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Student Extracurricular Participation, Student Achievement, and School Perception: an Elementary School Perspective

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Student Extracurricular Participation, Student Achievement, and School Perception: an Elementary School Perspective

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Abstract

Research studies of extracurricular activities have illustrated specific relationships between participation and certain student characteristics, such as higher grades, higher standardized test scores, higher attendance, fewer discipline issues, and increased positive school perception. Since so much of the previous research on extracurricular activities has focused on the secondary education level, the researcher questioned whether or not these same relationships would be present in elementary school students who participated in extracurricular activities. This research study was conducted at one elementary school in a large metropolitan area to determine what, if any, relationships among variables including length of time participating in the activity were evident amongst extracurricular activity participants. This study compared the MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores in math and communication arts, office discipline referral rates, and attendance rates of elementary school students who had participated in extracurricular activities to those students who did not participate in extracurricular activities. The researcher used both a mixed-methods approach to determine if there was a difference between those students who took part in extracurricular activities and those who did not. The quantitative part of the study demonstrated a relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and higher communication arts and math standardized test scores. A relationship was also evident between participation in extracurricular activities and higher communication arts standardized test scores for those who participated in extracurricular activities for a longer amount of time; however there was not a statistical difference in attendance or office discipline referrals for length of participation or participation in extracurricular activities in general. The study also examined

relationships between extracurricular participation and students' school perception. The qualitative analysis, which consisted of data gathered by student (*n*=65) and parent (*n*=29) questionnaires, revealed more similarities between extracurricular activity participants and non-participants than differences. The researcher was able to conclude that certain relationships existed amongst extracurricular activity participants and standardized test scores. The study concluded with implications and recommendations for future implementation of elementary extracurricular activity programs.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The American public school system is currently faced with several challenges that must be conquered in order to provide the best possible education for students. Educators are diligently working towards developing new techniques and strategies to ensure that all students are academically proficient, in addition to addressing issues that were once the sole responsibility of a student's family. With the economic recession that the United States has recently endured, school boards are now being placed in a very difficult position as they determine where to reduce or eliminate funding to balance their budgets.

Educators now face the ultimate challenge of determining everything that a student must have in order to receive a well-rounded education. Balancing those important needs against the currently available resources of time, money, and energy, is a difficult task for all educators. Since school resources are limited, all school programs are now being scrutinized. Every program is being evaluated to determine its worth and impact on a student's education.

Most Americans have participated in a school extracurricular activity at some point. Public schools are amongst the biggest providers of structured extracurricular activities (Howie, Lukacs, Pastor, Reuben, & Mendola, 2010). These programs are comprised of various activities such as music, drama, sports, and clubs that meet outside of the normal school day. In this study, all extracurricular activities are defined as being either an extension to the school's already established curriculum, which is being taught during the school day, or new programs, which are not currently addressed or offered in such curriculum (Lawhorn, 2008). An example of extracurricular activities that supported existing curriculum included academic clubs, such as a science club , while

new programs included such activities as sports and the arts. This study examined relationships between extracurricular participation and various characteristics, such as academic success factors and students' school perception. In determining the purpose of extracurricular activity offerings in schools, researchers have investigated various benefits that students receive from participating in these types of activities. Even though the vast majority of literature concerning extracurricular activities tends to include research from the secondary level, this study has contributed to the existing literature on extracurricular activities by studying the potential link between extracurricular activity participation and student success factors at the elementary level.

Background of the Study

Several studies have been conducted that demonstrate the potential positive impacts extracurricular activities can have on student achievement. Extracurricular activity participation has the possibility to impact grade point averages, attendance rates, discipline incident rates, and other critical areas that can influence student achievement in a positive manner. Extracurricular activities also tend to help students develop a positive connection and interest in their school by supporting their social development as well (Schaefer, Simpkins, Vest, & Price, 2011).

A study by Silliker and Quirk (1997) investigated the influence of extracurricular activity participation on a student's academic success. The research not only showed that students who participated in sports had better grade point averages in general, but also demonstrated that participants tended to have a higher grade point average during the time in which they were taking part in their sport (Silliker & Quirk, 1997). The study supported the idea that extracurricular activities may impact the academic success of a

student in a positive way, but does not detract from it. In researching the topic of extracurricular activities, several researchers stressed that the time spent participating in these activities is enriching and expands on students' academic skills (Holloway, 2000). Even though it is difficult to prove that extracurricular activities alone are responsible for better academic achievement, there does not seem to be a relationship between participation in these activities and lower GPA or achievement (Holloway, 2000).

Participation in extracurricular activities has also had a positive impact on dropout rates of high school teenagers. McNeal (1995) conducted a study that examined the dropout rates of various high school students and their extracurricular activity participation. He discovered that students who participated in extracurricular activities had a reduced risk of dropping out of high school in comparison to those students who did not participate in any extracurricular activities (McNeal, 1995). Students who took part in extracurricular activities that included fine-arts, sports, and academic clubs tended to have a lower dropout rate in comparison to those students who were non-participants. Students involved in extracurricular activities tended to develop a stronger commitment to school and developed more school pride, which helped lower the chance of a student dropping out of high school (McNeal, 1995).

Several schools have witnessed the effects of extracurricular activities on their student body and have become proactive in developing more extracurricular activities (Reeves, 2008). The strong correlation between students who are involved in extracurricular activities and their academic performance has prompted many schools to devote time to improving their extracurricular activities. A high school in the state of Illinois has worked toward developing a strong extracurricular program that supports the

various interests of its student body (Reeves, 2008). Educators in this school discovered that students who were involved in three to four extracurricular activities were benefiting from additional academic success and that the time involved in these activities was not negatively impacting their academic achievement (Reeves, 2008). Students who took part in these activities not only improved in the area of academics but also developed positive relationships with others and gained important life-long skills, like teamwork and organization. Similar effects have also been noted in extracurricular activities and programs at the elementary and middle school levels (Reeves, 2008).

Extracurricular activities provide students with an opportunity to explore their interests and to enrich their lives (Zhao, 2009). Some students would not have the opportunity otherwise to take part in such activities if their school did not offer them. In less affluent areas, some parents cannot afford to provide their children with these opportunities (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; McNeal, 1999; Posner & Vandell, 1999). A 1999 study by Posner and Vandell demonstrated that these types of activities offered various opportunities that were not easily accessible to students who came from low socio-economic households. Schools that provide extracurricular activities for students are opening the doors of possibility by providing an opportunity for students to explore their interests (Zhao, 2009). Extracurricular activities provide students with an opportunity to explore their curiosities, while creating meaningful relationships with their peers and teachers (Posner & Vandell, 1999).

Extracurricular activities also have the ability to impact student safety in a positive way by providing a structured environment for students after school is completed for the day. An estimated six million students under the age of 13 return home to an

empty house each day (Franklin, 2004). The hours of operation for America's schools make it difficult for parents who must work during the day, to provide adequate supervision. Many offenses against students, such as theft and fighting which typically take place in the surrounding neighborhood, occur after school because of the fact that so many students are left unsupervised after school hours (Franklin, 2004). Structured time, which is provided with afterschool extracurricular activities, can help keep students safe by providing much needed supervision (Franklin, 2004). Structured extracurricular activities provide great opportunities for students to explore their interests in a safe environment until their parent's workday is completed (Franklin, 2004). Students who participate in these activities are not only safe during after school hours but also have an opportunity to take part in activities that support the learning they engaged in during the school day.

Another major issue that impacts extracurricular activities in general includes the guidelines for participation. It has become a common practice to keep students who are struggling in the areas of academics and behavior from participating in extracurricular activities. In the state of Texas, the "No pass, no play" rule was legislated over 10 years ago. Many studies have cautioned against barring students from participating in these activities because they are not producing in the classroom (Holloway, 2000). Studies have shown that students who are struggling in school might benefit the most from taking part in extracurricular activities (Holloway, 2000). Policies such as the "No pass, no play" rule might do more harm than good, as they keep at-risk students, who could benefit the most from extracurricular activities, from being able to participate (Holloway, 2000). Participating in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right guaranteed by

law. At the same time, it is also important not to overlook the positive impacts of extracurricular activities, which can be seen in the academic success of those students who take part in extracurricular activities (Black, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fujita, 2006). In examining both sides of this controversy, extracurricular activities could be used as an intervention to help a student who has lost interest in school but at the same time, the privilege of taking part in extracurricular activities could also provide motivation to keep up a student's grades (Davis, 1996).

Extracurricular activities are important to a school's culture and provide students with a positive connection to school. These types of activities help bring out teamwork, leadership, and other lifelong skills, which other subject areas can struggle to teach (Kleinert, Miracle, & Sheppard-Jones, 2007). Students who take part in extracurricular activities learn how to become more responsible and confident. These skills then work towards helping students who participate in extracurricular activities to obtain academic success and to become good citizens of their schools (Kleinert et al., 2007).

Importance of Study

This study compared the MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores in math and communication arts, office discipline referral rates, and attendance rates of elementary school students who had participated in extracurricular activities to those students who did not participate in extracurricular activities. The researcher also used these variables to compare outcomes between students who participated in extracurricular activities for longer and shorter amounts of time. A school of roughly 380 students from a large metropolitan area was used for this study. The researcher collected data from the 2011-2012 school year, which included both qualitative and quantitative data from

individual students. The qualitative data for the study consisted of a student and parent questionnaire, as well as individual student interviews.

In a study by Pierce and Vandell (1999), at-risk students who participated more often in extracurricular activities at the elementary level tended to have better work habits in the classroom, were able to settle conflicts more peacefully, and had better attendance in comparison to students who attended less often (Shumow, 2001). This study will examine whether or not extracurricular activity involvement impacts students' academic success as well as overall perception of school over time, such that the length of involvement contributes to positive academic achievements. The study will compare students who take part in extracurricular activities and those who do not, as well as those students who take part in extracurricular activities longer in comparison to those who take part in these activities for a shorter amount of time for both quantitative and qualitative parts of the study.

Rationale for Study

The American school system has included extracurricular activities at the secondary level for decades, and several studies have shown a positive correlation between students who took part in these activities and their level of academic achievement in school. This study focused on the impact of extracurricular activities on elementary grade level students and the possible educational benefits of having extracurricular activities at the elementary level. Benefits of extracurricular activities can include anything from providing safe activities to keep students from dangerous situations that could occur after school (Franklin, 2004), to providing additional opportunities to keep students engaged in the learning process (Silliker & Quirk, 1997).

The additional benefits of extracurricular activity participation include higher attendance, lower discipline referrals, higher grade point averages, and standardized test scores.

Several studies concerning secondary extracurricular activities have shown many positive correlational relationships between students who do participate in extracurricular activities and academic success factors. A study by Silliker and Quirk (1997) found that students who participated in sports had better grade point averages in general, but also tended to have a higher grade point average during the time they were taking part in their sport (Silliker & Quirk, 1997). These studies have linked extracurricular activity participation with higher test scores, attendance rates, minimizing at-risk behaviors, and increased school satisfaction. Another study discovered that students who were involved in three to four extracurricular activities were benefiting from additional academic success and that the time involved in these activities was not impacting their academic achievement in a negative way (Reeves, 2008).

This previous literature surrounding extracurricular activity participation has prompted this study on extracurricular activities at the elementary level. Since very few research studies have been completed at the elementary level, this fills a gap in the literature surrounding the study of extracurricular activities.

Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in school perception between those who do or do not take part in extracurricular activities?
2. How does parental involvement contribute to participation in extracurricular activities?

3. What are the similarities and differences between parents whose children are involved in extracurricular activities and those who are not?

Alternate Hypotheses

In determining the sample size used for each of the three hypotheses listed, the researcher examined the population size of students who were and were not involved in extracurricular activities during the 2011-2012 school year. Table 1 shows the total population for third, fourth, and fifth grades. This table also shows each grade level's enrollment.

Table 1

Northview Elementary, School Population Size, 2011-2012 School Year

Grade Level	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Total
Population	78	88	75	241

Table 2 shows the total number of participants and non-participants for each grade level during the 2011-2012 school year. The researcher selected a random sample of 60 participants and 60 non-participants out of the entire third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Table 2

Northview Elementary, School Population Size, Extracurricular Activity Involvement

Grade Level	**Third**	**Fourth**	**Fifth**	**Total**
Participants	34	47	25	106
Non-Participants	44	41	50	135
Total Population	78	88	75	241

In determining the sample size for hypotheses four, five, and six, the researcher took the randomly selected sample of participants used for the first three hypotheses and divided them out by their years of participation. Table 3 shows the number of students who were involved in extracurricular activities for one, two, and three years.

Table 3

Extracurricular Activity Participants, Years of Involvement, Population and Sample

Years	**1**	**2**	**3**	**Total**
Population	63	34	10	107
Sample	35	19	6	60

Alternate hypothesis 1.

School Extracurricular Participants, who are involved in extracurricular activities will achieve a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

Alternate hypothesis 2.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will achieve a higher attendance rate in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

Alternate hypothesis 3.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will achieve a lower office referral rate in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

Alternate hypothesis 4.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will achieve a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

Alternate hypothesis 5.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will achieve a higher attendance rate in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

Alternate hypothesis 6.

School Extracurricular Participants, who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will achieve a lower office referral rate in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

Limitations of Study

This study has the following limitations:.

1. The students in this study are from an elementary school in a large metropolitan area, and therefore results may not be applicable to other grades, or schools in non-metropolitan areas.
2. Some students with lower MAP scores might not be able to participate in the school's afterschool extracurricular activities because they are required to take part in afterschool remedial programs.

3. The elementary school used in this study included third, fourth, and fifth grades.
4. All of the data used in this study were taken from the 2011-2012 academic year.
5. The quantitative data used in this study were collected from the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education and are accurate to the individual school district's knowledge.
6. The school that was the site for this research study was the same school in which the researcher taught.
7. There are several factors and interventions that can influence a student's overall academic success beyond extracurricular activity participation.
8. The area of non-school sponsored extracurricular activities was not included in this research study and could affect the overall results.
9. The two randomly selected samples of extracurricular participants and non-participants are equal in terms of the number of students selected for each group, but not equal in terms of student characteristics, such as racial diversity and socio-economic status. In the qualitative data, there were not an equal number of extracurricular activity participants to non-participants.

Definition of Terms

At-Risk Students: children who have certain circumstances which prevent them from being academically sound and which normally include several negative factors that attribute to problem behaviors in the classroom (Shumow, 2001).

Attendance Rate: a rate calculated by the number of students who attend school each day divided by the population of the entire school body and averaged

for an entire school year. Each school has an attendance rate that is monitored and reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the State of Missouri (MODESE, 2012).

Extracurricular Activities: activities that are either an extension to the school's already established curriculum, which is being taught during the school day, or new programs, which are not currently addressed or offered in such curriculum (Lawhorn, 2008).

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP): the standardized test that all students in third through eighth grade must take in the areas of math, communication arts, and science in public schools in Missouri. All students are tested each spring in these areas and are then placed in one of the following categories based on their scores for each of the subject areas tested: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. According to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal mandate, all students are to be proficient or above in reading and math by 2014. According to NCLB, all states must have an assessment program that is able to evaluate its' schools and students. The MAP test is very accurate and is a widely used measure of student achievement in schools across the state of Missouri (MODESE, 2012).

School Extracurricular Participants: The third, fourth, and fifth grade students who participated in the research study of extracurricular activities.

Structured Activities: the types of extracurricular activities that are led by adults who supervise students, which typically occur before or after school in the areas of sports, fine arts, clubs, and other types of organizations (Franklin, 2004).

Student Achievement: characteristics of a student who maintains a high grade point average, consistently scores well on standardized tests, rarely misses school, and has very few discipline issues (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fujita, 2006).

Unstructured Activities: the type of extracurricular activities that are selected by the student in an unsupervised setting, typically out of the school environment. These types of activities normally include activities like recreational reading, television watching, and video game playing (Fujita, 2006).

Youth Development: an adolescent's positive or negative physical, emotional, and mental growth. This is an overall examination of the process of youth growing into his or her early adult years (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a).

Summary

The role extracurricular activities play in student achievement has been supported by several research studies on students at the secondary level. This study has an opportunity to explore the possibilities of extracurricular activities at the elementary level and to determine whether or not the same results could be achieved with younger students. The lack of research in the area of elementary extracurricular activities gives this study an opportunity to contribute to the overall literature on the study of extracurricular activities.

The next chapter will examine several studies and the literature surrounding extracurricular activities in general. Since fewer studies existed for schools and students at the elementary level, a majority of the reviewed literature will focus around the secondary level. The positive benefits that are being experienced at the secondary level have a great opportunity to be experienced at an elementary level.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature surrounding extracurricular activities and their overall effect on education will be examined. It is important to note that a very limited amount of literature and research is available on elementary extracurricular activities. In exploring different studies and researching this topic, the researcher discovered that several studies had been conducted on extracurricular activities at the secondary level. This finding further supported the rationale behind conducting a study on extracurricular activities at the elementary school level. The researcher included extracurricular activity studies that were focused on several characteristics, such as academic success, school perception, student safety, reasons for student extracurricular activity participation, and various demographic attributes. Since the literature surrounding the overall study of extracurricular activities was also limited, the researcher included several studies that were conducted more than five years ago. It is also important to note that many research studies found various correlations between specific characteristics and extracurricular activity participation, but finding causal relationships proved extremely difficult.

Academic Success

Several studies on extracurricular activities have shown strong correlations between participation in extracurricular activities and student success. Studies supported that students who participated in extracurricular activities typically had a higher attendance rate, better academic success, and encounter fewer discipline issues (Black, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Fujita, 2006). One high school in Woodstock, Illinois discovered the power of extracurricular activities when administration decided to expand its after school extracurricular offerings. The administration of this high school noticed

that this change resulted in more freshmen passing more courses in the core subject areas (Reeves, 2008). It was also noted that the number of discipline issues had fallen in comparison to the previous year by half and that the graduation rate of the school was the highest it had ever been over the past decade (Reeves, 2008).

Even with notable achievements, such as the successes experienced by Woodstock High School, many studies have noted difficulty in producing valid results. Since so many schools had implemented various interventions and programs at the same time, it is difficult to determine how much of an effect extracurricular activities alone have on a school's academic success. Some studies on extracurricular activities, depending on how stringent their methodologies may be, have also overemphasized the benefits for participants in such areas as academics and behavioral characteristics (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). It has been proven though, that participation in extracurricular activities does not endanger a student's success (Lumsden, 2003a; Reeves, 2008; Silliker & Quirk, 1997).

In the state of New Hampshire, a task force was formed to report on the current state of after school extracurricular activities. This task force presented report on the extracurricular programs that were implemented at several schools state-wide and collected data that supported several findings (Frankel, Streitburger, & Goldman, 2005). The New Hampshire State Afterschool Task Force determined that extracurricular activities helped increase students' academic skills and contributed to better school attendance in general (Frankel et al., 2005). The study found that the higher the attendance rate of extracurricular participants, the higher the overall school attendance.

The report also supported the belief that qualified staff and ongoing data collection were key to beginning and continuing these types of programs (Frankel et al., 2005).

A study conducted by Chaplin and Puma (2003) examined the effects of extracurricular activities on a student's academic success at the elementary level. This study also examined whether or not the specific type of extracurricular activity made a difference in the academic achievement that was obtained (Chaplin & Puma, 2003). The research was conducted using longitudinal data collected from several sources, such as teachers, parents, schools, and academic data. Even though the researchers acknowledged several studies that had supported the concept of extracurricular activities and increased student achievement, they were unable to provide clear evidence in their study that supported this claim (Chaplin & Puma, 2003). The literature surrounding the study of extracurricular activities continued to reiterate that proving causal relationships between academic success factors and participation is very difficult (Shulruf, 2010). One of Chaplin and Puma's (2003) research models did show a positive correlation between improved academic success and participation in the fine arts, such as music and visual art (Chaplin & Puma, 2003). The researchers in this study also pondered the question of whether or not extracurricular activities alone helped certain students achieve academic success (Chaplin & Puma, 2003).

Another correlational study examined whether or not there was a positive relationship between extracurricular activity involvement and homework completion (Johnson & Moulden, 2011). This study included 33third grade students from two schools in the United States (Johnson & Moulden, 2011). Over the course of four weeks, the researchers collected extracurricular activity involvement from a parent survey, while

collecting weekly homework grades for each student involved in the study (Johnson & Moulden, 2011). Johnson and Moulden (2011) found that a negative correlation resulted between the amount of time spent in extracurricular activities per week and language arts homework . Even though the sample size of this study was very small, the study did show that students who participated in too many extracurricular activities did not perform well on their homework, and, therefore, did not benefit academically (Johnson & Moulden, 2011). Even with this result, most of the studies on extracurricular activities that were examined supported that extracurricular activities do not endanger a student's academic progress and that it would take participation in a very large number of activities to do so (Holloway, 2000; Lumsden, 2003a; Reeves, 2008).

A research study, which included several elementary schools, demonstrated that extracurricular activities influenced academic achievement in a positive way. Students who took part in extracurricular activities at Valdez Elementary in Denver, Colorado, achieved improvements in several academic areas including writing, reading, and social skills (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2005). In another elementary school in Detroit, Michigan staff members had seen an increase in homework completion and an increase of on-task behaviors during instructional time. Overall, elementary students who took part in extracurricular activities tended to have higher attendance, better academic success, higher self-esteem, and a strong connection to their school (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2005). Researchers have had a difficult time placing the right controls on variables to accurately determine the effects of extracurricular activities on student achievement. Even when several controls, such as socio-economic status, had been put into place, a wide demographic sample had

been used, and the study had been conducted over a period of years, it was still a challenge to include every single variable that could determine and influence academic success (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a).

Extracurricular activities also have different classifications, such as structured and un-structured. Many research studies of extracurricular activities have included comparisons between both structured and un-structured activities (Fredrick & Eccles, 2006; Fujita, 2006; Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010; Pierce & Vandell, 1999). A study of extracurricular activities on academic achievement was conducted with middle school students, which examined the effects of both structured and unstructured activities. This study by Fujita (2006) concluded that students who participated in extracurricular activities benefited academically, especially those students who participated in sports and community service projects. The results of the study also demonstrated that musical activities did not have an effect on student achievement (Fujita, 2006). This research study was conducted at one middle school and used a questionnaire to gauge how students' participation in extracurricular activities affected their academic success (Fujita, 2006). An unexpected part of the study illustrated that unstructured activities, such as television viewing, also supported academic success, even though many researchers have cautioned about the effects of students watching too much television and taking part in too many socializing activities (Dumais, 2009; Fujita, 2006). Overall, the study supported the idea that extracurricular activities can support and help students gain academic success.

While several research studies focused exclusively on extracurricular activity participation and its sole effect on academic achievement, other studies have combined

extracurricular participation with factors, such as parental involvement. In a study by Lagace-Seguin and Case (2010), extracurricular activity participation and parental involvement were examined to determine if both factors could help determine an elementary student's academic success and feelings towards school (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). The study included 72 elementary school students from various elementary schools in Eastern Canada (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). The researchers tested a hypothesis that parental involvement and extracurricular activity participation would be able to predict academic success and student well-being (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). The study involved administering several questionnaires to students and parents, including questions concerning the number and different types of extracurricular activities a student took part in (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010).

The results of the study showed several relationships, which were affected by parental involvement and the amount of extracurricular activity participation of each student. In the area of parental influence, meaning the influence parents had on their children taking part in extracurricular activities, the study showed that an increase in parental influence resulted in a decrease in well-being for students who participated in a greater amount of extracurricular activities (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). This was not the case, however, for students who took part in fewer amounts of extracurricular activities (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). The second relationship showed that as parental influence increased, academic success decreased for students involved in fewer extracurricular activities. In the area of parental support, as parental support increased, so did the well-being of the student resulting in a positive correlation (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010). An increase in academic success occurred as parental support increased.

Students who were involved in fewer extracurricular activities also experienced this relationship. Students who were involved in a larger number of extracurricular activities did not see these previously mentioned relationships (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010).

A study by Boatwright (2009) examined the effects of extracurricular activities at the high school level on a student's grade point average and a school's drop-out rate. After Boatwright collected data from several high schools in the Southwest region of Missouri, he was able to determine that students who participated in Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) sponsored activities had higher grade point averages than non-participants. It was also determined that students who participated in these types of extracurricular activities were less likely to drop out of high school. As the grade level increased, it was discovered that the grade point average of participants also increased. The author did acknowledge that taking part in a MSHSAA sponsored activity does require a minimum grade point average and that all students must maintain eligibility while taking part in any of these types of extracurricular activities, which was mentioned in the limitations of the study (Boatwright, 2009). This study did, however, highlight another topic surrounding extracurricular activities, which includes the requirements for participation.

Other studies have focused on specific extracurricular activities, such as intramural and team sports. A study by Broh (2002) looked at the effects of sports involvement and student achievement. In this research study, the author examined how sports helped increase students' academic achievement. The study included the use of longitudinal data from eighth through 12th^{t} grade students. It was determined that participation in interscholastic sports had a small but impactful benefit for students who

participated during their sophomore and senior years (Broh, 2002). It was noted that this participation improved a student's self-esteem, studying habits, and helped create stronger ties between peers, school, and parents. The study specifically showed that students who participated in sports teams improved in the area of math and in the area of academics in general (Broh, 2002).

Extracurricular activities have also been linked to both direct and indirect ways of improving student achievement. One study by Sorge, Newsom, and Hagerty (2000) discovered that after school science programs could drastically impact the science achievement of African-American girls. Other academic activities have been used to provide not just remedial help but academically enriching programs (Perry, Teague, & Frey, 2002). In the area of music, several studies have supported the belief that integrating music into core subject areas can boost achievement and motivate students in general. The areas of math and reading are especially important areas which music can help influence, because of the various similarities between these subject matters, such as fractions and the use of literature in musical compositions (Eady & Wilson, 2004). Pierce and Vandell (1999) found that at-risk students who participated more often in extracurricular activities at the elementary level tended to have better work habits in the classroom, were able to settle conflicts more peacefully, and had better attendance in comparison to students who attended less often (Shumow, 2001). Overall, the use of extracurricular activities not only contributes to students' overall academic success but can also provide a great structured atmosphere to help students gain self-confidence and develop a positive image about school.

Fredricks and Eccles (2006) examined the impact extracurricular activities made on a students' overall development. This was achieved by examining the number of activities that a student participated in, the length of that participation, and the impact both of these factors made in youth development (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). The researchers used different waves of data collection throughout their longitudinal study and determined that a student's total involvement in extracurricular activities increased as they grew older. This was not a huge surprise to the researchers since the number of extracurricular offerings tends to be greater at the secondary level in comparison to the elementary level (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). The study also witnessed the level of sports participation decreasing as the study progressed, throughout the waves (years) of data collection, with female students becoming more likely to participate in clubs in comparison to male students (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). In the area of academics, it was determined that students who participated longer in extracurricular activities had higher grades. The length of participation also influenced a student's feeling of school belonging in a positive manner (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a).

In essence, the length of participation in extracurricular activities had a positive effect on a student's overall development. The only negative result found in this study was that students who were involved in sport activities had a higher use of alcohol in comparison to those students who were taking part in other activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). This finding was also supported by another research study by Eccles and Barber (1999). In Eccles and Barber's study, a positive correlation existed between extracurricular activity participation and level of school belonging. It was also determined that older students who took part in several varied activities also encountered

the highest amount of positive outcomes in overall development (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a).

In another research study by Fredricks and Eccles (2006b), both researchers worked to determine the effects of extracurricular participation on long-term student outcomes, such as behavioral and academic adjustment. Unlike previous studies mentioned in this literature review, the methodology took into consideration student motivation and demographics, making adjustments for these variables in the methodology of the study (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). By controlling such variables and by using a very diverse sample of participants (such as gender, ethnicity, social economic status, parent education, etc.) the researchers were able to determine that extracurricular activities benefited students but not to such a great extent as other research studies had concluded (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). This study included self-selection factors, which are very important to consider when determining the ultimate benefits of participating in extracurricular activities. The question arises in the study of extracurricular activities often to whether or not student academic factors improve because of participation or if academic success is already present before participation, which influences students to take part in these activities in the first place (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b). Many students have high motivation in the classroom and because of this high motivation are most likely to consider becoming involved in extracurricular activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b).

Many students voluntarily join extracurricular activities, which tend to pose a challenge when determining the overall effects of extracurricular activity participation. A study of 1,480 students in a first wave of data collection, eventually resulting in 918

student participants in the last wave of data collection, evaluated the breadth of extracurricular activity participation in high school students (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). It was found that being involved in more activities resulted in positive development, which was caused by either the student's involvement in organized activities or that the involvement in extracurricular activities took time away from involvement in risky behaviors (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). Denault and Poulin (2009) also examined breadth of participation and witnessed a correlation between civic involvement and academic factors with involvement in multiple structured activities. Unlike the previously mentioned study, the research study also noted that the breadth of participation in extracurricular activities decreased in adolescents later into their high school years (Denault & Poulin, 2009). Another study also noted that an increase in extracurricular activities tended to be positively correlated with civic and community involvement (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010; Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008).

Students who choose to take part in extracurricular activities not only reap academic benefits, such as higher grade point averages and higher standardized test scores, but also have a higher probability of completing high school. Extracurricular activity involvement and its influence concerning the probability of a student dropping out of high school has also been another focal point of research studies. A study by Mahoney and Cairns (1997) showed that high school students who had participated in at least one activity during their early high school years were less likely to drop out in comparison to those who did not participate in any extracurricular activities.

Another study by McNeal (1995) examined the impact that extracurricular activities played in keeping students from dropping out of high school. After gathering

longitudinal data from several regions of the United States, it was determined that students who created more connections to their school had a lower chance of dropping out of school (McNeal, 1995). Extracurricular activities helped students develop a positive connection to school, which was proven in the study among students who were involved in sports and, in some regards, the fine arts, although a specific conclusion was not made in this area(McNeal, 1995). Participation in vocational and academic areas did not reduce the chance of a student dropping out of high school (McNeal, 1995). Even though the research was inconclusive about participation in fine arts and any relationship with the drop-out rates of high school students, this specific activity taught various skills and ideals that could help students finish high school. A student's employment also raised the risk of not finishing high school (McNeal, 1995). The study concluded by stressing that activities must meet frequently in order to be effective and to have the largest impact of lowering the chances of a student dropping out. Frequent participation also helped students develop ties to other classmates, which also affected dropout rates in a positive way (McNeal, 1995).

Even though many research studies have found positive correlations between extracurricular activity participation and various student academic outcomes, one must be cautious when drawing conclusions concerning the effects of extracurricular activity involvement. In a literature review of the research studies surrounding extracurricular activities, many research studies fail to show any causal relationships (Shulruf, 2010). When a relationship is determined in some of the studies of extracurricular activities, the effect of participation is actually much smaller than stated or are even non-existent (Shulruf, 2010). It is important to remember that correlations tend to be evident between

extracurricular activity involvement and academics, but determining why this relationship exists remains a challenge. Students may benefit from activity involvement, while other students who are academically sound might not directly benefit but might be influenced to participate because of their work ethic and dedication to school (Shulruf, 2010).

Extracurricular Activities and Student Safety

There were several sources that listed student safety as another benefit of extracurricular activities. Several educators have viewed extracurricular activities as a resource to keep children safe during non-school hours, while parents are at work to keep students from engaging in harmful activities (Shumow, 2001). Many children are at home by themselves after school until parents have completed their workday. Structured extracurricular after school activities help keep students safe during what would normally be unsupervised hours (Franklin, 2004). Mahoney (2000) found that extracurricular activities helped provide structure and also helped develop challenging skills for students who participated. Extracurricular activities not only provided supervision but also helped to develop student social skills, cognitive growth, and mental, emotional, and physical development (Holloway, 2002). These types of activities decreased the chance that a student will engage in high-risk behaviors and take part in criminal activity (Lumsden, 2003b). Not only do extracurricular activities benefit parents and children, but also employers. These activities can help prevent a decrease in productivity, which originates with employees who are worried about their children who are at home unsupervised after school (Franklin, 2004). Even with these great benefits, the supply of extracurricular programs has fallen short of the demand for these structured activities (Shumow, 2001).

Since research about extracurricular activities has demonstrated to educators, law enforcement, and state legislators how they can help keep students safe during after school hours, several states have grant programs in place to financially support extracurricular programs. Funding sources have also been secured through donations from local companies and corporations (Lumsden, 2003a). In the state of Minnesota, a local group could submit a grant in order to receive financial support, which then had the ability to increase the number of students participating in after school programs during non-school hours. These activities could range from tutoring and academic support to providing opportunities to build on a student's experience in the arts, sports, and other areas (Lumsden, 2003a).

In the state of California, this same opportunity was available to schools and other such agencies. Organizations were able to apply for government funding to provide after school programs in order to help raise student achievement and provide a safe, structured environment for students to go after school is done for the day (Perry et al., 2002). Many programs, including the grant program in California, were starting to enforce tough standards to ensure that these activities were staffed properly and accurate data were kept. The federal government had also become involved in supporting after school programs and had started the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative; along with supporting several grant programs (Perry et al., 2002). Providing the proper accountability measures and evaluation tools continued to be a challenge in developing effective extracurricular programs. Developing goals are an important step in maintaining and creating an overall effective program of extracurricular activities (Perry et al., 2002). When examining the potential benefits of extracurricular activities in

comparison to the costs associated with implementing these programs, school boards and officials must take several things into account. One author made a valid point by asking school districts to evaluate all of the costs associated with remedial education and compare those costs to the minimal funding needed in creating strong extracurricular programs in a school district (Reeves, 2008). It could be a worthwhile savings to create strong extracurricular programs that could help reduce the number of students who struggle academically in a school building and district.

The various research studies concerning extracurricular activity involvement and student success factors were also prevalent in the discussion of extracurricular activities and student safety. The addition of various interventions and programs made it difficult to determine exactly how much of an impact extracurricular activities had on academics (Chaplin & Puma, 2003; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Shulruf, 2010). Various studies and literature sources supported that students had specific needs to be met outside of their normal school day (Holloway, 2002; Reeves, 2008; Zhao, 2009). Extracurricular activity programs held great possibilities but must be properly evaluated to determine the programs' effectiveness (Perry et al., 2002). The data collection and analysis conducted with data on extracurricular participation must also be valid, and researchers must be cautious in making generalizations about these programs. A report released by the U.S. Department of Education on 21st Century Community Learning Centers was criticized for the way it evaluated its program (Lumsden, 2003a). Even with the inaccuracies in the report, such as making conclusions that were not justified by the data reported, it did note improvements in attendance, parental involvement, and math scores for middle school

centers. The evaluation of elementary centers was grim at best with almost no changes seen between participants versus non-participants.

While the previously mentioned studies focused on student safety during non-school hours, another study focused on the potential violent behaviors of students and whether or not extracurricular activity participation influenced that behavior. Over the past decade, the level of student violence has increased dramatically in America's schools. This violence included an increase in the number of physical altercations and in the percentage of students who brought weapons to school (Linville & Huebner, 2005). Linville and Huebner (2005) developed a study to determine whether or not there was a relationship between student violence and student involvement in extracurricular activities, a difference within the area of gender, and examined how to determine violent youth in general. A study of 235 teenagers, in grades 8 through 12, completed a questionnaire that asked questions focused on their extracurricular involvement and items that dealt with violent behavior. The questions in the area of violent actions included carrying weapons and being involved in physical fighting at school (Linville & Huebner, 2005).

The results of this study concluded that certain activities could help reduce the likelihood of a youth being involved in violent acts. The researchers noted that involvement in church-centered activity could help prevent a student from encountering violent activities. Even though a few researchers (Eccles & Barber, 1999) noted a decrease in violent behaviors for students who participated in extracurricular activities, tThis study illustrated a positive relationship between extracurricular activity participation and fighting occurrences. The researchers stated that the study did not

examine specific extracurricular activities and that this might influence the relationship. Another finding supported by other researchers was that male students tended to be more physically aggressive in comparison to females (Linville & Huebner, 2005).

Extracurricular Activities and Grade Level

The transition from elementary to middle school can be extremely challenging and educators continue to work to find ways to help students adjust. Students have several fears associated with this major change including unfamiliarity with their new school surroundings to anxiety about developing new friendships. Several ideas have been tested in easing school transition from developing special programs geared towards preparing students for their new school environment to gradually including them within the physical school environment (Allen, 2001). Included in the research surrounding school transition, extracurricular activities have been shown to give at-risk students the chance to develop a positive connection with the school and its staff (Mahoney, 2000). In a study by Akos (2006), extracurricular activities were studied in order to examine the potential power in creating a sense of belonging, increasing academic performance, and in helping students transition to the middle school level. The researcher sampled 173 sixth-grade students from one middle school in the Southeast. Each student completed a questionnaire that consisted of Likert scale formatted questions, concerning the transition from elementary to middle school. The results of this study showed a higher grade point average for those students who participated in one or more extracurricular activities during their first year in middle school. An increase in student belonging and positive perception of the school were also a direct result of participation in extracurricular activities. It was suggested that creating extracurricular activities that included both

elementary sixth grade students and middle school students might also help to ease the transition to middle school (Akos, 2006).

Another study focused on middle school students, which included a large sample of white and African-American students who came from various socioeconomic levels. In this study by Fredricks and Eccles (2008), student participation in organized extracurricular activities contributed to a higher grade point average, a more positive outlook on school in general, and a decrease in the amount of risky behaviors. In the literature review of this study, it was noted that the research completed in middle school extracurricular activities was sparse and that the studies that were done used cross-sectional data instead of longitudinal (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008). This study took 1,482 seventh grade students and tracked them through their 11th grade year, using two questionnaires and a face-to-face structured interview. The overall characteristics of the participants in the study varied, with different levels of income, race, education, and other factors included. Overall, the results showed several findings including that participation in extracurricular activities was related to better academic success at the eighth grade and 11th grade years (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008). This was yet another study that demonstrated a positive correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and academic success.

A study by Blomfield and Barber (2010) examined the effects of extracurricular activities in Australian adolescents and sought to discover whether or not these activities reduced negative outcomes and increased positive ones. The study examined adolescents' alcohol consumption, school attendance, school belonging, academic progress, and aspirations for college in relation to involvement in extracurricular

activities. This study showed that students who participated in extracurricular activities were more likely to go to college, obtained a higher level of school belonging, and achieved higher academic success in comparison to those students who did not participate (Blomfield & Barber, 2010). The study also showed that attendance was greater for those students who participated in extracurricular activities and that these students tended to have many friends who encouraged them to do well in school. Students who participated in team sports and had friends who drank tended to use alcohol more than students who were involved in other extracurricular activities, which the researchers hypothesized before the study was conducted (Blomfield & Barber, 2010). However, a study by Fredricks and Eccles (2006a) actually showed that alcohol and drug use amongst sport participants was lower in comparison to participants of other types of extracurricular activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a). Overall, many students looked forward to participating in extracurricular activities because of the social possibilities, which continues to be one of the main reasons why students participate in these types of activities (Blomfield & Barber, 2010).

Student behavior during instructional time is another factor that can affect student academic success. Howie et al. (2010) examined whether or not participating in extracurricular activities would impact the behavior of elementary and middle school students. The study used a sample of 25,797 students who were between the ages of 6 and 11 years old. Researchers used a telephone survey to determine each student's involvement in extracurricular activities and in their overall behavior by asking several questions in each of these two categories. The questionnaires determined that 75% of children surveyed did take part in at least one extracurricular activity, with 37% of

students taking part in sports and clubs (Howie et al., 2010). It was discovered that students who participated in both of these activities had higher levels of social skills in comparison to those students who did not take part in extracurricular activities. Even with this finding, the amount of behavioral issues did not differ amongst the two groups. It was determined that children who participated in more than one extracurricular activity would have increased social skills but no difference in overall behavior (Howie et al., 2010). It was determined that students who were involved in extracurricular activities were more likely to use the skills of conflict resolution and show respect to those they come in contact with on a daily basis (Howie et al., 2010).

Extracurricular Activities and Participation

In researching the effects of participation in extracurricular activities in general, finding valid results can be challenging because of the eligibility requirements that are being enforced in order to allow participation. In Texas, the "No Pass, No Play" rule was created by legislators to ensure that all students who participated in extracurricular activities were passing all of their classes (Davis, 1996). This policy stated that any student who failed a course would not be able to take part in any extracurricular activity for the next grading period. Unfortunately schools in the state of Texas did not keep any real records of how many students lost eligibility or the number of times each individual student lost the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities in general (Davis, 1996). The lack of data and research made it difficult to evaluate whether or not any policy that was created to keep students from earning failing grades was helping or harming students. Many researchers and educators have questioned these policies, realizing that many at risk-students could benefit greatly from extracurricular activities.

Research supported that students who typically do not have access to such programs and come from high-risk situations have the most to gain from participating in extracurricular activities (Shumow, 2001). Educators must weigh the risks of keeping at-risk students from participating in extracurricular activities, especially when such activities could most directly benefit them (Holloway, 2000). Extracurricular activities help to build confidence in students, which can affect their mental, physical, and emotional well-being (Kort-Butler, 2012). In working toward solving the major issues that face America's schools today, it is now more important than ever to find multiple ways to best serve students. The idea of getting the opportunity to experience new areas of interests and take part in learning new skills are supported in extracurricular activities (Skinner, 2008).

While certain school policies and state regulations might keep students from participating in extracurricular activities, there is another factor that limits participation. It is becoming more common to see audition and try-out processes determining which students are allowed to take part in certain extracurricular activities. A study by Barnett (2007) examined the effects of extracurricular activity try-out procedures with students who tried out for their cheerleading and dance teams at three different high schools. Data was collected on those female students who were successful in making one of these activities versus the students who did not. It was discovered that students who were denied participation in extracurricular activities because of skills had some negative long-lasting effects (Barnett, 2007).

The study by Barnett (2007) consisted of three high schools that were comparable in size with both dance teams and cheerleading squads. The researcher was able to collect data from 172 girls, in which 116 of them were not selected to participate on

either team. In various surveys, eight in total, given to the female participants during the various steps of the auditioning process and after, the study was able to evaluate several factors including emotional state, absenteeism, attentiveness in class, and involvement with illegal substances. It was concluded that both the students who did and did not make the teams were comparable in these different areas in the beginning of the study but those who were unsuccessful encountered negative consequences after the process was completed (Barnett, 2007). The students who did not make the team experienced a decrease in the way they felt about themselves after they were informed that they did not make the team. These students also had a drop in class attentiveness and emotional state, even two months after being informed of the decision (Barnett, 2007).

Even with specific policies and the practice of auditioning for certain extracurricular activities, there is still another major barrier to students' participation in extracurricular activities. In some schools and school districts, many students were being required to pay for extracurricular activities. "Pay-to-play" is another phrase that was linked to extracurricular activities. America's challenging economy and school districts' tight budgets resulted in many districts eliminating funding for extracurricular activities all together (Hoff & Mitchell, 2007). The cost of extracurricular activities had been on the rise and several states saw an increase in fee based extracurricular programs. These fees could range from as little as $15 to $50 a year to some schools charging fees as high as $1,500 on the West Coast. Thirty-four states in 2004 had schools charging some type of fee for these various types of activities (Hoff & Mitchell, 2007).

With so many schools starting to charge for these types of activities, it is important to mention again the importance of offering extracurricular activities to

students who come from lower socio-economic households. Extracurricular activities can help students who come from less affluent households reap several benefits (Dumais, 2006). It was also a problem that some of the students who need these types of activities the most have the least amount of opportunities and access to them (Hoff & Mitchell, 2007). It is also important to continue to note that these barriers may do more harm than good to at-risk students who would be able to reap several benefits from participating in extracurricular activities (Holloway, 2000).

Participation in Specific Extracurricular Activities

A theme that continues to stand out in the review of the literature surrounding extracurricular activities is the impact specific activities have on academic success (Darling et al., 2005; Fujita, 2006). Different types of extracurricular activities have various things to offer, but all tend to help students develop on a social, mental, and emotional level. These different activities not only help participants improve academically, but also provide an outlet for social interaction with peers who share the same interests (Lawhorn, 2008). Several studies have strived to determine why students participate in extracurricular activities to begin with and the reason they select specific activities in which to participate.

A study by Bucknavage and Worrell (2005) investigated the total percentage of gifted students who participated in extracurricular activities and then determined the percentage of activities that were selected most by gifted students. It was found that gifted students had a very high rate of extracurricular activity participation, in which a large part of the sample was involved in sports and individual music lessons (Bucknavage & Worrell, 2005). Another study on gifted students by Olszewski-Kubilius and Lee

(2004) also examined participation in extracurricular activities of gifted students. It was discovered that a large percentage of these students were involved in sports and performing musical ensembles. It was also noted that middle school students did not participate in as many political, academic, and other such clubs in comparison to high school students. Both of these studies were able to prove that a vast majority of gifted students were very active in extracurricular activities (Bucknavage & Worrell, 2005). This background information concerning gifted students and extracurricular activities supports various research studies that tend to show that extracurricular activities attract high achieving students in the first place (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006b; Shulruf, 2010).

Sports have played an important role in the development of America's youth for decades. Several researchers have noted that sport activities have the ability to help students set and reach goals, promote competitive attitude, and place students in a higher peer group (Darling et al., 2005). Eccles and Barber (1999) conducted a study that found that students who participated in the performing arts, sports, and other extracurricular activities demonstrated a positive outlook on school in general (Bucknavage & Worrell, 2005). Another study by Silliker and Quirk (1997) supported the belief that students who participated in an interscholastic sport would obtain a higher grade point average during the grading period in which their participation took place. This study took male and female soccer players from area high schools in the State of New York and recorded their grade point averages during the quarter they participated in soccer and the quarter in which they did not. The data illustrated that students who participated in soccer had a higher grade point average during their season than when they were not playing a sport. The researchers concluded that even though the evidence cannot support the claim that

interscholastic sports participation solely improved students' grade point averages, it definitely did not harm their academic success (Silliker & Quirk, 1997). Even with all of the positive advantages to sports, researchers have noted some drawbacks in participation. In a study by Fredricks and Eccles (2008), students who participated in sports teams during their middle school years actually saw a decrease in positive school characteristics and an increase in dangerous behaviors when compared to non-participants (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008).

Another study examined the various types of activities that college students participated in when they were in elementary school. This study by Madden, Brueckman, and Littlejohn (1997) used a group of college students as a control group of academically successful students and compared it against two groups of elementary students from two different public schools. Students at this college developed a survey of 104 different activities that they took part in during their elementary years, which comprised ages 5 through 8 and ages 9 through 12 years old. They tabulated the data from a questionnaire, which asked the students which different types of activities that a student participated in and how many times a week they participated in each activity. The students who were included in the experimental groups had been suspended from their classroom and were either in alternative education or in a juvenile facility. Overall, the results demonstrated that students who participated in extracurricular activities increased with age at a faster rate in the control group. The data also supported the claim that students who were academically sound chose more creative types of activities in which to partake. The experimental groups, which included the elementary students who had aggressive behaviors and academic shortcomings, showed a higher percentage of playing video

games and watching television (Madden et al., 1997). This study not only illustrated that students who participated in extracurricular activities are typically more academically successful but also supported the claim for structured extracurricular activities versus unstructured activities, such as watching television.

Extracurricular Involvement and Demographics

There are several reasons why students chose to participate in extracurricular activities and definite trends in the demographics of students who participate. Rigsby and McDill (1975) found that students who were more goal oriented and had a more positive outlook on school had a greater desire to participate in extracurricular activities. According to McNeal (1999), students who chose to take part in these activities typically tended to come from a higher socio-economic setting and were of a European descent (Darling et al., 2005). A study by Posner and Vandell (1999) found that low socioeconomic status elementary students who possessed better academic skills in third grade would be less likely to spend time in an unsupervised setting with peers and spent more time in enriching activities in fifth grade. In another study by Posner and Vandell (1999), participation in extracurricular activities by the fifth grade year increased for African-American children, while the amount of extracurricular participation decreased for white children (Shumow, 2001).

Howard and Ziomek-Daigle (2009) created a study to determine if a relationship between school attachment, extracurricular participation involvement, and academic success was evident in a group of African American high school students. The study focused on non-participants who were struggling academically and were in danger of failing courses, normally students who were in grades 10-12 (Howard & Ziomek-Daigle,

2009). The researcher created an extracurricular activity for these students that focused on goal creation and real-life skills each Saturday morning throughout one semester. This group also took part in field trips, such as college visits and activities within their communities (Howard & Ziomek-Daigle, 2009). After collecting and evaluating quantitative data, which examined grade point averages, course grades, absences, and tardies, it was determined that the program significantly impacted the academic success of the students involved (Howard & Ziomek-Diagle, 2009). However, the qualitative data in the form of student questionnaires did not support significant changes in school bonding attributes. Even though this study only involved 11 high school students, this was a great opportunity to try something new in order to reach underperforming students (Howard & Ziomek-Diagle, 2009).

A study by Dumais (2006) discovered several differences in participation by students of various socioeconomic classes, using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. It was proven that a student's extracurricular involvement during the kindergarten and first grade years affected their success in reading and math. It was also discovered that children who come from a lower socioeconomic household benefited more from extracurricular activities in comparison to those children who come from higher socioeconomic households (Dumais, 2006).

Overall, this is another study that supports the idea that students who come from less privileged situations could benefit in several ways from participating in extracurricular activities (Dumais, 2006). Dumais (2006) challenged the previous belief that students from higher socioeconomic households are the only students who benefit from extracurricular activities, which was seen mainly because of the parents'

educational backgrounds and exposure to highly educated individuals. The results demonstrated that the number of activities that a student participated in affected a student's reading test scores in a positive way and grades in math. It was discussed that some of the reasons for this gain in reading could result from more parental involvement from home, which could include parents helping on homework and reading to their child on a regular basis (Dumais, 2006). In another student survey that was administered to a group of middle school students, several students who came from lower socio-economic households did not participate in extracurricular activities. It is important to remember that school must strive to keep students from being excluded because of out of pocket student expenses required for these activities, transportation to and from these activities, or because of the lack of variety in the types of extracurricular activities offered (San Antonio, 2006).

In Peguero's (2010) *A Profile of Latino School-Based Extracurricular Activity Involvement*, several factors had the ability to impact the involvement of Latino students in extracurricular activities. Peguero (2010) stated in his study that extracurricular activities had been shown to impact academics in a positive way, reduce discipline issues, improve student perception of school, and to help prevent students from dropping out of high school.

In assessing Latino involvement in extracurricular activities and determining the factors that impact that involvement, the researcher focused on five main areas. These five areas included each student's immigration characteristics, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, gender, and academic progress (Peguero, 2010). The study used longitudinal data, which focused on 1,597 10th grade Latino students who attended high

school in various geographic regions across the United States (Peguero, 2010). The study examined participation in clubs, academic activities, intermural sports, and sports teams. The results of the study showed that higher family socioeconomic status correlated with high rates of participation. Other studies have shown similar results when examining extracurricular participation and socioeconomic status (Darling et al., 2005; McNeal, 1999). In the area of gender, female students were more likely to be involved in a club or classroom activity, than a sport activity (Peguero, 2010). It was also found that as standardized test scores rose for Latino students, their involvement in classroom related and club activities also increased. Latino students who were involved in sport activities did not see this increase in standardized test scores though. It was found that as the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch increased, the participation in interscholastic sports increased too (Peguero, 2010).

Gender is also an important area to examine in the research of extracurricular activities. A study of 134 high school students determined some of the differences between the effects of extracurricular activity involvement in males and females (Gadbois & Bowker, 2007). Some of the differences that were noted included the different types of extracurricular activities that males and females took part in, with male students having greater participation in sport activities and females having greater participation in non-sport activities. This study also found that more students described themselves with more feminine characteristic words that took part in non-sport activities, while more masculine words were characterized with sport participation (Gadbois & Bowker, 2007). Male and female students both benefited from physical self-esteem as far as sports participation was concerned, but only males benefited from general self-

esteem too (Gadbois & Bowker, 2007). It is important to remember that various demographics might benefit from specific extracurricular activities. This is not always the case though, as it was concluded that breadth of participation in activities was not influenced by race (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010).

A study by Dumais (2009) examined the effects of participation in extracurricular activities on teenagers from different generations. Data from the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 and National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 were used to examine potential differences between students from the Generation X and Millennial Generations (Dumais, 2009). Using regression models, the study showed an increase in the hours spent in extracurricular activities, as well as working and using technology (Dumais, 2009). The results also showed a correlation between activity involvement and math scores, as well as college aspirations. Even though the effects were small, there was still a relationship noted between activity involvement and math scores for both generations (Dumais, 2009).

Socio economic status (SES) also plays a very important role in the examination of extracurricular activities. A study by Covay and Carbonaro (2010) explored the differences between students who come from low socio economic status families to those that do not. Extracurricular activities are viewed as providing students with certain non-cognitive skills (such as time management skills, working well with others, being able to follow directions well, etc…), which, in return affect the academic achievement of those students who are involved with various extracurricular activities (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010). By using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, both researchers were able to examine data using a multivariate method to determine if

there was a correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and such factors as SES, racial groups and parent educational levels (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010). The study first concluded that as SES increases, the participation level of extracurricular involvement also rose. It is important to highlight that many low SES families do not have the financial resources to involve their children in specific extracurricular activities (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010). As far as racial considerations were concerned, white students were more likely to take part in extracurricular activities, with white students being more involved in sport activities. It was determined though, that involvement in extracurricular activities by various racial groups was influenced by the diversity of the school in which they attended (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010). In the area of non-cognitive skills, the specific activities of dance and sports witnessed the highest increases in these skills. Students from higher SES families tended to benefit more from sport involvement. In the area of language arts, lower SES family students benefited more from participation in art and music, however (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010).

Another area to consider when examining extracurricular activities includes looking at students who have various disabilities. An article by Kleinert et al. (2007) highlighted the importance of providing extracurricular activities to special needs children to help develop important life skills (Kleinert et al., 2007). It is important to note that extracurricular activities are social outlets for all students, regardless of whether or not they have a disability (Kleinert et al., 2007). Extracurricular activities play an important role in student lives and play multiple roles for different students.

Other Benefits of Extracurricular Activities

The recent epidemic of childhood obesity has become a major issue among America's youth across the United States. Several school districts and state school boards started several initiatives to combat this concern, and required schools to provide more time for physical education and recess, especially at the elementary level. Since extracurricular activities had such a positive influence on an adolescent's development, including academic success, several researchers are now investigating the possibilities of using physical activities in an 'after or before' school setting to tackle this concern of obesity. Several sources have shown that overweight youth have lower school attendance in comparison to those students who are not obese. This typically is because of illness or other health issues that arise from being overweight (Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2006). Extracurricular activities that are physical in nature help keep outside factors out of the way of physical activity. Several factors keep students from being physically fit because they do not have what they need to do so, including parks, play spaces, and equipment. It has been proven that physical activity alone might not help students reduce their weight but has several benefits that include building muscular strength and physical endurance (Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2006). In an effort to attract female physical participation in schools, classes such as aerobics have now been added to the physical education curriculum (Clark, 2009). It is important to realize that many students have differing opinions concerning non-competitive versus competitive sports. Many students, especially female students, enjoy sports but will begin to stop their participation when the activity become too intensive and the enjoyment of taking part in the sport decreases (Clark, 2009).

In a study conducted by Ara et al. (2006), the effects of extracurricular sports were examined to see if male students who participated in additional physical extracurricular activities benefited in comparison to their peers who did not take part in a sports team or intramural sports. A group of male students were selected to take part in the study for 3.3 years to determine whether or not their physical activity would affect their body's overall fat growth. Another goal of the study was to prove that students who were involved in more physical activities would show the greatest improvement in body composition (Ara et al., 2006). The results of the study showed that boys who were physically active increased their muscle mass and increased their total fat percentage at a slower rate in comparison to the group of male students who were not involved in physical activity three times a week. The results of this study demonstrated that students who are more active in physical extracurricular activities accumulate body fat at a slower rate, even without the change of a student's nutritional intake (Ara et al., 2006).

A study by Darling et al. (2005) discovered a relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment, which included drug and alcohol use, grade point average, overall impression of school, and life goals. Extracurricular activities, in general, help keep adolescents from high-risk behaviors, such as experimenting with drugs and alcohol. These activities also provide outlets to help develop school leaders and help students develop a positive perspective on their school (Darling et al., 2005). McNeal (1995) also emphasized that students who are involved in extracurricular activities will develop more positive relationships with peers and teachers. The study by Darling et al. (2005) discovered that students who took part in extracurricular activities had a more positive attitude towards school, higher goals and

grade point averages, and a lower level of drug use, marijuana specifically. This study also discovered that participation in extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment was not affected by demographic backgrounds. Even though the researchers found a difference in participants versus non-participants, this variance was still small (Darling et al., 2005).

A study by Fitzpatrick and McGaha-Garnett (2010) examined the effects of extracurricular activities in the college attendance of working adults. This study focused on high school graduates who entered the workforce before deciding to attend college. It was found that extracurricular participation in individual and community activities was one factor that influenced young working adults to attend college. It was also determined that certain activities centered around reading and physical fitness also helped increase the desire to improve one's self, which indirectly influenced these adults to pursue higher educational goals. These types of activities helped these individuals learn how to cope with stress (Fitzpatrick & McGaha-Garnett, 2010). Many colleges and universities in the United States also include participation in extracurricular activities as part of the admission process (Dumais, 2009). Parents of middle-class families also value extracurricular participation and view these activities as an avenue for more opportunities later in life (Clark, 2009). Extracurricular activity involvement tends to act as a way to market teenagers to colleges and universities (Clark, 2009).

Extracurricular activities have the opportunity to not only influence student success factors, but also played a role in occupational and civic success after high school (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). Gardner et al. (2008) examined 14,038 students in 10th and 12th grade and worked to determine that participating in extracurricular

activities positively correlated with academic and civic involvement. As the level of participation in the terms of length and intensity increases, the effects of such involvement can extend up to eight years after graduating high school (Gardner et al., 2008).

Why Do Students Participate in Extracurricular Activities?

Besides investigating demographic make-up of students who are choosing to participate in extracurricular activities, it is probably even more important to understand why certain students choose to take part in extracurricular activities. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) conducted a study that examined the positive outlook that was developed by students who chose to participate in extracurricular activities, when their prior opinion of school was not favorable. The data supported the finding that the more extracurricular activities that were offered to help meet the needs and interest of students, the greater the long-term effect of a more positive connection with school occurred (Holloway, 2002). Extracurricular activities give students an opportunity to participate in activities that are not normally offered during the normal school day and can be a great source of fulfillment (Ebie, 2005). These activities not only cater to specific interests of students but also play an important role in developing their own identity (Kort-Butler, 2012).

In a study conducted by Ebie (2005), students in a secondary school setting were given questionnaires with a few open-ended questions concerning the activities in which they participated. These questionnaires included questions concerning involvement in sports and musical extracurricular activities. After the data was interpreted and divided into four different categories, it was found that a majority participated for social reasons, which included teamwork and sharing common interests with others. Other students'

responses highlighted the importance of self-esteem and that taking part in an extracurricular activity made them feel good about themselves. The last two categories included kinesthetic and self-efficacy as reasons for participation in extracurricular activities (Ebie, 2005). The overall result of this study illustrated that students valued the importance of participating in activities with their friends and peers who share their same interests. Extracurricular activities have the opportunity to teach life-long skills, such as teamwork and goal setting. It is important to remember that placing too much focus on teaching a skill during an extracurricular activity can reduce the chances of the student realizing the positive outcomes that are shared in many research studies (Kort-Butler, 2012).

Extracurricular activities provide a major social outlet for many students, while catering to a student's specific interests. These specific interests tend to attract students to specific activities, which have a great possibility of fostering new friendships based on the similarities of the participants. Schaefer et al. (2011) conducted a study of extracurricular activities that solely examined the role these activities play in developing new and maintaining previous friendships. The study quantitatively examined the role extracurricular activities played in developing friendships and social networks. The researchers included a strong sample of 132 schools with over 67,124 students who took part in the study (Schaefer et al., 2011). An extracurricular activity setting not only supports existing friendships but fosters new ones as well, according to the results of the study. When two students took part in the same activity, they were 2.3 times more likely to become friends in comparison to non-participants. The study also concluded that this relationship was stronger at the high school level when compared to the middle school

level (Schaefer et al., 2011). Besides the differences in friendship development between participants and non-participants, certain extracurricular activities exhibited strong relationships between participation and friendships. Extracurricular activities that were art related were 2.3 times more likely to produce friendships in comparison to 1.8 times for sport participants (Schaefer et al., 2011).

Another study involving two elementary students who were heavily involved in professional theatre was conducted by Akiba (2006), which examined the effects of show business on the students' overall school experience. The author discovered vast differences in each student's overall attitude towards school and acting. The parent of one of the two students saw acting as a way to enhance her child's social and academic development. This child truly enjoyed learning and acting, and was very successful in school. The second child in the study did not experience such academic success and had actually exhibited some negative behaviors towards her peers. It seemed as though she was in acting just to get her mother's and anyone else's attention (Akiba, 2006). This study showed that students do not reap the same benefits from participating in extracurricular activities.

Parents also play an important role in helping students determine whether or not they will take part in extracurricular activities. This role not only determines participation but which extracurricular activities a student will take part in specifically. Shannon (2006) examined the role of structured and unstructured activities and what role parents play as far as how they communicate their opinions regarding these different categories of extracurricular activities. The researcher selected 20 high school seniors, with half of the sample being male and the other half being female, and conducted

interviews to determine what role, if any, their parents played as far as extracurricular participation was concerned (Shannon, 2006).

The interviews resulted in several findings, with the first being that all of the student participants described their participation in extracurricular activities as a needed opportunity to have experiences outside of the classroom and to offer relaxation. Many students expressed that this was a common view of many of their mothers as to the reason for these activities and communicated this while fathers showed this belief through their various activities (Shannon, 2006). The participants also shared that although transportation and costs were a determining factor concerning which extracurricular activities they participated in, parents also viewed various activities differently as far as determining the activity's value and outcomes. Even though some participants showed frustration with activities that their parents would question, such as hanging out and watching television, other students have learned through these experiences how to structure their leisure time. Many parents viewed structured extracurricular activities as more valuable because of the result of learning more about such items as teamwork, leadership, and other various life skills (Shannon, 2006). This study gave a great overview of the differences in opinions parents and students hold concerning extracurricular activities.

A student's participation in certain extracurricular activities could also help prevent at risk behaviors and depression. In 2009, a study by Guest and McRee examined the effect extracurricular activities played in the development of 13,466 middle and high school students. The results demonstrated that extracurricular activities vary whether or not they provide negative or positive outcomes in students. It was also

supported that the type of activity or the setting in which they take place can predict the consistent rates of depression or delinquency. Several factors including how well a student does in a particular activity, their overall participation, how and who is running the activity, can affect a student's mental and emotional health (Guest & McRee, 2009).

It was concluded that extracurricular activity participants were less likely to develop depression or delinquent behavior, with just a slight advantage over those students who did not participate (Guest & McRee, 2009). Extracurricular activities in general are not bound to helping develop any specific traits of youth development. The study did recommend that schools should be more concerned with how these activities are administered and less focus should be given to which specific activities are offered. Any extracurricular activity that is poorly implemented has the potential to hinder how students can benefit and can actually help develop negative behaviors. On the other hand, activities that are structured and are executed well can provide several benefits to students including helping to minimize delinquent behaviors and depression (Guest & McRee, 2009).

Funding For Extracurricular Activities

In reviewing the literature surrounding the benefits of extracurricular activities, several resources mentioned the challenges that are present in providing these activities. In an article by Bowman (2001), several challenges are listed for creating and maintaining these activities. The three biggest areas of concern include funding, staffing, and transportation. These challenges have become even greater with the present economy. According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in 2001, two-thirds of schools serving grades Pre-Kindergarten to

eighth are now offering extracurricular activities in comparison to the 23% of schools offering the same in 1988 (Bowman, 2001). Specific extracurricular activities, such as the fine arts, had been targeted for cuts because of financial reasons. This example affected many students who identified themselves with these activities and might not have had the extracurricular outlet to take part in such activities (Kort-Butler, 2012). The increase of activities and programs versus the amount of funding available for such was a big challenge for many schools.

Summary

In conclusion, several studies have shown all of the positive benefits students gain from participating in extracurricular activities. Several research studies have shown that strong extracurricular programs are able to effect a student's overall development from providing self-esteem and social opportunities, to helping to increase academic success. The experiences that students gain from participating in a wide variety of extracurricular activities tend to help students learn a different type of curriculum, which includes life-lessons.

The next chapter in this research study will focus on the procedures and methodology involved in conducting research on the effect of elementary extracurricular activities. This chapter will include the procedures necessary to select the sample population and the procedures used to determine differences between students who do take part in extracurricular activities in comparison to those students who do not. The researcher will also justify why the process for collecting and evaluating data was selected.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the procedures used in conducting the research study surrounding elementary extracurricular activities and its relationship with academic achievement and student perception are examined. The beginning of the chapter describes how the process was developed and the various types of instrumentation that were used. This research study included both quantitative and qualitative data that assisted in answering each hypothesis and research question. The chapter also includes a description of the population and sample selection, participant confidentiality, data collection and analysis procedures.

Rationale

This study focused on the impact of extracurricular activities on academic outcomes for elementary grade level students and the possible educational benefits of implementing extracurricular activity programs at the elementary level. The previous literature surrounding extracurricular activity participation has prompted this study (Black, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fujita, 2006). Since very few research studies have been completed at the elementary level, this fills a gap in the literature surrounding the study of extracurricular activities.

Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in school perception between those who do or do not take part in extracurricular activities?
2. How does parental involvement contribute to participation in extracurricular activities?

3. What are the similarities and differences between parents whose children are involved in extracurricular activities and those who are not?

Null Hypotheses

Null hypothesis 1.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will not achieve a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

Null hypothesis 2.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will not achieve a higher attendance rate in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

Null hypothesis 3.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will not achieve a lower office referral rate in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

Null hypothesis 4.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will not achieve a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length $\leq$ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

Null hypothesis 5.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will not achieve a higher attendance rate in comparison to those

students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

Null hypothesis 6.

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will not achieve a lower office referral rate in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

Research Setting

The total enrollment for Northview Elementary had ranged from 365 to 388 students over the past five years, serving second through sixth grades. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recorded a steady increase in the number of students served at Northview Elementary. Table 4 shows the trends in enrollment over the past five years.

Table 4

Northview Elementary, Enrollment Data 2008-2012

Enrollment	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Asian	1.6 %	1.9 %	1.9 %	1.3 %	1.3 %
Black	35.9 %	37.5 %	37.0 %	32.4 %	31.7 %
Hispanic	2.7 %	2.2 %	1.6 %	2.1 %	3.6 %
Indian	0.3 %	0.3 %	0.3 %	0.3 %	0.3 %
White	59.5 %	58.1 %	59.3 %	63.9 %	59.3 %
Total	373	365	378	380	388

Note: Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/Pages/default.aspx Adapted from Missouri Comprehensive Data System, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012.

The Indian and Asian populations remained steady over the past five years, while the White population remained steady with a 4 % increase during the 2011 school year. A decrease was seen in the Black population, decreasing from 37% to 31.7% in 2012. Unlike the other racial groups mentioned thus far, the Hispanic population had an increase of 2% over the past two years. Overall, the school experienced steady growth from 2009 to 2012 (MODESE, 2012).

Socioeconomic status was another important factor when evaluating the research setting of a study on extracurricular activities. Several research studies have highlighted that socio-economic status is a contributing factor in extracurricular activity participation (Darling et al., 2005; Dumais, 2006; Posner & Vandell, 1999; San Antonio, 2006). The free and reduced lunch percentages for Northview Elementary are listed in Table 5 and served as a good indicator of family socioeconomic status for the student body at Northview Elementary (MODESE, 2012).

Table 5

Northview Elementary, Free and Reduced Lunch Percentages 2008-2012

School Year	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Percentage	51.9 %	51.4 %	54.1 %	47.8 %	48.8 %

Note: Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/Pages/default.aspx Adapted from Missouri Comprehensive Data System, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012.

In 2008, the free and reduced lunch percentage was at 51.9% and had dropped to 48.8% in 2012, including a small increase to 54.1% in 2010. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, for the 2011-2012 school year, a typical family of four was eligible for free lunch if they earned less than $29,055 per year. A family was

eligible for reduced lunch prices if they earned less than $41,348 per year (United States Department of Agriculture, 2012).

Attendance rate was another important school statistic mentioned in research studies on extracurricular activities (Frankel et al., 2005; Shumow, 2001). Table 6 shows the attendance rate for Northview Elementary over the five years included in secondary data collection.

Table 6

Northview Elementary, Attendance Rate (Percentage) 2008-2012

School Year	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Percentage	94.6 %	95.2 %	95.0 %	95.8 %	96.3 %

Note: Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/Pages/default.aspx Adapted from Missouri Comprehensive Data System, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012.

The attendance rate had steadily grown from 94.6% in 2008 to 96.3% in 2012. Only a small decrease occurred between the years 2009 and 2010 of .2%, however the school witnessed an increase of 1.3% from 2010 to 2012 (MODESE, 2012).

This research study included hypotheses focusing not only on the attendance rate but also concerning discipline referral rates. Figure 1 shows the total number of office discipline referrals written for the most recent six years at the time of the study.

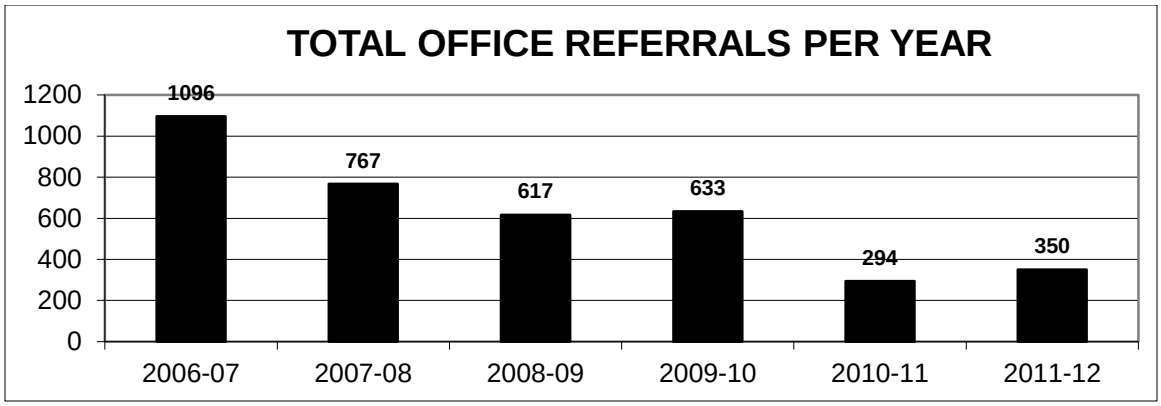

Figure 1. Total office discipline referrals 2006-2012. Note: Primary Investigator obtained written permission from the school district to use this data.

The trend in discipline data showed a decrease in the number of office discipline referrals written from the 2006-2007 school year to the 2008-2009 school year. A slight increase occurred between the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years with a very dramatic decrease during the 2010-2011 school year. Another increase occurred into the 2011-2012 school year.

Some important background information to mention concerning discipline at Northview Elementary School would include the implementation of a new behavior intervention program during the 2007-2008 school year. It is also imperative to know that the school had three head principal changes, as well as three assistant principal changes, which could affect how discipline was being handled and documented. Table 7 shows the percentage of incidents that resulted in disciplinary action in which a student was suspended for 10 or more days.

Table 7

Northview Elementary, Discipline Incidents Resulting in 10 or More Days of Suspension

School Year	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
Number of Incidents	0	1	6	0	0

Note: Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/Pages/default.aspx Adapted from Missouri Comprehensive Data System, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012.

Overall, Northview Elementary had few behavioral issues resulting in suspensions of 10 or more days. The seven incidents reported in Table 7 included drug-related and violent acts, which resulted in 10 or more days of out of school suspension (MODESE, 2012).

The last characteristic to examine, and perhaps one of the most important, is the adequate yearly progress at Northview Elementary for the five years of study. Each school in the State of Missouri was required to test their students using the Missouri Assessment Program exam, which was administered during the spring semester each year. The students took tests in the areas of math and communication arts for third through eighth grades. High school students were also tested but took end of course exams that were content-subject specific each semester instead of the MAP test. Students who were in the fifth and eighth grades also took a MAP test for science, but those results were not factored into whether or not a school met its adequate yearly progress benchmark (MODESE, 2012). Table 8 shows Northview Elementary adequate yearly progress (AYP) status for 2007-2011.

Table 8

Northview Elementary, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 2007-2011

School Year	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Math	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met
Communication Arts	Met	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met
Additional Indicator	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met

Note: Retrieved from http://mcds.dese.mo.gov/Pages/default.aspx Adapted from Missouri Comprehensive Data System, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012.

Table 8 shows that the school met its AYP for the first two years listed. In 2009 and 2010, however, the school did not meet AYP and was placed on school improvement level 2. Placement on school improvement level 2 meant that the school had to provide additional interventions for students, such as outside tutoring. In 2011, the school was able to meet AYP for math and has always met its additional indicator, which is attendance. In order to meet the additional indicator, the school must have an attendance rate of at least 93% or an increase from the previous year (MODESE, 2012). In the area of math and communication arts, a school must meet its AYP benchmark and the AYP of each of its subgroups. The subgroups for Northview Elementary included White, Black, IEP and free/reduced lunch (MODESE, 2012).

Methodology

This study was conducted at one elementary school in a large metropolitan area, which included elementary students who were enrolled in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. The school offered several after school extracurricular activities and was the school in which the primary investigator was employed. A list of extracurricular activities for Northview Elementary is listed in Table 9. Northview Elementary School

was in its third year of offering after school extracurricular activities at the time of the study.

Table 9

Northview Elementary, Extracurricular Activity Offerings, 2011-2012

Extracurricular Activity	***Description***	***Frequency of Meetings***
Drama Club	*Students learn and perform short plays and one-acts*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Northview Choir	*Students learn and perform choral music for concert performances at school and in the community*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Eco-Act	*This is a program in collaboration with the Missouri Botanical Gardens, including many hands-on lessons on ecology and the environment*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Science Club	*Students learn science concepts and take part in experiments*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Chess Club	*Students learn chess strategies and compete with other schools*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Girls on the Run	*This is a girls running club which incorporates life lessons and includes activities between all of the schools that take part in the Girls on the Run program*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Read, Run, Right	*This program includes running and physical activity, blended with reading and writing skills*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*
Equations	*Students learn advanced math skills and compete with other schools in math problem solving*	*Once a week, 60 minutes*

The primary investigator informed the entire population of third, fourth, and fifth graders about the research study, explaining the study on extracurricular activities and how students could participate. All of the third, fourth, and fifth grade students were then given a letter (Appendix A) and a parental consent form (Appendix B), which asked permission for each student's participation in the study. After each participating student turned in their signed parental consent forms, the primary investigator had the participants complete a student questionnaire (Appendix E), which included questions concerning their school experience and their extracurricular activity involvement. This process was started and completed during the month of May in 2012, with the assistance of teachers during each grade level's specials class time.

The researcher developed this questionnaire to gauge each student's feelings towards school, which was a process followed in several previous extracurricular activity studies (Ebie, 2005; Fujita, 2006; Howie et al., 2010). The number of questionnaires returned was 65 out of a population of 241 students, which was about 27% of the total population. Figure 2 shows the number of students, according to the student questionnaire, who took part in extracurricular activities and those who did not.

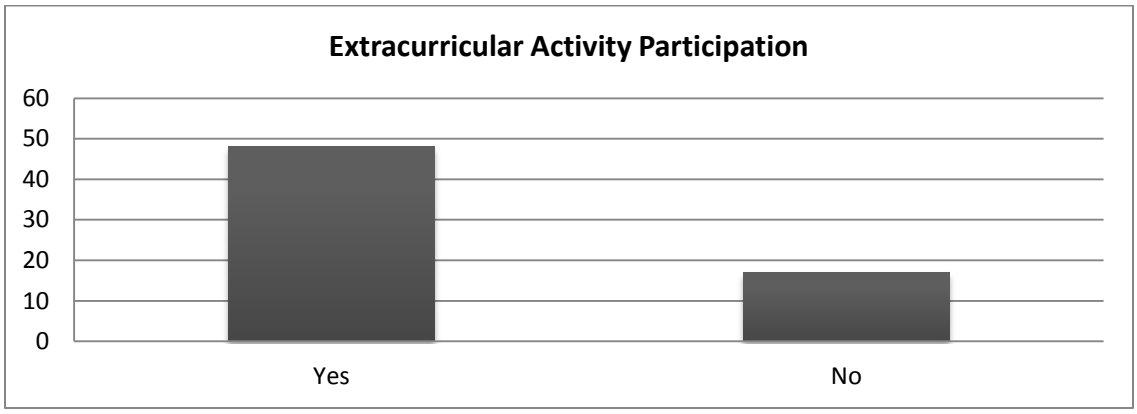

Figure 2. Extracurricular activity participation.

The completed questionnaires were then divided into four separate groups, which included those who did not take part in any activities, those who only took part in non-school sponsored activities, those who only took part in school sponsored activities, and those who took part in both types of extracurricular activities. Results of the completed questionnaires are listed in Table 10.

Since the total population of the three grades levels was 241 students and the number of questionnaires that were returned was 65, the primary investigator decided to use this information exclusively for the qualitative part of the study. The researcher was originally going to use this data to determine which students took part in what activities but this information was already obtained from the school district (Appendix D). Since the number of students who only took part in non-school sponsored activities was extremely low, the primary investigator decided not to include this in the data analysis, which was listed as a limitation of the study. The qualitative data was used to answer the research questions, along with data from a parent questionnaire (Appendix G), which was administered as well. The primary investigator had already obtained permission from the school district to use data for the study, so secondary data was used for the quantitative part of the study.

Table 10

Completed Student Questionnaires, Divided by Extracurricular Activity Involvement

Grade	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Total
Non-Participants	5	3	3	11
Non-School Sponsored Participants	4	5	1	10
School Sponsored Participants	15	8	0	23
School and Non-School Sponsored Participants	4	13	4	21
Total	28	29	8	65

After each student completed the questionnaire, the primary investigator randomly selected two to three students, out of the students who turned in a signed parental consent form, per grade level to interview. The primary investigator already had parental consent and asked for student assent (Appendix H) before conducting each interview. The purpose of the interview was to gain additional information and to ask questions (Appendix F) in addition to the questions included in the questionnaire that the students had already completed. Overall information from the interviews is listed in Table 11.

Table 11

Overview, Interview Participants

Participant	Grade	Gender	School EA Participant	Non-School EA Participant	Total Time of Interview
Participant A	4	M	Yes	Yes	8:29
Participant B	5	M	Yes	No	9:15
Participant C	4	F	Yes	Yes	10:05
Participant D	5	M	Yes	Yes	7:08
Participant E	5	F	Yes	Yes	8:47
Participant F	3	M	Yes	Yes	12:15
Participant G	3	F	Yes	No	7:05
Participant H	3	M	Yes	Yes	7:00

The primary investigator also sent home parent questionnaires to all students who had turned in a signed parental consent form and completed the student questionnaire. A total of 29 questionnaires were returned, which asked various questions about the child's

extracurricular activity participation and school experience. The questionnaire also asked about the parents' involvement with their child's education and opinions about how extracurricular activities were implemented at Northview Elementary. The number of parent questionnaires returned was 29, out of a possible number of 65 that were sent to participating student's families. Even though there were only 29 questionnaires returned, this accounted for 45% of the questionnaires that were distributed to families. Figure 3 shows the number of parents whose child was an extracurricular activity participant or non-participant.

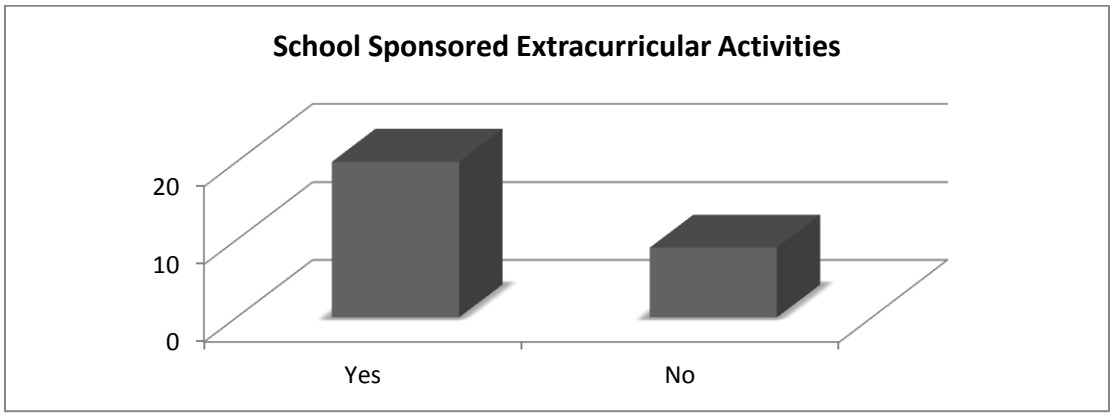

Figure 3. School sponsored extracurricular activity involvement, parent response.

The qualitative data collection procedures for this study of extracurricular activities included a student questionnaire, student interviews, and a parent questionnaire. After all of the qualitative data was gathered, the primary investigator transcribed and coded all data in an effort to answer the three research questions included in the study.

After the qualitative data was collected and coded, the primary investigator used secondary data from the school district in order to test all six hypotheses of the study. Data was gathered for each student enrolled in third, fourth, and fifth grades. This data included items such as each student's attendance rate, number of office discipline

referrals, MAP math test scores, and MAP communication arts test scores for the 2011-2012 school year. Students' names and identifiable information were omitted from the data to keep each student's information confidential. The school district also provided a list of students taking part in school sponsored extracurricular activities and which activities they participated in for the 2011-2012 school year.

The primary investigator randomly selected 60 students who took part in extracurricular activities, as determined by the school's extracurricular activity rosters. Another random sample was taken of 60 students who did not take part in extracurricular activities. After both samples were randomly selected amongst all third, fourth, and fifth graders, the researcher organized this data and recorded the number of years that all students took part in extracurricular activities. The primary investigator wanted to select a number that would be a good representation of the population and selected an equal number of participants and non-participants so a comparison between the two groups could be completed (Bluman, 2011).

The quantitative data was then organized into two groups, which included a random sample of 60 student extracurricular activity participants and a random sample of 60 student non-participants. Data for each random sample included each student's grade, attendance rate, number of discipline referrals, years participating in extracurricular activities, MAP math scores, and MAP communication arts scores. Two different statistical tests were then used to compare characteristics of students who were involved in extracurricular activities to students who were not involved in extracurricular activities to examine if there was an impact on MAP scores, discipline referrals, and attendance rate. The two statistical tests included *z*-test for difference in means and *z*-test for

difference in proportions, which are used to compare a single characteristic between two different samples (Bluman, 2011).

Descriptive Statistics of Two Random Samples

The primary investigator selected two random samples of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants. Each of the samples contained 60 students and was randomly selected from the entire population of third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Northview Elementary School, which included 241 students. Figure 4 shows the percentages of male and female students selected for both samples of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants.

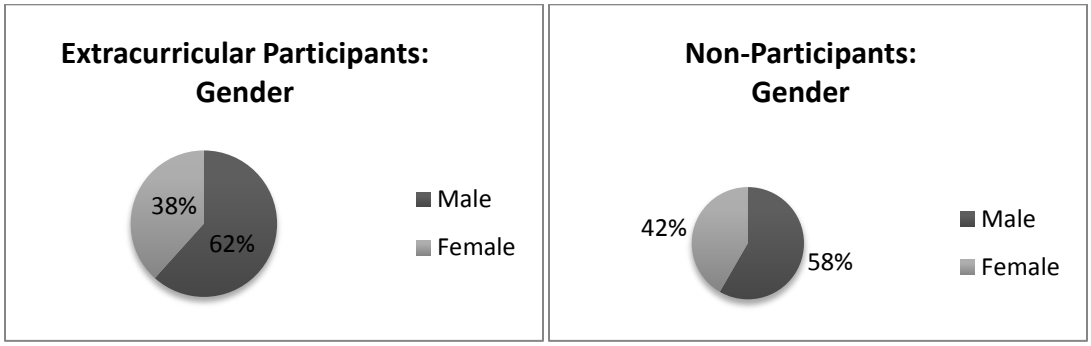

Figure 4. Extracurricular activity participants and non-participants, by gender.

Each random sample of participants and non-participants consisted of more than 50% male students. The samples included less than 50% female students for both participants and non-participants. Figure 5 shows the percentage of students from each grade level for both random samples.

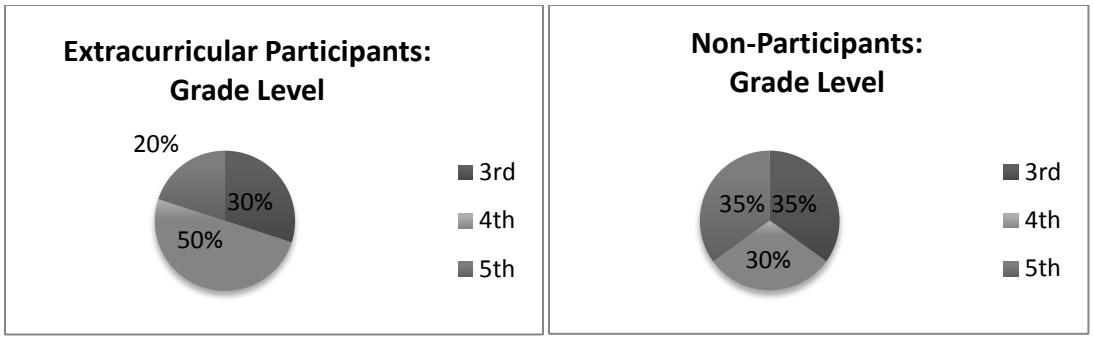

Figure 5. Extracurricular activity participants and non-participants, by grade level.

The fifth grade students accounted for 50% of those students in the extracurricular participant category, while third and fourth graders accounted for the other 50% of students involved. In the area of non-participants, the sample was more evenly divided between third, fourth, and fifth grades (Figure 5).

The final characteristic examined included descriptive statistics for race and ethnicity for both extracurricular activity participants and non-participants. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of students for each random sample.

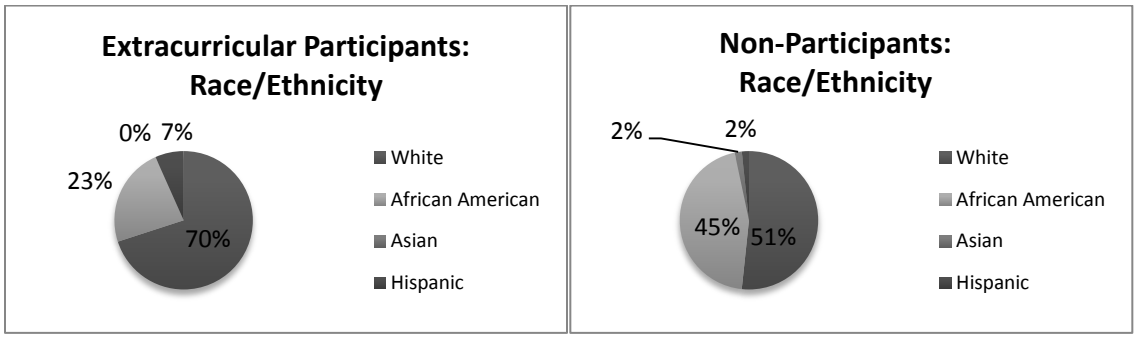

Figure 6. Extracurricular activity participants and non-participants, by race and ethnicity.

The random sample of extracurricular activity participants had a White percentage of 70% in comparison to White non-participants at 51%, which was a 19% difference. Whereas the White student category saw an increase in the percentage of students in the participant sample, this was the opposite for African American students. The percentage

of African American students in the participant category was 23% in comparison to the African American student percentage of 45% in the non-participant category.

Research Design and Rationale

In determining the overall relationship between extracurricular activity involvement and various characteristics such as MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores, individual students' attendance rates, and the number of discipline referrals a student received during the 2011-2012 school year, the researcher collected various types of student data. The data collected for each individual participant included the following:

- Gender
- 2012 Math MAP score
- 2012 Communication Arts MAP score
- Attendance Rate
- Number of extracurricular activities participated in
- Number of years participating in extracurricular activities
- Ethnicity
- Number of Office Referrals- Discipline

The researcher was able to collect all of the above individual student information during the 2012 spring semester, with the attendance rate collected at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. The last pieces of quantitative data collected included the MAP scores for each participant from the 2011-2012 school year, which were collected in August 2012. A *z*-test for difference in means was conducted for the hypotheses that included attendance rates and office discipline referral rates. A *z*-test for difference in proportions was conducted for the hypotheses that included MAP math and MAP communication arts

scores. The *z*-tests for difference in means and proportions were able to determine if a significant difference existed in student academic outcomes for comparison between extracurricular participants and non-participants (Bluman, 2011).

The qualitative data collected in this study helped determine each individual participant's perception of school. The researcher created an instrument in the form of a questionnaire to give all participating students at one elementary school, from a large metropolitan area. This questionnaire (Appendix E) was administered to all students in third, fourth, and fifth grades, who had returned a signed parental consent form (Appendix B), to determine whether or not a student's extracurricular activity participation made a significant difference in how a student felt about the school experience. The researcher was able to compare the answers of those who took part in extracurricular activities to those students who did not participate. The study also included student interviews (Appendix F) as well, to gather additional information. A parent questionnaire (Appendix G) was developed and administered to each participant's parents to gauge their overall involvement with their child's education and their opinions regarding extracurricular activities. This study used both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the relationship extracurricular activities had on academic success and school perception in an elementary school.

Instrumentation

Extracurricular activity rosters.

Extracurricular activity rosters were obtained to determine the number of extracurricular activities that were offered at the school and to determine the students who were involved in the various activities. This also helped determine the number of

students who were not involved in extracurricular activities or those who might be involved in non-sponsored extracurricular activities.

MAP scores.

MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores were obtained by asking permission to access the data from the participating school district (Appendix C) and then collecting this information from the school. All students in the State of Missouri are mandated to take this test from third grade to eighth grade in the areas of communication arts and math, with participation in science an option for each district. High school students no longer take this test but have End of Course (EOC) exams that are taken after completing certain subject area courses in high school. The MAP test scores determine the percentage of students who are categorized as below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced in the subjects of math, communication arts, and science. The goal of all educators in the State of Missouri is to get each student to proficient and above.

Attendance rate.

The attendance rate for each student was obtained by asking permission from the participating school district (Appendix C) and then collecting this information from the school. This data is kept for each individual student throughout the year by the school and is reported to MODESE each year, as a school average, when a school submits its core data from the previous school year. Attendance rate is extremely important to each school district and building, which is also tracked in a school's profile at MODESE, because it is used for adequate yearly progress (AYP) as an additional indicator.

Student questionnaire.

The researcher-developed questionnaire (Appendix E) on extracurricular activity participation included questions that were developed in an open-ended question format. In this questionnaire, each student was asked questions about whether or not they participated in extracurricular activities and the extent to which they participated. Students were then asked questions about how they felt about their school, whether or not they liked attending school, and other similar questions. This data collection instrument was used to obtain qualitative data for this study.

Parent questionnaire.

The researcher-developed questionnaire (Appendix G) on extracurricular activity participation included questions that were developed in an open-ended question format. In this questionnaire, each parent was asked questions about whether or not their child participated in extracurricular activities and the extent to which they participated. Parents were then asked questions about their involvement in their child's school, how much time they spent assisting their child in their homework, and other similar questions.

Student interviews.

Interviews were used for students that participated in the study. The interviews included several questions (Appendix F) that were similar to the questionnaire, which was administered to all participating students in the study. The individual interviews gave the interviewer the opportunity to ask follow up questions and to ask clarifying questions concerning extracurricular activity involvement.

Participants and Sample

The students selected for this study attended a large metropolitan area elementary school in the United States. This study focused on students from one elementary school, who were enrolled in third, fourth, and fifth grades during the 2011-2012 school year. All students who were enrolled in third, fourth, and fifth grades at this elementary school, who turned in a signed parent consent form (Appendix B), were able to take part in the study. Students were given a consent form for their parents to sign in order to get permission to take part in the qualitative part of the study and each student also signed an assent form (Appendix H). The students who brought back the consent form, signed by a parent, were then able to take part in the research study by completing the student questionnaire (Appendix E) on student extracurricular activity participation. This questionnaire included questions about the student's feelings towards school and their extracurricular activity involvement. After the students completed the student questionnaire, the researcher sorted the questionnaires into four categories:

- Students who did not take part in extracurricular activities
- Students who took part in extracurricular activities that were not school sponsored
- Students who took part in extracurricular activities that were school sponsored
- Students who took part in extracurricular activities that were both school and non-school sponsored

The questionnaires were collected and coded in order to answer the study's research questions. The primary investigator contacted the superintendent (Appendix C) of the participating school's district to obtain permission (Appendix D) to conduct this study on extracurricular activities and to use secondary data.

Confidentiality

The researcher took several precautions to ensure that the study did not include any identifiable student information. The individual data gathered on each student was secured during the study and was only accessible to the researcher. The information gathered during interviews was also secured and only accessible to the researcher during the study. These items were secured either by being stored in a physical place that was locked or by keeping the information on the researcher's computer, which was password protected. The student questionnaire used was administered by the school's specials teachers and did not have any identifiable information included. Each teacher then collected the questionnaires and put them in an envelope to give to the researcher.

Validity of the Data Collection

The collection of data in this study was carefully considered and was determined based on the validity of the data collection instruments that were used. In obtaining both MAP scores and the attendance rate from the school for each student; this type of data has a very high probability of being accurate because school districts are held accountable for correctly reporting this data each year. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) in the state of Missouri requires each school to report specific data using specific guidelines at the conclusion of each school year. Individual student data must be averaged correctly and reported to DESE each academic year. By using these two instruments, there is still a probability of human error in reporting the data but in all likelihood, it would be very small.

In the collection of extracurricular activity involvement, the researcher was able to get the rosters of each school sponsored activity and compare that to the responses

given in the student questionnaires. The student questionnaires offered great accuracy since almost all of the questions were open-ended. The data used in the quantitative part of the study had a very high likelihood of being accurate since it was secondary data from the school district, even though human error in entering data was still a possibility. The qualitative data collection process included involvement from other teachers and individuals to ensure the most accurate of results.

Summary

This study used quantitative and qualitative data to determine whether or not a relationship existed between academic success and extracurricular activity participation. The data collected also was used to determine whether or not a relationship existed between extracurricular activity participation and a student's perception of school in general. This data was carefully collected and the study was designed in a way to determine the relationship between participants and non-participants in the area of academic success and school perception.

In the next chapter, the researcher will share the results of the study and will evaluate the data, which was collected from the students and parents that were involved in this research study. The researcher will examine all sets of data and present them to the reader in an attempt to answer each of the three research questions of this study. The data collected will include both quantitative and qualitative, which will help determine the overall effect of extracurricular participation.

Chapter 4: Results

The results of this research study concerning elementary extracurricular activities will be reported in this chapter. A brief description of both randomly selected samples of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants will be discussed. The results of each tested hypothesis will be reported, which included the use of *z*-tests for difference in means and proportions. The first three hypotheses compared attendance rate, office discipline referral rate, and MAP test scores between extracurricular participants and non-participants. The last three hypotheses compared the same characteristics of attendance rate, office discipline referral rate, and MAP test scores for students who participated in extracurricular activities for a shorter amount of time to those who participated for a longer amount of time. The last part of the chapter discussed each of the three research questions, which were answered by the qualitative data collected during the study.

Null Hypothesis 1

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will not achieve a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

The primary investigator selected two random samples of 60 extracurricular activity participants and 60 non-participants, which were selected out of a population of 241 students. The MAP scores for each student in both samples were obtained for both math and communication arts for the 2011-2012 school year. After all of the data was obtained, the primary investigator converted those students achieving a score of proficient and above into percentages. Table 12 shows the percentage of students who scored proficient and above in both samples.

Table 12

Percentage of Students Proficient and Above, Math and Communication Arts 2011-2012 School Year

	Math	**Communication Arts**
Participants	73%	73%
Non-Participants	43%	45%

In order to compare the percentage of students who scored proficient or above on the MAP test in both samples, a *z*-test for difference in proportions was conducted. An alpha level of 0.05 was used with a critical value of +1.65, using a right tailed test. In the area of math, the z-test value was +2.35 and in communication arts, the *z*-test value was +2.20.

Since the MAP math z-test value of +2.35 is greater than the critical value of +1.65, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants achieved a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP math test than non-participants.

Since the MAP communication arts z-test value of +2.20 is greater than the critical value of +1.65, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants achieved a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP communication arts test than non-participants.

Null Hypothesis 2

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will not achieve a higher attendance rate in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

The researcher took the same two samples of 60 participants and 60 non-participants used for the analysis of null in hypothesis 1 and collected attendance data for each student. After determining the number of days each student missed during the 2011-2012 school year, this number was subtracted from 179 total school days for each student. The mean attendance, expressed in days, was then calculated for both participants and non-participants, which is listed in Table 13.

Table 13

Student Attendance 2011-2012, Average Number of Days Attended (179 Student Days)

Participants	**Non-Participants**
173.6	171.6

The primary investigator took both means of participants and non-participants and conducted a z-test for difference in means to determine if there was a statistical difference in student attendance rates. An alpha level of 0.05 was used with a critical value of +1.65, using a right tailed test. The z-test value was calculated to be +1.64, which was less than the critical value of +1.65, so the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants achieved a higher attendance rate than non-participants.

Null Hypothesis 3

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities will not achieve a lower office referral rate in comparison to those students who are not currently involved in any school extracurricular activities.

The researcher took the same two samples of 60 participants and 60 non-participants used in analysis of the previous hypotheses and collected office discipline referral data for each student. After determining the number of office discipline referrals for each student during the 2011-2012 school year, the primary investigator was then able to calculate the mean office discipline referral rate for both participants and non-participants, which is listed in Table 14.

Table 14

Student Office Discipline Referral Rates, 2011-2012

Participants	Non-Participants
0.32	1.27

The primary investigator took both means of participants and non-participants and conducted a *z*-test for differences in means to determine if there was a statistical difference in student office discipline referral rates. An alpha level of 0.05 was used with a critical value of -1.65, using a left tailed test. The *z*-test value was calculated to be -1.64, which was greater than the critical value of -1.65, so the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants achieved a lower student office discipline referral rate than non-participants.

Null Hypothesis 4

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will not achieve a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

The primary investigator took the same random sample of 60 extracurricular participants used in analysis for the previous hypotheses and determined each participant's length of participation. This group was then divided into two groups, which included students who took part in extracurricular activities for more than one school year and those who took part in extracurricular activities for one school year or less. The MAP scores for each student in both groups were obtained for both math and communication arts. After all of the data was obtained, the primary investigator converted those students achieving a score of proficient and above into percentages. Table 15 shows the percentage of students who scored proficient and above in both groups.

Table 15

Percentage of Students Proficient and Above, Math and Communication Arts 2011-2012 School Year, Extracurricular Activity Participants

	Math	**Communication Arts**
One Year or Less	66%	63%
Greater than One Year	84%	88%

A *z*-test for difference in proportions was conducted to determine if students who took part in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time resulted in higher MAP test scores. An alpha level of 0.05 was used with a critical value of +1.65, using a right tailed test. In the area of math, the z-test value was +1.56 and in the area of communication arts, the *z*-test value was +2.16.

Since the MAP math *z*-test value of +1.56 was less than the critical value of +1.65, the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants who participated for longer than one school year achieved a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP math test than those who participated for one school year or less.

Since the MAP communication arts *z*-test value of +2.16 was greater than the critical value of +1.65, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants who participated for longer than one school year achieved a higher percentage of proficient and above on the MAP communication arts test those who participated for one school year or less.

Null Hypothesis 5

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will not achieve a higher attendance rate in comparison to those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length $\leq$ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

The researcher took the divided sample of 60 extracurricular activity participants and collected attendance data for the group that participated for more than one school year and the group that had participated for one school year or less. After determining

the number of days each student missed during the 2011-2012 school year, this number was subtracted by 179 total school days for each student. The primary investigator was then able to calculate the mean attendance for both groups, expressed in days, which is listed in Table 16.

Table 16

Student Attendance 2011-2012, Average Number of Days Attended (179 Student Days), Extracurricular Activity Participants

One Year or Less	Greater Than One Year
173.66	173.52

The primary investigator took both means of participants that took part in extracurricular activities for a shorter amount of time and a longer amount of time and conducted a *z*-test for differences in means to determine if there was a statistical difference in student attendance rates. An alpha level of 0.05 was used with a critical value of +1.65, using a right tailed test. The *z*-test value was calculated to be +1.64, which was less than the critical value of +1.65, so the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants who participated for a longer amount of time achieved a higher attendance rate than participants who participated for a shorter amount of time.

Null Hypothesis 6

School Extracurricular Participants who are involved in extracurricular activities for a longer period of time will not achieve a lower office referral rate in comparison to

those students who are involved in any extracurricular activities for a shorter length of time [short length ≤ 1 school year; long length > 1 school year].

The researcher took the sample of 60 participants, who were divided into two groups based on their length of extracurricular activity participation, and collected office discipline referral data for each student. After determining the number of office discipline referrals for each student during the 2011-2012 school year, the primary investigator was then able to calculate the mean office discipline referral rate for both participants who took part in extracurricular activities for more than one year and those who took part for one year or less, which is listed in Table 17.

Table 17

Student Office Discipline Referral Rates 2011-2012, Extracurricular Activity Participants

One Year or Less	**Greater than One Year**
0.37	0.24

A z-test for differences in means was conducted for both groups to determine if there was a statistical difference in student office discipline referral rates. An alpha level of 0.05 was used with a critical value of -1.65, using a left tailed test. The *z*-test value was calculated to be -1.64, which was greater than the critical value of -1.65, so the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was not enough evidence to show that school extracurricular activity participants who participated for more than one year achieved a lower student office discipline referral rate than participants who took part for one year or less.

Research Question 1

1. Is there a difference in school perception between those who do or do not take part in extracurricular activities?

In order to answer the first research question, the primary investigator created a student questionnaire (Appendix E) and various student interview questions (Appendix F). The researcher distributed parental consent forms (Appendix B) and student questionnaires, once a signed parental consent form was returned to the primary investigator, to all of the participating third, fourth, and fifth grade students at Northview Elementary School.

The first question included on the student questionnaire asked students to describe their feelings towards school. Figure 7 shows the results for both extracurricular activity participants and non-participants.

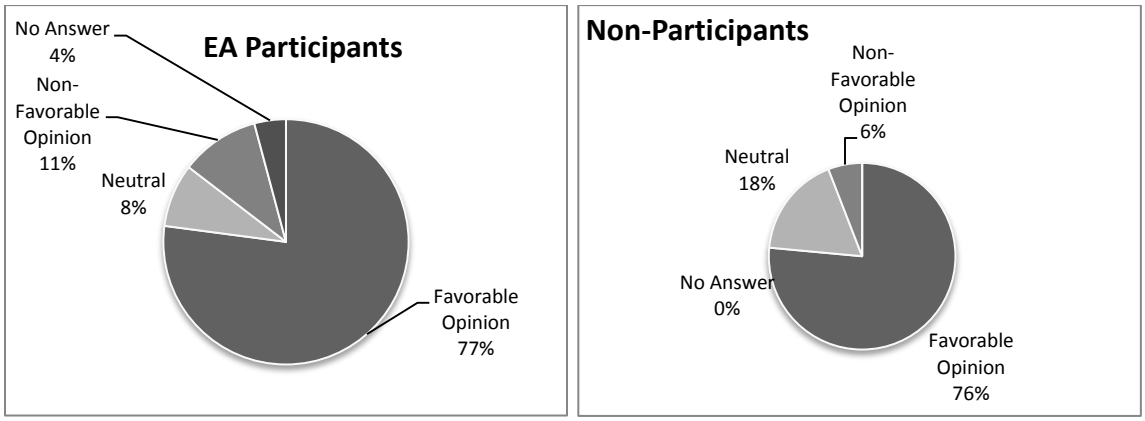

Figure 7. Student feelings about school.

In examining the data for both participants and non-participants, the categories were comparable. The non-favorable opinion category was actually a little higher for participants than non-participants. Overall, it seems to look as though there is not a major difference as far as feelings towards school is concerned for both categories.

Students were then asked how they thought they were doing in school during the 2011-2012 school year. Those results are shown in Figure 8.

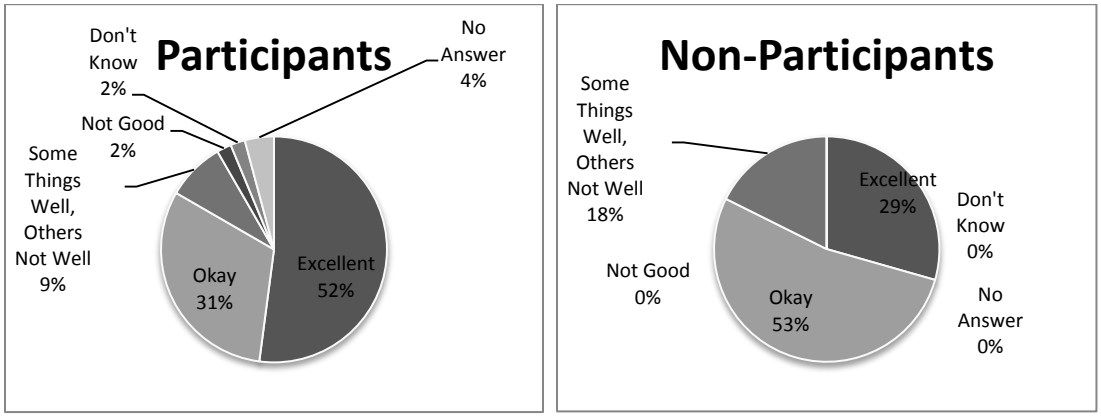

Figure 8. Students feelings concerning grades and academic progress.

The results from this question show that participants had a better outlook on how they were performing in school. The excellent category for participants was shown at 52% in comparison to 29% for non-participants. Although the participant data showed that a higher percentage of students felt they were doing excellent work, a total of 8% either did not answer this question, thought they were not doing well in school or did not know at all. Where the participants had 8% in the previously mentioned categories, non-participants had 0%.

The next two questions included in the student questionnaire asked what each student looked forward to during their school day and what they least looked forward to during their school day. Figure 9 and Figure 10 show data for both of these questions for participants and non-participants.

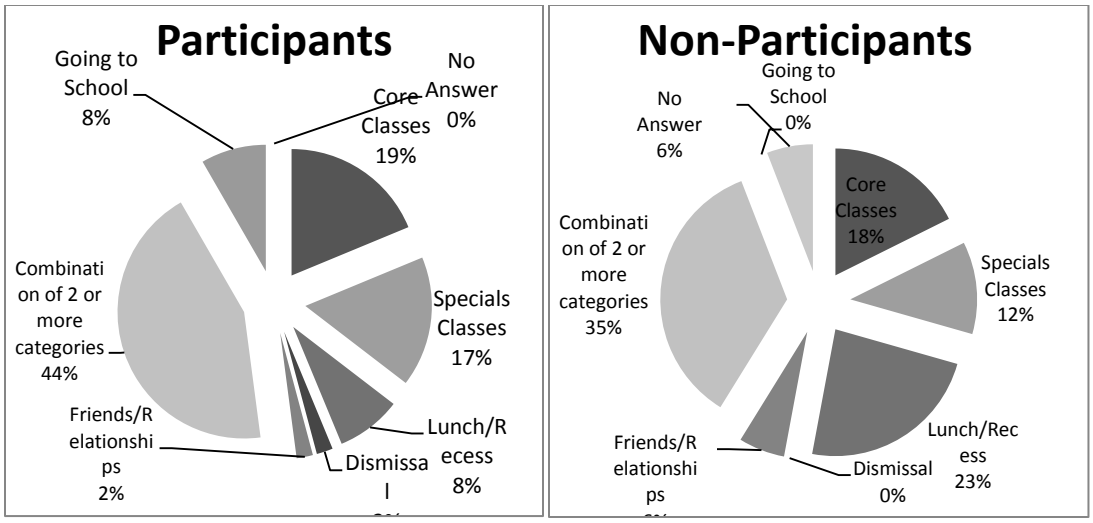

Figure 9. What students looked forward to during the school day.

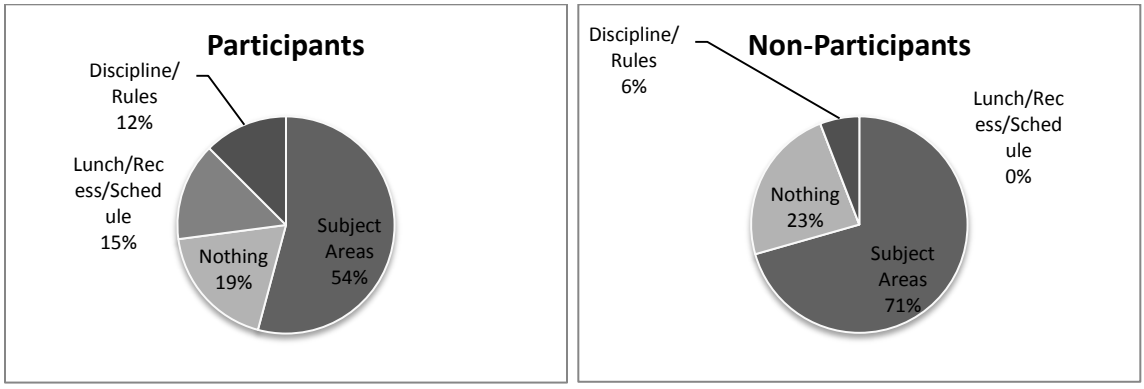

Figure 10. What students least looked forward to during the school day.

According to Figure 9, many students in both groups of participants and non-participants listed multiple things that they looked forward to during the school day. The combination of two or more categories made up 44% of the student answers in the participants group and 35% of the student answers in the non-participant group. In the area of core and specials classes, both group were comparable. However, in the category of lunch and recess, 8% of the participants listed this as what they looked forward to during the school day in comparison to 23% of students in the non-participant category.

In Figure 10, students in the non-participant group least looked forward to their subject areas. The participant group had a substantial amount of students who listed subject areas also, with 54% of students listing this as something they least looked forward to. However, the non-participant group had 71% of students who listed subject areas as something they least looked forward to. Many categories were comparable, except that of lunch, recess, and student schedules. In the participant group, 15% of students listed this category in comparison to 0% of the non-participant group.

In Figure 11, students listed what they would change about their school and/or school experience.

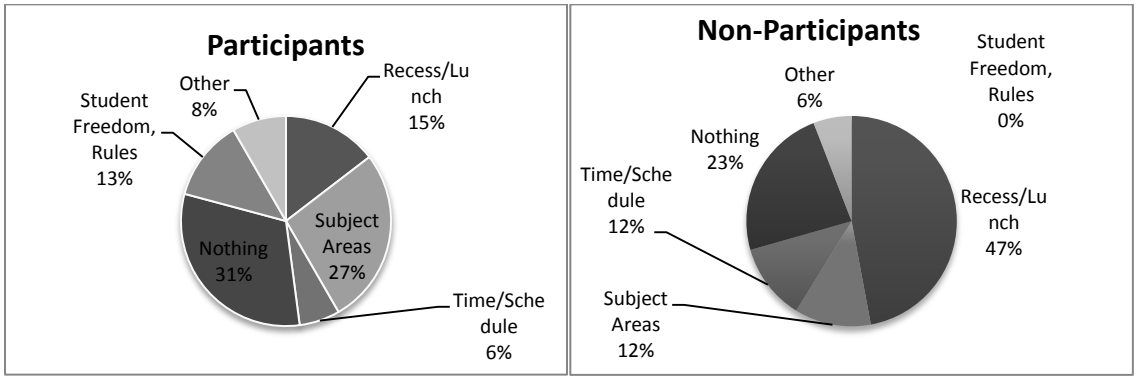

Figure 11. What would you change about your school/school experience?

In the non-participant group, 47% of students wanted to change something about their lunch and recess time in comparison to 15% in the participant group. There were also some differences in the categories of student freedom/rules and in subject areas. The participants listed student freedoms and rules as something to change 13% of the time in comparison to 0% in the non-participant category. A noticeable trend in participants would include the percentage of students who listed subject areas at 27%. Many responses from the participant group included very thoughtful answers for improving subject areas, many including activities and more time for certain subject areas.

The last graph to examine for research question one includes results to a question from extracurricular activity participants only. This question asked why students took part in extracurricular activities. The results from this question are shown in Figure 12.

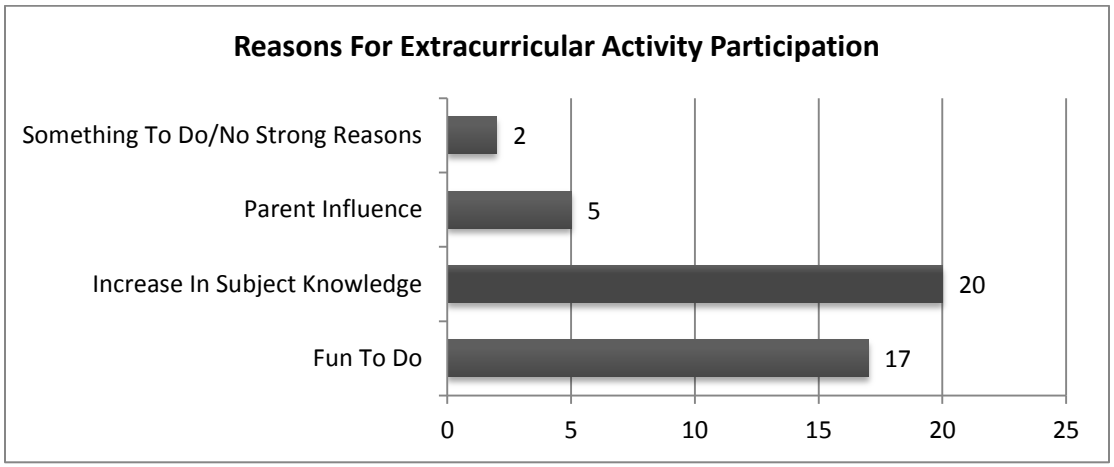

Figure 12. Reasons for extracurricular activity participation.

In examining all of the qualitative data for research question one, a trend was noticed amongst extracurricular activity participants. Many students in this group continued to list subject matter and increasing their own knowledge in many answers on the student questionaire. Where it seems as though there is not a noticeable difference between the two groups concerning school perception, it looks as though their might be a difference in their perception of their academic studies. A desire to seek more challenges in various subject areas was shown by participants in both the student questionaaire and student interview.

The results of the students interviews supported the data that was collected in the student questionairres. Many participants had several positive things to say about their school experience. Participant A thought that the school was a great place to learn and had many opportunities for gifted students.

> "I think it is a good school, especially for students who are really smart. They can go to the gifted class; helps so they are not just board in class doing the things they think are easy all of the time."

Participant B also supported this idea with his thoughts and enjoyed the concept of student choice.

> "Love it, love the learning and how it prepares us for the future. I also like the freedoms that you get, the choices that you get; seems like everything is balanced."

While the first two participants listed academic benefits to attending Northview Elementary, Participant C mentioned the social benefits also.

> "I like going to Northview Elementary because I get to see my friends and learn."

All of the responses to the first interview question concerning how the student felt about school were positive, except for Participant F who stated that "Sometimes I don't want to really want to do math or go to an assembly or something like that."

When students were asked what they looked forward to, many participants listed specific subject areas and recess. Participant H mentioned liking art and looking forward to the satisfaction of finishing projects, while Participant G looked forward to math and recess. Participant C mentioned liking math and looking forward to talking with friends at lunch. Overall, all of the participants had various subject area and social opportunities that they looked forward to.

When asked what a student might want to change about school, Participant B stated that he would like recess to be a bit longer and to also increase the amount of time in math and inquiry. Participant D also mentioned math and stated that he "would

probably bump up the amount of math time because I need the practice in it." Participant F expressed that he would not have any classes.

> "No classes, no classes, because you don't really have to do anything just play all day and go to PE, music, and art."

Several students also had many positive things to say about their teachers or home room teachers. Participant G stated that her teachers were very encouraging.

> "I think the teachers are great and they teach a lot and if you mess up they'll encourage you to keep trying and not give up."

Participant D also agreed with Participant G, supporting the statement that teachers were very supportive, "If I have a problem, they will just say okay and will talk with you after class."

Overall, the interviews expressed that many students were satisfied with their school experience and shared many things that they looked forward to during the school day. Several students shared changes they would like to see as far as increasing the amount of time a specific subject was taught, while also increasing time for such things as lunch and recess.

Research Question 2

2. How does parental involvement contribute to participation in extracurricular activities?

The researcher was able to collect information to assist in answering research question 2 by administering a parent questionnaire (Appendix G), which was created by the researcher. The process of administering the parent questionnaire began after the student questionnaire and interview process was started. The researcher sent home a note

to each participating student's family asking them to take part in this research study. Participating parents completed the parent questionnaire and returned it to the researcher.

In determining how much parental involvement influenced participation in extracurricular activities, the researcher develop questions which determined why students decided to take part in extracurricular activities, how involved each parent was in their child education at school, and how much time parents spent with their child assisting in homework. When parents were asked why their child decided to take part in extracurricular activities, many listed subject matter interest the most, which supported previous trends in student questionnaire data. Figure 13 displays the results for this question, which was included in the parent questionnaire.

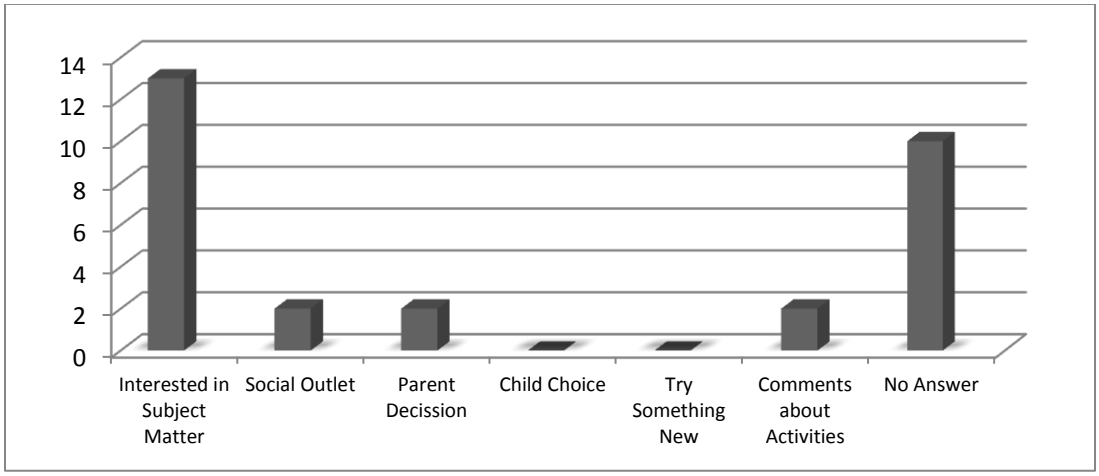

Figure 13. Parent listed reasons for their child's extracurricular activity involvement.

In examining the data in Figure 13, only a very few parents listed their child's involvement in extracurricular activities as being their choice. Many of the "no answer" category included parents of many non-involved students. Even though the number of responses for the "parent decision" category is small, other information gained through other answers in the parent questionnaire might show that students could be influenced in some way to take part in extracurricular activities by their parents. Figure 14 shows the

responses given by parents to a question that asked whether or not they thought that extracurricular activity involvement influenced their child's educational experience and how.

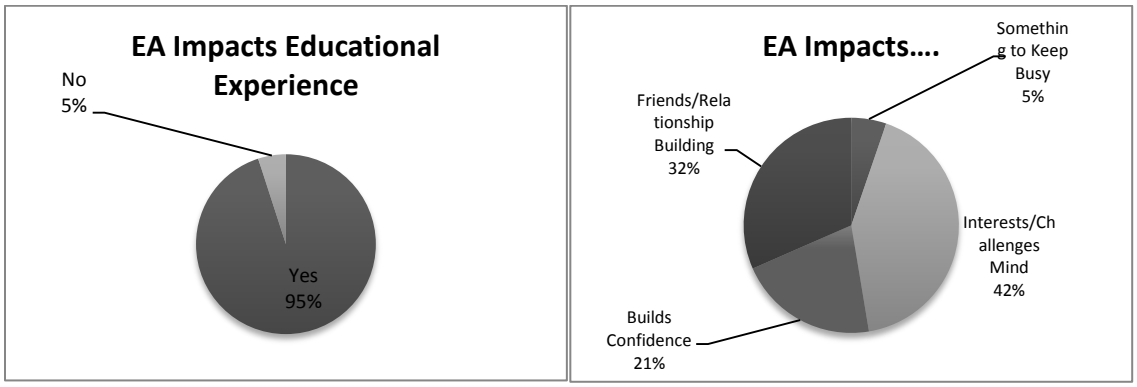

Figure 14. Parent responses, extracurricular activity involvement.

As observed in Figure 14, a vast majority of parents agreed that extracurricular activity involvement impacted their child's educational experience. As far as what is specifically impacted by extracurricular involvement, a majority of parents listed that extracurricular activities supported students' interests and challenged their minds. Another important attribute of extracurricular activities, as supported by Figure 14, is that extracurricular activities tended to build confidence in their child and provided a very important social outlet as well.

The researcher then collected data on parental involvement by asking each parent participant to list the different events, meetings, and volunteering opportunities that each of them participated in at their child's school. All of the answers were then divided into two categories, events that parents attended and volunteering opportunities. Figure 15 shows the results for parental involvement in participants and non-participants.

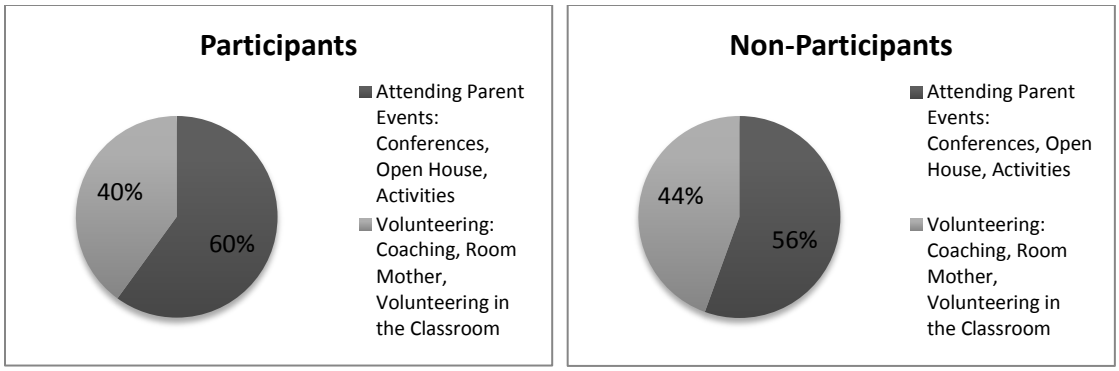

Figure 15. Parental involvement at Northview Elementary, participants and non-participants.

The data for participants and non-participants, as far as parental involvement is concerned, was very comparable. The last area that the researcher examined was that of homework assistance. All parents were asked how much homework their child had per week and how much time they spent in assisting their child with their homework. The results are listed in Figure 16.

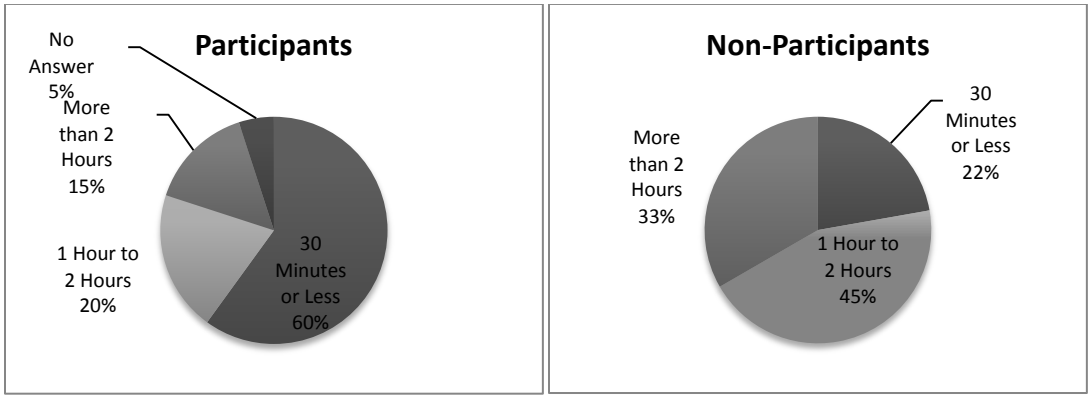

Figure 16. Homework assistance duration, participants and non-participants.

A vast majority of parents in the participant group listed "30 minutes or less" concerning homework assistance for their child. In the non-participant group, the time was greater with 45% spending an hour to two hours working with their child on homework each week. Even though the participant group parents seemed to spend less

time in assisting in their child's homework, many parents listed that their child did not need assistance. Most of the parents of the participant group listed that their role in their child's homework completion was to check over their homework. The non-participant group listed that their children had more homework per week in comparison to the participant group. Overall, it seemed as though this information, once the amount of homework and the parent's role in homework was considered, was comparable.

Research Question 3

3. What are the similarities and differences between parents whose children are involved in extracurricular activities and those who are not?

In order to answer research question three, the primary investigator examined all of the responses from the completed parent questionnaires (Appendix G). After examining certain responses for parental involvement at school and homework completion, the researcher determined that there were more similarities than differences between the parents of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants. The groups of participants and non-participants were involved with their child's school to the same degree, were comparable in how much time they assisted with their child's homework, and both groups even agreed that extracurricular activity involvement was capable of making an impact in their child's education. The researcher did examine one more factor, which was the parent's highest level of education. Figure 17 displays the highest obtained education for the parents of extracurricular participants and non-participants.

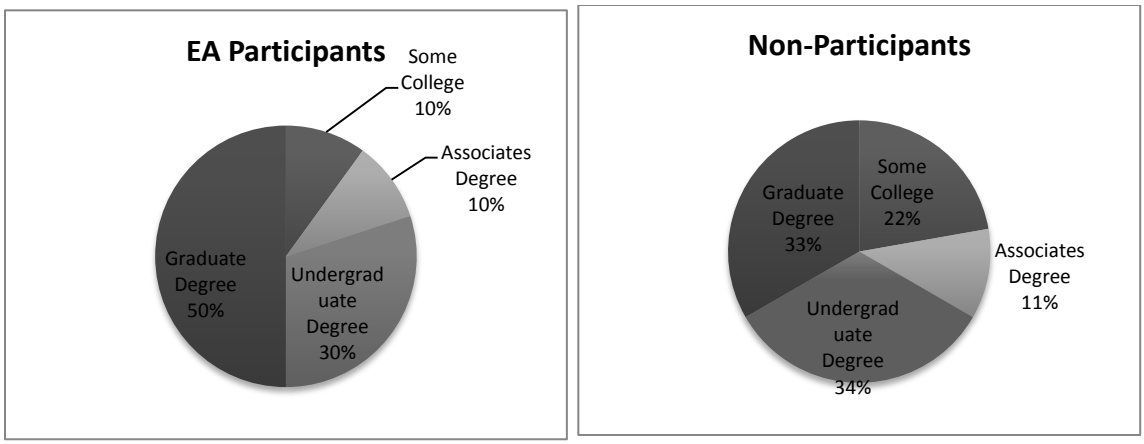

Figure 17. Parent level of education, participants and non-participants.

In comparing the participant group to the non-participant group, there were a higher percentage of parents who had a undergraduate degree or higher. The participant group had 80% of parents who completed an undergraduate degree or higher in comparison to 67% of parents who were in the non-participant group. The amount of parents who held a graduate degree was also higher than the non-participants. This was the only significant difference that was highlighted by the data collected in the parent questionaire.

Summary

This chapter reported the various findings of the data analysis that were conducted using various quantitative and qualitative data sources. In the area of quantitative data analysis, the researcher used *z*-tests for difference in proportions and means to determine if a statistical difference existed between participants and non-participants in the area of MAP test scores, attendance rate, and office discipline referrals. The same z-tests were conducted, using MAP test score, attendance rate, and office discipline referral data, for participants who had participated for a longer amount of time and a shorter amount of time. The researcher was able to reject the null hypotheses for MAP testing for

communication arts and math between participants and non-participants. The null hypotheses for MAP testing for communication arts was also rejected for participants who were involved for a longer amount of time in comparison to a shorter amount of time, however the null hypothesis for MAP math testing was not rejected. All null hypotheses for attendance rates and office discipline referral rates were not rejected. As far as the research questions were concerned, the researcher did not see a significant difference in school perception between those who did or did not take part in extracurricular activities. Research questions two and three resulted in discovering more similarities between parents of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants than differences. The only major difference was observed in the area of parent education, with parents of the participant group achieving a higher level of education in comparison to parents in the non-participant group. In the area of parent involvement, the way in which parents were involved in their child's education was comparable for both participants and non-participants, although a vast majority of parents valued extracurricular activity programs which could play a role in influencing their child's involvement.

The final chapter of this research study will review the research questions, purpose, and results found in Chapter 4. The researcher will also examine the limitations of the study as well as make any future recommendations for extracurricular activity programs. The chapter will conclude with thoughts concerning future studies of extracurricular activity programs and a summary of this research study on extracurricular activities.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Reflection

The various research studies of extracurricular activities have highlighted several relationships between participation and various student characteristics. Several studies have attempted to link extracurricular activity participation to higher grades, better attendance, lower office discipline referral rates, lower dropout rates, and better school perception (Black, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fujita, 2006). This research study on extracurricular activities attempted to determine if contribution of academic success was evident at Northview Elementary School by comparing extracurricular activity participants to non-participants regarding MAP test scores, attendance rates, office discipline referral rates, and school perception. The research also compared groups of students who had participated in extracurricular activities for a longer amount of time to those who had participated for a shorter amount of time.

This chapter will review the purpose, research questions, and findings of the study. The information gained through the data analysis will help determine what, if any, conclusions can be drawn about the potential benefits of extracurricular activity participation. The chapter will conclude with a review of the limitations of the study, along with recommendations for extracurricular activity programs, thoughts for future studies of extracurricular activities, discussion, and conclusions.

Purpose

This study on extracurricular activities compared the MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) scores in math and communication arts, office referral rates, and attendance rates of elementary school students who had participated in extracurricular activities to those students who did not participate in extracurricular activities. The researcher also

used the above-mentioned characteristics to compare students who participated in extracurricular activities for longer and shorter amount of time. A school of roughly 380 students, in which 241 students were eligible for the study, from a large metropolitan area was used for this study. Data was collected from the 2011-2012 school year, which included both qualitative and quantitative data from individual students.

This study attempted to show a contribution by extracurricular activity participation to characteristics of academic outcomes, such as test scores, attendance, behavior, and school perception. Many studies have shown that students who participate in extracurricular activities tend to perform better in the classroom, have higher attendance, lower amounts of behavior issues, and a more positive perception of attending school in comparison to those students who do not participate (Black, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a; Fujita, 2006). Previous research studies have also shown that students learn important real world applicable skills such as leadership, conflict resolution, confidence and positive work habits (Reeves, 2008). This study focused on the impact of extracurricular activities on elementary grade level students and the possible educational benefits of having extracurricular activities at the elementary level. The previous literature surrounding extracurricular activity participation has prompted this study on extracurricular activities at the elementary level. Since very few research studies have been completed at the elementary level, this contributes to the literature surrounding the study of extracurricular activities.

Research Questions

The researcher developed three research questions to determine the potential similarities and differences between extracurricular activity participants and non-participants.

1. Is there a difference in school perception between those who do or do not take part in extracurricular activities?
2. How does parental involvement contribute to participation in extracurricular activities?
3. What are the similarities and differences between parents whose children are involved in extracurricular activities and those who are not?

Review of Methodology

This study was created to determine if a relationship existed between extracurricular activities and quantifiable characteristics, such as MAP test scores, attendance rate, and office discipline referral rate. In order to make a determination, the researcher compared two different groups of students; those who participated in school sponsored extracurricular activities to those who did not. This comparison included the use of z-testing for difference in means and proportions to determine if a statistical difference existed between participants and non-participants concerning MAP test scores, attendance rates, and office discipline referral rates. Since the reviewed literature also included qualitative characteristics, such as school perception (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006a), the researcher developed three qualitative data collection instruments to determine the relationship between extracurricular activity involvement and students' perception of school. The researcher created a student questionnaire, parent

questionnaire, and developed student interview questions to gain important knowledge about how students felt about going to school and their extracurricular activity involvement. Parents also played an important role by sharing their thoughts regarding extracurricular activities and providing feedback on how extracurricular programs were implemented at Northview Elementary. The researcher used a mixed methods approach to determine the potential impacts extracurricular activities might play in a student's educational experience.

Findings

Quantitative results.

The first three hypotheses compared extracurricular activity participants to non-participants. The researcher was able to reject null hypothesis 1, supporting a statistical difference between Mathematics MAP and Communication Arts MAP scores of participants and non-participants, in which participants scored higher, by applying a *z*-test for difference in proportions. However, the researcher was unable to show a statistical difference in attendance rate and office discipline referral rate using a *z*-test for difference in means. The last three hypotheses compared students who were involved in extracurricular activities for up to one year to those who were involved for more than one year. In hypothesis 4, the researcher used a *z*-test for difference in proportion and was able to reject the null hypothesis for MAP communication arts, which showed a statistical difference, in favor of a higher percentage for participants. However, the researcher was unable to reject the null for the MAP math test proportions. The last two hypotheses concerning attendance and office discipline referral rates also resulted in the researcher being unable to reject the null hypothesis, resulting in no statistical difference being

found. Overall, the data analysis helped determine that a contribution existed for higher Math and Communication Arts MAP test scores from extracurricular activity participation. The data also supported a contribution from extracurricular activity participants who had participated for a longer amount of time to higher Communication Arts MAP tests scores. Although these findings do not support a causal relationship, the findings supported the idea that extracurricular activity participation provides the potential benefit of contributing to academic achievement.

Qualitative results.

In reviewing the qualitative data used to answer the three research questions, the researcher did not see a significant difference in school perception between those who did or did not take part in extracurricular activities. The similarity in school perception between extracurricular participants and non-participants could be attributed to several factors. Northview Elementary had a progressive curriculum, which was supported by real-life, hands-on activities. The school also had a looping program between fourth and fifth grades. Several of the students who participated in this study of extracurricular activities described positive relationships with their homeroom teachers during their interviews. It could be possible that strong teacher and student relationships could impact the results found in the student questionnaires. Since the school also had a high population of lower socio-economic families, this could have also impacted the results found in the qualitative data.

Data gathered for research questions two and three supported more similarities between parents of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants. A difference was discovered in the area of parent education, with parents of the participant

group achieving a higher level of education than those parents of the non-participant group. In the area of parent involvement, the way in which parents were involved in their child's education was comparable for both participants and non-participants, although a vast majority of parents valued extracurricular activity programs which could play an important role in influencing whether or not a child takes part in extracurricular activities. The responses from parents whose child was not taking part in extracurricular activities at the time of the study expressed that scheduling and lack of activity offerings were the main reasons for their child's non-involvement in extracurricular activities at Northview Elementary.

Implications

There are several implications to be addressed moving forward with implementing any extracurricular activity program. The first implication includes properly securing funding and resources. In order to produce effective extracurricular activity programs, these programs must be funded and staffed appropriately (Frankel et al., 2005). When extracurricular programs are supported, the possibility for student growth and achievement will reach its full potential. The results from this study showed a significant difference between participants and non-participants concerning standardized test scores. It is possible that providing extracurricular activities is able to influence student achievement and that the specific type of extracurricular activity a student participates in also makes a difference in the area of student achievement, especially if the activity is more academically aligned. Providing various opportunities for students to explore different subject areas and interests also plays a very important role in helping students realize their talents and strengths (Zhao, 2009). It is possible,

that although a causal relationship was not proven in this research study, that providing these additional opportunities for students could impact their level of academic achievement.

Once appropriate funding and resources are secured, it is important to collect data and evaluate all areas of the program. If more attention were given to implementing strong extracurricular programs at school, it would be interesting to see what the results of extracurricular participation might be. In the parent questionnaire, several parents mentioned their support for school sponsored extracurricular activities because it provided free opportunities for their child to explore different interests and create new experiences. This is very important for those families who do not have the financial means to involve their child in non-school sponsored extracurricular activities.

In the school district where Northview Elementary was located, extracurricular programs were cut three years prior to this study. After a failed tax levy, all extracurricular programs at the elementary level were cut, leaving several students without new learning and social opportunities. The programs were restored after much parental influence and input, which in itself show how important extracurricular activities are to students and parents. The main implications of time, money, transportation, and personnel will continue to provide challenges to school districts and administrators when determining what types of extracurricular offerings it is able to successfully implement.

Limitations

This study of extracurricular activities had several limitations that must be considered before making any conclusions about extracurricular activity participation. The first limitation included that this study was conducted in a smaller elementary school

of 380 students in a large metropolitan area, which may not be applicable to other grade levels or schools in non-metropolitan areas. Many students who did not score well on the MAP test in 2010-2011 were required to participate in a mandatory afterschool math and communication arts interventions. Since these students with lower MAP test scores were required to take part in this afterschool remedial program; this limited their participation in school sponsored extracurricular activities. The school used in this study included grades 2 through 6, with data provided only from grades 3, 4, and 5.

As far as the data collection process was concerned, all data used in this study was taken from the 2011-2012 academic year. Since this study only utilized data from one academic year, the results are limited. The data used for the description of the research site was collected from MODESE and is accurate to the individual school district's knowledge.

It is also important to mention that the research site was the same school in which the researcher was employed, which could have influenced some of the qualitative data used in the study. There are also several factors and interventions that could have influenced a student's overall academic success, therefore it is difficult to draw any conclusions about causal relationships and extracurricular activities. The last limitation included the fact that the researcher did not include a comparison of non-school sponsored or competitive extracurricular activities in this study of elementary extracurricular activities.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research study and the review of the literature surrounding extracurricular activity programs, the researcher developed a set of recommendations for future extracurricular activity program implementation.

1. Continue to support and expand school sponsored extracurricular programs.

The reviewed literature and this research study supported previously found connections between academic characteristics, such as scores on standardized tests and extracurricular activity participation. School sponsored extracurricular activity programs ensure that all students have an opportunity to participate, regardless of family socio-economic status. These programs support social growth, which is another important benefit of extracurricular activities (Lawhorn, 2008) and was seen in several responses to questions in the parent questionnaire.

2. Encourage at-risk students to get involved in extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular programs have the ability to influence positive school perception and to help students develop relationships with their teachers who sponsor before and after school activities. This research study was able to show a statistical difference between extracurricular activity participants and non-participants in the area of standardized testing, showing the possibility of extracurricular activities serving as a possible intervention to help improve a student's academic achievement. It is also important to examine the life-long skills that have been attributed to extracurricular activity participation, which in turn impact academic achievement.

3. Use extracurricular activities as another way of enabling students to discover their talents.

It is important for students to try new things, discover their strengths and weaknesses. By providing various extracurricular experiences to students, the possibility for students to discover their talents increases. The students and parents at Northview Elementary valued this, which was shown in various responses to questions on both the student and parent questionnaires. This also supported the concept of educating the whole child, providing various experiences outside of studying a few narrow subject areas (Zhao, 2009).

4. Collect data on extracurricular activity programs.

It was difficult to collect data concerning extracurricular activity involvement because there is typically little data kept concerning extracurricular activity programs. Collecting data, including data for multiple years, could yield important information concerning how an extracurricular activity program might impact the educational process in a school building.

5. Provide the proper supervision and activity sponsors.

This is a perfect opportunity for teachers to receive additional opportunities to build stronger relationships with their students. Continual extracurricular activity sponsorship could build relationships that last for years, which was seen in previous research studies. It is essential that supervision is provided and that staff is evaluated in these programs too. When the proper supervision and properly trained staff is provided, these programs have the best chance of being most influential on a student's educational experience.

6. Provide constant communication to parents about extracurricular activity programs.

It is important that parents are informed about deadlines for registering their child for participation in an extracurricular activity, receive communication about meeting times, and other reminders as needed. Some parents included comments about communication in the parent questionnaire, stating that they were uncertain about when the sign up deadlines were or did not receive proper communication when an afterschool activity was canceled. Providing good communication is key to creating strong extracurricular activity programs.

Recommendations for Future Studies

There were several items that should be taken into consideration for future studies of extracurricular activities. This study took place in one elementary school with a population of 380 students. Since the school was small, this limited the researcher to explore other areas of extracurricular activity participation, such as non-school sponsored extracurricular activity participation and competitive extracurricular activities. Another study of extracurricular activities would need to include more than just one school building to make more accurate conclusions on extracurricular activity programs. It is also important to remember that this research study only looked at the 2011-2012 school year. Even though hypotheses were created for shorter and longer participation, it would had been beneficial to conduct a study using a longer span of time, perhaps three to five years. It was difficult at times to obtain information on past extracurricular activity involvement because records concerning extracurricular activities were not kept for previous years. In general, there tends to be a small amount of data collected on

extracurricular activity participation each year, so conducting a study during a short period of time using secondary data had its limitations. If a researcher were able to start a study and collect data moving forward chronologically, this would open the doors to more data collection possibilities.

Overall, a future study would need to include a larger sample of participants and non-participants, several schools, the inclusion of non-school sponsored activities, and the study would need to be conducted over a span of three to five years. It might also be important to look for incentives for participation in the study, which the current study did not offer. Any future studies would have to ensure that the sample was diverse and that it continued to take into account such characteristics as socio-economic status, parental involvement, race and ethnicity, gender, and other various student characteristics, which could and have been shown by previous research studies to influence extracurricular activity involvement and benefits of such participation.

Discussion

In reviewing this study of extracurricular activities, many themes described in the reviewed literature were supported by the findings reported. Even though the hypotheses concerning MAP test scores and participation in extracurricular activities indicated statistical difference when comparing participants to non-participants, other areas such as attendance and office discipline referral rates did not. A research study by Shulruf (2010) supported this finding, which determined that some of the conclusions drawn by previous studies of extracurricular activities were not replicated with the same findings as the authors of those studies claimed. Even though other research studies have found links to attendance, behavior, and school perception, this study was unable to verify those results.

Another interesting piece of information was discovered in the student questionnaires, which showed that school perception was basically the same for both participants and non-participants. The questionnaire results also showed that many students selected "gaining subject area knowledge" as a main reason for extracurricular activity participation. This finding is supported by the research of Fredricks and Eccles (2006b), which explored self-selection factors. This research study highlighted the theory that students might not gain academic success or other positive student achievements during extracurricular activity participation, but might have this academic success and the traits needed in order to achieve it present before their extracurricular involvement, which in return, probably influenced their participation in extracurricular activities.

Even if this is the case, it is important not to rule out the possibilities associated with extracurricular activity participation. Participation in these activities has shown to contribute to an increase in the life-long skills of teamwork and organization in participants (Reeves, 2008; Shannon, 2006). It is also important to support students' various interests and to create opportunities for students to discover their passions (Zhao, 2009).

Offering extracurricular programs in our schools is extremely important, especially with the recent challenging economic times. Several parents include in the parent questionnaire mentioned that finance was a reason they were unable to take advantage of some non-school sponsored extracurricular activities. It is important that schools continue to provide activities so that all students are able to experience these opportunities that they would not be able to otherwise (Darling et al., 2005). The last

research question was able to show that extracurricular participants' parents had obtained a higher level of education, which tends to be an excellent indicator of socioeconomic status. This would support another previous research study that found that as socio-economic status rose, so did the percentage of participation in extracurricular activities (Lagace-Seguin & Case, 2010).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was evident by the results in this research study that there was a statistically significant contribution to student achievement measured by standardized test scores by extracurricular activity participation. There was not enough evidence to support an impact on attendance rates and office discipline referrals when examining extracurricular activity participants compared to non-participants, or participants who had participated for a longer or shorter amount of time. These findings do show that extracurricular activities have the possibility to influence academic success in a positive manner.

It was also shown that there was not a significant difference in school perception between participants and non-participants of extracurricular activities. There were also many more similarities between parents of extracurricular activity participants and non-participants than differences. One important finding included the fact that many students and parents listed interest in the subject matter as one of the main reasons for extracurricular activity involvement. The higher number of parents in the participant group that obtained a higher level of education also possibly supported the theory that more students of higher socioeconomic families get involved in extracurricular activities.

This study of extracurricular activities was able to support previous findings and also demonstrated that the study of extracurricular activities is worthwhile. The opportunities and experiences that are included in extracurricular activity programs have the ability to influence academic student outcomes in a positive way.

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Appendix A

Wednesday, May 9th, 2012

Dear Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about a research study that I am getting ready to begin during the spring semester. As many of you probably know, I am currently working on earning my Doctorate Degree (Ed.D.) from Lindenwood University and will be conducting a research study on extracurricular activities.

The study will examine whether or not student participation in extracurricular activities correlates with academic success. The study will also examine whether or not extracurricular activities improve a student's perception of school. I am very excited to conduct this study at Northview Elementary School.

The process of conducting the study will consist of data gathering. The first type of data to be gathered will be quantitative , which will consist of collecting various sets of numerical data. The second type of data to be gathered will be qualitative , which will consist of collecting responses through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observations. The qualitative data collection process is where I am asking for student and parent involvement.

In the next week or two, I will be sending a consent form home for each student, which will ask for permission to have them take part in this study. The consent form will go over the key points regarding my study. I will also look for parent involvement too, would like to have your point of view represented in the study .

I am looking forward to this great opportunity! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely Yours,

Mr. John Israel
2nd-6th Vocal Music
Northview Elementary School

Appendix B

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Parents to Sign for
Student Participation in Research Activities

"Student Extracurricular Participation, Student Achievement, And School Perception: An Elementary School Perspective"

Principal Investigator _Mr. John Israel_____
Telephone: 314-753-5438 E-mail: JMI071@lindenwood.edu

Participant _____ Parent Contact info _____
_____

Dear parent,

1. Your child is invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mr. John Israel under the guidance of Dr. Dean Vazis. The purpose of this research study is to examine extracurricular activities at Northview Elementary School and determine if a relationship exists between extracurricular activity participation and student achievement. The research study will help determine whether or not extracurricular activities have an impact on such areas as academics and student perception of school.

2. a) Your child's participation will involve
   - Completing a student questionnaire, which will ask questions about his/her school experiences and his/her experiences with before and after school activities.
   - A few students will be selected to take part in individual interviews with the primary investigator, regarding before and after school activity participation.
   - A few students will be selected to take part in small focus groups, focusing on before and after school activities.
   - All of the above procedures will take part at Northview Elementary School during the school day.

   Approximately 300 may be involved in this research.

b) The amount of time involved in your child's participation is listed below for each procedure:

- Student Questionnaire: 1 time occurrence, 10-15 minutes
- Student Interviews: 1-2 time occurrence, 20-30 minutes
- Focus Group Participation: 1 time occurrence, 20-30 minutes

3. There are no anticipated risks to your child associated with this research.

3. There are no direct benefits for your child's participation in this study. However, your child's participation will contribute to the knowledge about extracurricular activities and may help society.

3. Your child's participation is voluntary and you may choose not to let your child participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent for your child's participation at any time. Your child may choose not to answer any questions that he or she does not want to answer. You and your child will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to let your child participate or to withdraw your child.

3. We will do everything we can to protect your child's privacy. As part of this effort, your child's identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Mr. John Israel, (314) 753-5438 or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Dean Vazis, (636) 949-4402. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my child's participation in the research described above.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature	Date	Parent's/Guardian's Printed Name
Child's Printed Name		
Signature of Investigator	Date	Investigator Printed Name

Appendix C

Before and After School Activities Questionnaire- Student

Please write a response for each question below.

1. Please describe your feelings about school.

2. How do you feel you are doing in your classes this year?

3. What are some of the things that you look most forward to during your school day?

4. What are some of the things that you look least forward to during your school day?

5. If you could change anything about your school, what would it be?

6. Are you currently participating in any after or before school activities?

7. If you are participating in any before or after school activity, why did you decide to participate?

8. If you do not participate in any before or after school activity, why did you decide not to participate?

9. If you participate in before and/or after school activities, how do you feel about participating in the activity?

10. Do you take part in any non-sponsored school activities? If so, please list those activities.

11. Please list the before and/or after school activities that you participate in. If you do not participate in any, you can move on to the next question.

12. Please list the grade that you are currently in.

13. Please check your gender: _____Male _____Female

14. If you have any other comments about before and after school activities, please write them below.

Appendix D

Student Interview Questions- Extracurricular Activities

1. How do you feel about going to school?
    - What do you look forward to?
    - What do you not look forward to?
2. How are your classes going this year?
    - What comes easy?
    - What is challenging?
3. Describe the relationship that you have with your teachers.
4. If you could change something about your school experience, what would it be?
5. Do you have other thoughts or comments to share about your school experience?
6. Have you taken part in before or after school activities?
    If so…
        - What activities did you participate in?
        - Were these activities held at school or at other locations?
7. Are you currently involved in one or more before or after school activities?
    If so…
        - Which activities are you involved in?
        - Do any of these activities take part outside of your school's building?
    If not…
        - Why are you not currently taking part in any of these activities?
8. What made you decide to participate in before and after school activities?
    - Did anyone influence you to do so? If so, who?
9. Describe your experience participating in before and after school activities.
    - What did you get out of them?
    - Has your participation in these activities impacted your overall school experience?
10. If you could change something about a before or after school activity, what would it be?
11. Are there any activities that you wish you could take part in but currently do not?
    If so…
        - What is keeping you from doing so?
12. Do you have other thoughts or comments to share about your experience with before and after school activities?

Appendix E

Before and After School Activities Questionnaire- Parent

Please write a response for each question below.

1. Does your child take part in any before or after school activities, which are school sponsored?

    a) If so, what activities is your child currently involved in, which are school sponsored?

    What activities has your child been involved with in the past? How many hours a week is your child involved with each of the listed activities from above?

    b) How long has you child been involved with each of the activities listed from above?

2. Why did your child decide or not decide to take part in before or after school activities, which are school sponsored?

3. If your child has taken part in school sponsored extracurricular activities, do you think their participation has an impact on his/her overall school experience?

    a. If so, how?

4. Does your child take part in extracurricular activities that are not school sponsored?

    a) If so, please list those activities.

    b) How many hours a week is your child involved with each of the listed activities from above?

    c) How long has your child been involved with each of the activities listed from above?

    d) Are any of the activities that you child takes part in considered "competitive?" If so, please list those activities below.

How do you feel extracurricular activities are implemented at your child's school?

5. How could extracurricular activities be improved?

Describe how your child is currently doing academically this school year.

Please describe any involvement with your child's school. (meetings attended, activities attended, volunteering, etc…)

6. How many hours of homework per week does your child regularly bring home?

7. How much time do you spend in assisting your child with his/her homework?

Please describe your highest level of education obtained.

Please list your child's grade level.

8. If you have any comments regarding extracurricular activities, please include those below.

Appendix F

Lindenwood University

School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Assent Form For Participation in Research Activities

"Student Extracurricular Participation, Student Achievement, And School Perception: An Elementary School Perspective"

Principal Investigator Mr. John Israel
Participant Name _____ Grade Level _____

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1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mr. John Israel. The purpose of this research is to examine the affects of extracurricular activities at MRH Elementary School.
2. a) Your participation will involve:
    - Completing a student questionnaire, which will ask questions about your experiences with before and after school activities.
    - A few students will be selected to take part in individual interviews with the primary investigator regarding before and after school activity participation.
    - A few students will be selected to take part in small focus groups, focusing on before and after school activities.
3. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

I have read this assent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I assent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature/Date	Participant's Printed Name
Signature of Principal Investigator/Date	Investigator Printed Name

Vitae

John Israel was born in Princeton, Illinois on March 14, 1981. He lived in Florissant, Missouri from 1985-2001 and attended Lindenwood University in the fall of 1999. In 2004, John received his Bachelor of Arts from Lindenwood University in Music and was certified as a K-12 Vocal and Instrumental Music educator. After receiving his degree, he taught in the New Haven Public School District from 2004-2005, teaching K-12 vocal music and also taught in the St. Clair R-XIII School District from 2005-2007, as a sixth-12thgrade vocal music teacher and choral director. In 2006, John began his Master's in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University. Shortly after he began his Master's, he began teaching at Northview Elementary School and is still currently employed there as an elementary vocal music instructor. John finished his Master of Arts in 2008, Ed. S. in Educational Administration in 2010, and is expecting to complete his Ed. D. in Educational Administration from Lindenwood University in May of 2013. John currently resides in St. Charles, Missouri with his wife Jennifer.