a group of friends at school that I have fun with and are nice to me.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

24. Students in my school are welcoming to new students.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

Adult Social Support

25. Teachers treat me with respect.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

26. Adults in this school treat all students with respect.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

27. All students are treated fairly by the adults in my school.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

28. Teachers treat all students fairly.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

Cultural Acceptance

29. Students at my school treat each other with respect.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

30. Students treat one another fairly.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

31. Students show respect to other students regardless of their academic ability.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

32. Students at this school are treated fairly by other students regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture.
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

33. All students in my school are treated fairly regardless of their appearance.
- Strongly Disagree

- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

34. My parents, or other adults at my home, think that it is important for me to graduate from high school.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree